



## Bureau of Justice Statistics

# Family Violence Statistics

Including Statistics on Strangers and Acquaintances

**Reported and unreported family violence**

**Murder of family members**

**Family violence reported to police**

**Family violence recorded by police**

**State prosecution of family assault**

**Federal prosecution of domestic violence**

**Family violence offenders in prison**

**Family violence offenders in jail**

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# Family Violence Statistics

**Including Statistics on Strangers and Acquaintances**

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## Highlights, definitions, and counting rules

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### Introduction

This compendium contains the most recent family violence statistics from these sources: surveys conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), the BJS database of Federal statistics, and two statistical databases maintained by the FBI.

The sources provide statistical snapshots of family violence at different stages in the administration of justice. First are statistics on the nature and extent of family violence. Next are statistics on family violence that is reported to police, followed by statistics on the prosecution of persons charged with family violence. Lastly are statistics on persons sent to prison or jail for family violence.

The report is divided into eight sections giving statistics on —

- Reported and unreported family violence
- Fatal family violence
- Family violence reported to police
- Family violence recorded by police
- State prosecution of family assault
- Federal prosecution of domestic violence
- Family violence offenders in prison
- Family violence offenders in jail.

### Highlights

#### *Trends in family violence*

The rate of family violence fell between 1993 and 2002 from an estimated 5.4 victims to 2.1 victims per 1,000 U.S. residents age 12 or older. Throughout the period family violence accounted for about 1 in 10 violent victimizations.

#### *Reported and unreported family violence*

Family violence accounted for 11% of all reported and unreported violence between 1998 and 2002. Of these roughly 3.5 million violent crimes committed against family members, 49% were crimes against spouses, 11% were sons or daughters victimized by a parent, and 41% were crimes against other family members.

The most frequent type of family violence offense was simple assault. Murder was less than half of 1% of all family violence between 1998 and 2002.

About three-fourths of all family violence occurred in or near the victim's residence.

Forty percent of family violence victims were injured during the incident. Of the 3.5 million victims of family violence between 1998 and 2002, less than 1% died as a result of the incident.

The majority (73%) of family violence victims were female. Females were 84% of spouse abuse victims and 86% of victims of abuse at the hands of a boyfriend or girlfriend.

While about three-fourths of the victims of family violence were female, about three-fourths of the persons who committed family violence were male.

Most family violence victims were white (74%), and the majority were between ages 25 and 54 (65.7%). Most family violence offenders were white (79%), and most were age 30 or older (62%).

#### *Fatal family violence*

About 22% of murders in 2002 were family murders. Nearly 9% were murders of a spouse, 6% were murders of sons or daughters by a parent, and 7% were murders by other family members.

Females were 58% of family murder victims. Of all the murders of females in 2002, family members were responsible for 43%.

Children under age 13 were 23% of murder victims killed by a family member, and just over 3% of nonfamily murder victims.

The average age among sons or daughters killed by a parent was 7 years, and 4 out of 5 victims killed by a parent were under age 13.

Eight in ten murderers who killed a family member were male. Males were 83% of spouse murderers and 75% of murderers who killed a boyfriend or girlfriend.

In 2002 family murders were less likely than nonfamily murders to involve a firearm (50% versus 68%). Parents were the least likely family murderers to use a firearm (28%), compared to spouses (63%) or other family members (51%).

Among incidents of parents killing their children, 19% involved one parent killing multiple victims.

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### *Family violence reported to police*

Approximately 60% of family violence victimizations were reported to police between 1998 and 2002. The reporting rate among female victims was not significantly greater than the reporting rate among male victims.

The most common reason victims of family violence cited for not reporting the crime to police was that the incident was a "private/personal matter" (34%). Another 12% of non-reporting family violence victims did not report the crime in order to "protect the offender."

Among the 2.1 million incidents of family violence reported to police between 1998 and 2002, 36% resulted in an arrest.

### *Family violence recorded by police*

Family violence accounted for 33% of all violent crimes recorded by police in 18 States and the District of Columbia in 2000. Of these more than 207,000 family violence crimes, about half (53%, or 110,000) were crimes between spouses.

Among crimes recorded by police, 2% of family violence involved a firearm, compared to 6% of nonfamily violence. A weapon was used in 16% of family and 21% of nonfamily violence.

About 6% of all violent crime recorded by police in 2000 involved more than one offender victimizing a lone victim. The exception was stranger crime, in which 14% of incidents involved multiple offenders victimizing a lone victim.

About 49% of family violence crimes recorded by police resulted in an arrest. Males comprised 77% of suspected family violence offenders arrested in 2000.

### *State prosecution of family assault*

Of the approximately 1,500 defendants charged with felony assault during May 2000 in the State courts of 11 large counties, about a third were charged with family violence.

Among felony assault defendants charged with family violence in State courts, 84% had at least one prior arrest for either a felony or a misdemeanor (not necessarily for family violence), and 73% had been previously convicted of some type of felony or misdemeanor (not necessarily family violence).

Nearly half of felony assault defendants charged with family violence were released pending case disposition.

Among the 1,500 felony assault cases, the probability of the case leading to conviction (felony or misdemeanor) was greater for family assault defendants (71%) than nonfamily assault defendants (61%).

State courts sentenced 83% of persons convicted of assault (both family and nonfamily) to either prison or jail. Among felony assault defendants convicted in State courts —

- 68% of incarceration sentences for family assault were to jail
- 62% of incarceration sentences for nonfamily assault were to prison
- 45% of persons sent to prison for family assault received a sentence of more than 2 years, compared to 77% of nonfamily assault offenders sent to prison.

### *Federal prosecution of domestic violence*

Persons suspected of domestic violence made up 4% of the total 18,653 Federal suspects referred to U.S. attorneys for alleged violent crimes from 2000 to 2002.

Of the 757 suspects referred to U.S. attorneys for domestic violence offenses between 2000 and 2002, most were firearm-related domestic violence offenses rather than interstate domestic violence offenses.

- The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives accounted for 80% of all referrals for firearm-related domestic violence.
- The FBI accounted for 72% of all interstate domestic violence referrals.

Federal courts convicted 90% of defendants adjudicated for an interstate domestic violence offense.

Among defendants convicted in federal courts —

- 79% of convictions were the product of a guilty plea, and the remaining 21% were the product of conviction following a trial
- most were male (96%), under age 40 (67%), white (72%), and non-Hispanic (95%)
- 4 in 5 defendants had a prior adult conviction.

Of 47 Federal defendants sentenced for an interstate domestic violence offense between 2000 and 2002, 91% received a prison term with a median length of 60 months.

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*Family violence offenders in prison*

Of the nearly 500,000 men and women in State prisons for a violent crime in 1997, 15% were there for a violent crime against a family member.

Nearly half of all the family violence offenders in State prisons were serving a sentence for a sex offense against a family member. More than three-quarters of parents convicted of a violent crime against their son or daughter were in prison for a sex offense.

Of the crimes for which family violence offenders were in prison —

- most were against a female (78%)
- more than half were against a child under age 18
- more than a third were against a child under age 13.

About 90% of offenders in State prisons for family violence had injured their victim:

- 50% of family violence victims were raped or sexually assaulted
- 28% of the victims of family violence were killed
- 50% of offenders in State prisons for spousal abuse had killed their victims
- Of State prison inmates imprisoned for a crime against their son or daughter, 79% had raped or sexually assaulted the child, and another 10% had killed the child.

Among family violence offenders in State prisons in 1997 —

- most were male (93%)
- 6 out of 10 were white, while about a quarter were black
- about 80% were between ages 25 and 54.

Among offenders whose incarceration in State prisons was for family violence, 23% had used a weapon to commit their crime. The comparable percentage among State prisoners incarcerated for nonfamily violence was higher— 46%.

*Family violence offenders in jail*

Convicted family violence offenders made up about 22% of the nearly 86,500 convicted violent offenders in local jails in 2002. Most (60%) of these approximately 18,700 jail inmates incarcerated for family violence were in jail for an aggravated assault.

Local jail inmates convicted of family violence reported that —

- their victims were predominantly female (79%)
- nearly 30% of their victims were under age 18.

Among local jail inmates convicted of family violence, 55% injured their victim.

Most convicted jail inmates serving time for violence against a family member (88%) did not use a weapon during the crime.

Among jail inmates convicted of family violence, 45% had been subject to a restraining order at some point in their life. About 18% were under an active restraining order at the time of admission to jail.

