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FROM 2003 TO 2013 RATES OF NONFATAL VIOLENT CRIME AGAINST THE ELDERLY INCREASED 27 PERCENT

WASHINGTON – From 2003 to 2013 rates of nonfatal violent crime against the elderly increased 27 percent, from 3.4 to 4.4 victimizations per 1,000 persons age 65 or older and property crime declined 50 percent, the Justice Department’s Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) announced today. However, crime rates for elderly persons were consistently lower than rates for persons in younger age groups.

Nonfatal violent crime includes rape or sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault and simple assault. From 2003 to 2013, the elderly were victims in approximately 2 percent of all violent crimes and 2 percent of all serious violent crimes (rape or sexual assault, robbery and aggravated assault). However, the elderly made up about 21 percent of the population age 12 or older. If rates are calculated from 1994 to 2013, the nonfatal violent crime rate for the elderly declined 41 percent, from 7.4 to 4.4 victimizations per 1,000 persons, and the property crime rate declined 48 percent, from 141.0 to 73.9 victimizations per 1,000 households.

The majority (93 percent) of crimes against the elderly were property crimes, including household burglary, motor vehicle theft and other theft. From 2003 to 2013, for every violent crime committed against the elderly, 13 property crimes were committed against households headed by an elderly person. In comparison, three property crimes were committed against households headed by a person ages 25 to 49 for every violent crime, and five property crimes were committed against households headed by a person ages 50 to 64 for every violent crime.

As with nonfatal violence, the homicide rate of the elderly was lower than the rates of all other age groups. The elderly homicide rate declined 44 percent, from 3.7 homicides per 100,000 in 1993 to 2.1 in 2011. In comparison, the homicide rate declined 55 percent for persons ages 12 to 24, 42 percent for persons ages 25 to 49, and 36 percent for persons ages 50 to 64.

Between 2003 and 2013—

- More than half (56 percent) of elderly violent crime victims reported the victimization to police, compared to more than a third (38 percent) for persons ages 12 to 24.

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- A smaller percentage of elderly victims suffered an injury (18 percent), compared to victims ages 12 to 24 (30 percent) and ages 25 to 49 (25 percent).
- Approximately 45 percent of elderly victims who were injured received some type of medical treatment. No statistically significant differences were detected between age groups in the percentage treated for injury or location of treatment (e.g., hospital).
- Similar to other age groups, about 1 in 10 (11 percent) elderly violent crime victims received assistance from victim service agencies. However, elderly victims of serious violent crime received more assistance (21 percent) compared to other age groups (10 percent to 13 percent).
- About 59 percent of nonfatal violent crime committed against the elderly occurred at or near their home while 35 percent occurred at other locations, such as commercial places, parking lots or garages, open public areas and public transportation.
- Violent and property crime rates were highest among the elderly who lived in urban areas compared to those who lived in suburban or rural areas.
- Elderly persons who had disabilities were as likely as those without disabilities to experience violent victimization.
- Approximately 2.1 million persons age 65 or older (5 percent) were victims of one or more incidents of identity theft in 2012. Among elderly identity theft victims, existing credit cards (3 percent) or bank accounts (1 percent) were the most common types of misused information.

These findings were based on data from BJS's National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), which measures nonfatal crimes reported and not reported to police. This report also contains identity theft data from the Identity Theft Supplement (ITS) to the NCVS and homicide data from the CDC's Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS).

The report, *Crimes Against the Elderly, 2003–2013* (NCJ 248339), was written by BJS statistician Rachel E. Morgan and BJS intern Britney J. Mason. The report, related documents and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics' statistical publications and programs can be found on the BJS website at <http://www.bjs.gov/>.

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The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), headed by Assistant Attorney General Karol V. Mason, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice, and assist victims. OJP has six components: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking. More information about OJP can be found at <http://www.ojp.gov>.