

Victims with Disabilities

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, there are approximately 43 million individuals with disabilities in the United States. (Rubin, P. (1993). "The Americans with Disabilities Act and Criminal Justice: An Overview." *Research in Action*, p. 1. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice.)

Research conducted by the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN) in 1993 found that of all children who are abused, 17.2 percent had disabilities. Of all children who were sexually abused, 15.2 percent had disabilities. (Crosse, S.B., Kaye, E., & Ramofsky, A.C. (1993). *A Report on the Maltreatment of Children with Disabilities*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Child, Youth, and Families, National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect.)

The NCCAN study also found that abused children with disabilities were more likely to be male and generally older than children without disabilities who were abused. (*Ibid.*)

The incidence of maltreatment (number of children maltreated annually per 1,000 children) among children with disabilities was 1.7 times higher than the incidence of maltreatment for children without disabilities. (*Ibid.*)

Of the maltreated children with maltreatment-related injuries, child protection case workers reported that maltreatment directly contributed to, or was likely to have led to, disabilities for 62

percent of the children who experienced sexual abuse, for 48 percent of children who experienced emotional abuse, and for 55 percent of children who experienced neglect. (*Ibid.*)

Research consistently shows that women with disabilities, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or class, are assaulted, raped, and abused at a rate of two times greater than non-disabled women. (Sobsey, D. (1994). *Violence and Abuse in the Lives of People with Disabilities*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes; Cusitar, L. (1994). *Strengthening the Links: Stopping the Violence*. Toronto: DisAbled Women's Network (DAWN).

The risk of being physically or sexually assaulted for adults with developmental disabilities is likely 4 to 10 times as high as it is for other adults.

(Sobsey, D., *supra.*)

People with developmental and other severe disabilities represent at least 10 percent of the population of the United States. Of this population group: 1.8 percent of individuals have developmental disabilities; five percent of individuals have adult onset brain impairment; and 2.8 percent of the individuals have severe major mental disorders. (Sorenson, D. (1996, November). "The Invisible Victim," *The California Prosecutor*, Vol. XIX, No. 1.)

Note: OVC makes no representation concerning the accuracy of data from non-Department of Justice sources.