## Definitions

**Violent crime** Unless indicated otherwise, statistics on violent crime in this report pertain to all forms of the following crimes: criminal homicide, completed and attempted rape, sexual assault (including threats), robbery, assault (including threats), kidnaping, intimidation, illegal abortion, extortion, cruelty towards child or wife, hit-and-run driving with bodily injury, and miscellaneous crimes against persons (as opposed to crimes against property).

**Family violence** Unless indicated otherwise, family violence includes all types of violent crime committed by an offender who is related to the victim either biologically or legally through marriage or adoption. A crime is considered family violence if the victim was the offender's current or former spouse; parent or adoptive parent; current or former stepparent; legal guardian; biological or adoptive child; current or former stepchild; sibling; current or former step sibling; grandchild; current or former step- or adoptive-grandchild; grandparent; current or former step- or

adoptive-grandparent; in-law; or other relative (aunt, uncle, nephew).

**Nonfamily violence** Unless indicated otherwise, nonfamily violence includes all types of violent crime between current or former boyfriends and girlfriends; between current or former friends and acquaintances; and between strangers.

**Relationship of victim to offender** The databases used in this report all contain sufficient information to permit identification of family violence cases.

However, the types of information that make identification possible are not uniform. Some provide more relationship categories than others. For example, the Supplemental Homicide Reports provides 28 different categories of victim-offender relationship, while the National Crime Victimization Survey has 15 categories. Also, the databases use different terms to describe specific victim-offender relationships. For example, one uses the category "employee/employer," while another uses "colleague at work."

In general, enough information was available in each of the databases to distinguish six categories of victim-offender relationship: three family categories (spouse, son or daughter, and other family), and three nonfamily categories (boyfriend/girlfriend, friend/acquaintance, and stranger). Most sections of the report present statistics on all six categories.

## Sources of data on family violence

### National Crime Victimization Survey (a BJS survey)

One data source used to document the nature and extent of family violence in the United States is the BJS National Crime Victimization Survey, or NCVS, for 1998 to 2002. The NCVS compiles data on family and nonfamily violence through biannual interviews with nationally representative samples of U.S. residents age 12 or older. In these interviews, residents are asked if they were a recent victim of crime. Those who were victims are then asked numerous questions about the incident, such as where it occurred and whether they knew the offender. Residents are encouraged to tell interviewers both about crimes that were reported to police and about unreported crimes.

Because the survey data come from interviews with victims, the NCVS has no information on homicide. The survey's scope is limited to certain forms of nonfatal violence: rape and sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault. Based on interviews with the Nation's crime victims, estimates are formed not only of how many of these crimes occur each year but also of the characteristics pertaining to the criminal incidents. Such characteristics include the number of victims that obtained medical care for their injuries, the number that reported the crime to police, and the number whose assailant was a relative.

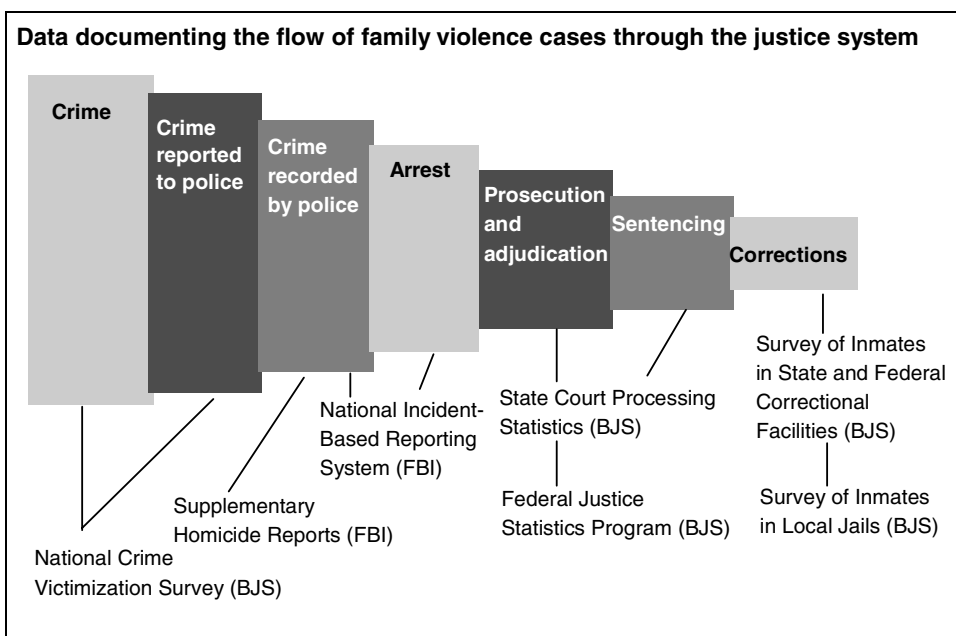


Figure 1



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*Supplementary Homicide Reports  
(an FBI database)*

For national statistics on family homicide for the year 2002, the source used in this report was the FBI's Supplementary Homicide Reports, or SHR. The FBI compiles detailed national data on family and nonfamily homicide from the thousands of law enforcement agencies across the Nation. For each criminal homicide, the SHR record such information as the age and race of the offender, the relationship of the victim to the offender, and the type of weapon used in the killing.

*National Incident-Based Reporting System (an FBI database)*

For statistics on family violence that comes to police attention and for statistics on arrests for family violence, the source used in this report is the database for the year 2000 from the National Incident-Based Reporting System, or NIBRS. The database, compiled by the FBI, contains NIBRS data from at least 1 police agency in each of 18 States and the District of Columbia. These jurisdictions cover about 16% of the U.S. population and do not include any areas with a population of one million or more.

The NIBRS data have information on victims, offenders, persons arrested, and incidents of family and nonfamily violence. For example, information on victims includes the type of injury sustained and the victim's relationship to the offender. Among the various details available on offenders and arrestees are their age, race, and gender. Offense characteristics available in the NIBRS data include the type of weapon used and the type of location where the crime occurred.

*State Court Processing Statistics  
(a BJS data collection)*

No national data in the United States describe the processing of family violence cases from arrest through final disposition by a court. The available alternative used in this report is an extract of the BJS data collection State Court Processing Statistics (SCPS). The SCPS data used are entirely from police and court records that tracked family and nonfamily assault cases in 11 counties, from the filing of State court charges in May of 2000 to their final court disposition. These data include information about persons arrested and charged with family and nonfamily assault: their demographic characteristics, their prior arrest and conviction record, and their criminal justice status at time of arrest. The SCPS data also contain information about the processing of the assault cases, such as type of pretrial release, adjudication outcome, and type of sentence imposed.

*Federal Justice Statistics Program  
(a BJS database)*

Information regarding violations of family violence-related Federal statutes that were subsequently referred to Federal court come from the Federal Justice Statistics Program (FJSP), a database maintained by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. FJSP provides annual data on workload, activities, and outcomes associated with Federal criminal cases. Data for 2000 to 2002 were acquired on all aspects of processing in the Federal justice system, including the number of persons investigated, prosecuted, convicted, and incarcerated. The FJSP database is a BJS database, constructed from files provided by the U.S. Marshals Service, the Executive Office for United States Attorneys, the

Administrative Office of the United States Courts, the United States Sentencing Commission, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

*Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities (a BJS survey)*

For national statistics on persons in prison for family violence, this report used the BJS Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities, conducted in 1997. The survey involves face-to-face interviews with a nationally representative sample of State prisoners. Persons in prison for either family or nonfamily violence are included in the sample. Through interviews with them, information is obtained on their victims and on numerous other characteristics of the crime that brought them into prison, such as whether a weapon was used, and the location of the offense.

*Survey of Inmates in Local Jails  
(a BJS survey)*

For statistics on inmates who were convicted of family violence and sentenced to a period of incarceration of less than 1 year, the source used in this report is the BJS Survey of Inmates in Local Jails. This is a periodic survey which describes the current offenses and offense characteristics of local jail inmates. Most recently conducted in 2002, face-to-face interviews were conducted with a nationally representative sample of local jail inmates to collect systematic information on this special correctional population. Questions were asked regarding the relationship of the victim to the incarcerated offender, the gender, race/Hispanic origin, and age of victims and offenders, injury to the victim, offender use of a weapon, offender substance use at the time of the crime, and the place at which the crime occurred.

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## Uniform counting rules

Incidents of crime vary depending on the number of offenders, number of offenses committed, and number of victims. For instance, in a single incident where two men rape and rob a woman, there are two offenders, four offenses (a rape and a robbery committed by each man), and a single victim. Such an incident differs from one in which a lone man assaults another individual. That incident involves one offender, one offense, and one victim.

