



# Department of Justice



## Office of Justice Programs

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### **HALF OF VIOLENT VICTIMIZATIONS OF THE ELDERLY IN MICHIGAN FROM 2005-2009 INVOLVED SERIOUS ACTS OF VIOLENCE**

#### *Perpetrators of elder abuse were often related to the victims*

WASHINGTON – A report released today by the Justice Department’s Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) found that half of violent victimizations of persons age 65 or older involved serious violence, such as murder, rape, sexual assault, robbery and aggravated assault, based on data from crimes known to Michigan law enforcement from 2005 to 2009.

A family member was identified as the perpetrator in half of violent victimizations against the elderly during the five-year period. The victim’s child or grandchild was the offender in nearly a third of the victimizations. An intimate partner was the perpetrator in about 13 percent, and other relatives were linked to about six percent of victimizations.

Elder abuse can take many forms, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, financial or material exploitation, neglect and abandonment. Currently, no national data system captures information on elder abuse known to law enforcement; however, the FBI’s National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) collects such data from all law enforcement agencies in sixteen states, as well as many other local jurisdictions. This study focused on incidents of violent physical and sexual abuse of elderly persons known to law enforcement in Michigan from 2005 to 2009, demonstrating how NIBRS data can be used to describe the level and characteristics of elder abuse in a specific jurisdiction.

About 13,220 violent crimes against the elderly came to the attention of law enforcement in Michigan from 2005 to 2009, or about 1.6 percent of the nearly 824,000 total violent victimizations in the state.

Overall, victims age 65 or older experienced the lowest annual rate of reported violence (204.5 violent victimizations per 100,000 persons in that age group), while persons ages 18 to 24 had the highest rate (3,917 violent victimizations per 100,000 persons in that age group). Despite a lower rate of reported violence, elderly victims were more likely than victims younger than age 65 to be murdered or to be robbed.

(MORE)

The majority (63.6 percent) of violent victimizations against persons age 65 or older took place inside a residence (house, apartment, or group quarters such as a residential or long-term care facility). Violence inside a residence typically took place in the late afternoon and evening, peaking around 8 p.m. The victim's child or grandchild was identified as the perpetrator in a third of the violence against elderly males in a residence and in nearly half of the violence against elderly females in a residence.

Other findings of the five-year analysis showed—

- Elderly males experienced a rate of reported physical violence (247.7 per 100,000 males age 65 or older) that was 1.4 times higher than the rate for elderly females (172.9 per 100,000 females age 65 or older).
- The rate of reported violent victimization by a stranger was more than two times greater for elderly males (65.5 per 100,000 males age 65 or older) than for elderly females (29.2 per 100,000 females age 65 or older).
- Among the elderly, persons age 85 or older experienced a rate of rape and sexual assault (11.9 per 100,000 persons age 85 or older) that was three times greater than the rate for persons ages 65 to 84 (3.6 per 100,000 persons age 65 to 84).
- An estimated 16.5 percent of violence against the elderly involved a firearm, and the majority of those firearms were handguns.
- Four out of 10 elderly victims of violence were physically injured during the incident. An estimated 6.5 percent suffered a major physical injury, including 1.0 percent of victims who died as a result of the attack.
- About a third (31.6 percent) of violent victimizations of the elderly resulted in an arrest being made. Offenses committed by the elderly victim's child or grandchild were most likely to result in an arrest (59.7 percent), compared to other relationship categories.

The report, *Violent Crime against the Elderly Reported by Law Enforcement in Michigan, 2005-2009* (NCJ 238546), was written by BJS statistician Erica Smith. The reports, related documents and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics' statistical publications and programs can be found on the BJS website at <http://www.bjs.gov/>.

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The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), headed by Acting Assistant Attorney General Mary Lou Leary, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice, and assist victims. OJP has six components: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking. More information about OJP can be found at <http://www.ojp.gov>.