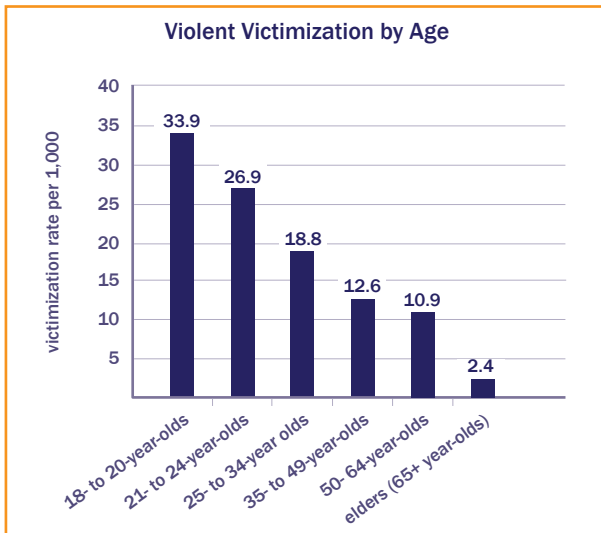


Elder Victimization

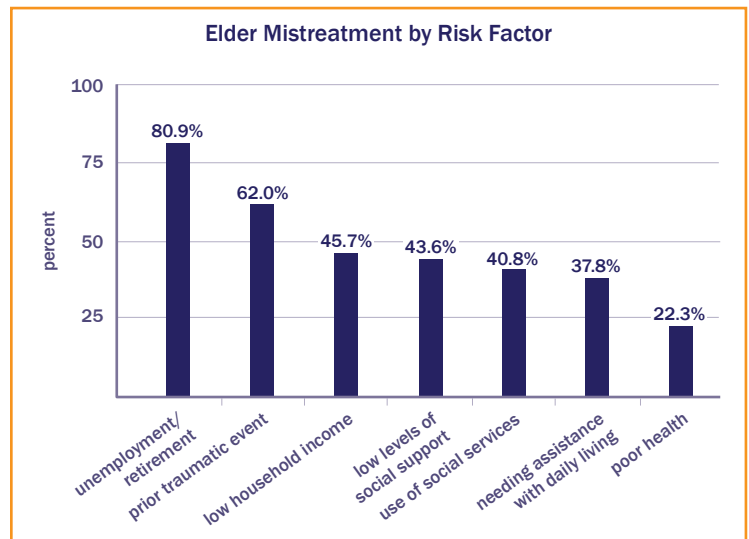
Elder victimization, like other crimes that are frequently perpetrated by acquaintances, family, friends, or other people known to the victim, often remains hidden. The extent and nature of elder victimization has only recently been recognized as a problem, and, as a result, there are few national-level studies of crimes against the elderly or official statistics. Victimization of older persons spans all types of crime, but financial exploitation has emerged as a particularly difficult problem. Elders are vulnerable to these types of crimes for many reasons, which range from their having more resources to exploit, to medical needs, to diminished capacity. While elders, overall, have the lowest victimization rates of any age category, the nature of elder victimization renders these crimes especially devastating and difficult for many victims.

- In 2010, people 65 years and older made up 15 percent of the U.S. population. This age group experienced the lowest rate of violent victimization at 2.4 such victimizations per 1,000, compared to 18-20 year olds, who experienced the most violent victimizations at 33.9 per 1,000.¹



- In one state,² between the years of 2005-2009, adults 65 or older were violently victimized at a rate of 204.5 per 100,000 residents per year. The rate of violent victimization of white adults 65 and older was 145.4 per 1,000; 744.9 per 1,000 black adults over 65 were violently victimized; 239.6 per 1,000 American Indian/Alaska Native adults over the age of 65 were victims of a violent crime; and 131.9 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander adults over the age of 65 were victims.³

- In adults ages 60 and older, 1.6 percent reported that they had experienced physical mistreatment in the past year and 5 percent were currently being financially exploited by family members.⁴ Less than 1 percent reported sexual mistreatment in the past year. Of those who were sexually abused, 16 percent reported to police and 53 percent said they were sexually mistreated by a family member.⁵
- In one state, between the years of 2005-2009, 50 percent of violent victimizations of the elderly involved serious violence, including murder, rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and kidnapping.⁶
- A 2010 Federal Trade Commission study discovered a trend in the increasing number of incidents of Internet crime reported by those individuals in the 50 to 59 and 60 and older categories.⁷
- Of those who reported both crimes and their age to the Federal Trade Commission in 2010, people 60 and older made 14 percent of fraud complaints and 14 percent of identity theft complaints.⁸
- Contextual factors associated with increased or decreased risk of elder mistreatment include the following: being unemployed or retired (81 percent); a prior traumatic event (62 percent); low household income (46 percent had less than \$35,000 per year combined for all members of the household); low levels of social support (44 percent); use of social services (41 percent); needing assistance with activities of daily living (38 percent); and poor health (22 percent).⁹



¹ Jennifer L. Truman, *Criminal Victimization, 2010*, (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 2011), data extrapolated from Table 9, accessed September 4, 2012, <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv10.pdf>.

² This statistical overview cites a study of elder victimization in only one state because comprehensive national-level data on this topic were not available.

³ Erica Smith, *Violent Crime against the Elderly Reported by Law Enforcement in Michigan, 2005-2009*, (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice 2012), 2, accessed September 4, 2012, <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/vcerlem0509.pdf>.

⁴ Ron Acierno et al., "The National Elder Mistreatment Study," (U.S. Department of Justice grant report, NCJ 226456, March 2009) 5, accessed September 4, 2012, <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/226456.pdf>.

⁵ Ibid., 46.