The various databases used in this report are not uniform in the amount of information they contain about each incident of crime. One of the databases (NIBRS) contains information on virtually every offender, every victim, and every offense in an incident. The other databases contain less information. For example, offender characteristics available in the prisoner database pertain only to each individual incarcerated offender. The incident that resulted in that person's incarceration may have involved multiple offenders, but information on co-offenders was unavailable.

To improve the comparability of statistics across the databases, rules were adopted to guide tabulations. All statistics in this report — that is, statistics on offenders, on offenses, and on victims — follow the rule that each incident be treated as though it involved one offender, one offense, and one victim.

If an incident involved more than one *offender* and information (such as age, race, and gender) was available on more than one offender, the available data on just one of the offenders were tabulated. Similarly, if an incident involved more than one *offense* and information on the different offenses (such as the place where each occurred) was available, only the data on one of the offenses were counted.

Likewise, if an incident involved more than one *victim* and the database contained information (such as the victim's age, race, and gender) on more than one victim, victim statistics used in the analysis were based on just one of the victims.

Certain databases used in the report — NCVS, SHR, and NIBRS — were victim-based. Choosing a particular victim to characterize an incident was unnecessary with these databases. Other data collections used in the report — Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities and Survey of Inmates in Local Jails — were offender-based. Choosing a particular offender to characterize an incident was unnecessary with these sources.

Where choices had to be made about which offender, which offense, or which victim characterized an incident, the choices were guided by various hierarchies. Information about the hierarchies is summarized below.

In choosing a particular *offender* to characterize an incident, the choice was guided by the victim's relationship to the offender. For example, in a single incident in which a woman was assaulted by her husband and a stranger, the incident was treated as a spouse-on-spouse assault. Offender statistics for such an incident (such as age, race, and gender) therefore pertained solely to the characteristics of the husband; characteristics of the stranger were not tabulated.

Selecting the husband over the stranger to characterize the incident conforms to a rule adopted for this report that says to select whichever offender is highest in the following victim-to-offender relationship hierarchy (shown in order from highest to lowest, with column headings in italics):

### *Spouse*

spouse and common-law spouse  
ex-spouse

### *Son or daughter*

child  
stepchild

### *Other family*

parent and stepparent  
sibling and step-sibling  
grandchild  
grandparent  
in-laws  
other relative

### *Boyfriend or girlfriend*

boy/girlfriend  
ex-boy/girlfriend  
homosexual partner

### *Friend or acquaintance*

child of girl or boyfriend  
friend  
neighbor  
employer  
employee  
acquaintance  
babysittee  
otherwise known

### *Stranger*

stranger

### *Not included in analysis*

relationship unknown

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When it was necessary to choose a single *victim* to characterize an incident, the victim-offender relationship hierarchy was also used. Again, the chosen victim was the one highest in the hierarchy.

In choosing a particular *offense* to characterize an incident, the choice was guided by the offense's position in a hierarchy of offense seriousness. The offense highest in the hierarchy was selected to characterize the incident. For example, in a single incident where the victim was raped and murdered, the offense selected to characterize the incident was murder because murder is higher in the offense seriousness hierarchy than rape. The offense seriousness hierarchy (from most to least serious) generally corresponds to the offense list shown in table 5.1.

As noted earlier, each incident tabulated in this report was treated as having one offender, one offense, and one victim. Each incident was also treated as having one offense location, one victim injury (if any), one weapon involved (if any), one arrestee (if any), and one arrest offense (if any). The characteristic's position in a hierarchy determined which characteristic (for example, which injury) was tabulated. The characteristic with the highest position was chosen.

Listed in order from highest to lowest, the offense location hierarchy is in table 5.2; victim injury hierarchy, table 8.4; offender weapon use hierarchy, table 5.6; and arrest offense hierarchy, table 5.8. The arrestee hierarchy is the same as the victim-to-offender relationship hierarchy described above.

## Family violence offenders in prison

### About the data in this section

Statistics in this section pertain to violent offenders in State prisons nationwide in 1997. The statistics were based on State prisoner data from the BJS Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities, 1997. (Federal prisoner data were not included in these analyses.) The survey involved face-to-face interviews with a nationally representative sample of prison inmates.

Among other things, sampled inmates were asked what crime they were in prison for and whether their victim was a member of their own family. Based on what inmates told interviewers, it is estimated that, at the time of the survey in 1997, State prisons held 494,349 inmates whose offense was a violent crime. Information on the victim's relationship to the offender was obtained on 458,148 of the total 494,349 violent prisoners. The statistics in this section pertain to these 458,148 inmates.

### Inmates in State prison for family violence

Of the 458,148 men and women in State prisons nationwide for a violent crime in 1997, 14.6% were there for a violent crime against a member of their family (table 8.1). The remaining 85.4% were men and women whose violent crime was against a nonfamily member.

Inmates in prison for spouse abuse comprised 3.8% of all prisoners incarcerated for a violent crime. More inmates were in prison for a violent crime against their children (26,876 inmates, or 5.9% of the total) than were there for a violent crime against their spouse (17,440 inmates, or 3.8% of the total).

Offenders who committed their crime against a stranger made up nearly half of all inmates in State prisons for a violent crime in 1997. The next most frequent category consisted of those in confinement for a violent crime against a friend or acquaintance (33%).

### Type of violent crime for which offenders were imprisoned

The leading type of violent crime for which family violence offenders were in State prisons was a sex offense. Sex offenders were nearly a half of all family violence offenders in State prisons. The leading type of violent crime for which nonfamily offenders were imprisoned was robbery, accounting for nearly a third of their total. Among prisoners incarcerated for a violent crime against a stranger, nearly half were robbers.

Sex offenders comprised 78.4% of all the men and women in prison for a crime against their son or daughter. An additional 7.6% murdered their child.

Those convicted of assault made up about 20% of both family and nonfamily violence offenders in State prisons. But assaulters made up 39.5% of perpetrators of spouse violence.

**Table 8.1. Offenses for which family violence offenders were in State prison in 1997, compared to offenses for which nonfamily violence offenders were imprisoned, by relationship**

Type of offense	All violent crimes	Percent of crimes in which the victim was the offender's —							
		Family member				Nonfamily member			
		Total	Spouse	Son or daughter	Other family	Total	Boyfriend or girlfriend	Friend or acquaintance	Stranger
<b>All offenses</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Homicide <sup>a</sup>	29.3%	24.9%	46.7%	9.1%	26.8%	30.0%	30.8%	35.7%	26.0%
Murder <sup>b</sup>	25.9	22.2	43.1	7.6	23.6	26.5	26.9	31.3	23.1
Manslaughter <sup>c</sup>	3.4	2.6	3.6	1.5	3.3	3.5	3.9	4.4	2.9
Sex offenses	19.0	49.2	6.9	78.4	47.1	13.8	21.1	22.7	6.8
Rape	5.8	9.9	2.5	16.3	8.1	5.0	5.7	7.0	3.6
Sexual assault	13.2	39.3	4.4	62.1	39.0	8.8	15.5	15.7	3.2
Robbery	27.5	1.5	1.0	0	3.6	32.0	4.4	14.4	47.2
Assault	20.5	20.3	39.5	7.4	21.0	20.5	36.7	23.0	16.9
Other violence	3.7	4.1	5.8	5.2	1.5	3.7	7.0	4.1	3.1
<b>Total offenses</b>	458,148	66,923	17,440	26,876	22,607	391,224	23,283	151,256	216,686
<b>Percent of all offenses</b>	100%	14.6%	3.8%	5.9%	4.9%	85.4%	5.1%	33.0%	47.3%

Note: Data identifying the victim's relationship to the offender were reported by 92.7% (458,148) of 494,349 State prison inmates held for a violent crime in 1997. Of these 458,148 inmates with recorded relationships, offense type was reported for all. Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

<sup>a</sup>Includes murder, nonnegligent manslaughter, vehicular and non-vehicular manslaughter, and negligent manslaughter.

<sup>b</sup>Includes nonnegligent manslaughter.

<sup>c</sup>Includes vehicular and non-vehicular manslaughter, and negligent manslaughter.

Source: BJS, 1997 Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities.

