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Injuries from Crime

ACQUISITIONS

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Between 1979 and 1986 an estimated 63 million persons in the United States were victims of rape, robbery, or assault. Of this total, 17.7 million persons suffered an injury during the crime. About 1 in 6 of these injured victims survived serious injuries — gunshot or knife wounds, broken bones, teeth knocked out, loss of consciousness, internal injuries, or unspecified injuries requiring a hospital stay of at least 2 days. These estimates come from the National Crime Survey (NCS), a continuing survey conducted in a nationwide sample of households.

Other findings from this study include:

- An estimated 28% of violent crime victims were injured during the crime; over 13% had an injury serious enough to require some medical attention; for 7% the injury was serious enough to require hospital care; and for 1% a hospital stay was necessary.
- On average, 2.2 million victims were injured from crime each year between 1979 and 1986; 1 million received medical care; a half million were treated in an emergency room or hospital.
- The injury rate per 1,000 persons age 12 or older was approximately the same in 1986 as in 1973, when the NCS began. Over the same 13-year period the rate for violent crimes declined 11%. The difference in trends indicates that a higher proportion of crime victims were injured in 1986, compared to 1973.
- Among those victims injured in violent crimes, an estimated 1% received gunshot

On average more than 2.2 million persons suffered injuries from violent crime each year between 1979 and 1986. The National Crime Survey, a continuing investigation of Americans' experience with crime, provides detailed information on the nature and extent of these injuries.

This Special Report examines the type and severity of injury, the amount of medical care that victims received, and the crimes that caused the injuries. It identifies how these factors are associated with characteristics of crime victims — sex, race, ethnicity, age, income, occupation, and place of residence. The report's comparison of injuries from crime with other injuries or conditions requiring medical treatment gives a valuable perspective on the impact of violent crime on the public health of the Nation.

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Acting Director

wounds, 3% received knife wounds, and 6% suffered broken bones or teeth knocked out.

- Rates of injury from violent crime were highest for males, blacks, persons age 19 to 24, persons who were separated or divorced, those earning less than \$10,000 per year, and residents of central cities.
- When injured, black crime victims and elderly crime victims were substantially more likely than others to require overnight hospitalization.

Injuries from crime: Overview, 1979-86

| | Average annual number |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Injured crime victims | 2,210,760 |
| Medical care received | 1,054,020 |
| In emergency room or hospital | 537,100 |
| Overnight stay | 87,650 |
| Crime resulting in injury | |
| Rape | 72,490 |
| Robbery | 419,890 |
| Aggravated assault | 676,550 |
| Simple assault | 1,041,830 |
| Types of injuries | |
| Bruises, cuts, scratches, etc. | 1,871,710 |
| Broken bones or teeth | 141,460 |
| Loss of consciousness | 83,780 |
| Knife wounds | 76,930 |
| Internal injuries | 63,680 |
| Gunshot wounds | 22,870 |

- Unemployed persons had rates of injury three times higher than the national rate, while retired persons experienced injury rates about a-seventh of that for the Nation.
- Injuries caused by crime account for more than 700,000 days of hospitalization annually — about 30% of the hospital days for traffic accident injuries and just over 1% of the days resulting from heart disease.
- The average hospital stay for victims of crime, 9 days, was about the same as the stay for those undergoing cancer treatment and 2 days longer than the average hospitalization for those injured in traffic accidents or receiving treatment for heart disease.

Injuries in criminal victimization

This report shows the likelihood, nature, and extent of criminal victimization injuries and compares them to injuries from other causes. The data come primarily from the NCS in which from 1979 through 1986 an annual average of 116,000 respondents in 55,000 households were asked about their experience with crime in the 6 months preceding the interview. Crime victims are questioned in detail about the offense, the offender, and the consequences of the crime.

Because the data are gathered from a nationwide sample of households, NCS crimes include crimes not reported to the police as well as those reported. To be considered injured, the victim must have suffered physical or bodily harm during a rape, robbery, or assault. Mental and emotional trauma, although very real consequences of crime for victims, are not measured by the NCS and therefore are not discussed in this report.

NCS questions about injury and medical care

What were the injuries you suffered, if any? Anything else? (Mark all that apply)

- ☐ None
- ☐ Raped
- ☐ Attempted rape
- ☐ Knife wounds
- ☐ Gunshot, bullet wounds
- ☐ Broken bones or teeth knocked out
- ☐ Internal injuries
- ☐ Knocked unconscious
- ☐ Bruises, black eye, cuts, scratches, swelling, chipped teeth
- ☐ Other (Specify)

Were you injured to the extent that you received any medical care after the attack, including self treatment?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Where did you receive this care? Anywhere else? (Mark all that apply)

- ☐ At the scene
- ☐ At home/neighbor's/friend's
- ☐ Health unit at work, school, first aid station, at a stadium, park, etc.
- ☐ Doctor's office/health clinic
- ☐ Emergency room at hospital/emergency clinic
- ☐ Other (not hospital) (Specify)
- ☐ Hospital

Did you stay overnight in the hospital?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

How many days did you stay?
— Number of days

Trends in violent crime and injuries

The 1986 rate of crime injury—the number per 1,000 persons age 12 or older—was the same as the rate in 1973 (figure 1). However, the rate of violent victimization in 1986, compared to 1973, was 11% lower. This difference between injury and victimization rates indicates that a victim of a violent crime in 1986 was more likely to sustain physical injury than was a victim of a violent crime in 1973.

