

## Facts About Sexual Assault

Prepared by the Center for Sex Offender Management

The statistics below point to the following facts about sexual assault:

- *Sexual assault is widespread.*
  - *Most victims of sexual assault know their assailant.*
  - *Few sexual assaults are reported.*
  - *The majority of reported sexual assaults do not end up in arrests or convictions.*
  - *The trauma caused by sexual assault is profound.*
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- ❑ For a number of legitimate reasons, only about 10% of victims of sexual assault ever report their victimization to law enforcement (Kilpatrick, Edmunds, and Seymour, 1992).
  - ❑ Rape is a crime primarily committed against youth. In the National Violence Against Women study (NVAW), 18% of the women surveyed had experienced a completed or attempted rape at some time in their life. Of these women, 22% were under 12 and 32% were ages 12-17 (Tjaden and Thoennes, 1998).
  - ❑ Estimates from the NVAW survey equate to approximately 302,100 women and 92,700 men forcibly raped each year in the United States (Tjaden and Thoennes, 1998).
  - ❑ 1 of 6 U.S. women and 1 of 33 U.S. men have experienced an attempted or completed rape as a child and/or an adult (Tjaden and Thoennes, 1998).
  - ❑ An estimated 12.1 million women have been raped at least once in their lifetime. Of these, 56% (6.8 million) had experienced one rape and 39% (4.7 million) had experienced more than one rape. 5% (600,000) were unsure as to how many times they had been raped (Kilpatrick, Edmunds, and Seymour, 1992).
  - ❑ Only 4% of rape victims sustained serious physical injuries as a result of their rape (Kilpatrick, Edmunds, and Seymour, 1992).
  - ❑ Most victims know their assailant, as an acquaintance, friend, relative, or intimate (National Crime Victimization Survey, 1999).
  - ❑ NCVS indicated that of reported rapes, 30% of offenders were arrested, 64.7% were not arrested, and 5.3% were unknown. 16.7% of the victims were male and 83.3% were female (Warchol, 1998).
  - ❑ Women raped before the age of 18 are twice as likely to be raped as an adult, compared with women who have not been raped before age 18 (Tjaden and Thoennes, 1998).
  - ❑ Women who have been sexually assaulted either in childhood or as adults are more likely to attempt suicide than women who have not (Heise, Ellsberg, and Gottemoeller, 1999).

- ❑ 60% of prostitutes have been sexually abused before the age of 16, by an average of two people for an average of 20 months (Silbert and Pines, 1981).
- ❑ There is a strong link between sexual abuse victimization early in life and involvement in sexual behaviors later in life that place women at risk for contracting HIV (Klein and Chao, 1995).
- ❑ 62% of pregnant and parenting adolescents had experienced contact molestation, attempted rape, or rape prior to their first pregnancy (Boyer and Fine, 1993).
- ❑ Overall, rape has the highest annual victim costs at \$127 billion per year (excluding child sexual abuse), which is much higher than many other crimes. Costs to victims and to society include: medical care, mental health care, police services, social services, and loss of income due to absence from work (Miller, Cohen, and Wiersema, 1996).
- ❑ In 1994, 265,000 convicted sex offenders were under the authority of corrections agencies in the United States (Greenfeld, 1997). About half of convicted sex offenders are on probation/parole and living in communities. This statistic is somewhat misleading however, because the actual number of people who commit sexual assault in society far exceeds any statistics that are currently available due to the low reporting rates for and high degree of fear and secrecy surrounding crimes of sexual assault.

### **Where to get more statistics on sexual assault:**

The National Sexual Violence Resource Center  
 125 North Enola Dr.  
 Enola, PA 17025  
 Phone: (877) 739-3895 (toll free) or (717) 909-0710  
 Fax: (717) 909-0714  
 Internet: [www.nsvrc.org](http://www.nsvrc.org)

The National Center for Victims of Crime  
 2111 Wilson Blvd., Suite 300  
 Arlington, VA 22201  
 Phone: (703) 276-2880  
 Fax: (703) 276-2889  
 Internet: [www.ncvc.org](http://www.ncvc.org)

## References

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