

Sexual Assault Facts

The Victim

In General:

1. Every two minutes, somewhere in America, someone is sexually assaulted.
2. In 2002, 7 out of every 8 rape victims were female.
3. In 2002, 1 in every 8 rape victims was male.
4. About 4 out of 10 sexual assaults take place at the victim's own home. 2 in 10 take place in the home of a friend, neighbor, or relative. One in 10 take place outside, away from home. About 1 in 12 take place in a parking garage.
5. Among people 12 and older who were raped, 13.3% of victims were black, compared to blacks being 12.3% of the U.S. population.
6. Black are about 10% more likely to be attacked than whites.
7. The most common reasons given by victims for not reporting these crimes are the belief that it is a private or personal matter and that they fear reprisal from the assailant.

Our Children:

8. About 44% of rape victims are under age 18.
9. 7% of girls in grades five to eight and 12% of girls in grades nine through twelve report being sexually abused.
10. 3% of boys in grades five through eight and 5% of boys in grades nine through twelve said they had been sexually abused.
11. Of sexually abused children in grades five through twelve, 48% of the boys and 29% of the girls had told no one about the abuse—not even a friend or sibling.
12. Ages 12-34 are the highest risk years. Risk peaks in the late teens: girls 16 to 19 are four times more likely than the general population to be victims of rape, attempted rape or sexual assault.
13. 93% of juvenile sexual assault victims knew their attacker; 34.2% were family members and 58.7% were acquaintances. Only 7% of the perpetrators were strangers to the victim.

The Criminal

1. The average age of rapists at arrest is 31. 48% were non-white; 22% of imprisoned rapists report that they are married.
2. In 1997 8% of all rape and sexual assault arrests were women.
3. Women commit approximately 20% of sex offenses against children.
4. Juveniles accounted for 16% of forcible rape arrestees in 1995 and 17% of those arrested for other sex offenses. Juvenile offenders are generally male and between the ages of 13 and 17.
5. In about 1 of every 3 sexual assaults, the perpetrator was intoxicated—30% with alcohol, 4% with drugs.
6. 98% of males who raped boys reported that they were heterosexual.

7. In 2001 only about 7% of rapes involved the use of a weapon—2% used a gun, and 4% used a knife. 86% of victims reported the use of physical force only. 7% were unsure.

The Punishment

1. 61% of rapes/sexual assaults are not reported to the police. Of the 39% of the attacks that are reported, there is only a 16.3% chance the rapist will end up in prison.
2. If the rape is reported to police, there is a 50.8% chance that an arrest will be made. If an arrest is made, there is an 80% chance of prosecution.
3. If there is a prosecution, there is a 58% chance of a felony conviction. If there is a felony conviction, there is a 69% chance the convict will spend time in jail.
4. Factoring in unreported rapes, about 6% of rapist—1 out of 16—will ever spend a day in jail. 15 out of 16 will walk free.
5. In 1977 they were approximately 265,000 convicted sex offenders under the authority of corrections agencies in the United States. 60% of these convicted sex offenders were supervised in the community, whether directly following sentencing or after a term of incarceration in jail or prison.

Sources: 2002 National Crime Victimization Survey; Sex Offenses and Offenders. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice; Commonwealth Fund Survey of the Health of Adolescent Girls, 1998; Commonwealth Fund Survey of the Health of Adolescent Boys, 1998; Sexual Assault of Young Children as Reported to Law Enforcement. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 2000; Sexual Abuse of Boys, Journal of the American Medical Association, December 2, 1998; “Sex Offenses and Offenders: An Analysis of Data on Rape and Sexual Assault,” U.S. Department Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1977.