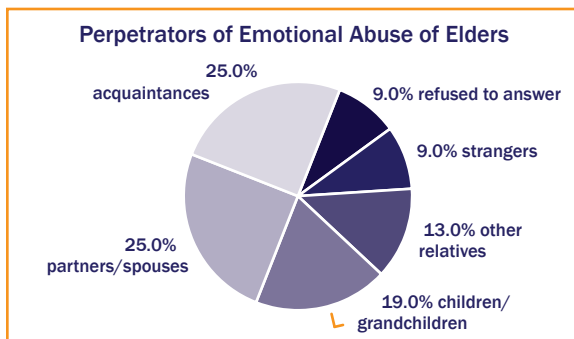
⁶ Smith, *Violent Crime against the Elderly*, 1.

⁷ Internet Crime Complaint Center, *2010 Internet Crime Report*, (National White Collar Crime Center, 2011), 6, accessed September 4, 2012, www.ic3.gov/media/annualreport/2010_IC3Report.pdf.

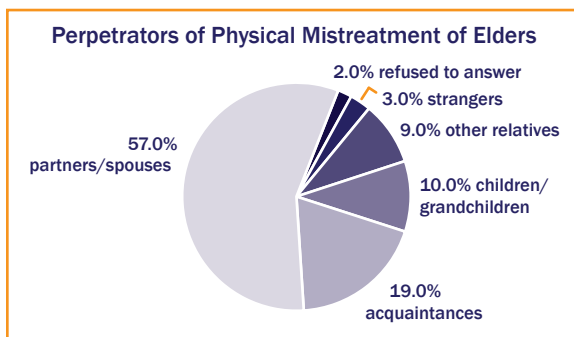
⁸ Federal Trade Commission, "Consumer Sentinel Network Data Book for January-December 2010," (2011), 10 and 13, accessed September 4, 2012, <http://www.ftc.gov/sentinel/reports/sentinel-annual-reports/sentinel-cy2010.pdf>.

⁹ Acierno, "The National Elder Mistreatment Study," 5.

- Adults between 60 and 70 are at 3 times the risk of being emotionally abused compared to adults over the age of 70.¹⁰
- About 5 percent (or 1 in 20) of adults 60 years of age and older reported emotional mistreatment in the past year. Of those, only 8 percent reported to law enforcement.¹¹
- Perpetrators of emotional abuse towards older adults were most likely family members, such as partners/spouses (25 percent), children/grandchildren (19 percent), and other relatives (13 percent). Twenty-five percent of perpetrators of emotional abuse were acquaintances, and 9 percent were strangers.¹²



- Seventy-six percent of perpetrators of physical mistreatment of older adults were family members. Of those perpetrators, 57 percent were partners or spouses, 10 percent were children/grandchildren, and 9 percent were other relative. Acquaintances accounted for 19 percent of physical mistreatment, and strangers made up 3 percent.¹³



- In one state, between the years of 2005-2009, 3 of 10 victims over the age of 65 who had reported violence were victimized by their own child or grandchild. Also, 38 percent of violent victimizations of female victims over the age of 65 involved the victim's child or grandchild, while 23 percent of male victims over the age of 65 involved the victim's child or grandchild.¹⁴

- In one state, the rate of elderly victimizations by male offenders was three times higher than the rate of elderly victimizations by female offenders.¹⁵
- In one state between 2005 and 2009, violent victimization by a stranger was two times greater for elderly men (65.5 per 100,000) than for elderly women (29.2 per 100,000).¹⁶
- In one state between 2005 and 2009, 85 percent of reported violence against adults 65 years old and older was intraracial.¹⁷
- In one study of adults reported to protective services for suspected physical elder abuse, 72 percent of older adults who had been abused within 30 days prior to examination had bruises; of those, 90 percent knew the cause of their bruises. In the same study, 56 percent of the abused older adults had at least one bruise 5 cm or larger compared to only 7 percent of subjects who were not abused.¹⁸
- In one state, about 4 out of 10 victims of a violent crime who were 65 or older were physically injured during the incident. Overall, 33 percent experienced a minor physical injury, 6.5 percent experienced a major physical injury such as death, rape, or sexual assault, and 60 percent were not physically injured.¹⁹
- In one survey, fewer than one percent of older adults reported sexual mistreatment in the past year. Approximately 16 percent of respondents had reported sexual mistreatment to the police. Family members accounted for about half of the reported sexual mistreatments, with partners and spouses making up 40 percent.²⁰
- In 2010, 585 people aged 65 or older were murdered, or 4.6 percent of all murder victims whose ages are known.²¹
- Of those 585 homicide victims age 65 or older, 270 (or 46 percent) were female, compared to 23 percent of homicide victims of all ages.²² ★

¹⁰ Ibid., 7.
¹¹ Ibid., 38.
¹² Ibid., 7.
¹³ Ibid., 9.
¹⁴ Smith, *Violent Crime against the Elderly*, 1.

¹⁵ Ibid., 3.
¹⁶ Ibid., 1.
¹⁷ Ibid., 4.
¹⁸ Aileen Wiglesworth et al., "Bruising as a Marker of Physical Elder Abuse," *Journal of the American Geriatric Society* 57, no. 7 (2009): 1191-1194, accessed September 4, 2012, <http://www.pekdadvocacy.com/documents/eldercare/Bruising.pdf>.
¹⁹ Smith, *Violent Crime against the Elderly*, 7.
²⁰ Acierno, "The National Elder Mistreatment Study," 9.
²¹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 2010*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 2011), Expanded Homicide Data Table 2, accessed September 4, 2012, <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s./2010/crime-in-the-u.s.-2010/tables/10shrtbl02.xls>.
²² Ibid.