**Table 8.2. Location of family violence compared to nonfamily violence for inmates in State prison for a violent crime in 1997, by relationship**

Offense location	All violent crimes	Percent of crimes in which the victim was the offender's —							
		Family member				Nonfamily member			
		Total	Spouse	Son or daughter	Other family	Total	Boyfriend or girlfriend	Friend or acquaintance	Stranger
<b>All inmates</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Residence/home	44.5%	89.1%	84.0%	94.3%	87.0%	36.9%	70.6%	52.9%	22.0%
Public place	32.9	7.3	11.6	3.6	8.5	37.2	18.6	31.3	43.3
Commercial property	21.3	2.1	3.3	0.4	3.3	24.6	8.8	14.5	33.3
Other place	0.6	0.2	0.6	0	0	0.6	0.4	0.7	0.6
No one place	0.8	1.2	0.5	1.7	1.3	0.7	1.6	0.6	0.8
<b>Total inmates</b>	458,148	66,923	17,440	26,876	22,607	391,224	23,283	151,256	216,686
<b>Percent of all inmates</b>	100%	14.6%	3.8%	5.9%	4.9%	85.4%	5.1%	33.0%	47.3%

Note: Data identifying the victim's relationship to the offender were reported by 92.7% (458,148) of 494,349 State prison inmates held for a violent crime in 1997. Of these 458,148 inmates with recorded relationships, offense location was reported for 98.9%. Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

Source: BJS, 1997 Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities.

### Location of family violence

Based on offender self-reports, an estimated 44.5% of violent offenses occurred in either the victim's home, offender's home, or a home shared by the victim and offender (table 8.2). Offenses also occurred in public places (32.9%) — in a school, on the street, in a parking lot, on public transportation, in a station or depot, or in a park — and on commercial property (21.3%) — a bar, restaurant, gas station, store, office, or factory.

The location of violence differed for family and nonfamily victims. Almost all family violence occurred in a home belonging to either the victim or the offender, or a residence shared by the victim and offender. A total of 89.1% of family violence crimes committed by State prison inmates occurred at home. Among nonfamily offenders, 36.9% of the incidents occurred at home.

Eighty-four percent of State prison inmates who victimized their spouse and 94.3% who victimized their son or daughter committed the offense at home. When victims of violent crime were strangers, 22% of the incidents occurred in a residence.

**Demographic characteristics of family violence victims, based on prisoner accounts**

*Gender*

Most inmates in prison for family violence were incarcerated for a violent crime against a female, while most in prison for nonfamily violence were there for a crime against a male. Offenders in prison for a violent crime against a female made up 78.2% (71.9% + 6.3% = 78.2%) of the nearly 67,000 incarcerated family violence offenders, compared to 44.4% (32.7% + 11.7% = 44.4%) of the approximately 391,000 nonfamily violence offenders (table 8.3).

Husbands in prison for violently victimizing their wives were 89.2% (80.9% +

8.3% = 89.2%) of all the inmates in prison for spouse violence in 1997. Among inmates in prison for a violent crime against their offspring, 85.3% (79.7% + 5.6% = 85.3%) victimized their daughters.

Female victims also predominated among inmates in prison for violence against a boyfriend or girlfriend. Of the approximately 23,000 imprisoned offenders whose violent crime was against a boyfriend or a girlfriend, 91.1% (83% + 8.1% = 91.1%) were in prison for a crime against a female.

*Race/Hispanic origin*

Forty-nine percent of the victims of inmates in prison for a violent crime

were white. An additional 29% were black, and 13.3% were Hispanic. Approximately 56.7% of the victims of family violence offenders were white. The comparable percentage among nonfamily violence victims was 47.9%.

*Age*

Of the crimes for which family violence offenders were imprisoned, most were against a child (a person under age 18). Of the 67,000 imprisoned family violence offenders, 52.6% were in prison for a violent crime against a child. A violent crime against a child accounted for 12.3% of the approximately 391,000 offenders imprisoned for violence against a nonfamily victim.

**Table 8.3. Demographic characteristics of victims of family violence compared to nonfamily violence for inmates in State prison for a violent crime in 1997, by relationship**

Victim characteristic	All violent crimes	Percent of crimes in which the victim was the offender's —							
		Family member				Nonfamily member			
		Total	Spouse	Son or daughter	Other family	Total	Boyfriend or girlfriend	Friend or acquaintance	Stranger
<b>All inmates</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Gender</b>									
Male	50.7%	21.9%	10.8%	14.8%	38.8%	55.6%	8.8%	57.5%	59.3%
Female	38.4	71.9	80.9	79.7	55.6	32.7	83.0	34.9	25.6
Both	10.9	6.3	8.3	5.6	5.5	11.7	8.1	7.6	15.0
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>									
White	49.2%	56.7%	52.7%	63.6%	51.6%	47.9%	42.3%	44.8%	50.7%
Black	29.0	24.8	24.6	20.9	29.8	29.8	40.2	36.6	23.7
Hispanic	13.3	13.9	17.8	12.2	12.8	13.2	13.4	12.6	13.7
Other	3.4	3.1	3.4	2.2	3.8	3.5	1.9	2.7	4.3
Mixed race group <sup>a</sup>	5.0	1.5	1.5	1.1	2.0	5.6	2.2	3.4	7.6
<b>Age</b>									
Under 18	18.4%	52.6%	0%	91.3%	47.8%	12.3%	15.1%	21.5%	5.2%
Under 13	9.1	35.3	0	60.6	32.9	4.4	0.4	9.9	0.8
13 - 17	9.3	17.3	0	30.7	15.0	7.9	14.7	11.6	4.4
18 - 24	15.8	6.3	12.4	2.0	6.5	17.5	17.3	18.4	16.8
25 - 34	26.4	15.4	43.4	0.7	11.1	28.4	37.0	24.7	30.1
35 - 54	22.6	14.8	34.7	0.3	16.5	24.0	23.0	21.0	26.4
55 or older	4.6	3.6	1.4	0.3	9.3	4.8	1.4	4.3	5.5
Mixed age group <sup>b</sup>	12.1	7.2	8.1	5.4	8.8	13.0	6.2	10.1	15.9
<b>Total inmates</b>	458,148	66,923	17,440	26,876	22,607	391,224	23,283	151,256	216,686
<b>Percent of all inmates</b>	100%	14.6%	3.8%	5.9%	4.9%	85.4%	5.1%	33.0%	47.3%

Note: Data identifying the victim's relationship to the offender were reported by 92.7% (458,148) of 494,349 State prison inmates held for a violent crime in 1997. Of these 458,148 inmates with recorded relationships, victim gender was reported for 99.5%, race for 98.4% and age for 95.2%. Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

<sup>a</sup>Refers to crimes with two or more victims of different races.

<sup>b</sup>Refers to crimes with two or more victims of different age categories.

Source: BJS, 1997 Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities.

**Table 8.4. Victim injury in family violence compared to nonfamily violence for inmates in State prison for a violent crime in 1997, by relationship**

Victim injury	All violent offenders	Percent of crimes in which the victim was the offender's —							
		Family member				Nonfamily member			
		Total	Spouse	Son or daughter	Other family	Total	Boyfriend or girlfriend	Friend or acquaintance	Stranger
<b>All inmates</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Any injury</b>	70.6%	89.8%	80.7%	94.7%	91.0%	67.4%	79.5%	82.1%	55.7%
Death	33.5	27.6	49.6	10.1	31.5	34.5	34.3	39.8	30.9
Rape/sexual assault	19.5	49.6	6.9	78.6	48.1	14.3	21.9	23.0	7.5
Bullet wound	4.7	1.7	4.3	0.3	1.4	5.2	3.7	6.3	4.6
Knife wound or laceration	3.4	2.7	5.3	0.4	3.4	3.6	5.2	4.2	2.9
Broken bones or teeth	2.3	1.9	5.3	0.3	1.3	2.4	1.5	2.5	2.4
Internal injuries	0.5	0.9	1.0	0.6	1.0	0.5	0.8	0.4	0.5
Unconsciousness	0.8	0.3	0.5	0.5	0	0.9	1.2	0.9	0.9
Bruises, black eye, cuts	5.4	4.1	7.1	2.7	3.2	5.6	10.7	4.5	5.8
Other	0.5	1.0	0.7	1.1	1.1	0.4	0.1	0.5	0.3
<b>No injuries</b>	29.4%	10.2%	19.3%	5.3%	9.0%	32.6%	20.5%	17.9%	44.3%
<b>Total inmates</b>	458,148	66,923	17,440	26,876	22,607	391,224	23,283	151,256	216,686
<b>Percent of all inmates</b>	100%	14.6%	3.8%	5.9%	4.9%	85.4%	5.1%	33.0%	47.3%

Note: Data identifying the victim's relationship to the offender were reported by 92.7% (458,148) of 494,349 State prison inmates held for a violent crime in 1997. Of these 458,148 inmates with recorded relationships, victim injury was reported for 99.5%. Detail may not add to total because of rounding.  
Source: BJS, 1997 Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities.

