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Violence against Women

A National Crime Victimization Survey Report

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Foreword

The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) is the single most comprehensive source for information on the experience and consequences of violent crimes against women. This report, based upon a nationally representative sample survey of women and entailing about 400,000 individual interviews, provides us with many important insights about violence suffered by women:

— more than 2 1/2 million women experience violence annually;

— women are about equally likely to experience violence perpetrated by a relative or intimate, an acquaintance, or a stranger — nearly 2 in 3 female victims of violence were related to or knew their attacker;

— about 1 in 4 attacks on females involved the use of a weapon by the offender — about 1 in 3 of these involved a firearm;

— about 3 out of 4 female victims of violence resisted the actions of the offender either physically or verbally;

— about a third of female victims of violence were injured as a result of the crime;

— about half the women victimized by violence reported the crime to the police, and among those who didn't, about 6 in 10 said that they considered the matter a private or personal one or they felt the offense was minor; and,

— nearly half the victims of rape perceived the offender to have been under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol at the time of the offense.

These findings, and the many more detailed observations included in this report, will be expanded in the coming years because of redesigned questions on the experiences of women with all forms of forced or unwanted sexual contact. This redesign effort demonstrates our belief that we must continuously evaluate and improve the methods used to gauge the extent of difficult-to-measure crimes, which involve issues sensitive for those being interviewed.

On behalf of BJS, I extend my appreciation to each respondent who, because of her willingness to discuss her experiences, has made this report possible.

Lawrence A. Greenfeld
Acting Director

Table of contents

Tables

Introduction	1	1. Personal crime, by sex of victim	2	15. Reason for reporting or not reporting violent crime to police, by victim-offender relationship	9
Incidence rates and characteristics of criminal victimization for males and females	1	2. Personal crimes, by demographic characteristics	2	16. Police response to report, by female victims and victim-offender relationship	9
Demographic characteristics of female victims of rape, robbery, and assault	3	3. Crimes of violence, by demographic characteristics	3	17. Police response time for female victimizations, by victim-offender relationship	10
Purse snatching and other personal larceny involving contact	4	4. Personal larceny involving contact, by demographic characteristics	4	18. Type of response made by police at crime scene, by victim-offender relationship	10
Characteristics of offenders who committed violent crimes against women	5	5. Personal larceny involving contact, by age of female victim	4	19. Self-protective behavior utilized by female victims of violent crime, by victim-offender relationship	10
Family violence	6	6. Characteristics of offenders who victimized females, by type of violent crime	5	20. Place and time of rape incidents, by victim-offender relationship	11
Characteristics of family, acquaintance, and stranger perpetrated violence	7	7. Sex, age and alcohol/drug use of offenders perceived to be involved, by type of violent crime	5	21. Rape offenders under the influence of alcohol or drugs, by victim-offender relationship	11
Rape victimization	10	8. Race of offender and race of victim in single-offender female victimizations, by type of crime	5	22. Reason for reporting or not reporting rape victimization to police	11
Methodology	13	9. Male and female violent crime rates, by victim-offender relationship	6	23. Characteristics of incidents for those rapes reported to police	12
		10. Male and female violent crime victimizations, by specific victim-offender relationship	6	24. Offender weapon use, victim self-protective behaviors, injury levels sustained and medical care received by rape victims	12
		11. Violent crime victimization rates for females, by demographic characteristics	7		
		12. Violent crime rates, by type of crime and victim-offender relationship	8		
		13. Violent crime victimizations where weapon was present, by victim-offender relationship	8		
		14. Injuries, medical care and hospital care received by female violent crime victims, by victim-offender relationship	8		

Introduction

This report uses data from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) of the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) to provide a detailed accounting of violent crime victimization against women and how this victimization differs from victimization against men. Several types of violent crime were investigated, including rape, robbery, and assault. In addition, a special section examined the incidence rates and contextual characteristics of personal larceny victimizations which involved contact, such as purse snatching and pocket picking.

Another section of the analysis presents the characteristics of violent victimizations by victim-offender relationship:

- *intimate* (for example, boyfriend, girlfriend, spouse, ex-spouse)
- *other relative* (for example, parent, sibling, grandparent, in-law, cousin),
- *acquaintance* (for example, friend, someone known by face only), and
- *stranger*.

Major findings from the NCVS data include:

- Although women were significantly less likely to become victims of violent crime, they were more vulnerable to particular types of perpetrators. Whereas men were more likely to be victimized by acquaintances or strangers; women were just as likely to be victimized by intimates, such as husbands or boyfriends, as they were to be victimized by acquaintances or strangers. The rate of violence committed by intimates was nearly 10 times greater for females than for males.
- Over two-thirds of violent victimizations against women were committed by someone known to them: 31% of female victims reported that the offender was a stranger. Of those known offenders, approximately 28% were intimates such as husbands or boyfriends, 35% were acquaintances, and the remaining 5% were other relatives. In contrast, victimizations by intimates

and other relatives accounted for only 5% of all violent victimizations against men. Men were significantly more likely to have been victimized by acquaintances (50%) or strangers (44%) than by intimates or other relatives.

- Women who were black, Hispanic, in younger age groups, never married, with lower family income and lower education levels, and in central cities were the most vulnerable to becoming the victims of violent crime.
- White and black women experienced equivalent rates of violence committed by intimates and other relatives. However, black women were significantly more likely than white women to experience incidents of violence by acquaintances or strangers.
- Among women who experienced a violent victimization, injuries occurred almost twice as frequently when the offender was an intimate (59%) than when a stranger (27%). Injured women were also more likely to require medical care if the attacker was an intimate (27%) rather than a stranger (14%).

For rape victims, however, the outcome was different: Women who were raped by a stranger sustained more serious injuries than women raped by someone they knew.

- Almost 6 times as many women victimized by intimates (18%) as those victimized by strangers (3%) did not report their violent victimization to police because they feared reprisal from the offender.

- Rape was more likely to be committed against women by someone known to them (55%) than by a stranger (44%).

- Rape victimizations involving known offenders were almost twice as likely to occur at or near the victim's home (52%) compared to rapes by strangers, which were more likely to occur in an open area or public place (43%). Almost a quarter of rapes by strangers did occur at or near the victim's home.

