



Bureau of Justice Statistics Selected Findings

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Female Victims of Violent Crime

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Incidents of violence against women include murders, rapes, sexual assaults, robberies, and both aggravated and simple assaults. National estimates of the extent and nature of female victimization derive from two primary sources within the U.S. Department of Justice.

The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics in conjunction with the Census Bureau, provides information about criminal events nationwide, including those not reported to law enforcement. The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program compiles data on crimes brought to the attention of law enforcement agencies nationwide. Currently, over 16,000 city, county, and State law enforcement agencies voluntarily submit agency-level summary reports of crimes within their jurisdictions.

Together, these data shed light on different aspects of female victimization. This report summarizes findings from several U.S. Department of Justice published reports focusing on the number of violent victimizations, rates of victimization, and the contexts in which the incidents occurred.

National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) and Uniform Crime Reporting system (UCR) data* show that between 1992 and 1994, the number of violent crimes committed against women reached almost 14 million:

*Data on murders are reported in the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting system (UCR). Data on rape, sexual assault, robbery, and both simple and aggravated assault are from the NCVS.

- an estimated 4.4 million in 1992
- 4.8 million in 1993, and
- nearly 4.7 million in 1994.

In 1994 there were 1 rape for every 270 women, 1 robbery for every 240 women, and 1 assault for every 29 women. For homicide — the least frequent — there was 1 female victim for approximately every 23,000 women 12 or older.

From 1973 to 1994 the violent victimization rates of women and men converged

In 1994 women were about two-thirds as likely as men to be victims of violence. Of the 10.9 million crimes of violence in 1994, 4.7 million were against women. The rate of victimization was 43 per 1,000 women about two-thirds the 60 violent victimizations per 1,000 men.

Twenty years ago women's likelihood of victimization was less than half that of men. The overall trend indicates that the rates of victimization for men and women converge — the rate for men decreasing and the rate for women remaining relatively stable or increasing.

Rates of violent crimes (including murders, rapes, robberies, and assaults) per 1,000 population

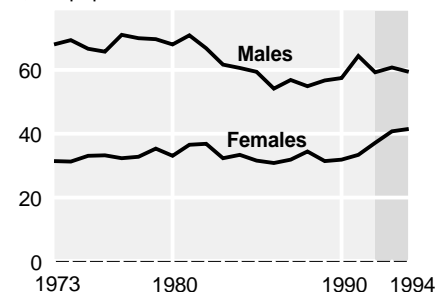


Figure 1

Sources: BJS, the National Crime Survey (NCS) data, 1973-92 and the NCVS data, 1992-94, for rape, robbery, and assault; Uniform Crime Reports for homicides.

The 1973-91 rates were adjusted for comparability to data collected under the redesigned survey method, 1992-94. See BJS, *Criminal Victimization, 1994*, April 1996, NCJ-158022.

Women are at less risk than men of homicide in general

In 1995 the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting system (UCR) reported that females represented 23% of all known homicide victims in the United States. In single victim-single offender incidents, males are most often slain by males (89%). Similarly, 9 of every 10 female victims were murdered by males.

In general, for both fatal and non-fatal violence, women are at higher risk than men to be victimized by an intimate

Female homicide victims are more than twice as likely to have been killed by husbands or boyfriends than male victims are to have been killed by wives or girlfriends.

For those cases in which the victim-offender relationship is known, husbands or boyfriends killed 26% of female murder victims, whereas wives or girlfriends killed 3% of the male victims.

Source: FBI, *Crime in the United States 1995: Uniform Crime Reports*.

In 1992-93 females experienced 7 times as many incidents of non-fatal violence by an intimate as did males. Each year women experienced over 1,000,000 violent victimizations committed by an intimate, compared to about 143,000 incidents that men experienced.

	Annual average number of violent crime victimization by lone offenders*	
	Victims	
	Female	Male
Known	2,715,000	2,019,400
Intimate	1,008,000	143,400
Relative	304,500	122,000
Acquaintance/ friend	1,402,500	1,754,000
Stranger	802,300	1,933,100

*Excludes homicide

Women were also more likely than men to experience violent victimization by a relative. In contrast, men experience victimizations by friends, acquaintances, and strangers in greater numbers than women.

Source: BJS, *Violence against Women: Estimates from the Redesigned Survey*, August 1995, NCJ-154348. This report restricted the analysis to lone-offender victimizations.

Women are more likely to be victimized by someone they know than by a stranger

In 1992-93 a majority of women victims (78%) indicated that the offender who victimized them was a person known to them (sometimes intimately). About 9% of female victims reported that the offender was a relative; 29%, an intimate (which includes spouse or ex-spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend, and ex-boyfriend or ex-girlfriend); and 40%, an acquaintance.

Twenty-three percent of female victims indicated that the offender was a stranger. This is in contrast to the victim-offender relationships in male victimizations that more frequently involve strangers. Male victims are about as likely to be victimized by a stranger (49%) as by someone they know (51%).

Source: BJS, *Violence against Women: Estimates from the Redesigned Survey*, August 1995, NCJ-154348.

The murder rates for both male and female victims of intimate violence have declined

From 1977 to 1995 the rate for husbands, ex-husbands, or boyfriends as murder victims of an intimate partner dropped by two-thirds. For female murder victims of an intimate, the decline was far less dramatic, from a rate of 1.6 per 100,000 to 1.3. These rates were based on murders in which law enforcement authorities determined the circumstances of the crimes.

During the same period, the homicides in which police could not determine the victim-offender relationship increased from 27% to 40% of all cases. Illegal drug trafficking is widely considered to be a major factor in the rise of murders with unknown circumstances. If that interpretation is correct, the increased proportion of murders with unknown victim-offender relationships should not greatly affect conclusions about the trends of murders by intimates.