In violent crimes in which the victim was the prisoner's daughter or son, an estimated 91.3% of prison inmates victimized a child under age 18, and 60.6% involved a child under age 13.

### Injuries to family violence victims

About 70.6% of State prison inmates serving a sentence for a violent crime injured their victim during the incident (table 8.4). Injuries included death, rape, bullet and knife wounds, broken bones, internal injuries, being knocked unconscious, and bruises and cuts. A third of the inmates killed their victim, and a fifth raped or sexually assaulted their victim. An additional 8.1% wounded their victim by a bullet, knife, or other sharp object.

State prison inmates incarcerated for a violent offense against a family member were more likely than inmates committing a crime against a nonfamily member to have injured their victim. About 9 in 10 offenders who victimized their family injured that family member. In comparison, almost 7 in 10 inmates

whose victim was not a family member injured their victim.

State prison inmates whose victim was a family member were more likely than inmates whose victim was not family to have inflicted sexual harm on their victim. Half who said their victim was a family member had raped or sexually assaulted that person. About 1 in 7 inmates who victimized a nonfamily member had attacked the victim sexually.

Prison inmates convicted of nonfamily violence (34.5%) were more likely than inmates convicted of family violence (27.6%) to have killed their victim.

Victims of spouse violence were just as likely to have died from their injuries as to have recovered. About half of the inmates in State prison for a violent offense against their spouse killed their victim. In contrast, about a third of inmates serving sentences for a violent crime against a boyfriend or girlfriend indicated their victim died. When State prison inmates victimized their daughter or son, about 8 in 10 of these victimizations involved rape or sexual assault.

Another 10.1% had killed their son or daughter.

### Demographic characteristics of inmates in State prison for family violence

#### Gender

The majority of incarcerated perpetrators of family violence were males. Males made up 93.2% of all persons in State prison in 1997 for a violent crime against a family member (table 8.5).

Females were 6.8% of inmates in prison for committing a violent crime against a family member and were 3.3% of inmates in prison for nonfamily violence.

#### Race/Hispanic origin

According to prisoner data, whites comprised 58.3% of men and women in prison for family violence. Blacks were 25.6%, and Hispanics were 12.9%. Whites formed the majority (58.3%) of those in prison for family violence; blacks, the majority (50.8%) for nonfamily violence.

**Table 8.5. Demographic characteristics of family violence offenders in State prison in 1997, compared to nonfamily violence offenders, by relationship**

Offender characteristic	All violent crimes	Percent of crimes in which the victim was the offender's —							
		Family member				Nonfamily member			
		Total	Spouse	Son or daughter	Other family	Total	Boyfriend or girlfriend	Friend or acquaintance	Stranger
<b>All inmates</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Gender</b>									
Male	96.2%	93.2%	91.5%	92.3%	95.6%	96.7%	92.5%	96.4%	97.4%
Female	3.8	6.8	8.5	7.7	4.4	3.3	7.5	3.6	2.6
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>									
White	33.5%	58.3%	50.5%	66.3%	54.8%	29.2%	38.0%	34.2%	24.9%
Black	47.1	25.6	25.4	20.8	31.3	50.8	44.7	46.9	54.2
Hispanic	15.7	12.9	19.5	9.9	11.3	16.2	13.2	15.1	17.2
Other	3.7	3.3	4.6	3.0	2.6	3.8	4.0	3.8	3.7
American Indian/ Alaska Native	2.3	2.4	3.5	2.2	1.8	2.3	2.5	2.6	2.1
Asian/Pacific Islander	1.2	0.6	0.5	0.8	0.4	1.3	1.5	1.1	1.5
<b>Age</b>									
Under 18	0.7%	0.2%	0%	0%	0.5%	0.7%	0%	0.5%	1.0%
18 - 24	21.7	8.7	4.7	2.2	19.4	23.9	12.1	21.3	26.9
25 - 34	34.6	25.3	25.8	20.8	30.2	36.2	32.6	34.4	37.9
35 - 54	39.3	57.1	58.9	68.9	41.8	36.2	50.4	38.9	32.9
55 or older	3.8	8.8	10.6	8.1	8.2	2.9	4.9	4.9	1.3
<b>Total inmates</b>	458,148	66,923	17,440	26,876	22,607	391,224	23,283	151,256	216,686
<b>Percent of all inmates</b>	100%	14.6%	3.8%	5.9%	4.9%	85.4%	5.1%	33.0%	47.3%

Note: Data identifying the victim's relationship to the offender were reported by 92.7% (458,148) of 494,349 State prison inmates held for a violent crime in 1997. Of these 458,148 inmates with recorded relationships, offender characteristics were reported for all. Race/Hispanic origin does not specify the percentages of offenders who identified themselves as "other race." Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

Source: BJS, 1997 Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities.

**Table 8.6. Offender weapon use or possession in family violence compared to nonfamily violence for inmates in State prison for a violent crime in 1997, by relationship**

Whether offender had or used a weapon	All violent crimes	Percent of crimes in which the victim was the offender's —							
		Family member				Nonfamily member			
		Total	Spouse	Son or daughter	Other family	Total	Boyfriend or girlfriend	Friend or acquaintance	Stranger
<b>All inmates</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Offender had or used a weapon</b>	42.5%	22.9%	44.5%	4.8%	28.1%	45.8%	37.9%	43.9%	48.0%
Firearm	30.7	14.2	29.8	3.7	15.0	33.5	24.7	32.0	35.5
Handgun	25.0	10.2	21.4	2.6	10.8	27.5	19.3	25.0	30.2
Other	5.7	4.0	8.4	1.1	4.2	6.0	5.4	7.0	5.3
Knife or other sharp object	9.1	7.7	13.7	1.0	11.0	9.3	9.9	8.9	9.6
Blunt object	2.4	1.0	1.1	0	2.2	2.7	2.8	3.0	2.5
Other	0.3	0	0	0.1	0	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.5
<b>Offender did not have or use a weapon</b>	57.5%	77.1%	55.5%	95.2%	71.9%	54.2%	62.1%	56.1%	52.0%
<b>Total inmates</b>	458,148	66,923	17,440	26,876	22,607	391,224	23,283	151,256	216,686
<b>Percent of all inmates</b>	100%	14.6%	3.8%	5.9%	4.9%	85.4%	5.1%	33.0%	47.3%

Note: Data identifying the victim's relationship to the offender were reported by 92.7% (458,148) of 494,349 State prison inmates held for a violent crime in 1997. Of these 458,148 inmates with recorded relationships, weapon use was reported for 98.6%. Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

Source: BJS, 1997 Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities.



**Table 8.7. Offender drug or alcohol use in family violence compared to nonfamily violence for inmates in State prison for a violent crime in 1997, by relationship**

Drug or alcohol use by offender	All violent crimes	Percent of crimes in which the victim was the offender's —							
		Family member				Nonfamily member			
		Total	Spouse	Son or daughter	Other family	Total	Boyfriend or girlfriend	Friend or acquaintance	Stranger
<b>All inmates</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Alcohol only	23.2%	26.7%	27.0%	23.5%	30.2%	22.6%	32.4%	24.4%	20.2%
Drugs only	9.6	4.7	4.9	3.0	6.4	10.5	3.9	8.4	12.6
Alcohol and drugs	19.5	12.2	13.6	11.0	12.6	20.8	16.5	20.3	21.6
None	47.7	56.5	54.5	62.5	50.9	46.2	47.1	46.9	45.5
<b>Total inmates</b>	458,148	66,923	17,440	26,876	22,607	391,224	23,283	151,256	216,686
<b>Percent of all inmates</b>	100%	14.6%	3.8%	5.9%	4.9%	85.4%	5.1%	33.0%	47.3%

Note: Data identifying the victim's relationship to the offender were reported by 92.7% (458,148) of 494,349 State prison inmates held for a violent crime in 1997. Of these 458,148 inmates with recorded relationships, substance use by offender was reported for 97.7%. Detail may not add to total because of rounding.  
Source: BJS, 1997 Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities.

**Age**

The ages provided by surveyed prisoners were their ages at the time of the survey, not at the time of their offense. Their age when they committed the crime was not recorded. The typical inmate had been in prison over 4 years when they were surveyed.

Of the approximately 67,000 inmates in State prison for family violence, 57.1% were between ages 35 and 54 when interviewed. By contrast, of the approximately 391,000 inmates in prison for nonfamily violence, a smaller percentage — 36.2% — were in this age range at the time of the survey.

