

Over 60 percent decline in sexual violence against females from 1995 to 2010

Written by

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WASHINGTON – From 1995 to 2005, sexual violence against U.S. female residents age 12 or older declined 64 percent from 5.0 per 1,000 females to 1.8, and remained unchanged through 2010, according to a report, *Female Victims of Sexual Violence, 1994-2010*, released today by the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS).

These estimates of sexual violence from 1994 to 2010, averaged across two years and reported as the most recent year, are based on data from the annual National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). Sexual violence against females includes completed, attempted, or threatened rape or sexual assault. In 2010, females experienced 270,000 rape or sexual assault victimizations at a rate of about two victimizations per 1,000 females age 12 or older.

In 1995, 29 percent of rape or sexual assault victimizations against females were reported to the police. This percentage increased to 56 percent in 2003 before declining to 35 percent in 2010. Of the sexual victimizations reported to the police in 2005-10, about 64 percent were reported to the police directly by the victims, 10 percent by another household member and 14 percent by an official other than the police. About 84 percent of the victims stated that the police came to the victim after being notified.

When police responded after being notified, the most common police activity according to the victim was to take a report. In 2005-10, police took a report in 86 percent of reported victimizations and questioned witnesses or conducted a search for the offender in 48 percent of reported victimizations. The percentage of reported victimizations in which the police collected evidence increased from eight percent in 1994-98 to 19 percent in 2005-10.

The percentage of reported rape or sexual assault victimizations that resulted in an arrest either at the scene or during a follow-up investigation decreased from 47 percent in 1994-98 to 31 percent in 2005-10. Overall, out of the 283,200 annual average rape or sexual assault victimizations in 2005-10, both reported and not reported to the police, approximately 12 percent resulted in an arrest.

Other findings showed—

- The majority of sexual violence against females involved someone the victim knew. In 2005-10, 78 percent of sexual violence involved an offender who was a family member, intimate partner, friend or acquaintance.
- About 38 percent of sexual violence was committed by a friend or acquaintance, 34 percent by an intimate partner (former or current spouse, girlfriend, boyfriend) and 6 percent by a relative or family member. Strangers committed about 22 percent of all sexual violence, a percentage that remained unchanged from 1994 to 2010.
- In 2005-10, the offender was reported to be armed with a gun, knife or other weapon in 11 percent of rape or sexual assault victimizations.
- In 2005-10, about 58 percent of female victims of sexual violence suffered a physical injury during the attack, such as cuts, bruises, internal injuries, broken bones, gunshot wounds or rape

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injuries. This percentage remained unchanged from 1994-98 to 2005-10.

- The percentage of females who were physically injured during a rape or sexual assault and received some type of treatment for their injuries increased from 26 percent in 1994-98 to 35 percent in 2005-10.
- In 2005-10, 80 percent of female rape or sexual assault victims who were treated for physical injuries received care in a hospital, doctor's office or emergency room as compared to 65 percent in 1994-98.
- In 2005-10, about one in four (23 percent) rape or sexual assault victims received help or advice from a victim service agency.

The NCVS is the largest data collection on criminal victimization independent of crimes reported by law enforcement agencies to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR)—the nation's other key measure of the extent and nature of crime in the U.S. During 2010, about 81,950 households and 146,570 persons were interviewed for the NCVS. The NCVS is a self-reporting survey with the first interview conducted in-person. Follow-up in-person or telephone interviews are conducted every six-months for three years.

The report, *Female Victims of Sexual Violence, 1994-2010* (NCJ 240655), was written by BJS statisticians Michael Planty, Ph.D., and Lynn Langton, Ph.D., and Christopher Krebs, Ph.D., Marcus Berzofsky, Dr.P.H., and Hope Smiley-McDonald, Ph.D., of RTI International. More information on criminal victimization and sexual violence from 1994 to 2010 is available from the NCVS Victimization Analysis Tool on the BJS website at <http://www.bjs.gov/>

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