Violent crime rates rose 14% between 1975 and the peak in 1981; injury rates from violent crime rose 16% over the same period, also peaking in 1981. The violent crime rate in 1985 compared to that in 1981 dropped 19%, and the rate of injury from violent crime, 1985 compared to 1981, dropped 18%. The decline in the injury rate between the 2 years was largely attributable to a lower rate of minor injury. The serious injury rate for each of the years 1973 through 1986 remained generally constant; some evidence indicates a slight decline in serious injury when 1985 is compared to 1981.¹

¹The categories of "serious" and "minor" injury are used for analytic purposes and should not suggest that "minor" injuries are not serious for the victim.

Injury trends, 1973-86

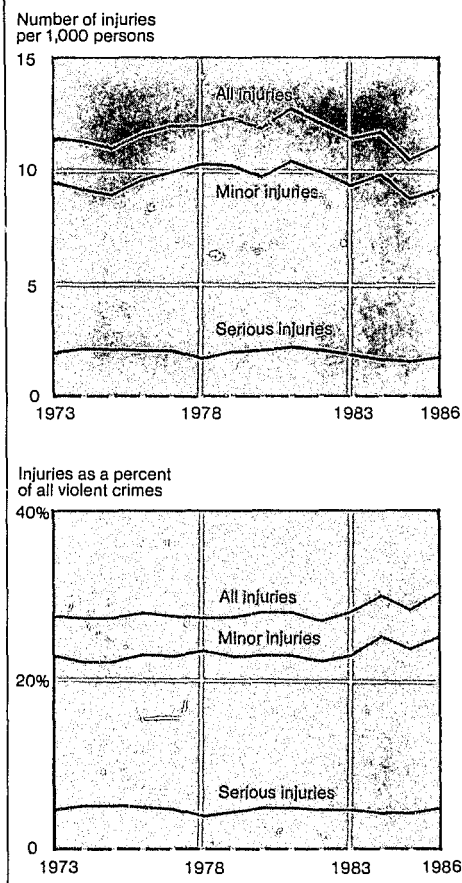


Figure 1

Table 1. Number and rate of criminal victimizations with injury, by severity of injury, type of injury, and level of medical care, 1979-86

| | Average annual | | Percent of criminal victimization injuries |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|--|
| | Number | Rate ^a | |
| Total | 2,210,760 | 11.7 | 100 % |
| Severity of injury ^b | | | |
| Serious | 357,830 | 1.9 | 16 % |
| Minor | 1,826,600 | 9.7 | 83 |
| Type of injury | | | |
| Gunshot wounds | 22,870 | .1 | 1 % |
| Knife wounds | 76,930 | .4 | 3 |
| Broken bones, teeth | 141,460 | .7 | 6 |
| Internal injuries | 63,680 | .3 | 3 |
| Loss of consciousness | 83,780 | .4 | 4 |
| Bruises, cuts, scratches, etc. | 1,871,710 | 9.9 | 85 |
| Other | 353,250 | 1.9 | 16 |
| Injury and medical care ^c | | | |
| No medical care received | 1,155,500 | 6.1 | 52 % |
| Medical care received | 1,054,020 | 5.6 | 48 |
| Outside an emergency room or hospital | 516,920 | 2.7 | 23 |
| In an emergency room or hospital | 537,100 | 2.8 | 24 |
| Did not stay overnight | 449,450 | 2.4 | 20 |
| Stayed overnight | 87,650 | .5 | 4 |

Note: Percents may not add to total because of rounding and omission of "don't know" and "not ascertained" categories. Types of injury add to more than total because victims may have sustained more than one type of injury.

^aNumber of injury victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older.

^bSerious injuries include gunshot or knife wounds, broken bones, loss of teeth, internal injuries, loss of consciousness,

and undetermined injuries requiring 2 or more days of hospitalization. Minor injuries include bruises, black eyes, cuts, scratches, swelling, and undetermined injuries requiring less than 2 days of hospitalization.

^cMedical care is any care or treatment given for physical injuries by a trained medical provider, by a nonmedical person, or by the victim.

During the period of 1979 through 1986 an annual average of 7.8 million violent crime victimizations were reported in the NCS. It is possible for one person to be victimized more than once during a year. Previous BJS research, which accounted for multiple victimizations, estimated that in a year approximately 3% of the Nation's population age 12 or older are victims of the violent crimes of rape, robbery, or assault.²

The 3% represents a conservative estimate of the total number of victims of violent crime because it includes only the violent crimes measured by the NCS—rape, robbery, and assault. Offenses like murder, manslaughter, kidnapping, and child abuse are not included.

Types of injury and violent victimization

An annual average of 2.2 million violent victimizations, 1979 through 1986, resulted in injuries (table 1). Of these, 16% of the injured, over 350,000 each year, were seriously injured. To be classified as seriously injured, a crime victim sustained at least one of the following:

- gunshot or knife wound
- one or more bones broken, chipped, or cracked
- teeth knocked out
- internal injury
- loss of consciousness
- undetermined injuries requiring 2 or more days in the hospital.