Incidence rates and characteristics of criminal victimization for males and females

- The violent crime rate for males has decreased since 1973; however, the rate of violent crime for females has not. Rates of violent victimization against females remained relatively consistent from 1973 to 1991. The 1991 female rate of 22.9 translates as approximately 2,500,000 women in the United States experiencing a violent crime in that year (figure 1).

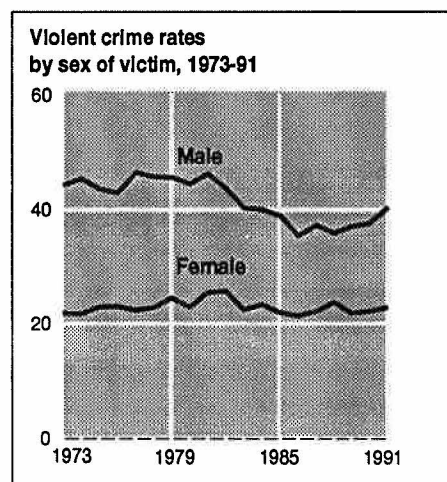


Figure 1

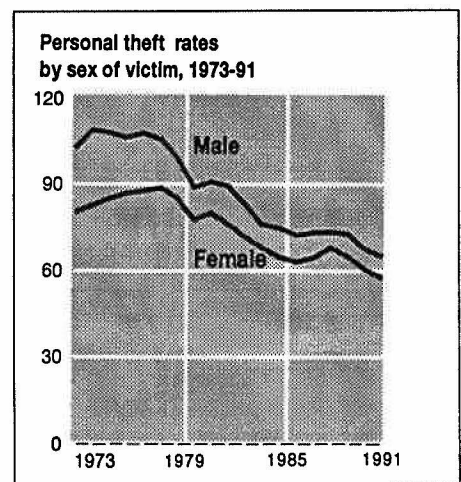


Figure 2

- Theft victimization rates for both females and males were generally declining during the 1973-91 period. The decline for males, however, was much faster than the decline for females (figure 2).

- Except for rape, females were significantly less likely than males to experience all forms of violent crime during 1987-91 (table 1).

- Although overall theft victimization rates were higher for males than females, no significant differences between the sexes existed in the rates of personal larceny with contact, that include crimes such as purse snatching and pocket picking.

Because females were as vulnerable to this type of theft as were males, personal theft involving contact is examined separately on page 4.

- Black and Hispanic females had a higher risk of experiencing a crime of violence than white and non-Hispanic females (table 2).

- Both non-Hispanic males and females experienced higher rates of theft crimes than their Hispanic counterparts.

- While white females experienced higher theft victimization rates than black females, the converse was true for males. Black males had higher theft victimization rates than white males.

- Younger females and males were more likely than all older persons to experience both violent and theft victimizations. Females over age 35 were victimized by personal theft at about the same rate as males over age 35.

- Both females and males with higher family incomes experienced fewer crimes of violence than those in the lower income categories. Females in families making less than \$9,999 had a higher violent victimization rate than males in the highest income category of \$50,000 or more.

- The risk of experiencing a crime of theft was greater for females in the higher income categories, compared to those

Table 1. Average annual rate per 1,000 persons and average annual number of personal crime victimizations, by sex of victim, 1987-91

Type of crime	Average annual rate of crime victimizations per 1,000 persons	
	Male	Female
Crimes of violence	40.5	24.8
Rape	.2	1.3
Completed	.1	.6
Attempted	.1	.7
Robbery	7.4	4.0
Completed	4.6	3.0
Attempted	2.7	1.0
Assault		
Aggravated	12.4	5.1
Simple	20.4	14.3
Crimes of theft	71.6	64.2
Personal larceny		
With contact	2.3	3.1
Without contact	69.3	61.1
	Average annual number of victimizations	
	Male	Female
Crimes of violence	3,926,415	2,600,607
Rape	17,859	132,172
Completed	7,268	58,614
Attempted	10,590	73,558
Robbery	719,865	426,975
Completed	449,302	316,187
Attempted	270,562	106,788
Assault		
Aggravated	1,207,673	543,153
Simple	1,981,016	1,498,305
Crimes of theft	6,943,990	6,712,738
Personal larceny		
With contact	222,104	314,882
Without contact	6,721,886	6,397,855

Note: Detail may not add to total shown because of rounding.

Table 2. Average annual rate of personal crimes per 1,000 persons age 12 or older for males and females, by demographic characteristics, 1987-91

Victim characteristic	Average annual rate of personal crimes per 1,000 persons			
	Male		Female	
	Crimes of violence	Crimes of theft	Crimes of violence	Crimes of theft
Total	40.5	71.6	24.8	64.2
Race				
White	38.6	71.0	23.8	65.2
Black	55.9	76.7	32.3	58.8
Other	38.7	71.8	23.2	57.8
Ethnicity				
Hispanic	49.5	67.8	29.3	60.3
Non-Hispanic	39.7	71.9	24.4	64.4
Age				
12-19	97.1	114.0	31.1	64.1
20-24	87.3	126.2	52.1	108.6
25-34	43.8	85.8	28.5	63.9
35-49	24.9	61.2	18.5	63.1
50-64	10.8	40.1	7.8	37.0
65 or over	5.0	20.1	3.5	19.5
Education				
Some high school or less	54.2	66.2	31.8	58.8
High school graduate	33.4	58.7	20.0	47.9
Some college	48.5	92.7	28.1	82.9
College graduate or more	22.9	78.4	18.2	86.8
Family income				
Less than \$9,999	69.0	79.5	42.9	59.5
\$10,000-\$19,999	45.3	65.2	27.3	59.5
\$20,000-\$29,999	37.9	69.3	23.6	63.8
\$30,000-\$49,999	32.5	70.5	17.3	65.2
\$50,000 or more	28.8	76.6	15.1	77.7
Marital status				
Never married	78.8	110.6	46.6	101.1
Married	18.5	47.9	11.1	49.4
Widowed	12.7	33.5	6.8	24.8
Divorced/separated	51.1	95.3	55.2	62.1
Location of residence				
Central city	55.9	90.2	34.4	79.1
Suburban	36.1	71.1	20.6	65.1
Rural	29.1	47.9	20.1	41.1

with lower family incomes. There was no consistent relationship, however, between rates of theft and family income for males. Females with either some college or a college degree had higher theft victimization rates and lower violent victimization rates than females with less education (table 2).

