

Juvenile Crime and Victimization

In September 1997, the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) released a Special Report entitled *Age Patterns of Victims of Serious Crimes*. The Report found that vulnerability to violent crime victimization varies across the age spectrum -- victimization rates increase through teenage years, crest at around age 20, and steadily decrease throughout adult years. This pattern, with some exceptions, exists across all race, sex, and ethnic groups. (Perkins, C. A. (1997, September). *Age Patterns of Victims of Serious Crimes*, NCJ-162031, p. 1. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.)

Each year between 1992 and 1994, U.S. residents age 12 or older experienced about 4.3 million serious violent victimizations on average. Of all serious violent crimes -- murder, rape, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault -- the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that while persons age 12 to 24 comprise less than a quarter of the U.S. population (22%), they comprise almost half (49% or 2 million) of all serious victimizations each year. (Ibid.)

Persons younger than 25 were the most vulnerable to serious violent crime, regardless of how age patterns are analyzed. They made up almost 50% of all persons suffering a serious violent crime and almost 56% of rape/sexual assault victims. (Ibid., p. 2 and 3)

Persons age 12 to 24 comprised: 35% of murder victims and 49% of serious violent crime victims. Persons age 18 to 21 were the most likely to experience a serious violent crime, and blacks in that age group were the most vulnerable: 72 victimizations per 1,000 blacks, 50 victimizations per

1,000 Hispanics, and 46 victimizations per 1,000 whites. (Ibid., p. 1)

Serious violent crimes for persons age 18 to 21 were 17 times higher than for persons age 65 or older. (Ibid., p. 1)

On average each year, from 1992 to 1994, about 1 in 50 persons fell victim to a serious violent crime, among persons age 12-24, this figure was twice the rate -- 1 in 23. (Ibid., p. 2)

Almost 1 in 10 murder victims age 18 to 21 were black. (Ibid., p. 1)

Juvenile arrests for Violent Crime Index offenses increased by 55 percent for females versus 33 percent for males in 1993. During this time frame, female juvenile offenders were responsible for 6 percent of all murders, 9 percent of all robberies, and 18 percent of all aggravated assaults. (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (1996). *Female Offenders in the Juvenile Justice System: Statistics Summary*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.)

Follow-up studies of children who had cases of substantiated abuse or neglect found that 26 percent of the children were later arrested as juveniles. (National Institute of Justice. (1995, March). *Victims of Childhood Sexual Abuse - Later Criminal Consequences, Research in Brief*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.)

Four of every five delinquency cases involved a male juvenile. Juvenile males accounted for 77 percent of person offense cases, 79 percent of property offense cases, and 86 percent of drug law violations in 1994. (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (1996). *Delinquency Cases in Juvenile Courts, 1994*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.)