The incidence of more serious injuries ranged from .1 per 1,000—almost 23,000 victims annually—for gunshot wounds, to .7 per 1,000—141,000 victims—for broken bones or teeth knocked out.³

The most frequent injuries were bruises, black eyes, cuts, scratches, swelling, chipped or cracked teeth, or undetermined injuries requiring less than 2 days hospitalization. Almost 10 per 1,000 persons 12 or older, comprising 85% of all injured victims, incurred one or more minor injuries. Aggregating injuries into serious and minor categories must be somewhat arbitrary. Long-term health problems could result from minor as well as serious injuries.

²The risk of violent crime, BJS Special Report, NCJ-97119, May 1985.

³See Philip J. Cook, "The case of the missing victims: Gunshot woundings in the National Crime Survey," *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* (March 1985) 1(1): 91-102, and *The use of weapons in committing crimes*, BJS Special Report, NCJ-99643, January 1986, for analyses of NCS gunshot wound estimates.

Table 2. Type of injury that victims of crime sustained, by level of medical care received, 1979-86

| Type of injury | Total | Percent of injured victims who received: | | | |
|----------------------------|-------|--|--|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| | | No medical care | Medical care outside an emergency room or hospital | Emergency room or hospital care | Did not stay overnight |
| Serious | 100% | 13% | 21% | 44% | 21% |
| 2 or more serious injuries | 100 | — | 6 | 32 | 60 |
| Gunshot wound only | 100 | — | 12 | 34 | 47 |
| Knife wound only | 100 | 19 | 20 | 46 | 16 |
| Broken bones/teeth only | 100 | 10 | 25 | 55 | 9 |
| Internal injuries only | 100 | 13 | 31 | 42 | 14 |
| Loss of consciousness only | 100 | 26 | 26 | 43 | 5 |
| Minor | 100% | 60% | 24% | 16% | 1% |

Note: Minor injuries include bruises, black eyes, cuts, scratches, swelling, and undetermined injuries requiring less than 2 days of hospitalization. Victims who sustained both serious and minor injuries are tabulated only in the specified

serious injury category. Undetermined serious injuries are omitted. Medical care is defined on table 1.
— Too few cases to obtain a statistically reliable estimate.

Table 3. Type of injury sustained by victims of crime who received medical care, by where the medical care was received, 1979-86

| Type of injury | Average annual number of victimizations | Of all victims who had medical care, percent who received care at: | | | | |
|----------------------------|---|--|-------------------|------------------------------|----------------|----------|
| | | The scene | Home ^a | Doctor's office ^b | Emergency room | Hospital |
| Serious | 309,300 | 7% | 14% | 19% | 55% | 48% |
| 2 or more serious injuries | 38,150 | 9 | — | 9 | 58 | 77 |
| Gunshot wound only | 18,790 | — | — | — | 61 | 65 |
| Knife wound only | 57,160 | 6 | 21 | 9 | 59 | 48 |
| Broken bones/teeth only | 105,050 | 5 | 12 | 29 | 55 | 40 |
| Internal injuries only | 37,160 | — | 14 | 31 | 50 | 41 |
| Loss of consciousness only | 44,600 | 16 | 23 | 15 | 53 | 33 |
| Minor | 739,980 | 9% | 40% | 18% | 32% | 20% |

Note: Minor injuries include bruises, black eyes, cuts, scratches, swelling, and undetermined injuries requiring less than 2 days of hospitalization. Victims who sustained both serious and minor injuries are tabulated only in the specified serious injury category. Undetermined serious injuries are omitted. Medical care is defined on table 1. Sites where vic-

tims received medical care add to more than 100% because victims may have received care at more than one place.
— Too few cases to obtain a statistically reliable estimate.

^aHome includes the home of a neighbor or friend.

^bDoctor's office includes health units.

Health care and violent victimization

Another dimension of the severity of injuries from crime is the extent of health care that victims require. Almost half of injured victims received some medical care, with almost a fourth being treated in an emergency room or hospital. One in twenty-five stayed overnight or longer in a hospital.

An estimated 60% of victims with two or more serious injuries and almost 50% of those with gunshot wounds stayed at least 1 night or longer in the hospital (table 2). An additional third of the victims with multiple serious injuries or gunshot wounds were treated in a hospital or emergency room and released. Approximately 1 in 10 seriously injured victims reported that they

had received no medical care after the crime.

When seriously injured victims received medical attention, the care was most often given in an emergency room or hospital (table 3). Over two-thirds of those with gunshot wounds or with two or more serious injuries were treated at a hospital. About 5 in every 10 victims receiving medical care were treated in an emergency room. About 3 in 10 victims with broken bones, teeth knocked out, or internal injuries received care at a doctor's office; for other types of serious injury, fewer than 2 in 10 victims who had medical attention were treated at a health unit or physician's office, at the scene of the crime, or in a private home.

Injury by type of crime

An estimated 28% of all victims of attempted or completed violent crimes were injured. The percent varied by type of crime:

- 39% of rape victims were injured
- 33% of robbery victims were injured
- 32% of the victims of aggravated assault sustained injuries and
- 25% of simple assault victims reported being injured.

