

Elder Crime and Victimization

During the 2002-2003 period, there was a 22.6 percent decrease in violent crimes against persons age 65 or older. Victimization rates for violent crime were 2.7 per 1,000 persons age 65 or older, down from 3.5 per 1,000 persons in the 2000-2001 period.

(Bureau of Justice Statistics. 2004. *Criminal Victimization, 2003*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.)

On average, each year between 1992 to 1997, the elderly were victims of 2.7 million property and violent crimes; 2.5 million household burglaries, motor vehicle thefts, and household thefts; 46,000 purse snatchings and pocket pickings; and 165,000 non-lethal violent crimes including rape, robbery and aggravated and simple assault.

(Bureau of Justice Statistics. 2000. *Crimes Against Persons Age 65 or Older, 1992-1997*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.)

A 50-state survey found that Adult Protective Services received 472,813 reports of elder abuse in domestic and institutional settings in 2000. Eighty-four percent of the reports received were investigated and almost half were substantiated. Adults over 80 were the most frequent victims of abuse excluding self-neglect.

(The National Center on Elder Abuse. 2002. *A Response to Abuse of Vulnerable Adults: The 2000 Survey of State Adult Protective Services*. Washington, D.C.)

Self-neglect made up 39 percent of allegations investigated; caregiver neglect/abandonment made up 19 percent of cases; financial abuse/exploitation, 13 percent; physical abuse, 11 percent; emotional/verbal abuse, seven percent; and sexual abuse accounted for 1 percent of cases. (Ibid.)

Family members (e.g., spouse, parents, children, grandchildren, siblings, and other family members) accounted for 61.7 percent of perpetrators in substantiated reports. Spouse/intimate partners made up 30.2 percent of the perpetrators and facility and institution staff made up 4.4 percent of the perpetrators. (Ibid.)

More than 33,000 people 60 and older were treated for non-fatal assault-related injuries (not including sexual assault) in emergency room departments in 2001. Assaults happened almost equally at home (25.9 percent) and in public places (27.5 percent).

(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. August 29, 2003. "Non-fatal Physical Assault-Related Injuries Among Persons Aged 60 Years Treated in Hospital Emergency Departments - United States, 2001." *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 52(34): 812-816.)

Rates for persons aged 60 to 69 years were more than two times greater than those for the two older age categories (persons aged 70 to 79 and persons aged 80 and older). (Ibid.)

Compared with persons aged 20 to 59 years, a greater proportion of older assault victims were women, had fractures, and were hospitalized at the time of diagnosis. (Ibid.)

Older consumers – age 60 and over – reported a higher percentage of complaints for telemarketing frauds in 2003. Almost 34 percent of complaints were made by older victims compared to 27 percent in 2002.

(National Fraud Information Center. 2004. *2003 Telemarketing Fraud Report*. Washington, D.C.: National Consumer League.)

Based on complaints to the National Fraud Information Center, older consumers are especially vulnerable to certain kinds of telemarketing fraud. In 2003, 66 percent of the reports of sweepstakes fraud, 59 percent of the lottery club scams, and 52 percent of magazine sales scams were made by individuals 60 or older. (Ibid.)

The proportion of individuals losing at least \$5,000 in Internet frauds is higher for victims 60 years and older than it is for any other age category.

(National White Collar Crime Center. 2003. *2002 Internet Fraud Report*. Washington, D.C.: Federal Bureau of Investigation.)

The National Aging Resource Center on Elder Abuse estimates that 20 percent of elder abuse victims experience financial exploitation.

(Office of Community-Oriented Policing Services. 2003. *The Problem of Financial Crimes Against the Elderly*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.)

There were 852 homicides reported in 2002 of people 60 years of age and over.

(Federal Bureau of Investigation. 2003. *Crime in the United States, 2002*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.)

Although the number of homicides of people age 65 and older has been decreasing, this age group still has the highest percentage of homicides that occur during the commission of a felony.

(Bureau of Justice Statistics. 2004. *Homicide Trends in the United States*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.)

In a recent analysis of nursing home inspections and complaint investigations from 1999 to 2000, it was found that more than nine percent - 1,601 homes - were cited for causing actual harm or immediate jeopardy to residents. Over 30 percent (5,283 homes) were cited for an abuse violation that had the potential to cause harm.

(U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Government Reform, Special Investigations Division, Minority Staff. July 2001. *Abuse of Residents Is a Major Problem in U.S. Nursing Homes*.)

Abuse violations cited during annual state inspections of nursing homes have almost tripled since 1996 – 5.9 percent in 1996 to 16 percent in 2000. (Ibid.)

Between one and two million Americans age 65 or older have been injured, exploited, or otherwise mistreated by someone on whom they depended for care or protection.

(Bonnie, R. and Wallace, R. 2003. *Elder Mistreatment: Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation in an Aging America*. National Academy Press. Washington, D.C.)

There was an increase in older victims of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender violence between 2002 - 2003. Victims over 50 years of age increased 20 percent overall, and victims 60 and over increased 33 percent. (Patton, C. 2004. *Anti-Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Violence in 2003*. New York. National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs.)

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