Sexual violence encompasses a variety of criminal acts, ranging from sexual threats to unwanted contact to rape. It is widely recognized that sexual violence crimes are extremely underreported because of the stigma associated with these crimes. This stigma contributes to the difficulty of measuring sexual violence in official statistics. Other difficulties include inconsistent definitions of sexual assault and rape; differing reporting requirements to local, state, and national law enforcement; and low conviction rates. Sexual violence, however, remains pervasive and traumatizing to its victims. The statistics cited below are drawn from several large, national data sets and reports on various forms of sexual violence and “forcible rape.” While we know both men and women can be victims of sexual violence, most of these acts are perpetrated by male offenders against female victims. Most of the offenders are known to the victim in some capacity, including as friends, acquaintances, family members, or intimate partners. A recent report on the methods of reporting sexual violence from the National Research Council commissioned by the Bureau of Justice Statistics suggests it is likely that the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) is undercounting rape and sexual assault.2

Data from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) showed, in 2011:

- An estimated 243,800 rapes or sexual assaults of victims age 12 or older.3
- Females made up 85.7 percent of rape or sexual assault victims.4

According to FBI data, in 2011:

- Forcible rapes accounted for 7 percent of violent crimes reported to law enforcement.7
- Law enforcement cleared 41.2 percent of reported forcible rapes.8
- Forcible rapes accounted for 0.2 percent of all arrests.9

A study on youth victimization and perpetration (published in 2013) shows that in the years 2010–2011:

- Among youth age 14 to 21, 9 percent reported being the perpetrator of some type of sexual violence in their lifetime.10
- Among youth age 14 to 21, 4 percent (10 females and 39 males) reported being the perpetrators of attempted or completed rape.11

---

5 Ibid.
6 Truman and Planty, Criminal Victimization, 2010, figure 8.
In 2010, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) published a large national study providing much needed national data about rape and sexual assault. Some of the findings include:

- Nearly 1 in 5—or 22 million—women in the United States has been raped in her lifetime.\(^\text{12}\)

- More than 1.2 million Hispanic women were victims of rape in their lifetime, and approximately 37 percent were victims of rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate in their lifetime.\(^\text{13}\)

- \(\text{Approximately 1 in 71 men in the United States reports having been raped in his lifetime, which equals roughly 1.6 million men.}\(^\text{14}\)

- “Non-contact” and unwanted sexual experiences were the most common form of sexual violence experienced by both men and women; about 40 million women and 14 million men have had this experience during their lifetimes.\(^\text{15}\)

- Approximately 1 in 5 black and white non-Hispanic women and 1 in 7 Hispanic women have been raped at some point in their lives. More than one-quarter of women who identified as Native American/Alaska Native reported having been raped in their lifetime.\(^\text{16}\)

- Between one-fifth and one-quarter of black, white, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaska Native men experienced sexual violence other than rape in their lifetimes.\(^\text{17}\)

- Twenty-eight percent of male victims of completed rape were first raped when they were 10 years old or younger.\(^\text{18}\)

- Among female victims of rape, 51 percent reported that at least one perpetrator was a current or former intimate partner.\(^\text{19}\)

- Among female victims of rape, 41 percent reported having been raped by an acquaintance, 13 percent reported having been raped by a family member, and about 14 percent reported having been raped by a stranger.\(^\text{20}\)

- Seventy-five percent of female victims of sexual coercion reported perpetration by an intimate partner, and 46 percent of victims of unwanted sexual contact reported perpetration by an acquaintance.\(^\text{21}\)

- Nearly 1 in 10 women has been raped by an intimate partner in her lifetime.\(^\text{22}\)

- Of female victims of sexual violence other than rape, 92 percent reported only male perpetrators. Of male victims, 79 percent reported only female perpetrators.\(^\text{23}\)
• More than three-quarters of female victims of completed rape (80 percent) were first raped before their 25th birthday, with 42 percent experiencing their first completed rape before the age of 18.24

• Of the women who reported a completed rape before the age of 18, 35 percent also experienced a completed rape as an adult, compared to 14 percent of the women who did not report being raped prior to age 18.25

The Department of Defense published a report on sexual assault in the military for the fiscal year 2012. This report provided some important insight into the rates of sexual assault in the military. Some of the findings include:

• Military service members reported 3,374 sexual assaults—representing a 6 percent increase from fiscal year 2011. Of these reports, 2,558 were “unrestricted” reports, which is a 5 percent increase from fiscal year 2011.26

• The Armed Services received 981 “restricted” reports of sexual assault, but at the request of the victim, 165 of these were converted from “restricted” to “unrestricted” reports, which allow an official investigation.27

• Among unrestricted reports in the Armed Services, 62 percent involved service member-on-service member sexual assault.28

Rape and sexual assault occur at a high rate in our prisons and jails. Several reports show:

• An estimated 7 percent of state and federal prison and jail inmates reported having one or more incidents of sexual victimization by another inmate or facility staff from 2011 to 2012.29 Rates of inmate-on-inmate sexual victimization among prisoners were more than 3 times higher for females (6.9 percent) than for males (1.7 percent).30

From 2011 to 2012, 51 percent of state and federal prisoner reports of sexual victimization involved inmate-on-inmate victimization. About 52 percent of jail inmate reports of sexual victimization involved inmate-on-inmate victimization.31

In 2012, 1,720 juveniles incarcerated in youth correctional facilities reported incidents of sexual victimization. Approximately 17 percent of these reports involved nonconsensual youth-on-youth sexual acts while almost 81 percent involved incidents of staff sexual misconduct.32