Though rape victims were the most likely to report an injury, victims of aggravated assault were about twice as likely as rape victims to have sustained a serious injury (table 4). Victims of aggravated assault

were also more likely than other victims of violent offenses to have received treatment in a hospital or emergency room and to have stayed in a hospital at least 1 night. By contrast, victims of simple assault, the most numerous of violent victimizations, were the least likely to have sustained an injury and, when injured, to have required hospitalization or emergency room treatment.

An annual average of about a half million injured crime victims were treated in emergency rooms and hospitals from 1979 through 1986 (table 5). Estimates of medical care received by victims each year included approximately 450,000 emergency room visits or hospital stays that were not

overnight and nearly 90,000 hospitalizations for at least 1 night. Injured victims of aggravated assaults, about 30% of all injured crime victims, accounted for 45% of those treated in emergency rooms and 65% of those injured victims hospitalized for at least 1 night. Simple assault victims were about 47% of those injured in violent crimes but about 5% of those requiring hospitalization for at least 1 night.

Injured victims of crime

Population groups most likely to be injured as a result of a criminal victimization were males, blacks, those age 19 to 24, persons who attended at least a year of high school but less than a year of college, separated or divorced persons, those with family incomes of less than \$10,000, and residents of central cities (table 6). The least likely to be injured were females, whites, widows, those 50 or older, persons with incomes of \$30,000 or more, those who had attended college for a year or more, and those who lived outside central cities.

Males were more likely to be injured than females. When injured, a higher percentage of males than females sustained serious injuries and spent at least 1 night in the hospital or were treated in a hospital or emergency room. Blacks had higher injury rates and a larger proportion of serious injuries than did whites. A higher percentage of blacks than whites or other racial groups like American Indians, Asians, or Pacific Islanders received health care, particularly hospital or emergency room treatment, for their injuries. Injured black victims accounted for 14% of all injured violent crime victims but 29% of those victims whose injuries resulted in a hospital stay of at least 1 night.

Hispanics did not differ statistically from non-Hispanics on the likelihood or severity of injuries or on the extent of health care received for injuries.

Although persons age 12 to 18 were second only to those age 19 to 24 in their probability of being injured, they were less likely than those in other age groups to be seriously injured, to need medical attention for their injuries, or to receive emergency room treatment or hospitalization for their injuries. Persons age 50 or older were less likely to be injured than those under age 50. Yet, when injured, those 50 or older sustained a higher percentage of serious injuries and were more likely to require at least 1 night in the hospital for treatment of

Table 4. Type of crime for all injured victims, by severity of injury and level of medical care, 1979-86

| | Type of crime for all injured victims | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--------|---------|--------------------|----------------|
| | All violent crimes | Rape | Robbery | Aggravated assault | Simple assault |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Severity of injury | | | | | |
| Serious | 16% | 19% | 21% | 38% | * |
| Minor | 83 | 80 | 77 | 62 | 99 |
| Level of medical care received | | | | | |
| No medical care | 52% | 46% | 49% | 38% | 63% |
| Medical care outside an emergency room or hospital | 23 | 20 | 24 | 24 | 23 |
| Emergency room or hospital care | | | | | |
| Did not stay overnight | 20 | 29 | 21 | 30 | 13 |
| Stayed overnight | 4 | 5 | 5 | 8 | — |
| Average annual number of injured victims | 2,210,760 | 72,490 | 419,890 | 676,550 | 1,041,830 |

Note: Percents may not add to total because of rounding and omission of "don't know" and "not ascertained" categories. Severity of injury and medical care are defined on table 1. Victims who sustained both serious and minor in-

juries are tabulated only in the serious injury category. *By definition assaults that result in serious injuries are aggravated assaults. — Less than .5%.

Table 5. Level of medical care received by injured victims of crime, by type of crime, 1979-86

| Type of crime | Total | Percent of injured victims who received: | | | |
|--|-----------|--|--|---------------------------------|------------------|
| | | No medical care | Medical care outside an emergency room or hospital | Emergency room or hospital care | |
| | | | | Did not stay overnight | Stayed overnight |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Rape | 3% | 3% | 3% | 5% | 4% |
| Robbery | 19 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 26 |
| Aggravated assault | 31 | 22 | 31 | 45 | 65 |
| Simple assault | 47 | 57 | 47 | 30 | 5 |
| Average annual number of injured victims | 2,210,760 | 1,155,500 | 516,920 | 449,450 | 87,650 |

Note: Medical care is defined on table 1.

Table 6. Characteristics of injured victims of crime, by severity of injury and level of medical care, 1979-86

