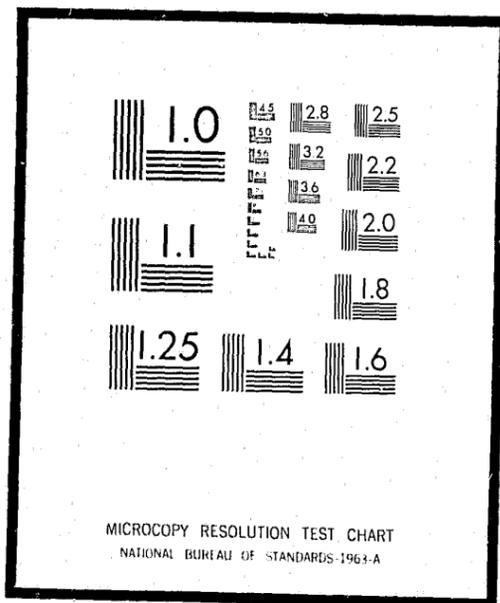


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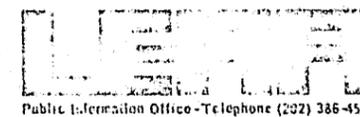
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*CITIZEN ACTION PROGRAMS
CHALLENGE BUREAU
1/28/75*

news release



Law Enforcement Assistance Administration United States Department of Justice Washington, D.C. 20530

The first preliminary results of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration's new survey of the incidence and characteristics of crime show that unreported crime is twice as high as reported crime in the initial eight cities studied.

The material from the National Crime Panel of LEAA showed that nearly half of the victims of assault, robbery, burglary, and larceny \$50 and above did not report the incident to police. The nonreporting rate of larceny below \$50 was 80 percent.

The most common reasons cited for not reporting the crime, according to the survey's preliminary report, was that the victim felt police couldn't do anything or the victim didn't think the incident was important enough.

The survey was conducted for LEAA by the Bureau of Census from July through October of 1972 and was based on victimization data from the previous 12 months.

Some 25,000 persons were interviewed in 10,000 to 12,000 households and businesses in each of the eight cities participating in LEAA's High Impact Anti-Crime Program--Atlanta, Baltimore, Cleveland, Newark, Dallas, St. Louis, Denver, and Portland, Ore.

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The National Crime Panel is a long-range \$10 million per year program that will furnish on a regular basis statistics on the incidence of crime, its costs, the characteristics of the criminal event and the victim, estimates of unreported crime, and an assessment of why people fail to report crime. National data will be provided on a quarterly basis.

The panel will gather the in-depth information on crime and its victims in 26 major American cities. Hundreds of smaller areas in the nation are also being surveyed to provide a national picture of crime.

"Test studies have shown in the past that substantial amounts of crime go unreported," said LEAA Administrator Donald E. Santarelli. "This study confirms those surveys.

"This is a landmark study that presents an unparalleled statistical profile of crime and its victims," said Mr. Santarelli. "The comprehensiveness of the study, plus its detail, gives criminal justice planners a solid yardstick with which they can measure crime, break it down into its various categories, then implement a planning process and action program to deal more effectively with crime.

"The criminal justice system must now redouble its efforts to restore the public's confidence in the police and our judicial and enforcement process," he said.

Santarelli said LEAA is responding to that need by creating a program stressing citizen involvement--ranging from telling citizens how they can better protect themselves against crime to how they can join together in responsible citizen action programs.

"There are many relatively simple, inexpensive steps citizens can take," said Mr. Santarelli. "And the LEAA effort to help citizens--to bring them into the system, to meet their needs--is going to be a high priority item for LEAA.

"The statistics have uncovered in minute detail the sobering fact that a great many people do not report crime because they are turned off by the criminal justice system and its clanking process," said Mr. Santarelli.

"It shows that there is an obvious need to turn the citizen on to the criminal justice system through citizen action programs like the one LEAA is now advocating," he said.

"That program must contain plans that encourage citizens who are the victims of crime or a witness of crime to go to the police, report the crime, and stand ready to become a willing participant in any subsequent action.

"The criminal justice system, in turn, must operate to serve the people, organize itself so it meets the wishes and preferences of the public, and set up convenient administrative processes that aid, not hinder, the public's participation.

"When citizen interest and participation become an integral part of the criminal justice system, then the nation will begin to make a real impact on crime," said Mr. Santarelli.

The concept for the National Crime Panel study stems from a smaller pilot survey conducted by the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice published in 1967. That study showed that unreported crime also was twice as high as reported to police.

National Crime Panel data will be used in conjunction with information gathered by the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports to give police departments detailed characteristics and information about crime, its socio-economic and demographic distribution, and other information about crimes and victims.

"The data gathered by the National Crime Panel in no way impairs the value of the Uniform Crime Reports," said Mr. Santarelli. "The two programs will, in fact, complement each other.

"For example, the data from the National Crime Panel will help criminal justice planners in developing long-term strategies to cope with crime, especially as it relates to the average person. The data will tell them of the general pattern of crime so that they can make long-range plans specifically targeted to meet expected criminal developments.

"The UCR, on the other hand, is invaluable for tactical operations that involve day-to-day police work. For instance, the UCR can point out an increase in robberies in a certain area, thus alerting the police of the need to take appropriate action," he said.

