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BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS
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3.2 PERCENT OF INMATES REPORT SEXUAL VICTIMIZATION IN LOCAL JAILS

WASHINGTON – An estimated 3.2 percent of jail inmates (24,700) reported one or more incidents of sexual victimization in a survey mandated by the Prison Rape Elimination Act, the Justice Department’s Bureau of Justice Statistics announced today. About 1.6 percent of all inmates (12,100) reported an incident involving another inmate, 2.0 percent (15,200) reported an incident involving jail staff, and 0.4 percent reported being victimized by both other inmates and staff.

The survey limited reporting by inmates to incidents occurring in the past 6 months or since their admission to the jail, if more recent. Sexual victimization is defined as all types of sexual activity, including inmate-on-inmate nonconsensual sexual acts and abusive sexual contacts or unwanted touching. It also includes both willing and unwilling sexual activity with staff. An estimated 1.3 percent of inmates (10,400) said they had sex or sexual contact unwillingly with staff, and 1.1 percent (8,400) said they willingly had sexual contact with staff.

The survey was conducted in 282 randomly selected local jails between April and December 2007, with a sample of 40,419 inmates. Eighteen jail facilities had an overall sexual victimization rate of at least twice the national average of 3.2 percent, and 18 facilities had no reports of sexual victimization from inmates.

The Tarrant County Detention Facility (New Mexico) recorded the highest overall rate of sexual victimization (13.4 percent). When sexual victimization excluded allegations of touching only, the Tarrant County Detention Facility remained the highest with 8.9 percent, followed by the Brevard County Detention Center in Florida (7.8 percent), the Bernalillo County Metropolitan Detention Center in New Mexico (6.7 percent), and the Southeastern Ohio Regional Jail (5.8 percent).

Overall, 0.6 percent of all jail inmates reported an injury related to sexual victimization. Among all victims, 16 percent reported minor injuries (such as bruises, cuts, or scratches), 8 percent reported being knocked unconscious, 6 percent reported anal or rectal tearing, 6 percent internal injuries, 3 percent broken bones, and 2 percent knife or stab wounds.

(MORE)

Inmate-on-inmate sexual victimization most often occurred in the victim's cell or room (56 percent of reports). Staff-on-inmate sexual victimization most often occurred in a closet, office, or other locked room (47 percent). Nearly 62 percent of all reported incidents of staff sexual misconduct involved female staff with male inmates; 8 percent involved male staff with female inmates.

An estimated 5.1 percent of female inmates compared to 2.9 percent of male inmates said they had experienced one or more incidents of sexual victimization. About 4.6 percent of inmates ages 18 to 24 reported sexual assault, compared to 2.4 percent of inmates age 25 and older.

Inmates with a sexual orientation other than heterosexual reported significantly higher rates of sexual victimization. An estimated 2.7 percent of heterosexual inmates alleged an incident, compared to 18.5 percent of homosexual inmates, and 9.8 percent of bisexual inmates or inmates indicating "other" as an orientation.

The Prison Rape Elimination Act requires the Bureau of Justice Statistics to conduct an annual data collection to measure the incidence of prison rape in at least 10 percent of the nation's correctional facilities. It also requires the Attorney General to provide a listing of institutions ranked according to the incidence of prison rape. As a consequence of sampling error, the survey cannot provide the three jail facilities with the highest rates of victimization.

The survey consisted of an audio computer-assisted self interview (ACASI) in which inmates, using a touch-screen laptop, interacted with a computer-assisted questionnaire and followed instructions via headphones. Inmate participation was voluntary, with 67 percent completing the survey.

The report, *Sexual Victimization in Local Jails Reported by Inmates, 2007* (NCJ 221946), was written by BJS statisticians Allen J. Beck and Paige M. Harrison. Following publication, the report can be found at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/svljri07.htm>.

For additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics' statistical reports and programs, please visit the BJS Web site at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs>.

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