| Victim characteristics | Average annual rate of victimizations with injury ^a | Percent of injured victims whose injury was: | | | Percent of injured victims who received: | | | | |
|------------------------------|--|--|---------|-------|--|-----------------|--|---------------------------------|------------------|
| | | Total | Serious | Minor | Total | No medical care | Medical care out-side emergency room or hospital | Emergency room or hospital care | |
| | | | | | | | | Did not stay over-night | Stayed overnight |
| Total | 11.7 | 100% | 16% | 83% | 100% | 52% | 23% | 20% | 4% |
| Sex | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 13.5 | 100% | 20% | 79% | 100% | 50% | 22% | 22% | 5% |
| Female | 10.1 | 100 | 12 | 87 | 100 | 54 | 25 | 18 | 3 |
| Race | | | | | | | | | |
| White | 11.3 | 100% | 15% | 84% | 100% | 54% | 23% | 19% | 3% |
| Black | 14.7 | 100 | 23 | 76 | 100 | 40 | 23 | 28 | 8 |
| Other | 12.9 | 100 | 20 | 80 | 100 | 52 | 26 | 17 | 5 |
| Ethnicity | | | | | | | | | |
| Hispanic | 12.9 | 100% | 17% | 82% | 100% | 48% | 25% | 21% | 6% |
| Non-Hispanic | 11.6 | 100 | 16 | 83 | 100 | 53 | 23 | 20 | 4 |
| Age | | | | | | | | | |
| 12-18 | 22.8 | 100% | 11% | 88% | 100% | 58% | 26% | 14% | 2% |
| 19-24 | 25.2 | 100 | 16 | 83 | 100 | 54 | 21 | 21 | 4 |
| 25-34 | 14.5 | 100 | 18 | 81 | 100 | 49 | 24 | 23 | 5 |
| 35-49 | 7.1 | 100 | 20 | 78 | 100 | 47 | 22 | 26 | 4 |
| 50 or older | 2.4 | 100 | 22 | 77 | 100 | 46 | 25 | 21 | 8 |
| Education^b | | | | | | | | | |
| Grade school | 12.1 | 100% | 13% | 86% | 100% | 54% | 28% | 15% | 3% |
| High school | 13.1 | 100 | 18 | 81 | 100 | 52 | 22 | 21 | 5 |
| College | 9.3 | 100 | 14 | 85 | 100 | 50 | 24 | 23 | 3 |
| Marital status | | | | | | | | | |
| Married | 4.7 | 100% | 18% | 80% | 100% | 48% | 24% | 24% | 4% |
| Widowed | 3.5 | 100 | 18 | 81 | 100 | 44 | 32 | 17 | 7 |
| Separated/divorced | 31.1 | 100 | 18 | 81 | 100 | 51 | 24 | 20 | 5 |
| Never married | 21.3 | 100 | 15 | 84 | 100 | 55 | 23 | 19 | 3 |
| Income | | | | | | | | | |
| Less than \$10,000 | 19.2 | 100% | 19% | 80% | 100% | 51% | 23% | 21% | 5% |
| \$10,000-\$19,999 | 11.7 | 100 | 15 | 83 | 100 | 53 | 23 | 20 | 3 |
| \$20,000-\$29,999 | 9.6 | 100 | 14 | 84 | 100 | 50 | 24 | 22 | 3 |
| \$30,000 or above | 7.7 | 100 | 12 | 87 | 100 | 54 | 25 | 18 | 3 |
| Not ascertained | 9.0 | 100 | 18 | 82 | 100 | 55 | 20 | 21 | 4 |
| Residence | | | | | | | | | |
| Central city | 16.0 | 100% | 18% | 81% | 100% | 50% | 22% | 23% | 5% |
| Suburbs | 10.5 | 100 | 15 | 84 | 100 | 53 | 25 | 19 | 3 |
| Outside metro area | 9.0 | 100 | 15 | 84 | 100 | 55 | 24 | 18 | 3 |

Note: Percents may not add to total because of rounding and omission of "don't know" and "not ascertained" categories. Severity of injury and medical care are defined on table 1.

Victims who sustained both serious and minor injuries are tabulated only in the serious injury category.

^aNumber of injury victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older.

^bEducation is the highest year or grade completed.

their injuries. Injured victims age 50 or older accounted for 7% of all injured crime victims but 12% of those who were hospitalized for at least 1 night. By contrast, injured victims in the youngest age group, 12 to 18, accounted for 27% of all injured victims but less than 16% of the injured victims requiring hospitalization overnight.

The extent of medical care received and the severity of injuries varied slightly with the educational attainment of the victim. Victims with a grade school or high school education had higher rates of injury than those who had attended college. Victims with a high school education also reported a higher percentage of serious injuries and

injuries requiring a hospital stay for at least 1 night. Victims who had a high school education accounted for 57% of injured crime victims, 64% of those reporting serious injuries, and 69% of those hospitalized for at least 1 night.

Separated and divorced persons had an injury rate 2 1/2 times higher than the national rate, 6 1/2 times that of married persons, nearly 9 times that of widowed persons, and 1 1/2 times the rate of persons who had never been married.

Victims with less than \$10,000 in family income were more likely to be injured and to be injured seriously than were victims

in higher income groups. About the same percentage of all income groups received health care.

Residents of central cities were more likely than those living in suburbs or outside metropolitan areas to be injured, to be seriously injured, and to spend at least 1 night in a hospital.

Rates of injury varied by the victims' sex, race, age, income, and place of residence. When these characteristics are combined, white male central city residents under age 25 and with family incomes of less than \$10,000 had the highest average annual

rate of injury from crime (table 7).⁴ Least likely to be injured during a crime were those who were 25 or older, living outside central cities, and having family incomes of \$10,000 or more.

White males under age 25 had higher rates of injury than these other groups of victims: females of all races, white males who were 25 or older, and black males of all ages. These differences held whether comparing by their place of residence or by family income. Young white males' risk of injury from crime was higher if they lived in central cities or had incomes of less than \$10,000.