Nearly a quarter of prisoners whose victim was a nonfamily member were young adults (ages 18 to 24). Among prisoners incarcerated for family violence, 8.7% were young adults.

**Weapons used or possessed in family violence**

Among State prison inmates incarcerated for a violent offense, 42.5% had or used a weapon in the incident — a firearm, knife or other sharp object, a blunt object such as a rock or club, or some other type of weapon (table 8.6). Twenty-five percent of inmates had or used a handgun, and another 9.1%

were in possession of a knife or other sharp object.

Relatively few State prison inmates whose victim was a family member possessed or used a weapon, compared to inmates whose victim was not a family member. When inmates committed violence against a family member, 22.9% used or carried a weapon; when inmates attacked someone who was not a family member, a larger percentage — 45.8% — had a weapon with them.

A smaller percentage of family violence offenders than nonfamily violence offenders were in possession of a firearm at the time of the incident. About 14.2% of inmates whose victim was a family member used or carried a firearm, while 33.5% with nonfamily victims had a firearm.

Whether an inmate who victimized a family member was in possession of a weapon varied by the type of relationship between the victim and the offender. Inmates who victimized their children generally did not use a weapon. About 4.8% were carrying a weapon when they committed a violent crime against a son or daughter. In comparison, 44.5% of inmates who committed a crime against a spouse or ex-spouse had a weapon, as did 28.1%

who committed their offense against other family members.

Firearms were generally the favored weapon of State prison inmates, as 30.7% of the 458,000 State prison inmates had or used a firearm while committing the offense for which they were serving a prison sentence. About 29.8% of the inmates who had committed a crime against their spouse had a firearm, and 24.7% of offenders who committed boyfriend/girlfriend violence used or possessed a firearm at the time of the incident.

**Drug and alcohol use by family violence offenders**

Of State prison inmates sentenced to serve time for a violent crime, 23.2% were drinking alcohol at the time of the incident, 9.6% were using drugs, and 19.5% were under the influence of both alcohol and drugs (table 8.7).

A smaller percentage of family violence offenders than nonfamily violence offenders were drinking or on drugs when they committed the offense for which they were in prison. Approximately 43.5% of State prisoners victimizing a family member and 53.8% victimizing nonfamily members were using drugs or alcohol at the time they committed the offense.

Alcohol use did not vary significantly by the offender's relationship to his/her victim. About 38.9% of State prison inmates whose victim was a family member and 43.4% whose victim was a nonfamily member were under the influence of alcohol when they committed their offense.

**Number of victims and offenders in family violence**

Generally, State prison inmates were alone in committing the violent crime

for which they were serving a sentence. Of the approximately 458,000 imprisoned violent offenders, 74.4% were offenders who had acted alone (59.3% + 15.1% = 74.4%) (table 8.8).

Lone offenders made up a larger percentage of family violence offenders than nonfamily violence offenders. About 95% of family violence offenders were the only offender (79.1% + 15.9% = 95%), compared to 70.9% of inmates who committed offenses against

persons who were not family members (55.9% + 15% = 70.9%).

Spouse violence and boyfriend/girlfriend violence were almost exclusively against a single victim. Ninety percent of spouse violence and 88% of boyfriend/girlfriend violence was directed at a single victim.

Among inmates in State prison for family violence, the most frequent type of incident involved one offender and one victim. About 79.1% of family

**Table 8.8. Number of victims and offenders in family violence compared to nonfamily violence for inmates in State prison for a violent crime in 1997, by relationship**

Number of victims and offenders	All violent crimes	Percent of crimes in which the victim was the offender's —							
		Family member				Nonfamily member			
		Total	Spouse	Son or daughter	Other family	Total	Boyfriend or girlfriend	Friend or acquaintance	Stranger
<b>All offenses</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>One victim</b>	76.9%	83.4%	90.3%	80.9%	81.1%	75.8%	88.2%	81.6%	70.3%
One offender	59.3	79.1	86.6	77.2	75.7	55.9	85.6	65.4	45.9
Multiple offenders	17.6	4.3	3.7	3.7	5.4	19.9	2.6	16.2	24.5
<b>Multiple victims</b>	23.1%	16.6%	9.7%	19.1%	18.9%	24.2%	11.8%	18.4%	29.7%
One offender	15.1	15.9	9.1	18.3	18.1	15.0	9.4	13.0	17.1
Multiple offenders	7.9	0.8	0.6	0.9	0.8	9.1	2.4	5.4	12.6
<b>Total offenses</b>	458,148	66,923	17,440	26,876	22,607	391,224	23,283	151,256	216,686

Note: Data identifying the victim's relationship to the offender were reported by 92.7% (458,148) of 494,349 State prison inmates held for a violent crime in 1997. Of these 458,148 inmates with recorded relationships, number of victims and offenders was reported for 95.6%. Detail may not add to total because of rounding.  
Source: BJS, 1997 Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities.

**Table 8.9. Number of prior sentences of family violence offenders in State prison in 1997 compared to nonfamily violence offenders, by relationship**

Number of prior sentences	All violent crimes	Percent of crimes in which the victim was the offender's —							
		Family member				Nonfamily member			
		Total	Spouse	Son or daughter	Other family	Total	Boyfriend or girlfriend	Friend or acquaintance	Stranger
<b>All inmates</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
No prior sentences	31.1%	42.6%	41.3%	48.6%	36.3%	29.1%	36.6%	31.7%	26.5%
Prior sentences	68.9	57.4	58.7	51.4	63.7	70.9	63.4	68.3	73.5
1	18.5	18.1	16.9	15.9	21.5	18.6	17.8	18.1	19.0
2	16.4	13.7	12.6	13.7	14.7	16.8	14.8	16.5	17.2
3-5	21.1	17.6	18.3	16.1	18.8	21.7	14.3	21.7	22.5
6-10	9.0	5.1	7.4	4.6	4.0	9.7	13.1	7.8	10.6
11 or more	4.0	2.9	3.6	1.1	4.6	4.1	3.4	4.1	4.2
<b>Total inmates</b>	458,148	66,923	17,440	26,876	22,607	391,224	23,283	151,256	216,686
<b>Percent of all inmates</b>	100%	14.6%	3.8%	5.9%	4.9%	85.4%	5.1%	33.0%	47.3%

Note: Data identifying the victim's relationship to the offender were reported by 92.7% (458,148) of 494,349 State prison inmates held for a violent crime in 1997. Of these 458,148 inmates with recorded relationships, number of prior sentences was reported for 99.3%. Detail may not add to total because of rounding.  
Source: BJS, 1997 Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities.

violence offenders acted alone against one victim. The comparable figure among inmates in prison for nonfamily violence was 55.9%.

**Prior sentences of inmates in prison for family violence**

Prisoners incarcerated for a violent offense reported their prior history of sentences to incarceration or probation, both as juveniles and as adults. Over two-thirds of violent offenders had served a prior sentence to probation or incarceration in a jail, prison, juvenile, or other detention facility (table 8.9).

Inmates who were currently in prison for a violent offense against a member of their family were not as likely as other violent offenders to have a history of prior sentences. About 6 in 10 prison inmates serving a sentence for a violent crime against a family member had served a prior sentence, while 7 in 10 whose victim was a boyfriend, girlfriend, friend, acquaintance, or stranger had a record of previous offenses.

Least likely to have a prior sentence were prison inmates who abused their son or daughter. About half had a previous sentence. About 58.7% of inmates sentenced for a violent crime against a

spouse and 63.4% of those sentenced for violence against a boyfriend or girlfriend had served a sentence prior to their current stay in prison. In comparison, 73.5% who victimized a stranger had served a previous sentence.

**Convicted family violence offenders in State and Federal prisons and in local jails**

At midyear 2003, 109,300 inmates were serving a sentence for family violence in a State or Federal prison or local jail. At the same time about 5 times as many (597,500) were incarcerated for a crime against someone who was not a family member.

About 15.5% of violent offenders in Federal, State, and local correctional facilities had committed a violent crime against someone in their family.

The bulk of incarcerated family violence offenders were housed in State correctional facilities — 77% in State prisons, 1.6% in Federal prisons, and 21.3% in local jails.

More persons in a correctional facility in 2003 were held for an offense against a daughter or son (39,500) than against a wife or husband (33,100) or another family member (36,800).

