Sexual Assault

fact sheet

Prevalence

- According to the latest National Crime Victimization Survey, 223,290 people were raped or sexually assaulted in 2003. Of these, 89% were women. (National Crime Victimization Survey, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2004)
- Thirty-nine percent of rape and sexual assault victims say they reported the crime to the police. (National Crime Victimization Survey, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2004)
- Twelve percent of sexual assault cases in emergency departments are drug-facilitated. (McGregor et al., An Exploratory Analysis of Suspected Drug-Facilitated Sexual Assault Seen in a Hospital Emergency Department, Journal of Women’s Health, 2003)
- More than two-thirds of rape and sexual assault victims are assaulted by someone they know, almost 40% by someone they know very well, such as a boyfriend or a spouse. Only 30% are sexually assaulted by strangers. (National Crime Victimization Survey, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002, Table 34)
- People ages 16-24 are raped and sexually assaulted at rates higher than any other age group. (National Crime Victimization Survey, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002, Table 3)
- African-Americans are sexually assaulted at rates 3 times higher than whites. (National Crime Victimization Survey, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002, Table 5)
- Nearly thirty percent of sexual assault victims are assaulted at or near their home, and 17% of them are assaulted at or near a friend’s or neighbor’s home. (National Crime Victimization Survey, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002, Table 61)
- Persons with disabilities are at 1.5 to 5 times the risk of sexual abuse and assault as are members of the general population. (Sobsey, R.N., Ed. D., Violence and Abuse in the Lives of People with Disabilities: The End of Silent Acceptance, 1994)
- Nearly 5% of college women are sexually assaulted during any given calendar year (Fisher, Cullen, and Turner, The Sexual Victimization of College Women, NII/BJS, 2000)
- Three in four American adolescents who were sexually assaulted were victimized by someone they knew well. Thirteen percent of sexual assaults were reported to police, 6% to child protective services, 5% to school authorities, and 1.3% to other authorities. Eighty-six percent of sexual assaults went unreported. (National Institute of Justice, Youth Victimization: Prevalence and Implications, 2003)

Impact

- In a study of recent female rape victims, a total of 73% were extremely fearful either at the time of the rape or afterwards about contracting HIV due to rape. (Resnick, Rape-related HIV Risk Concerns Among Recent Rape Victims, Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 2002)
- Only 32% of rape victims who sustained additional injuries were treated for those injuries. (Remison, Rape and Sexual Assault: Reporting to Police and Medical Attention, 1991-2000. Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002)
- Only one-third of the rape victims who received emergency room treatment received some type of STD screening. Of those, only 35% received STD medication. (Amey & Bishai, Measuring the Quality of Medical Care for Women Who Experience Sexual Assault, Annals of Emergency Medicine, 2002)
- The lifetime prevalence of PTSD among American adolescents ages 12-17 who have experienced sexual assault is 28.2% for boys and 29.8% for girls (compared to 5.4% for boys and 7.1% for girls who have not been sexually assaulted). (National Institute of Justice, Youth Victimization: Prevalence and Implications, 2003)

Economic Cost

- Fourteen percent of rape and sexual assault victims lost time from work as a result of their victimization; 28% of them lost 6-10 days. (National Crime Victimization Survey, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002, Tables 87, 89)
- Each year, victims of intimate partner rape lose an estimated 1.1 million days of activity. Mean daily earnings lost by intimate partner rape victims is $60. (CDC, Cost of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States, 2003)
- The total cost of sexual assault to victims was $18 million in 2002. (National Crime Victimization Survey, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002, Table 82)

Criminal Justice Response

- Law enforcement agencies across the country received 95,136 reports of forcible rape in 2002. (Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports, 2003)
- Rapists are serial criminals. In one study, 46% of rapists who were released from prison were rearrested within 3 years of their release for another crime — 18.6% for a violent offense, 14.8% for a property offense, 11.2% for a drug offense, and 20.5% for a public-order offense. (Bureau of Justice Statistics, Reelidivism of Prisoners Released in 1994, 2002)
- Even when rape is reported to law enforcement, there is only a 16.3% chance that the rapist will end up in prison. (Probability statistics compiled by NCFA from US Department of Justice statistics. See www.ncfa.org/studies/s229/s229.html)