- Males who had never married were the most likely to experience a violent crime, followed by females who were divorced or separated. For both women and men, those who were widowed were the least likely to be victims of a violent crime.

- For crimes of theft, both females and males who had never married were more likely to be victimized, followed by divorced or separated individuals, those who were married, and widowers, respectively.

- Both females and males residing in central cities experienced the highest rates of both violent and theft crime victimizations, compared to their suburban or rural counterparts. Rural female and male residents had the lowest rates of victimization.

Demographic characteristics of female victims of rape, robbery, and assault

- Black females were more than twice as likely to experience a robbery as white females (table 3). No significant differences separated females of different races for the rates of rape and of aggravated or simple assault.

- Hispanic females were more likely to experience a robbery than non-Hispanic females, but Hispanic and non-Hispanic females were equally likely to experience other violent crimes.

- Women age 20-24 were the most likely to experience all types of violent crime. While the risk of becoming a victim of rape or assault decreased after age 34, women over age 65 were just as likely to be a robbery victim as those between ages 35 and 64.

- Women with less education generally experienced higher rates of aggravated and simple assault than women with more education. For the rates of rape or robbery, however, no significant differences occurred between women in diverse educational categories.

- Those in the lowest family income category of \$9,999 or less experienced the highest rates of all forms of violent crime. Rates of violent victimization decreased as income levels increased.

- For all forms of violent crime, females who either had never married or were divorced or separated experienced a

greater risk of victimization than other females. Widows were generally the least likely of all to be violent victims.

- Females residing in central cities were more vulnerable to all types of violent crime. They were twice as likely to experience a rape as suburban or rural females. Central city females were also over twice as likely to experience a robbery as their suburban counterparts and almost 4 times as likely to be robbed as females living in rural areas.

- Females living in suburban and rural residences experienced similar rates of rape, robbery, and assault.

Table 3. Average annual rate for crimes of violence per 1,000 females age 12 or older, by demographic characteristics, 1987-91

Characteristic	Average annual rate per 1,000 females				
	Total	Rape	Robbery	Aggravated assault	Simple assault
Total		1.3	4.0	5.1	14.3
Race					
White	23.8	1.1	3.4	4.8	14.4
Black	32.3	2.0	8.7	7.6	13.8
Other	23.2	1.3	3.9	4.8	13.0
Ethnicity					
Hispanic	29.3	1.1	6.6	7.0	14.6
Non-Hispanic	24.4	1.2	3.8	5.0	14.3
Age					
12-19	31.1	1.8	3.4	6.1	19.5
20-24	52.1	3.1	7.6	10.9	30.3
25-34	28.5	1.5	5.3	5.9	15.7
35-49	18.5	.7	3.1	4.0	10.7
50-64	7.8	.2	2.1	1.6	3.8
65 or over	3.5	.1*	1.3	.9	1.2
Education					
Some high school or less	31.8	1.5	4.5	7.1	18.6
High school graduate	20.0	1.1	3.5	4.1	11.3
Some college	28.1	1.6	4.6	6.1	15.8
College graduate or more	18.2	1.0	3.6	2.8	10.9
Family Income					
Less than \$9,999	42.9	2.4	7.4	10.1	22.9
\$10,000-\$19,999	27.3	1.4	4.6	5.7	15.6
\$20,000-\$29,999	23.6	1.0	3.0	5.0	14.5
\$30,000-\$49,999	17.3	1.0	2.2	3.0	11.3
\$50,000 or more	15.1	.5	2.1	2.8	9.5
Marital status					
Never married	46.6	2.9	7.3	9.1	27.0
Married	11.1	.3	1.8	2.7	6.3
Widowed	6.8	.3	2.1	1.6	2.6
Divorced/separated	55.2	2.8	8.8	11.0	32.5
Location of residence					
Central city	34.4	2.0	7.6	7.3	17.3
Suburban	20.6	.9	2.6	4.1	12.9
Rural	20.1	.9	1.9	4.3	12.8

*Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

Purse snatching and other personal larceny involving contact

Because females, particularly elderly women, were found to be just as vulnerable as males to personal larceny involving contact (purse snatching and pocket picking), the characteristics of these victimizations against women warrant a more detailed description.

- White females were less likely to experience a personal larceny involving contact than were black females or females from another racial group (table 4). Hispanic females were also more likely to experience this type of victimization, compared to non-Hispanic females.

- Females in all age groups had equivalent rates of personal larceny involving contact. This pattern is quite different from the pattern observed for violent crime in which the risk of victimization decreased with age.

- Widowed females were as likely to experience personal larceny with contact as were those who had never married or who had divorced or separated.

- Females in central cities were over 3 times more likely to experience a personal larceny that involved contact than those in suburban areas and over 6 times more likely than females residing in rural locations.

Characteristics of personal larceny which involved contact differed between those females under the age of 65 and those who were age 65 or older (table 5).

- Regardless of age, most female victims of personal larceny involving contact were victimized in an open area or public place. However, almost twice as many victims over age 65 as younger victims were victimized at or near their home.

- Female victims in all age categories who experienced personal larceny with contact were more likely to be victimized between noon and 6 p.m., compared to any other period.

Table 4. Average annual rate of personal larceny involving contact per 1,000 females age 12 or older, by demographic characteristics, 1987-91

Characteristic	Rate per 1,000 females
Total	3.1
Race	
White	2.6
Black	5.0
Other	4.5
Ethnicity	
Hispanic	5.8
Non-Hispanic	2.7
Age	
12-19	1.3
20-24	4.1
25-34	3.2
35-49	2.2
50-64	2.7
65 or over	3.2
Education	
Some high school	2.9
High school graduate	2.0
Some college	3.0
College graduate or more	5.1
Family income	
Less than \$9,999	4.3
\$10,000-\$19,999	2.9
\$20,000-\$29,999	2.7
\$30,000-\$49,999	2.1
\$50,000 or more	2.9
Marital status	
Never married	4.1
Married	1.9
Widowed	3.6
Divorced/separated	4.3
Location of residence	
Central city	6.4
Suburban	1.9
Rural	.5

- Female victims of personal larceny age 65 or older were less likely to take self-protective action and more likely to report their victimization to police than their younger counterparts.

