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Rape/Sexual Assault Sexual Assault Awareness Month 2008 Statistics

Rape and sexual assault is a serious and destructive problem affecting hundreds of thousands of people each year. Ascertaining an accurate picture of the impact of sexual violence is a difficult task and the data vary greatly due to reasons such as underreporting, lack of standardized definitions, and how data are collected. The available data seriously underestimate the enormity of this problem.

Nationally

- According to the FBI, 92,455 forcible rapes were reported to the police at a rate of 30.9 crimes per 100,000 residents (FBI, 2007).
- The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) found that 41.4% of sexual assault victims reported the assault to the police. According to this report, sexual assaults are the type of violent crime least likely to be reported to the police (NCVS, 2007).
- The NCVS (2006) found that in 2006 there were 272,350 victims of rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault age 12 and older.
- Every 2 minutes, someone in the U.S. is sexually assaulted (Extrapolation from the NCVS, 2006)
- According to the NCVS (2006) male victims knew their assailant in 50% of sexual victimizations and female victims knew their assailant in 70% of sexual victimizations.
- Among college students nationwide, between 20% and 25% of women report experiencing completed or attempted rape (Fisher, Cullen, and Turner, 2000).
- Over 32,000 pregnancies result from rape every year (Holmes et al., 1996).
- Women are more likely than men to be victims of sexual violence; 78% of the victims of rape and sexual assault are women and 22% are men (Tjaden and Thoennes, 2000).
- Sexual violence victimization starts very early in life. More than half of all rapes of women (54%) occur before age 18; 22% of these occur before age 12. For men, 75% of all rapes occur before age 18, and 48% before age 12 (Ibid.).

Massachusetts

- In Fiscal Year 2006, 2,582 unduplicated incidents of sexual assault were reported to the 17 DPH-funded rape crisis centers and Llamanos, the statewide Spanish language helpline (Massachusetts Department of Public Health, 2008).
- Rape crisis centers provided educational activities to 33,545 people in fiscal year 2006 (Ibid.).
- There were a total of 12,171 hotline calls to rape crisis centers in 2006; of those, 7,191 were from survivors; 2,585 were from significant others; and 2,395 were from professionals (Ibid.).
- An estimated 15% of women and 7% of men have experienced unwanted sexual contact in their lifetime (MDPH, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey, 2007).
- It is estimated that there were 1,742 reports of forcible rape to Massachusetts law enforcement in 2006 (Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports, 2007 <http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/03cius.htm>). * Note- not all police departments are required to report their numbers through the Uniform Crime Reports. Therefore, this is an estimated number. Also, these refer to the more narrowly-defined federal category called forcible rape.
- Fifteen-percent of Massachusetts high school females and 5% of high school males reported ever experiencing sexual contact against their will. (Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2007).
- Students who had experienced sexual contact against their will exhibited higher rates of many risk behaviors, such as considering or attempting suicide, sexual intercourse, having ever been or gotten someone pregnant, and driving a car after drinking alcoholic beverages (Ibid.).
- Students who had ever experienced sexual violence against their will had significantly lower academic achievement than their peers (Ibid.).
- Sexual minority youth (i.e. students who either identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual) were significantly more likely than other students to report having experienced sexual contact against their will (34% vs. 19%) [Ibid.].