

Elderly Victims of Crime

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is a Research Report Derived from the
Idaho Crime Victimization Survey 2003
Conducted by the Idaho State Police
Statistical Analysis Center.

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Produced by

Idaho State Police
Statistical Analysis Center

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Introduction

From June to July 2003 the Idaho Research and Analysis Consortium, the Idaho State Police and Boise State University conducted the Idaho Crime Victimization Survey 2003. For this report concerning elderly victimization, respondents age 65 and older were extracted from the main data set. The census bureau defines persons age 55 to 64 as "older" and age 65 and above as "elder." Therefore, the population of respondents over 64 conforms with the census bureau's definition for the elderly.

The goal of this report is to identify the types of crime victimization typically affecting the elderly population in Idaho. As a comparison, occurrences of crime among the general population are used to help understand the prevalence of crime among the elderly.

Several crime categories are analyzed and presented along with demo-

graphic characteristics that help identify specific victimization patterns.

The crime categories included in this report include property and violent crime, further complemented by actual and lifetime experiences of domestic violence in all of its forms (emotional abuse, physical abuse, stalking/harassment and sexual abuse), hate crime, sexual harassment in the workplace, perceptions of safety and elderly satisfaction with police services.

The data utilized for this report was sponsored and collected under the guidance of the Idaho State Police. Direct and indirect financial contributions were made by S.T.O.P Violence Against Women Evaluation Program, Idaho Statistical Analysis Center, and the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence, to mention a few of a larger group of state local agencies and nonprofit organizations.

Methodology

The Idaho Crime Victimization Survey 2003 collected information from 1,265 individuals age 18 and older between June and July 2003. Out of the total number of respondents, 323 were age 65 or older. This subgroup of respondents identified as elder was analyzed separately from the

general victimization survey. The findings in this report represent statewide elderly victimization for most of the crime categories outlined in the original survey. The margin of error for the findings is calculated at plus/minus 5.5 percent points at 95% confidence level.

Demographics

Typically, more females than males respond to victimization surveys, especially when including a broader age range. But, for the Idaho Crime Victimization Survey 2003 there were almost as many males as females completing the survey. The age of the respondents ranged from 65 to 91. However, more were between ages 65 to 74 (55.3%) than older than 75 (44.7%). More than 90% reported having earned at least a high school diploma or GED. About 22% of these earned a Bachelors degree or higher.

Most elderly respondents reported living in households with annual incomes under \$30,000. The household size varied from 1 to 7 individuals, but most elderly households were composed of 2 people or less. About 14% of the elder survey respondents considered themselves disabled.

Most of the elderly respondents (66%) were married; 23% were widowed and less than 5% were single. The majority were long time Idaho residents and mostly living in urban areas.

Less than half of the elderly respondents (41.5%) said they drink alcohol. There were fewer elderly respondents saying they drink alcohol than the total group of individuals who participated in the survey. Nearly half (49.8%) of the general population age 18 or older admitted the use of alcohol.

One elder respondent admitted to using marijuana at least one to two times per week, although not in the presence of children.

About 2 of every 3 elderly households owned a firearm. This ratio mirrors the typical Idaho household owning a firearm in 2003.

Two thirds of elderly persons enjoy some form of intimate companionship; mostly by marriage.

About one third of elderly persons were widowed, divorced or single in 2003.

Most elderly have had a lifetime opportunity for education; more than 90% had a high school diploma or GED.

13.8% of the elderly consider themselves disabled.

Gender	n	%
Female	166	51.7
Male	155	48.9

Age		
n	323	
Mean	74	
Age Range	65 to 91 Years old	

Household Size		
Mean	1.85	
Median	2	
Size Range	1 to 7 persons	

Household Income		
n	234	
Median Range	\$20,000 to \$29,999	

Marital Status	n	%
Married	213	65.9
Widowed	75	23.2
Divorced	17	5.3
Single	12	3.7
Living with partner	3	0.9
Involved in intimate relationship but not living together	1	0.3

Educational Level	n	%
Less than High School	30	9.4
High School or GED	107	33.4
Some College	100	31.3
Associates Degree	12	3.8
Bachelors Degree	37	11.6
Master Degree	25	7.8
Doctorate Degree	9	2.8

Do you consider yourself disabled?		
Yes	44	13.8
No	275	86.2

Property Crime

Crime Rates per 1,000 Households

Elderly populations, as well as the general household population, experienced crime victimization at different rates for different types of crime. Although total property victimization has generally decreased in Idaho, the households where the elderly live reported large levels of property crime in 2003.