Table 5. Characteristics of personal larceny involving contact, by age of female victim, 1987-91

Characteristic	Percent of females experiencing personal larceny with contact		
	Total	Under age 65	65 or over
Value of property taken			
Total	100%	100%	100%
Under \$25	40	38	45
\$26-\$50	18	20	10*
\$51-\$100	14	13	14
Over \$100	21	21	23
Not ascertained	9	8	9
Location of incident			
Total	100%	100%	100%
At or near home	14	12	23
Commercial location	16	15	21
Parking area or garage	14	12	17
In or near school	3	3	0
Open public area or public transportation	50	53	35
Not ascertained	3	6	4
Whether incident took place in daylight or dark			
Total	100%	100%	100%
Incident occurred—			
During daylight	61	58	74
While dark	33	35	23
At dawn or dusk	6	7	3
Time of day			
Total	100%	100%	100%
6 a.m. to noon	17	16	19
Noon to 6 p.m.	46	44	58
6 p.m. to midnight	32	34	20
Midnight to 6 a.m.	4	5	3*
Self-protective action taken			
Total	100%	100%	100%
None	52	48	73
Physical action	29	32	15
Passive/verbal	18	20	12
Reported incident to police			
Total	100%	100%	100%
Yes	50	47	60
No	50	53	40

Detail may not add to 100% because of rounding. *Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

Characteristics of offenders who committed violent crimes against women

In general, most female victims of violence were attacked by lone offenders. Of those victimizations involving more than one offender, a greater proportion was a robbery. Rape was the violent victimization least likely to involve more than one offender. Less than 10% of all rape victimizations involved more than one offender (table 6).

Because multiple offender victimizations represent very different experiences for female victims compared to single-offender victimizations, the remainder of this report will examine these types of victimizations separately. Unless otherwise noted, analyses which follow focus exclusively on one-on-one incidents of violence. This specification was also necessary to determine the exact relationship (intimate, acquaintance, or stranger) between the victim and the offender.

- Female victims of all types of violent crime were more likely to be victimized by male offenders than female offenders (table 7). Females, however, committed about a quarter of all assaults against females.

- Most violent offenders who victimized females were perceived by the victim to be over age 21.

- Female victims of rape and aggravated assault were significantly more likely to perceive their attackers to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, compared to females who experienced a robbery or simple assault.

- When offenders were perceived by female victims to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, a higher percentage of rape and assault offenders were reported to have been using alcohol

rather than other drugs. For robbers perceived to be under the influence, a higher percentage were reported to have been under the influence of drugs rather than alcohol.

Table 6. Number of offenders perceived to be involved in victimizations of females, by type of violent crime, 1987-91

Type of offender	Percent of violent victimizations				
	Total	Rape	Robbery	Aggravated assault	Simple assault
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Single offender	76%	90%	71%	79%	85%
Multiple offenders	22%	9%	26%	18%	13%
Two	47	30	56	43	45
Three to five	38	45	36	36	41
Over five	12	16	6	19	11
Not ascertained	3	9	3	2	3
Don't know number of offenders	2%	1%	3%	3%	2%

Detail may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Table 7. Perceived sex, age, and alcohol/drug use of single-offenders who victimized females, by type of violent crime, 1987-91

Characteristic of single violent offender against women	Percent of single-offender victimizations				
	Total	Rape	Robbery	Aggravated assault	Simple assault
Sex					
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Male	75	98	87	76	71
Female	23	1*	12	22	28
Not ascertained	2	1	1	2	1
Age					
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Under 18	15	5	10	14	18
Under 21	11	9	14	11	10
Over 21	70	8	70	70	69
Not ascertained	4	5	6	5	3
Alcohol/drug use					
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Yes	37	45	31	45	35
No	26	18	18	21	29
Not ascertained	37	36	50	33	35
Type of drug^a					
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Alcohol	53	65	30	53	58
Drugs	19	14	37	19	15
Both	20	15	19	20	20
Not ascertained	8	6	14	8	7

Detail may not add to 100% because of rounding.

*Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

^aBased on those cases reporting alcohol/drug use by offender.

• In general, violent crime against women was primarily intra-racial. Eight out of ten violent crimes against white women were perpetrated by white offenders (table 8). Similarly, almost 9 out of 10 violent victimizations sustained by black women were committed by black offenders.

• Robberies experienced by white females were the victimizations most often inter-racial. A white female robbery victim was as likely to have been victimized by a black offender as a white offender. Robberies experienced by black females were primarily intra-racial.

Family violence

Family violence is difficult to measure because it most often occurs in private and victims may be reluctant to report it because of shame or fear of reprisal by the offender. As do all NCVS data, estimates of family violence rely on victims willing and able to report incidents to survey interviewers. These estimates include any rape, robbery or assault that was committed by intimates, including spouses, ex-spouses, boyfriends, girlfriends, parents, children, or other relatives. For a more detailed discussion of measurement issues concerning family violence, see the *Methodology*, page 13.

• Annually, compared to males, females experienced over 10 times as many incidents of violence by an intimate (table 9). On average each year, women experienced 572,032 violent victimizations at the hands of an intimate, compared to 48,983 incidents committed against men.

• Women were just as likely to experience a violent victimization by an intimate or relative (33%) as they were to be victimized by an acquaintance (35%) or a stranger (31%). Family related violence, however, accounted for only 5% of all violent victimizations against men. Men were far more likely to be victimized by an acquaintance (50% of all male victimizations) or a stranger (44% of all male victimizations) than by an intimate or family member (table 10).