Persons 25 years or older had lower injury rates than those under 25, with their rates usually being even lower if they lived outside central cities and if they had incomes of more than \$10,000. For persons older than 24 race and sex had little statistical association with risk of injury.

Black males under 25 and white or black females in the same age group had injury rates between those of white males under 25 and all persons 25 or older. Their rates also varied by where they lived and their family income. Those living in central cities

and having family incomes of less than \$10,000 had higher injury rates than those living outside cities and with incomes of \$10,000 or more.

Age, income, and to a lesser extent, place of residence are more strongly associated with the risk of criminal victimization injury than sex or race, except for white males under age 25.

Unemployed persons had an average annual injury rate from crime which was about 3 times that of employed persons and that of the Nation (table 8). Retired persons had an injury rate about a seventh of the overall rate.

Among the major occupation groups, service workers had injury rates twice that of all employed persons. Farmers and farm managers, by contrast, had rates of injury from crime which were about 30% of the overall rate for employed persons.

Selected occupations with the highest injury rates from criminal victimization were recreation workers, police officers, bartenders, parking lot attendants, and taxi cab drivers. Those occupations with the lowest average rates of injury from crime were teachers, truck drivers, postal workers, and physicians and nurses.

⁴It is possible that undercoverage of minority populations contributed to this finding. See Gary M. Shapiro and Donna Kostanich, "High response error and poor coverage are severely hurting the value of household survey data," *Proceedings of the American Statistical Association Meetings* (August 1988).

Table 7. Annual rates of criminal victimizations with injury, by sex, race, age, place of residence, and family income, 1979-86

| Age, sex, and income | Average annual rate of victimizations with injury, by place of residence and race of victim* | | | |
|---------------------------|--|-------|------------------------|-------|
| | In central cities | | Outside central cities | |
| | White | Black | White | Black |
| Age 12-24 | | | | |
| Male | 37.7 | 29.1 | 26.6 | 16.5 |
| Female | 24.6 | 25.9 | 17.3 | 16.1 |
| Age 25 or older | | | | |
| Male | 11.5 | 15.1 | 5.7 | 8.2 |
| Female | 9.5 | 11.4 | 5.6 | 8.1 |
| Income less than \$10,000 | | | | |
| Age 12-24 | | | | |
| Male | 52.4 | 37.6 | 36.8 | 17.9 |
| Female | 37.7 | 28.5 | 30.6 | 21.1 |
| Age 25 or older | | | | |
| Male | 21.6 | 21.5 | 8.5 | 11.0 |
| Female | 16.2 | 17.3 | 10.4 | 10.3 |
| Income \$10,000 or more | | | | |
| Age 12-24 | | | | |
| Male | 33.6 | 25.1 | 24.5 | 12.3 |
| Female | 19.1 | 23.9 | 14.4 | 10.7 |
| Age 25 or older | | | | |
| Male | 9.7 | 12.2 | 5.4 | 6.8 |
| Female | 7.3 | 6.1 | 4.4 | 6.6 |

*Number of injury victimizations per 1,000 persons 12 or older.

Comparing criminal victimization injuries to other medical conditions and injuries

Each year approximately 1 of every 4 persons age 18 or older sustain a nonfatal injury of some type requiring at least a half-day of restricted activity or consultation with a physician or medical assistant (table 9). Between 1979 and 1986 about half of 1% of those 18 or older annually sustained injuries that resulted from crime and required medical care. Over a third of nonfatal injuries happened at home, and another quarter at work.

Table 8. Annual rates of criminal victimizations with injury, by employment and occupation, 1979-85

| | Average annual rate of victimizations with injury* |
|---|--|
| Total | 11.7 |
| Employment status | |
| Employed | 11.5 |
| Unemployed | 33.5 |
| Keeping house | 5.8 |
| At school | 19.5 |
| Unable to work | 10.7 |
| Retired | 1.7 |
| Armed Forces | 10.2 |
| Other | 12.2 |
| Major occupation groups | |
| Professional, technical, and managerial workers | 7.6 |
| Sales workers | 10.4 |
| Clerical workers | 10.9 |
| Craft workers | 11.8 |
| Operatives | 12.5 |
| Laborers, excluding farm | 21.0 |
| Service workers, excluding private household | 24.1 |
| Private household workers | 12.5 |
| Farmers and farm managers | 3.3 |
| Farm laborers and farm supervisors | 14.0 |
| Selected occupations | |
| Recreation worker | 118.5 |
| Police officer | 63.3 |
| Bartender | 35.3 |
| Parking lot attendant | 30.3 |
| Cab driver | 22.6 |
| Auto mechanic | 21.4 |
| Retail sales clerk | 18.3 |
| Guard | 15.0 |
| Food service worker | 9.7 |
| Social worker | 8.5 |
| Cashier | 7.5 |
| Bus driver | 6.9 |
| Fire fighter | 6.5 |
| Service station attendant | 5.6 |
| Street and door-to-door sales | 5.1 |
| Physician/nurse | 4.6 |
| Postal worker | 4.4 |
| Truck driver | 4.4 |
| Teacher | 4.2 |

Note: Data are from 1979-84 and collection quarters 1 through 4 of 1985.
*Number of injury victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older.