For every 1,000 elderly households in Idaho, 6 were affected by pocket picking in 2003. Within the general population, 11 of every 1,000 households experienced this type of victimization.

Pocket Picking

Elderly: 6.2

General Population: 11.9

Theft from Outside the Home

Elderly: 34.1

General Population: 55.3

Theft from Inside Vehicle

Elderly: 34.1

General Population: 52.9

Property crime affecting the elderly in a more disproportionate manner in comparison to the general population were incidents of vandalism, theft of items left outside the home, theft from items left inside vehicles, and theft of vehicles.

Property crime least affecting elderly households in comparison to the general population were incidents involving theft of parts attached to a vehicle; like hubcaps, battery, gasoline, etc., and burglary.

Elderly victims of property crime reported the incidents to the police 45.5% of the time. The reasons given for not reporting to the police, included: The matter was too trivial (46.7%), didn't want to involve police (10%), nothing could be done (20%), or unspecified other reasons (23.3%).

Elderly persons living in households with low income were similarly likely to be affected by property crime as elders in the upper income categories. However, households with annual incomes lower than \$40,000, reported remarkably more theft of items left outside their homes, theft from inside vehicles and vandalism in comparison to the elderly living in households with higher incomes.

Theft of Vehicle Parts

Elderly: 9.3

General Population: 26.1

Theft of Vehicle

Elderly: 3.1

General Population: 4.8

Vandalism

Elderly: 46.3

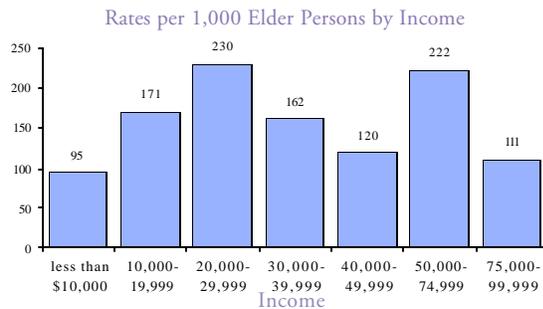
General Population: 62.5

Burglary

Elderly: 15.5

General Population: 36.4

Elderly Property Crime Rates by Income Category

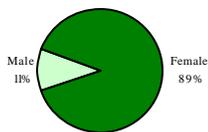


Violent Crime

25% of threats or attacks with thrown objects were reported to the police. The one threat of murder was also reported.

The main reason for not reporting the incidents to the police was that the matter was too trivial or small.

Lifetime Rape Victimization



Violent crime is classified as sexual and non-sexual in nature. Sexual violent crime includes incidents of sexual assault, rape and attempt to commit rape. Non-sexual violent crime includes murder, attempt to commit murder, and robbery. The category of violent crime also includes threats or attacks during a verbal confrontation and physical assault.

Approximately 12 of every 1,000 elder persons were affected by violent crime. In comparison, the elderly group experienced 9 times less violent crime than the general population. The typical victim of violent crime is under age 34 with an annual household income under \$30,000.

There were no elderly victimizations reported for robbery, assault with a firearm, assault with physical force nor threats or attacks during a verbal confrontation. For the period covered by the victimization survey, no elderly victimization for crimes related to sexual assault or rape to the elderly was reported.

From the violent crime category, only threats or attacks by throwing an object and threats of murder affected the elderly. Threats or attacks with a thrown object affected 9 of every 1,000 elderly persons while the crime rate for the general population was reported to affect 5.5 out of every 1,000 persons.

Although only one elder person received a murder threat, this represents a rate of 3 elders for every 1,000 elderly persons. The general population reported 6.3 victims of mur-

der threats for every 1,000 persons.

The potential for the elderly to experience violent crime, based on findings from the current victimization survey, is minimum for sexual victimization and lower than it is for the general population for all types of violent crime, except for threats or attacks with a thrown object. The rate of threats or attacks with thrown objects was almost twice as high for the elderly than it was the general population.