Table 8. Race of female victims of a single violent offender, by the type of crime and perceived race of the offender, 1987-91

Type of crime and race of victim	Percent of single-offender violent victimizations				
	Perceived race of offender				
	Total	White	Black	Other	Not known/ascertained
Crimes of violence					
White	100%	80%	13%	5%	2%
Black	100	4	89	6	1*
Rape					
White	100	78	15	4	3
Black	100	1*	98	0*	5*
Robbery					
White	100	40	43	12	5
Black	100	5	88	5	2
Aggravated assault					
White	100	83	8	7	1*
Black	100	12	83	5	1*
Simple assault					
White	100	87	5	6	1*
Black	100	5	89	5	1*

Detail may not add to 100% because of rounding.
*Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

Table 9. Average annual rate and number of single-offender violent victimizations of women and men, by victim-offender relationship, 1987-91

Victim-offender relationship	Sex of victim	
	Female	Male
Average annual rate per 1,000		
Intimates	5.4	.5
Other relative	1.1	.7
Acquaintance	7.6	13.0
Stranger	5.4	12.2
Average annual number of victimizations		
Intimates	572,032	48,983
Other relative	117,201	75,587
Acquaintance	796,067	1,268,506
Stranger	571,114	1,182,307

Table 10. Percent distribution of single-offender violent victimizations, by victim-offender relationship for women and men, 1987-91

Victim-offender relationship	Percent of single-offender violent victimizations*	
	Female	Male
Total	100 %	100 %
Relative/Intimate	33 %	5 %
Spouse	9.6	.5
Ex-spouse	4.0	.4
Boyfriend/girlfriend	14.0	1.0
Parent	.8	.6
Child	1.3	.3
Brother/sister	1.6	.9
Other relative	2.0	1.2
Acquaintance	35 %	50 %
Stranger	31 %	44 %
Unknown relationship	1 %	1 %

Note: Detail may not add to 100% because of rounding.
*The percentages are based on the total number of victimizations for the 5-year period, rather than on the annual average.

• Women with lower education and family income levels were more likely to be victimized by intimates than women who had graduated from college and who had higher family incomes (table 11).

Women with family incomes less than \$9,999 were more than 5 times as likely to experience a violent victimization by an intimate and more than twice as likely

to be victimized by an acquaintance than those with family incomes over \$30,000.

• Living in suburban or rural areas did not decrease a woman's risk of experiencing an act of violence by an intimate.

Women living in central cities, suburban areas and rural locations experienced similar rates of violence committed by intimates.

• Violence by strangers was more likely to occur in central cities than in the suburbs or rural areas. Females living in central cities were 4 times more likely to be victimized by a stranger than rural females and almost 2 times more likely than suburban females.

• Robbery was the only crime in which women were more likely to be victimized by strangers rather than intimates, family members, or acquaintances. Female victims of simple assault were more likely to be victimized by an intimate or an acquaintance rather than a stranger or a relative who was not an intimate (table 12).

Characteristics of family, acquaintance, and stranger perpetrated violence

• Women who were victimized by strangers were more likely to face an armed offender (33%) compared to offenders who were intimates (18%), other relatives (22%), or acquaintances (21%) (table 13).

• When weapons were present during a violent victimization, strangers, compared to other types of offenders, were more likely to be armed with guns. Intimates and other relatives were more likely to be armed with knives or other sharp instruments.

• Women suffering violent victimizations were almost twice as likely to be injured if the offender was an intimate (59%) compared to offenders who were strangers (27%). Women were also more likely to receive injuries requiring medical care if the attacker was an intimate (27%) compared to a stranger (14%) (table 14). For rape victims, however, the outcome was different: Women who were raped by a stranger were injured more often than women raped by someone whom they knew (table 24). (For further discussion of victims of rape, see page 10.)

Table 11. Average annual rate of single-offender violent victimizations per 1,000 females, by victim-offender relationship and demographic characteristics, 1987-91

Characteristic	Rate of single-offender violent victimizations per 1,000 females within categories of victim-offender relationship			
	Intimate	Other relative	Acquaintance	Stranger
Total	5.4	1.1	7.6	5.4
Race				
White	5.4	1.2	7.2	5.1
Black	5.8	1.3	10.5	7.4
Other	3.6	.7*	6.2	5.3
Ethnicity				
Hispanic	5.5	1.3	6.3	7.2
Non-Hispanic	5.4	1.1	7.7	5.3
Age				
12-19	5.8	2.3	21.7	8.0
20-24	15.5	1.5	14.3	11.6
25-34	8.8	1.1	7.3	6.5
35-49	4.0	1.2	5.2	4.6
50-64	.9	.4	1.9	2.6
65 or over	.0*	.2	.7	1.1
Education				
Some high school or less	5.3	1.7	11.8	4.9
High school graduate	6.1	.7	5.3	4.2
Some college	6.4	1.2	6.8	8.0
College graduate or more	2.5	.5	6.0	6.0
Family Income				
Less than \$9,999	11.4	2.0	12.7	7.7
\$10,000-\$19,999	6.7	1.4	7.9	5.8
\$20,000-\$29,999	5.9	.9	7.8	4.6
\$30,000-\$49,999	2.7	.7	5.8	4.4
\$50,000 or more	1.6	.5	4.6	4.2
Marital status				
Never married	7.1	1.7	16.6	10.0
Married	1.5	.5	3.2	3.0
Widowed	.7	.5	1.4	2.1
Divorced/separated	16.7	2.6	12.6	8.8
Location of residence				
Central city	6.5	10.1	9.5	8.8
Suburban	4.6	1.0	6.4	4.6
Rural	5.6	1.4	7.2	2.3

*Estimates is based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

• Although the percentage of female victims of violence who reported their victimization to police did not vary by victim-offender relationship, the reasons given by victims for not reporting an incident did. Female victims who knew their assailants most often did not report

because they believed the incident was a private or personal matter. The most important reason for not reporting given by females victimized by strangers was that they felt the incident was minor and may not be classified as a crime (table 15).

• Almost 6 times as many women victimized by intimates (18%) as those victimized by strangers (3%) did not report their violent victimization to police because they feared reprisal from the offender.

• The most common reason given for reporting a victimization to police, regardless of the relationship the victim had to the offender, was to punish the offender.

• Police responded to over three-quarters of all reports by females victimized by intimates, acquaintances, strangers or other relatives by coming to the crime scene (table 16).

• Police were more likely to respond within 5 minutes, if the offender was a stranger than if an offender was known to the female victim (table 17).

• Police took a report in over two-thirds of all incidents of violence reported, regardless of the relationship between the victim and offender. However, the police were more likely to take a formal report if the offender was a stranger (77%) rather than an intimate (69%), other relative (67%), or acquaintance (70%) (table 18).