Table 9. Annual rates of injury from criminal victimization and other causes

| | Annual rate per 1,000 persons |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Nonfatal injuries | |
| All injuries | 244 |
| Injuries at home | 84 |
| Injuries at work | 60 |
| Injuries from motor vehicles | 30 |
| Burn injuries | 9 |
| Criminal victimization injuries requiring medical care | 5 |
| Fatal injuries | |
| Deaths from intentional and unintentional injuries | .71 |
| Motor vehicle accident deaths | .23 |
| Other unintentional injuries | .23 |
| Suicide | .16 |
| Homicide and legal intervention | .10 |
| Deaths from all causes, age 15 or older | 11 |

Note: Noncriminal victimization injuries are included if they require at least a half-day of restricted activity or consultation with a physician or medical assistant. All nonfatal injury rates are for persons 18 or older, except for burn injuries based on those age 17 or older. All fatal injury rates are for those 15 or older.
Sources: See Appendix.

Table 10. Annual rates of injury that resulted in emergency room visits

| | Annual rate per 1,000 persons |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Emergency room visits related to injuries from: | |
| Sports | 6 |
| Motor vehicle accidents | 5 |
| Stairs | 3 |
| Criminal victimizations | 2 |
| Knives | 2 |

Note: Rates are for persons age 15 or older, except for the motor vehicle accident rate which is based on the total population.
Sources: See Appendix.

Table 11. Hospitalization for injuries or other medical conditions

| Injury or condition | Annual number of persons hospitalized | Annual number of days in hospital | Average number of days of hospitalization |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Alcohol or drug dependency treatment | 1,974,000 | 20,285,000 | 10 days |
| Cancer | 3,578,000 | 32,760,000 | 9 |
| Criminal victimization injuries | 82,000 | 707,000 | 9 |
| Traffic accident injuries | 311,000 | 2,174,000 | 7 |
| Heart disease | 8,367,000 | 57,294,000 | 7 |

Note: Data for all injuries or conditions except criminal victimization injuries include persons of all ages. The criminal

injuries were 6 times more likely from a moving motor vehicle than from a criminal offender. Emergency room visits were 2 1/2 times more likely from a vehicular accident than from a crime (table 10). Several reasons may be given for why the rate that reflects total injuries differs from the rate of injuries treated in emergency rooms. The differences may be due to separate sources of information about vehicular accidents, different definitions of injury and of the population at risk, and the selectivity imposed by treatment in hospitals or emergency rooms.

About 110 of every 10,000 persons age 15 or older died in 1985 (table 9). In the same year about 7 of every 10,000 died from injuries, and about 1 in 10,000, or 14% of all persons fatally injured, were homicide victims.

Persons age 15 or older were about as likely to visit an emergency room for an injury caused by crime as for an injury from a knife or stairs (table 10). They were more likely to need emergency room treatment for sports or motor vehicle accident injuries.

Injuries from crime caused victims to spend an annual average of 707,000 days in a hospital (table 11). This total was about 30% of the average number of days that traffic accident victims spent in the hospital and about 1% of the days resulting from heart disease.

The estimated 82,000 persons who each year were hospitalized for at least 1 night as a result of injuries from violent crime remained in the hospital an average of 9 days. The average length of hospital stay for crime victims was about the same as the stay for patients undergoing cancer treatment and 2 days longer than the

average hospitalization for persons injured in traffic accidents or receiving treatment for heart disease.

Methodology

Data for this report include all physical injuries resulting from a rape, robbery, or assault and reported to the National Crime Survey. Although victims of rape may suffer injury from the act of rape itself, this analysis includes rape and attempted rape victims only when they reported a physical injury in addition to the rape or attempted rape.

In total there were 17,686,100 injury victimizations during the period 1979 through 1986. Rates differ from those in other NCS publications because series crimes were included in this study. Series crimes, that is, three or more similar criminal incidents about which the victim is unable to provide separate details, were counted as three victimizations each. Series victimizations constituted 6% of the injuries for this report.

All comparisons in this report are significant at the 95% confidence level or above, unless modified by such words as "some-what" or "some indication of," in which case the relationship is significant at the 90% confidence level. For further details on significance testing see *Criminal victimization in the United States, 1986*, NCJ-111456, August 1988, Appendix III.

Appendix

Sources for table 9, Annual rates of injury from criminal victimization and other causes: "Current estimates from the National Health Interview Survey, 1986," *Vital and Health Statistics*, Series 10(164), National Center for Health Statistics; *United States population estimates by age, sex, and race, 1980 to 1987*, Series P-25(1022), U.S. Bureau of the Census; "Types of injuries and impairments due to injuries," *Vital and Health Statistics*, Series 10(159), National Center for Health Statistics; "Advance report of final mortality statistics, 1985," *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*, 36(5), National Center for Health Statistics; National Crime Survey, 1979-86, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Sources for table 10, Annual rates of injury that resulted in emergency room visits: *National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS) product summary report, 1985-87*, Consumer Product Safety

Commission; *National Accident Sampling System— 1985: A report on traffic accidents and injuries in the United States*, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration; National Crime Survey, 1979-86, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Sources for table 11, Hospitalization for injuries or other medical conditions: "Detailed diagnoses and procedures for patients discharged from short-stay hospitals, 1986," *Vital and Health Statistics*, Series 13(95), National Center for Health Statistics; *National Accident Sampling System— 1985: A report on traffic accidents and injuries in the United States*, National

Highway Traffic Safety Administration; National Crime Survey, 1979-86, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

The Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs, coordinates the activities of the following program offices and bureaus: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Institute of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office for Victims of Crime.

Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Reports are written principally by BJS staff. Caroline Wolf Harlow wrote this report. Bruce Taylor provided analytical assistance. Gertrude Thomas assisted with statistical preparation. Thomas Hester edited this report. Marilyn Marbrook, assisted by Tina Dorsey, Jayne Pugh, Jeanne Harris, and Yvonne Shields, administered the report production.

May 1989, NCJ-116811

Appendix table. Average annual number of criminal victimizations with injury, by victim characteristics, 1979-86

| Victim characteristics | Total | Average annual number of injured victims whose injury was: | | No medical care | Average annual number of injured victims who received: | | |
|------------------------|-----------|--|-----------|-----------------|--|---|------------------|
| | | Serious | Minor | | Medical care out-side emergency room or hospital | Emergency room or hospital care Did not stay over-night | Stayed overnight |
| Sex | | | | | | | |
| Male | 1,219,030 | 238,820 | 966,380 | 615,320 | 269,170 | 272,210 | 61,490 |
| Female | 991,730 | 119,010 | 860,210 | 540,180 | 247,760 | 177,240 | 26,150 |
| Race | | | | | | | |
| White | 1,846,200 | 276,150 | 1,547,480 | 1,002,910 | 430,950 | 352,240 | 59,100 |
| Black | 311,250 | 70,970 | 236,730 | 124,780 | 72,220 | 88,300 | 25,740 |
| Other | 53,300 | 10,700 | 42,380 | 27,820 | 13,760 | 8,920 | 2,810 |
| Ethnicity | | | | | | | |
| Hispanic | 143,280 | 24,070 | 117,430 | 69,220 | 35,310 | 30,310 | 8,440 |
| Non-Hispanic | 2,067,480 | 333,750 | 1,709,160 | 1,086,280 | 481,610 | 419,140 | 79,210 |
| Age | | | | | | | |
| 12-18 | 594,750 | 64,780 | 521,760 | 343,020 | 151,830 | 85,450 | 13,870 |
| 19-24 | 615,940 | 100,470 | 509,820 | 333,010 | 131,630 | 128,920 | 22,100 |
| 25-34 | 569,420 | 104,420 | 459,380 | 277,990 | 134,270 | 128,670 | 28,320 |
| 35-49 | 286,660 | 56,370 | 224,530 | 134,960 | 63,310 | 75,790 | 12,410 |
| 50 or older | 144,000 | 31,790 | 111,100 | 66,530 | 35,890 | 30,620 | 10,950 |
| Education* | | | | | | | |
| Elementary | 408,040 | 51,210 | 351,200 | 221,750 | 113,290 | 61,520 | 11,130 |
| High school | 1,257,410 | 229,920 | 1,013,970 | 658,560 | 272,660 | 265,750 | 60,210 |
| College | 534,000 | 74,490 | 452,640 | 269,540 | 128,180 | 120,840 | 14,790 |
| Not ascertained | 11,310 | 2,200 | 8,780 | 5,650 | 2,790 | 1,340 | 1,520 |
| Marital status | | | | | | | |
| Married | 490,680 | 90,710 | 393,450 | 236,970 | 116,060 | 116,360 | 21,290 |
| Widowed | 44,200 | 8,080 | 35,900 | 19,340 | 13,990 | 7,700 | 3,170 |
| Separate/divorced | 477,210 | 83,970 | 386,760 | 244,590 | 112,480 | 97,710 | 22,050 |
| Never married | 1,190,710 | 173,730 | 1,004,030 | 650,670 | 272,980 | 225,530 | 40,670 |
| Not ascertained | 7,960 | 1,330 | 6,460 | 3,930 | 1,410 | 2,150 | 470 |
| Income | | | | | | | |
| Less than \$10,000 | 770,290 | 145,470 | 617,430 | 392,480 | 178,570 | 159,920 | 39,110 |
| \$10,000-\$19,999 | 573,220 | 88,550 | 477,090 | 305,760 | 133,810 | 113,460 | 19,450 |
| \$20,000-\$29,999 | 364,390 | 51,920 | 305,950 | 183,490 | 88,810 | 81,400 | 10,690 |
| \$30,000 or above | 313,560 | 38,520 | 271,440 | 170,520 | 77,240 | 55,250 | 10,260 |
| Not ascertained | 189,300 | 33,380 | 154,680 | 103,260 | 38,490 | 39,420 | 8,140 |
| Residence | | | | | | | |
| Central city | 851,390 | 152,450 | 688,320 | 425,690 | 183,460 | 197,880 | 43,970 |
| Suburbs | 812,440 | 121,320 | 680,470 | 428,880 | 201,250 | 155,300 | 26,350 |
| Outside metro area | 546,930 | 84,050 | 457,810 | 300,930 | 132,210 | 96,270 | 17,330 |

Note: Detail may not add to total because of rounding and omission of "don't know" and "not ascertained" categories.

Medical care and severity of injury are defined on table 1.

*Education is the highest year or grade completed

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