The elderly reporting these type of victimizations were living in households with annual income between \$30,000 to \$49,999. The person receiving the murder threat was a male who had less than high school education, the elderly threatened or attacked with thrown objects were one male and two females and had high school or some college education. All of the above incidents were reported by elderly living in urban areas.

Lifetime Rape Victimization

Although no sexual assault was reported for the elderly in 2003, 9 of 323 or what is equivalent to 2.8% of the respondents admitted to having experienced rape at least once in their lifetime and only one of them received counseling or professional services as a result of the rape. Furthermore, one of the 9 elderly victims who experienced lifetime rape victimization was male.

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

20% of the elderly remained employed in 2003.

The rate of employment for people 65 and older is presumably low, given that most have reached retirement age. Of the 323 elderly respondents to the Idaho Crime Victimization Survey, 62 or 19.2% were employed in 2003.

Sexual harassment in the workplace typically affects employees at a decreasing rate as age increases. Employees 18 to 24 experienced 52.4% of all sexual harassment in the workplace in 2003. By comparison, elderly sexual harassment victimization in the workplace is negligible or almost nonexistent.

Rates of sexual harassment in the workplace for the elderly are negligible.

About 3% or 2 out of the 62 elder employees reported some form of sexual harassment in the workplace; most including unwelcome or obscene jokes.

Hate Crime

The feeling of vulnerability to hate crime is greater among the elderly living in households with annual income between \$75,000 to \$99,999.

During the year 2003, 6 out of every 1,000 elderly persons reported actual hate crime victimization in 2003. However, experiencing hate crime and feeling vulnerable to hate crime are not the same, even though some would argue that feeling vulnerable to hate crime is like living in fear of becoming a victim even if a person never experiences the actual hate victimization.

(20%), and religion (7%) among a combination of other reasons.

Males as well as females are similarly likely to be affected by hate crime.

About 50 of every 1,000 elderly feel they are vulnerable to hate crime; but only 25 of every 1,000 elderly have ever been victimized by hate crime at least once in their lifetime.

The typical reasons for feeling vulnerable to hate crime for the general population in 2003 were, in descending order, race, religion, age, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation and physical disabilities. Comparatively, the elderly are more concerned with becoming targets for hate crime due to their age, race or religion, but not for gender, sexual orientation or physical disabilities, even when 20 of the elder respondents indicated they consider themselves disabled.

Age is the main reason the elderly feel they can become victims of hate crime.

The reasons for feeling vulnerable include age (33%), race

Domestic Violence

Elderly females reported 9.3 times more lifetime domestic violence than elderly males.

The elderly were victims of emotional abuse only. No physical or sexual abuse was reported in 2003.

Incidents of domestic violence are more prevalent among younger age groups. As such, people under 45 experienced more than 70% of all domestic violence. Elderly populations were the least affected by domestic violence in 2003.

Domestic violence accounts for incidents of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. The elderly population reported neither physical nor sexual victimization in 2003. Emotional abuse (as defined by name calling, control of money, friends and time, or being treated in a belittling way) was the only form of domestic violence reported for the elderly in 2003. Emotional abuse was reported at the rate of 9 elderly victims for every 1,000 elders.

Lifetime Domestic Violence

About 7% of the 323 elders responding to the 2003 victimization survey had been victims of domestic violence at least once in their lifetime.

Ninety percent (90%) of all elderly lifetime victims of domestic violence were female; 10% male. These ratios represent that 123 of every 1,000 elderly females experienced domestic violence at least once in their lifetime; a rate 9.3 times higher for elderly females than elderly males.

Perceptions of Crime and Satisfaction with Police Services

Satisfaction with police services increases as age and income increase.

Elderly populations are slightly more fearful of crime than the general population. For example, 53% of elderly respondents thought that crime had increased in Idaho, while only 49.8% of the general population also thought crime had increased. Paradoxically, the perception of increased crime was opposite to actual crime patterns. Most crime rates actually reduced in 2003 (source: police reports and the Idaho Crime Victimization Survey 2003).

Satisfaction with Police Services

As the age of the respondent increased, a higher degree of satisfaction with services provided by the police was expressed. In addition, elderly females were more satisfied with police services than elderly males.

The elderly living in households with annual income under \$40,000 were the least satisfied with police services, as were those living in the more rural counties.