• The police questioned witnesses in about the same proportion of violent victimizations of females, regardless of the victim-offender relationship. Searching the scene for evidence occurred more often when a stranger, rather than other types of offenders, had committed the crime.

Table 12. Average annual rate of single-offender violent victimizations per 1,000 females, by type of crime and victim-offender relationship, 1987-91

Type of crime	Rate of single-offender violent victimizations per 1,000 females within categories of victim-offender relationship				
	Total	Intimate	Other relative	Acquaintance	Stranger
Rape	1.3	.2	.0*	.5	.3
Robbery	4.0	.6	.1	.5	1.5
Aggravated assault	5.1	1.1	.2	1.4	1.1
Simple assault	14.3	3.6	.7	5.1	2.4

*Estimates is based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

Table 13. Percent of single-offender violent crime victimizations where weapon was present, by victim-offender relationship, 1987-91

Type of weapon	Percent of female victims of violence				
	Total	Intimate	Other relative	Acquaintance	Stranger
Weapon present	27%	18%	22%	21%	33%
Type of weapon used					
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Guns	30	34	19	23	38
Knives or sharp instruments	34	40	41	36	35
Blunt objects	18	12	16	20	14
Other weapons	18	15	24	22	13

Table 14. Percent of single-offender violent crime victimizations resulting in injuries, medical care, and hospital care for female victims, by victim-offender relationship, 1987-91

	Percent of female victims of violence				
	Total	Intimate	Other relative	Acquaintance	Stranger
Injury	34%	59%	48%	31%	27%
Serious	3	3	3	3	2
Minor	31	56	45	28	25
Received medical care	19	27	20	14	14
Received hospital care	9	15	10	8	8

Note: Serious injuries include gunshot or knife wounds, broken bones, loss of teeth, internal injuries, loss of consciousness, and undetermined injuries requiring 2 or more days of hospitalization. Minor injuries include bruises, black eyes, cuts,

scratches, swelling, and undetermined injuries requiring less than 2 days of hospitalization. Medical care refers to any care or treatment given for injuries by a medical provider, a nonmedical person, or by the victim herself.

Table 15. Percent of female victims reporting single-offender violent crime to police and the most important reason for reporting or not reporting, by victim-offender relationship, 1987-91

Whether reported and reasons why or why not	Percent of female victims of violence				
	Victim-offender relationship				
	Total	Intimate	Other relative	Acquaintance	Stranger
Reported to police	52%	56%	58%	45%	55%
Most important reason for not reporting					
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Private or personal matter	39	33	43	48	20
It was a minor incident	20	6	8	17	28
Police couldn't do anything	3	1*	0	1	12
Police wouldn't do anything	10	13	3	7	11
Didn't want to get offender in trouble	5	9	15	3	1*
Afraid of reprisal from offender	7	18	11	6	3
Other	16	20	20	18	25
Most important reason for reporting					
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
To stop or prevent this from happening to me or others	22	28	28	20	15
To recover loss-insurance	4	2	1*	3	8
To punish offender	46	50	40	46	43
It was my duty	4	2	0	3	7

Detail may not add to 100% because of rounding.
 *Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

Table 16. Percent distribution of single-offender violent victimizations where police were called by female victim, by police response and victim-offender relationship, 1987-91

Police response	Percent of female victims of violence who had reported to police				
	Victim-offender relationship				
	Total	Intimate	Other relative	Acquaintance	Stranger
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Police came	77%	76%	78%	76%	79%
Police did not come	13	14	14	17	13
Respondent went to police	9	7	7	6	7

Detail may not add to 100% because of rounding and because some respondents who called police did not respond to the question.

Table 17. Percent distribution of single-offender violent victimizations where police came to female victim, by police response time and victim-offender relationship, 1987-91

Police response	Percent of female victims of violence indicating that the police visited the scene of the crime				
	Total	Victim-offender relationship			
		Intimate	Other relative	Acquaintance	Stranger
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Within 5 minutes	28%	25%	24%	24%	36%
Within 10 minutes	28	28	33	28	28
Within 1 hour	35	37	35	38	28
Within 1 day	4	4	6	6	4
Longer or don't know	5	5	2	4	4

*Detail may not add to 100% because of rounding and because some respondents who called police did not respond to the question.

Table 18. Percent distribution of single-offender violent victimizations against females where police came to crime scene, by police action and victim-offender relationship, 1987-91

Type of response	Percent of female victims of violence				
	Total	Victim-offender relationship			
		Intimate	Other relative	Acquaintance	Stranger
Took report	72%	69%	67%	70%	77%
Took evidence for case	5	2	2	3	9
Promised police surveillance	5	4	4	5	5
Searched	15	7	8	10	29

Note: Because this is a multiple response question, totals do not sum to 100%.

Table 19. Self-protective behavior used by female victims of single-offender violent victimizations and outcomes, by victim-offender relationship, 1987-91

Self-protection and outcome	Percent of female victims of violence				
	Total	Victim-offender relationship			
		Intimate	Other relative	Acquaintance	Stranger
Self-protective behavior					
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
None taken	24	20	17	27	26
Physical action	30	40	38	27	20
Passive/verbal	45	40	44	45	52
Self-protective actions helped situation					
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Yes	61	53	53	65	70
No	23	30	30	20	15
Not ascertained	16	17	17	15	15
Self-protective actions made situation worse					
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Yes	17	23	24	16	11
No	67	58	62	69	75
Not ascertained	16	19	14	15	14

Detail may not add to 100% because of rounding.

• Although a similar proportion of females victimized by either known or unknown offenders used self-protective behavior, the type of self-protection varied by the victim/offender relationship. Women victimized by an intimate or another family member were almost 2 times more likely to use physical self-protection such as fighting back, compared to women victimized by a stranger.

Women were most likely to argue, reason, or cooperate when offenders were strangers (table 19).

• In a comparison of females who attempted to protect themselves from violence — by intimates or other relatives and by strangers — a larger percentage of the victims of intimates and other relatives reported that their actions hurt the situation.

Rape victimization

Rape, as defined by the NCVS for the time period studied in this report was self-classified by all respondents. Each respondent was asked if she had been attacked during the previous 6 months; if she reported that she had been raped, the incident was classified as a completed rape. If the victim reported that the offender(s) had tried to rape her, the incident was classified as an attempted rape. The NCVS is currently using a new survey instrument which more directly queries respondents about sexual assaults. Data from this new questionnaire will be available in the fall of 1994. For a more detailed discussion of this issue, see *Methodology*, page 13.