Rate of intimate murders per 100,000 persons age 16 and over

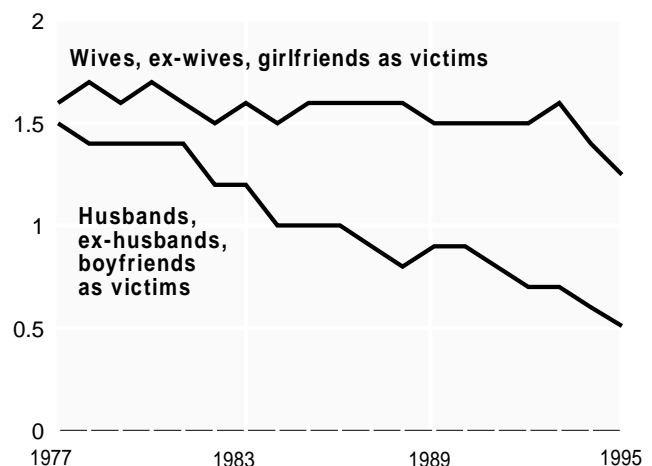


Figure 2

Sources: BJS, *Violence between Intimates*, November 1994, NCJ-149259. FBI, *Crime in the United States 1995: Uniform Crime Reports*. FBI, *Crime in the United States 1994: Uniform Crime Reports*. FBI, *Crime in the United States 1993: Uniform Crime Reports*, Section 5, Homicide analysis.

Victimization rates of men exceed those of women in all violent crime categories except rape and sexual assault

	Victimization rates per 1,000 persons age 12 or older	
	Female	Male
All crimes of violence	43	60
Rape/sexual assault	4	.2
Robbery	4	8
Assault	35	51
Aggravated	8	15
Simple	27	36
Homicide	.04	.18

Source: BJS, *Criminal Victimization 1994*, April 1996, NCJ-158022. Homicide rates were calculated from FBI, *Crime in the United States 1994: Uniform Crime Reports*.

Low-income women are more likely to experience violent victimizations

Women with an annual family income under \$10,000 were more likely to experience violence than those with a family income of \$10,000 or more.

When the violence is committed by intimates, women in the lowest income group are at 4 times greater risk than women in the highest income group.

Family income	Average annual rate of violent victimizations per 1,000 females	
	Total	Intimate
Less than \$10,000	57	20
\$10,000-\$14,999	47	13
\$15,000-\$19,999	42	11
\$20,000-\$29,999	38	10
\$30,000-\$49,999	31	5
\$50,000 or more	25	5

Source: BJS, *Violence against Women: Estimates from the Redesigned Survey*, August 1995, NCJ-154348.

The race or ethnicity of the female victim is not associated with level of risk

There is no evidence from the NCVS to suggest that different races have higher or lower risks of victimization by intimates. Also, between Hispanics and non-Hispanics there is no measurable difference in risk of victimization by intimates.

Source: BJS, *Violence against Women: Estimates from the Redesigned Survey*, August 1995, NCJ-154348.

Female victims are more likely to be injured in violence by intimates than in violence by strangers

Although women are more likely to sustain an injury when victimized by an intimate, the percentage of violent incidents requiring medical care is not affected by the victim-offender relationship.

	Percent of female victims	
	Sustaining injury	Requiring medical care
All lone-offender violence*	33%	41%
Victim-offender relationship		
Intimate	52%	41%
Other relative	38	35
Acquaintance/ friend	26	43
Stranger	20	37

*Excludes homicide.
Source: BJS, *Violence against Women: Estimates from the Redesigned Survey*, August 1995, NCJ-154348.

Women injured in violent crimes are more likely than those not injured to report victimizations to law enforcement

Among violent victimizations of women by lone offenders, a higher percentage of those involving injury than those without injury were reported to law enforcement:

- Injured 54%
- Not injured 39

Source: BJS, *Violence against Women: Estimates from the Redesigned Survey*, August 1995, NCJ-154348.

Victimization estimates from different sources may vary

Statistics reported from various sources may sometimes lack consistency. Many factors may contribute to these seemingly disparate results, such as differences in sample design, in sources of data (official reports or self-reports), in survey methodology, in the scope and specificity of the questions asked, in the time frame

covered (“ever,” “this year,” or “while at college”), and in the definitions of events and relationships.

When reviewing data from different sources, it is useful to examine overall trends over time and the general magnitude and direction of patterns in the data, rather than focusing on specific numbers. Patterns and conclusions that are consistent across multiple data sources are generally reliable for policy purposes.

Sources

- BJS, *Criminal Victimization 1994*, April 1996, NCJ-158022.
- BJS, *Violence against Women: Estimates from the Redesigned Survey*, August 1995, NCJ-154348.
- BJS, *Violence between Intimates*, November 1994, NCJ-149259.
- FBI, *Crime in the United States 1995: Uniform Crime Reports*.
- FBI, *Crime in the United States 1994: Uniform Crime Reports*.
- FBI, *Crime in the United States 1993: Uniform Crime Reports*.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics is the statistical agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. Jan M. Chaiken, Ph.D., is director.

BJS Selected Findings summarize statistics about a topic of current concern from both BJS and non-BJS data sets. Cathy Maston provided statistical review. Tom Hester, Tina Dorsey, Priscilla Middleton, and Yvonne Boston edited the report. Marilyn Marbrook administered production.

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Data may be obtained from the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data at the University of Michigan, 1-800-999-0960. The report, data, and supporting documentation are also available on the Internet: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/>