Type of correctional institution	Total incarcerated for a violent crime	Total number of inmates incarcerated for a crime in which the victim was the offender's —							
		Family member				Nonfamily member			
		Total	Spouse	Son or daughter	Other family	Total	Boyfriend or girlfriend	Friend or acquaintance	Stranger
Total	706,800	109,300	33,100	39,500	36,800	597,500	51,400	221,600	324,600
<b>Prison</b>	600,100	86,000	22,300	34,600	29,100	514,100	30,100	193,900	290,200
State	576,500	84,200	21,900	34,000	28,200	492,400	29,400	190,300	272,700
Federal	23,600	1,800	400	600	900	21,700	700	3,600	17,500
<b>Local jails</b>	106,700	23,300	10,800	4,900	7,700	83,400	21,300	27,700	34,400

Note: Local jail estimates are based on convicted inmates only.  
 Source: Estimates based on BJS, *Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 2003*, NCJ 203947, May 2004.

## Methodology

### Reported and unreported family violence

Statistics comparing reported and unreported nonfatal family violence to reported and unreported nonfatal nonfamily violence come from the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) for 1998 to 2002. The statistics are based on data gathered from residents living throughout the United States, including persons living in group quarters, such as dormitories, rooming houses, and religious group dwellings. Crew members of merchant vessels, Armed Forces personnel living in military barracks, and institutionalized persons, such as correctional facility inmates, were not included in the scope of this survey. Similarly, U.S. citizens residing abroad and foreign visitors to this country were excluded. With these exceptions, individuals age 12 or older living in units selected for the sample were eligible to be interviewed.

In addition to single incidents of criminal victimization, the NCVS records data on series victimizations. A series victimization is defined as six or more similar but separate crimes which the victim is unable to recall individually or describe in detail to an interviewer. Survey respondents who indicated they were series victims were asked to provide details for the most recent incident. In annual BJS reports on the NCVS, series victimizations are excluded from the published victimization estimates. However, because repeat victimization is an important aspect of family violence, series crimes were included in these analyses, counted as "1" victimization to represent all the incidents in the series.

NCVS data in this section are based on a nationally representative sample of the general population age 12 or older who experienced a violent victimization that occurred between January 1998

and December 2002. Data were aggregated over this 5-year period to obtain sample sizes large enough to detect differences between family and nonfamily violence victims, as well as to detect differences between family and nonfamily violent crimes based on the characteristics of the incident.

Additional information on weighting, along with other methodological details, can be found in the BJS Internet-only report *Criminal Victimization in the United States — Statistical Tables, 2002* (NCJ 200561).

### Fatal family violence

To compare family murder to nonfamily murder, this report uses data from the FBI's 2002 Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR). Murder as defined here includes murder and nonnegligent manslaughter which is the willful killing of one human being by another. Not included in the analyses are deaths caused by negligence, suicide, or accident; justifiable homicides; and attempts to murder.

SHR data are based solely on police investigation. Not all law enforcement agencies which report offense information to the FBI also submit supplemental data on murder. At the time of analysis, the most recent SHR data contained information on 12,940 of the 16,204 murders reported in the FBI's Uniform Crime Report. To account for the total number of homicides, the SHR data were weighted to match national and State murder estimates prepared by the FBI. All victim-based analyses are adjusted in this manner.

While many law enforcement agencies report supplemental data on murder, one reason why much of the data concerning victim-offender relationship may not be reported is because no suspects were identified. In 2002, SHR data recorded information on the

relationship of the victim to the offender for 56.2% (9,102) of the 16,204 murders committed that year.

The dataset utilized in this report was compiled by James Alan Fox, the Lipman Family Professor of Criminal Justice at Northeastern University. The dataset, along with additional details about imputation and estimation procedures, is available from the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data <<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/NACJD>>, please refer to ICPSR 4179. After the analysis for this report was completed, the SHR database was updated to include information on an additional 2,117 murders, bringing the total number of murders included in the database to 15,057 of the 16,204 murders in the United States in 2002.

### Family violence recorded by police

To compare family violence recorded by police to nonfamily violence recorded by police, this report utilizes official police statistics reported to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in 2000. Law enforcement agencies can report official police statistics to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting System in one of two ways:

1. the Summary reporting system
2. the Incident-based reporting system (NIBRS).

Under the Summary system, law enforcement authorities aggregate the number of incidents by offense type and report these totals to the FBI on a monthly basis. Under the NIBRS system, agencies provide an individual record for each reported crime, including detailed information regarding the victim(s) and offender(s) involved, characteristics of the incident, and information on any arrests made in connection with the incident. In this regard, NIBRS represents a more comprehensive and detailed crime reporting

system, with the ability to capture a wide range of information on specific incidents.

To compare the characteristics of family violence to nonfamily violence, only cases with incident dates during calendar year 2000 were included in the analysis. In addition, only incidents from law enforcement agencies officially certified by the FBI to report NIBRS data were included. Currently, no agencies serving jurisdictions with populations of one million or more are certified to report NIBRS data. In 2000, agencies from 18 States and the District of Columbia submitted NIBRS data, representing 16% of the U.S. population and 13% of crime.

Additional methodological details can be found on the BJS website <<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/nibrs.htm>>, as well as at the Incident-Based Reporting Resource Center <<http://www.jrsa.org/ibrrc>>.

### State prosecution of family assault

To compare the prosecution of family and nonfamily violence defendants, this report uses data from the BJS data collection State Court Processing Statistics (SCPS). The most recent SCPS study collected data for 14,877 felony cases filed during May 2000 in 40 large counties selected to represent the estimated 54,590 felonies filed in the Nation's 75 most populous counties during that month. Results of that study and information regarding sampling and other methodological details are available in the BJS publication *Felony Defendants in Large Urban Counties, 2000*, NCJ 202021, December 2003.

Data from all 40 counties were not used to compare the case processing of family violence to nonfamily violence. Since assault was the only crime in the

**Table 10.1. Felony assault cases in the State courts of 11 counties during May 2000, by county and type of assault**

County (State)	Unweighted		Weighted	
	Family	Nonfamily	Family	Nonfamily
Contra Costa (CA)	19	26	19	26
Los Angeles (CA)	30	66	120	264
Riverside (CA)	60	36	120	72
San Bernardino (CA)	27	33	54	66
Santa Clara (CA)	19	24	38	48
Pinellas (FL)	15	53	30	106
Essex (NJ)	15	72	30	144
Franklin (OH)	7	9	14	18
Harris (TX)	9	39	36	156
Tarrant (TX)	8	38	16	76
Travis (TX)	8	24	16	48
<b>Total defendants</b>	217	420	493	1,024

Source: BJS, 2000 State Court Processing Statistics.

2000 SCPS data to have specific statutes that identified family violence, other violent crimes (such as murder, rape, or robbery) were excluded from the analysis. To be in this study, a county also had to meet two criteria:

1. The county had an estimated 10 or more assault defendants charged under a family or domestic violence statute (table 10.1).
2. The county had at least 17% of its assault defendants charged with committing family or domestic violence.

A total of 11 counties met the selection criteria. For instance, Travis County, Texas, had an estimated 16 family violence cases which accounted for 25% of the 64 assault cases filed in that county during May 2000. Within the selected counties, a sample of 637 cases was statistically weighted to represent 1,517 family and nonfamily assault defendants. Although the estimated 1,517 cases were less than 3% of the 54,428 felony cases filed in the Nation's 75 largest counties in May 2000, demographic characteristics of both cohorts were similar (table 10.2).

Where family assault defendants were compared to nonfamily assault defendants in this section, sampling error was

**Table 10.2. Demographic distribution of felony defendants in the 11-county study compared to the Nation's 75 largest counties, 2000**

Defendant characteristic	Felony defendants in State courts during May 2000	
	Assault cases in 11 counties	All cases in the 75 largest counties
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	84.7%	81.0%
Female	15.3	19.0
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>		
White	26.2%	29.6%
Black	39.2	45.4
Hispanic	32.6	22.7
Other	2.0	2.4
<b>Age at arrest</b>		
Under 18	1.6%	2.9%
18 - 24	30.7	30.8
25 - 34	31.5	30.9
35 - 54	32.8	33.2
55 or older	3.4	2.1
<b>Total defendants</b>	1,517	54,428*

\*Excludes 162 weighted cases for which the arrest charge could not be classified.  
Source: BJS, 2000 State Court Processing Statistics.

taken into account. All differences discussed were statistically significant at the .05 level.