• Data from 1987 to 1991 indicated that every year nearly 133,000 women age 12 or older were victims of rape or attempted rape (table 1). More of these rapes were committed by someone known to the victim (55%) than by a stranger (44%) (table 20).

• Rapes committed by nonstrangers were more likely to occur at or near the victim's home (52%), while rapes by strangers were more likely to occur in an

open area or another public place (43%). About a fourth of the rapes by strangers took place at or near the victim's home.

• Rapes were more likely to take place after dark between the hours of 6 p.m. to midnight regardless of the victim/offender relationship (table 20).

• Nonstranger rapists were almost 70% more likely to have been under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of the victimization compared to rapists who were strangers (table 21).

• There was no difference in the extent to which female victims of stranger or nonstranger perpetrated rape reported their victimization to police. Just over half of all rape victimizations were reported (table 22).

• Most females reported their victimization because they wanted to punish the offender regardless of the relationship they had with them. More females raped by men whom they knew, compared to females raped by strangers, did not report the victimization to police because they believed it to be a private or personal matter.

Table 20. Place and time of single-offender rape incidents, by victim-offender relationship, 1987-91

Place and time of rape	Total	Percent of rape victimizations	
		Victim-offender relationship	
		Non-stranger	Stranger
Percent of rape cases	100%	55%	44%
Place of occurrence			
Total	100%	100%	100%
At or near own home	43	52	25
At or near friend's home	16	21	8
Commercial establishment or school	6	9	4
Public parking area or garage	5	4	8
Open area or public area	18	5	43
Not ascertained	12	9	12
Whether incident took place in daylight or dark			
Total	100%	100%	100%
Incident occurred—			
During daylight	32	31	33
While dark	62	64	59
At dawn or dusk	6	4	8
Time of day			
Total	100%	100%	100%
6 a.m.-noon	16	15	18
Noon-6 p.m.	16	18	14
6 p.m.-midnight	37	38	32
Midnight-6 a.m.	31	25	34

Table 21. Percent of single-offender rape committed under the influence of drugs or alcohol, by victim-offender relationship, 1987-91

Alcohol or drug use	Total	Percent of female victims of rape	
		Victim-offender relationship	
		Non-stranger	Stranger
Offender's alcohol/drug use			
Total	100%	100%	100%
Yes	45	51	35
No	19	24	7
Not ascertained	36	25	58
Type of drug^a			
Total	100%	100%	100%
Alcohol	66	68	61
Drugs	14	10	25
Both	15	16	11
Not ascertained	5	6	3

^aBased on those cases reporting alcohol/drug use by offender.

Table 22. Percent of females reporting single-offender rape victimizations to police, by the most important reasons for reporting or not reporting, by victim-offender relationship, 1987-91

	Total	Percent of female victims of rape	
		Victim-offender relationship	
		Nonstranger	Stranger
Reported to police	53%	53%	55%
Most important reason for reporting			
Total	100%	100%	100%
To stop or prevent this from happening to me or someone else again	15	17	11
To punish offender	56	52	65
Other reason or not ascertained	29	31	24
Most important reason for not reporting			
Total	100%	100%	100%
Private or personal matter	28	35	13
Police couldn't do anything	4	1*	11
Police wouldn't do anything	11	11	11
Afraid of reprisal from offender	17	18	15
Other reason or not ascertained	40	35	50

*Estimate is based on 10 or fewer cases.

• Rape victims were more likely to report their victimization to police if the offender used a weapon, if she sustained an additional injury as the result of her victimization, and if she required medical care (table 23).

• A higher proportion of rapists who were strangers (29%) than those whom the victim knew (17%) were armed with a weapon. Of those armed, strangers were just as likely to use handguns (42%) as knives (44%), while rapists known to the victim were more likely to use knives or other sharp instruments (51%) in the attack (table 24).

• A larger percentage of victims of rape by strangers (60%) than other rape victims (43%) were injured (table 24). As reported earlier, this relationship was reversed for crimes of violence in general in which females were more likely to sustain an injury if the offender was known (table 14).

Table 23. Percent distribution of police reporting behavior by female rape victims, by characteristics of rape incident, 1987-91

Characteristic	Percent of female victims who reported to police
Total reporting rape	53%
Whether crime was completed	
Completed	61%
Attempted	48
Weapon	
Weapon present	64%
No weapon present	50
Victim-offender relationship	
Intimate	50%
Acquaintance	50
Stranger	56
Physical Injury status	
Additional injuries sustained	65%
No additional injuries sustained	52
Medical care received	
Received medical care	75%
No medical care received	41
Number of offenders	
Single offenders	53%
Multiple offenders	62
Place of occurrence	
At or near home including private garage	53%
At or near friend's home	54
Commercial establishment or school	29*
Public parking area/garage	36
Open area or public area	51

*Estimate is based on 10 or fewer cases.

Table 24. Percent distribution of offender weapon use, rape victim self-protective behaviors, injury levels sustained, and medical care received for single-offender rape victimizations, by victim-offender relationship, 1987-91

	Percent of female victims of rape		
	Total	Victim-offender relationship Nonstranger	Stranger
Offender had weapon	21%	17%	29%
Type of weapon present			
Handgun	35%	29%	42%
Knives or sharp instruments	48	51	44
Other weapon	17	20	15
Self-protective action taken			
Took some action	85%	85%	85%
Active physical	51	55	43
Passive/verbal	34	30	42
Self-protective action helped			
Yes	61%	58%	68%
No	26	29	22
Don't know	13	13	10
Self-protective action made situation worse			
Yes	17%	16%	20%
No	68	68	70
Don't know	17	16	10
Victim sustained injury other than rape injuries	47%	43%	60%
Medical care			
Received medical care	60%	57%	62%
Received hospital care	30	29	30

Note: See note on table 14 for list of possible injuries. Medical care refers to any care or

treatment given for injuries by a medical provider, a nonmedical person, or by the victim herself.