Mr. Santarelli also said that each Impact city has an LEAA grant to analyze the information gathered by the National Crime Panel and then develop crime-fighting programs geared to that data. The analysis should be completed within this year, he said.

Comparisons between panel data and the UCR have "extremely limited utility," the study notes, because the UCR compiles statistics on crimes reported to police in a city, while the panel measured victimization regardless of where the crime occurred. In addition, definition differences make direct comparisons difficult.

However, the panel did make the comparison "since others will inevitably make such comparisons."

With the exception of auto theft and aggravated assault, crime was slightly more than twice as high than reported in the UCR's offense categories of rape, robbery, burglary, and larceny \$50 and above. For aggravated assault, the crime panel's figures were approximately one and one-half times greater than the UCR reports.

UCR reports of auto theft agreed with the panel's findings, probably because there is a good chance of recovering a stolen auto and the fact that most insurance policies require police notification of a stolen car, the study noted.

When compared with the UCR, the panel estimated that crime was nearly three times as high in Denver; more than twice as high in Atlanta, Baltimore, Cleveland, Dallas, and Portland; and about 1.5 as high in Newark and St. Louis.

Crimes surveyed by the panel were "household crimes" such as burglary, larceny, and auto theft; personal crimes such as assault and robbery; and commercial crimes such as robbery and burglary. Each criminal event was counted once regardless of the number of victims.

The most likely victim of a personal crime is a poor, young male, the study said, but it noted that victims of crime include large numbers of both sexes and all ages and races at every income level.

The rates of personal victimization for whites and nonwhites was "somewhat discrepant," the study said, in that in some cities the victimization rate for whites exceeded that for nonwhites, while in other cities the opposite pattern emerged.

For example, whites in Atlanta showed a higher rate of personal victimization than did nonwhites (6,894 vs. 5,022 per 100,000 persons), while whites in Newark showed a lower rate of personal victimization than did nonwhites (4,532 vs. 6,595).

"This differential pattern...may be accounted for by differences among the cities in race- and victimization-related phenomena," said the study. A search for such phenomena will be included in a forthcoming, detailed analysis."

The study also found that personal victimizations are more likely to occur in an outside public place such as a street, parking lot, park, or field. In every city except Dallas, more than half of the personal victimizations occurred in such public places.

According to the study, 70 percent of the robberies and 50 percent of assaults occurred in open places. About 80 percent of the assault victims who suffered an injury required hospital treatment, the study noted, while 15 percent required overnight or longer hospital treatment.

"These data suggest that the assaultive violence victimizations uncovered in these surveys of victims are by no means trivial in terms of their consequences to the victims," said the study.

Victimization by strangers accounted for the majority of all personal victimizations in each of the eight cities, with 90 percent of the robberies and 60 percent of the assaults committed by strangers. When some form of theft was involved, stranger victimization rose substantially, ranging from a low of 83 percent in Dallas to a high of 94 percent in Newark.

The proportion of personal victimizations by strangers was highest in Newark, where nearly seven out of eight victims reported that the offender was a stranger, according to the study.

"The clear pattern which emerges...is that for assaultive crimes that do not include theft, the offender is much more likely to be either well known or casually acquainted with the victim than for crimes which include theft," says the study.

The study also found that the "rate of household victimizations is substantial in each of the eight cities." With the exception of Newark, household victimizations was at least 20,000 per 100,000 households.

Denver, Portland, and Dallas headed the list, while Newark, St. Louis, Baltimore, and Cleveland were at the bottom. The smallest rate of burglary was 11,378 per 100,000 households in Baltimore, but the study said all of the "cities have relatively high and homogenous rates of burglary."

In relation to income, the general burglary pattern that emerged was that as income rose so did the likelihood of burglary.

For commercial crimes, burglary was up to 12 times more common in some cities than robbery, business burglary was, in general, at least three times more likely than household burglary, and business robbery up to 10 times more likely in some cities as personal robbery.

The study said that assault without theft is more likely to go unreported than assault with theft.

In general the survey showed greater nonreporting males than for females, with the trend "especially pronounced" for assaultive violence with theft. In Baltimore, for example, two out of five assaultive violences with theft involving males were not reported--but only one out of four among females.

Across the age groups, those in the 12 to 19 year group were the most unlikely to report that they were a crime victim. Nonreporting rates were considerably smaller for those 50 and over.

In virtually every city, the nonreporting rate for burglary was over 40 percent of those interviewed. Auto theft had the lowest rate of nonreporting--only about one in five auto thefts.

Currently, the nation's five largest cities are being surveyed and the results should be available later this year. Thirteen other major cities are being surveyed, and those results will be available later this year. The first results of the national sampling also should be available later this year.

The High Impact Anti-Crime program is an LEAA-funded project that offers technical and financial assistance to the participating cities. Under the program, each city can receive up to \$20 million. The aim of the program is to reduce crime in each city by 20 percent.

It should be noted that the data gathered in the National Crime Panel is on victimizations that occurred before the Impact program got under way. The second survey will be conducted in 1975 and will be used to measure the effectiveness of crime reduction programs in the Impact cities. A third survey is planned for 1978 in these same cities.

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