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### **Federal prosecution of domestic violence**

The source of data for statistics on Federal prosecution of domestic violence is the BJS Federal Justice Statistics Program database covering the years 2000 to 2002. The database is presently constructed from source files provided by the U.S. Marshals Service, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys, the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, the United States Sentencing Commission, and the U.S. Bureau of Prisons. A description of the source agency data files, along with other methodological details, can be found in the methodology section in the BJS Internet-only document *Compendium of Federal Justice Statistics, 2002* (NCJ 205368).

### **Family violence offenders in prison**

Information about offenders in prison for family violence were obtained from BJS's 1997 Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities. From June through October, 1997, a nationally representative sample of inmates in State prisons were interviewed about their current offense and sentences, criminal histories, family and personal backgrounds, gun possession and use, prior drug and alcohol use and treatment, educational programs, and other services provided while in prison.

Data and documentation with additional details are available from the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data <<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/NACJD>>. Please refer to ICPSR 2598.

### **Family violence offenders in jail**

The 2002 Survey of Inmates in Local Jails provides nationally representative data on persons held in local jails including those held prior to trial and convicted offenders serving sentences in local jails or awaiting transfer to prison. Data in the survey include the individual characteristics of jail inmates; current offenses, sentences and time served; criminal histories; jail activities, conditions and programs; prior drug and alcohol use and treatment; and health care services provided while in jail. In the last Survey, completed in 1996, a representative sample of 6,000 inmates were interviewed. The sample for the 2002 survey was selected from 3,365 jails housing 558,017 males and 73,224 females. The dataset and documentation with additional details about the survey will be available from the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data <<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/NACJD>>.

## Appendix

### Discrepant findings from two different ways of measuring family violence

The extent of family violence in the United States is measured two different ways in this report. One way — through the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) — is based on survey interviews with samples of the U.S. population. The other way — through the FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) — is based on statistics compiled by police.

NCVS data summarized in this report indicated that family violence makes up 11% of all violence (both reported to police and unreported) (table 2.1), but police statistics summarized in this report indicated that family violence makes up nearly 33% of all police-recorded violence (table 5.1). No firm explanation for this apparent discrepancy is offered in the report. Presumably the discrepancy is caused by a host of factors. The discussion that follows identifies some of them, not necessarily the most important ones.

One factor pertains to the willingness of victims (and others) to report crime to police. If family violence is more likely than nonfamily violence to be reported to law enforcement authorities, the family violence percentage in police statistics will tend to be larger than the percentage in the statistics for all violence (reported and unreported). To check that possibility, reporting rates for family and nonfamily violence were compared. Results indicated that family violence (59%) is more likely than nonfamily violence (46%) to be reported to police (table 4.1). While the difference is not large enough to fully account for the 11%-versus-33% discrepancy between NCVS and police statistics, results do suggest that a difference in reporting between family and nonfamily violence is a contributing factor.

A second factor pertains to the fact that the police statistics on family violence used here are not directly comparable to the NCVS statistics in terms of geographical coverage. That is, the police statistics are based on data from agencies reporting in 18 States and the District of Columbia, while the NCVS statistics are for the entire United States. If the family violence percentage in the 18 States and the District of Columbia happens to be much larger than other States, using these jurisdictions to compare to the NCVS will create the appearance of a greater discrepancy than may actually exist.

A third factor pertains to the handling of "series" victimizations in the analysis of the NCVS data. The 11% family violence percentage from NCVS data was based on an analysis that treated each "series" victimization (6 or more crimes of a similar nature that the victim is unable to recall individually) as a single victimization. Since family violence series victimizations comprised 17% (rather than 11%) of all violent series victimizations, treating each series victimization as 6 or more victimizations (rather than 1) would tend to raise the family violence percentage above 11%. To illustrate, when the family violence percentage was re-computed, this time treating each series using the actual number of incidents (up to 20) indicated by the victim, the percentage rose to 12.5%.

A fourth factor pertains to the possibility that the NCVS undercounts family violence to a greater extent than nonfamily violence. If so, that would make the family violence percentage look lower than it actually is. The little research on the undercount that has been done — notably, a small study of assault victims whose victimization was reported to police in San Jose, California, and a national study of victims who went to hospital emergency rooms for their injuries — compared undercounts

between family and nonfamily violence. Findings from both studies suggest that the NCVS undercounts family violence to a greater extent than nonfamily violence. The two studies are summarized below.

#### *San Jose study of known assault victims*

In January 1971, a sample of victims of assault was drawn from the records of the San Jose Police Department. These known victims were interviewed and asked whether they had been a victim of crime at any time in 1970. The victims and their interviewers were not told that the researchers wanted to determine to what extent known assault victims tell interviewers about recent victimizations.

Results suggested that family assault victims were less likely than nonfamily assault victims to tell interviewers about their victimization (table 11.1). While 78% of 18 family assault victims did not mention being a victim of family violence, the comparable percentage for 62 nonfamily assault victims was lower: 29%.

**Table 11.1. Among known assault victims, percent who told NCVS interviewers about the victimization**

Relationship of victim to offender	Known assault victims who did not tell NCVS interviewers about their victimization
Family violence	78%
Nonfamily violence	29

Source: Adapted from U.S. Department of Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (1972). *San Jose Methods Test of Known Crime Victims*, Statistics Technical Report No. 1. Washington, DC: USGPO, June.

The original purpose of the San Jose study was to determine the effects of the passage of time on the recall of criminal victimizations. The survey design emphasized overall reporting issues, not the specific reporting of family violence. Hence, one limitation of the study is the small sample size. Of 126 sampled victims of assault, 18 family assault victims and 62 nonfamily assault victims were located and agreed to participate, a 63.5% response rate.

Another limitation pertains to the fact that the questionnaire used in the study was more similar to the pre-1993 NCVS questionnaire than the one in use today. Consequently, the San Jose study results may be more relevant to the pre-1993 version than today's questionnaire.

The pre-1993 version was replaced with one that was specifically designed to reduce undercounting of family (and domestic) violence. There is some evidence that the redesign may have succeeded in reducing the undercount. In 1991 (the last full year of interviews using the old questionnaire), family violence victims made up 7.3% of all violence victims (8% if series victimizations totaling 3 are counted as 3 crimes rather than 1; 4 counted as 4; and 5 counted as 5). In 1993 (the first full year using the redesigned questionnaire), the percentage was 10.2%.

#### *Hospital emergency room study*

While results of the San Jose study only shed light on the extent to which police-reported family violence (family violence that was brought to police attention) is mentioned in NCVS interviews, results of another study may shed light on the extent to which victims tell interviewers about both reported and unreported

**Table 11.2. Comparison of the Study of Injured Victims of Violence (SIVV) and the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), by offense and by relationship, 1994**

Type of offense	SIVV-recorded admissions to hospital emergency rooms in 1994*		NCVS-estimated admissions to hospital emergency rooms in 1994		Ratio of SIVV/NCVS
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Total	954,000	100%	504,700	100%	1.9
Family violence	179,000	18.8	33,300	6.6	5.4
Nonfamily violence	775,000	81.2	471,400	93.4	1.6

\*Age 12 or older

Source: Adapted from BJS, *Violence-Related Injuries Treated in Hospital Emergency Departments*, NCJ 156921, August 1997.

family violence of a particularly serious nature. In this other study, two national numbers were compared:

1. from the NCVS, the total (reported and unreported) estimated number of family violence victims who said they went to a hospital emergency room for treatment for their injuries in 1994
2. from a national survey — the Study of Injured Victims of Violence (SIVV) — the total (reported and unreported, presumably) estimated number of family violence victims whose injuries brought them to hospital emergency rooms for treatment in 1994.

All other things being equal, the two numbers should be the same if injured family violence victims tell NCVS interviewers about any incidents that lead to emergency room treatment.

In fact, SIVV recorded far more emergency room admissions in 1994 than the NCVS, suggesting that the NCVS undercounts victims of serious family violence. The SIVV number of emergency room admissions for family violence (179,000) was found to be over 5 times the number recorded by the NCVS (33,300) (table 11.2). By comparison, the SIVV number of emergency room admissions for nonfamily violence (775,000) was 1.6 times greater than the NCVS-estimate (471,400), suggesting that the NCVS

undercounts particularly serious types of family violence to a greater extent than nonfamily violence.

The relevance of the SIVV study is limited by the fact that its findings pertain to victims who were injured and went to an emergency room. Such victims are a small percentage of all family violence victims. Furthermore, the statistics for the NCVS-documented victims of family violence (who went to emergency rooms) may be unreliable because they are based on a small sample. Also, the SIVV study did not document how many victims had, and how many had not, reported the crime to police. Presumably, the SIVV study included some of both.