Methodology

The tables in this report include National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) data from 1987 to 1991. The NCVS obtains information about crimes, including incidents not reported to the police, from a continuous, nationally representative sample of households in the United States. This includes persons living in group quarters, such as dormitories, rooming houses, and religious group dwellings. Groups not included were crew members of merchant vessels, Armed Forces personnel living in military barracks, and institutionalized persons, such as correctional facility inmates. 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 designated for the sample were eligible to be interviewed. References in this report to "women" or "females" therefore include adolescents but not children under age 12.

The NCVS measures crimes of violence (rape, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault), crimes of theft (personal larceny with and without contact), and household crimes (burglary, household larceny, and motor vehicle theft). The survey does not include murder, kidnaping, commercial crimes, and incidents that the victim may not recognize as crimes, such as fraud or con games.

Calculation of NCVS rates

The rates in this report were annual average rates for 1987-91. The numerator of a given rate was the sum of the crimes that occurred each year from 1987 through 1991 for each respective demographic group; the denominator was the sum of the annual population totals for these same years and demographic groups.

Application of standard errors

The results represented in this report were tested to determine whether the observed differences between groups were statistically significant. Most comparisons passed a hypothesis test at the .05 level of statistical significance (or the 95 percent confidence level) meaning that the estimated difference between comparisons was greater than twice the standard error of that difference. However, some comparisons were significant at the 90 percent confidence level only. These comparisons were qualified by phrases such as "somewhat" or "some evidence of a difference." Comparisons which failed the 90% hypothesis test were not considered statistically significant and, therefore, were not discussed in this report.

Even though the data in this report were collected over several years, some estimates were based on a relatively small number of sample cases, particularly for certain demographic groups. The data tables note when estimates were based on 10 or fewer sample cases. Because standard errors cannot be accurately computed for such estimates, it is inadvisable to compare them to other estimates. Further, caution should be used when comparing estimates not discussed in the text, since seemingly large differences may not be statistically significant at the 95 percent or even the 90 percent confidence level.

Family violence

For the time period covered in this report (1987-91), the NCVS did not directly ask respondents about attacks which were perpetrated by intimates or other family members. If, however, a respondent revealed that they had been attacked or otherwise victimized by someone known to them such as a husband or boyfriend, the incident was recorded as such.

The relationship of the victim to the offender would then have been categorized within the following categories: known by sight only, a casual acquaintance, spouse at time of incident, ex-spouse at time of incident, parent or step-parent, own child or step-child, brother/sister, other relative, boy/girlfriend or ex-boy/girlfriend, friend or ex-friend, roommate or boarder, school-mate, neighbor, someone at work, or other nonrelative.

The NCVS has changed its methodology regarding issues of family violence. The NCVS now more directly asks respondents about violence of this nature. Included in the current screener instrument, after the general questions concerning acts of violence or theft, is an item that states the following:

- People often don't think of incidents committed by someone they know. (Other than any incidents already mentioned,) did you have something stolen from you OR were you attacked or threatened by (a) someone at work or school, (b) a neighbor or friend, (c) a relative or family member, (d) any other person you've met or known?

Respondents are further guided: *Please mention it even if you were not certain it was a crime.* If the respondent replies *yes*, an incident report is completed and coded appropriately.

The redesigned questionnaire was implemented into 100% of the sample in June 1993, and estimates and data from this will be available in the fall of 1994.

Rape

For the period covered in this report (1987-91), rape was self-defined by respondents. That is, in response to a series of questions related to being attacked, threatened, or harmed, estimates in this report were based on those women who voluntarily reported that they had been raped. When a woman indicated that she had been the victim of a completed or attempted rape, she was not asked to explain what happened further. Her personal classification of the incident as a completed or attempted rape was accepted and recorded.¹ In addition, if the respondent was reluctant to provide information describing the event, interviewers were instructed to read response categories which included "raped," "tried to rape," "verbal threat of rape," as appropriate. Response categories for "raped" and "attempted rape" were also included when respondents were asked about any injuries suffered during the victimization. Thus, even though the NCVS did not directly ask respondents whether they had been victims of attempted or completed rape, there were several opportunities for respondents to classify an attack as rape during the course of completing the incident form.

The redesigned NCVS now queries respondents much more directly about their experiences with unwanted sexual contact. To ascertain information on rape in the redesigned survey, respondents are asked the question:

- Incidents involving forced or unwanted sexual acts are often difficult to talk about. (Other than any incidents already mentioned), have you been forced or coerced to engage in unwanted sexual activity by (a) Someone you didn't know before, (b) A casual acquaintance, or (c) Someone you know well?

If a respondent's reply is affirmative, an incident report is completed. At this time, the interviewer is directed to clarify what type of sexual activity occurred by asking the respondent the following question:

"Do you mean forced or coerced sexual intercourse? Again, if the answer is affirmative, the incident is coded as a rape. If there is some confusion by what "sexual intercourse" implies, interviewers are provided with a very specific operational definition of rape adopted by the NCVS. This definition can be used for reference or can be read to respondents at any time during the interview and states:

Rape is forced sexual intercourse and includes both psychological coercion as well as physical force. Forced sexual intercourse means vaginal, anal, oral penetration by the offender(s). This category also includes incidents where the penetration is from a foreign object such as a bottle.

Definition of location

To define operationally the location categories, this report utilizes the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) concept of Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA's) and classifies units of analysis into three segments based upon their relationship to a MSA: central city, outside central city, and nonmetropolitan area. Specifically, these classification categories, defined by OMB as central city, outside central city, and nonmetropolitan, are labeled in this report as central city, suburban, and rural respectively. A more detailed description of these areas follows:

Central City: The largest city, or grouping of cities in a Metropolitan Statistical Area. In this report, city areas are categorized as those portions of metropolitan areas located in "central cities."

Suburban: A county or group of counties containing a central city, plus any contiguous counties that are linked socially and economically to the central city. In this report, suburban areas are categorized as those portions of metropolitan areas situated "outside central cities."

Rural: A county or group of counties not located inside a metropolitan statistical area. This category includes a variety of localities, including smaller cities with populations less than 50,000; however, it is primarily comprised of sparsely populated areas.

¹ *The Crime of Rape*, Bureau of Justice Statistics (NCJ- 96777), Special Report, 1985; *Female Victims of Violent Crime*, Bureau of Justice Statistics (NCJ-126826), report, 1991.