REPORTING OF SEXUAL ASSAULT
IN
NEW MEXICO

Planning and Research Division
New Mexico State Police Department

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REPORTING OF SEXUAL ASSAULT IN NEW MEXICO

The F.B.I. statistics for 1976 indicated that the rate of reported rape nationally was 26.4 per 100,000 population. In New Mexico during 1976 it was 40.5 per 100,000. In Bernalillo County it was 67.4 per 100,000 and in Santa Fe County it was 70.9 per 100,000 during 1976.

It must be emphasized that these are figures for reported rapes. Reporting goes up with the existence of a Rape Crisis Center in a community, improved public awareness and education of the nature of the crime, sensitive handling of the victim by law enforcement officers, hospital staff, improved prosecution by district attorneys, etc. In other words, these horrendous figures are undoubtedly an indication of improved attention and handling of the victims of the crime, collection of evidence, and a general change in social attitudes as reflected by juries and judges.

In the counties mentioned there are well established Rape Crisis Centers that have established working relations with local law enforcement agencies, hospitals, the district attorney's office and various other human service agencies. Rape Crisis Counselors also act as client advocates to see them through the criminal justice system, especially the necessary interviews by police detectives and the usually grueling trial process. This protection and support of the victim encourages reporting and cooperation with the criminal justice agencies.

These established Rape Crisis Centers, once they have gained the confidence of the women in the community, find that eventually women come forward to seek counseling about rapes that occurred months, and even years ago. This shows that women are still ashamed or afraid to report the fact that they have

been victims of rape. They often are most afraid of the reaction of their husbands, boyfriends or immediate family. It is encouraging that they are deciding to seek out the help they need to work out their fear, anger, and false sense of guilt that society used to impose on victims.

However, the more help a victim is given, the greater the reporting. The crime of rape has been around a long time. It usually occurs in more densely populated areas and in cultures where there is less respect for women as human beings. However, if the rate of rape by counties throughout New Mexico is studied, it can be seen that the rate of reporting has gone up considerably in every county that has a Rape Crisis Center, or a Mental Health facility or some other general crisis intervention facility that also deals with rape victims. This does not mean that the number of rapes has increased, but only that the rate of reporting it is closer to the actual occurrence of the crime.

The F.B.I. estimates that nationally, only one tenth of the rapes committed are reported. Dr. Joanne Sterling, Assistant Director of the Bernalillo County Mental Health Center and a member of the national Rape Prevention and Control Advisory Committee, sponsored by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, reports that New Mexico has some of the best treatment for rape victims (centered around the Rape Crisis Centers) in the nation. Therefore, our reporting rate, instead of being only 10% of the rapes that actually occur, is probably closer to 70-80% of those that actually occur; perhaps even higher in those cities where intervention on behalf of the victim is especially strong. These statistics, though disturbing, indicate a more honest and accurate count and recognition of the problem than in many states.

In New Mexico there is the added benefit of the rape evidence collection

kits that are used by the doctors at the hospitals to collect the evidence from the victim. This is in addition to what police officers collect from the scene of the crime. In recent months the State Police Crime Laboratory has received more cases with all the standards of evidence necessary for analysis sufficient to give to the district attorney to make a solid case. This was not true in the past. This improved collection of evidence by law enforcement officers and the hospital can be attributed to improved training and cooperation between agencies.

This brings out another benefit, but of no less significance, produced by the presence of a Rape Crisis Center in a community. The Center serves as a vehicle to educate the public about the nature of the crime and the physical and emotional trauma that a victim suffers. It helps to change social attitudes, which in turn allows the services to develop that are needed. It also serves as a vehicle to develop inter-agency cooperation and understanding among all those that deal with a rape victim--law enforcement, hospital emergency room personnel, the State Police Crime Laboratory that analyzes the evidence, district attorney's office, and in some cases, other human service agencies as well.

Therefore, even though the statistics of reported rape in New Mexico are way above the national rate, it is also true that the rate of reporting is way above the national average. New Mexico has accomplished two important objectives: 1) Victims in key cities receive excellent intervention, which includes counseling, medical treatment, and support in the process of assisting the district attorney's office with prosecution; 2) With increased reporting, community support and awareness, and more successful prosecutions of the offenders who committed the crimes, the publicity seems to have started a deterrent effect. Even with a high rate of reporting that is close to the actual occurrence, the rate of reported

rape in New Mexico seems to be taking a dip in 1977 for the first time. This is a result of concerted community education and inter-agency cooperation, with the Rape Crisis Centers acting as the hub of the wheel of effort that began in New Mexico in 1972-1973. Five years later we are beginning to see the results of these efforts.

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member of the
New Mexico Task Force on Victims
of Sex Crimes

December 1977

RATE OF REPORTED SEXUAL ASSAULT IN NEW MEXICO

City and County Totals	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
Population	329,300.0	339,500.0	354,400.0	358,200.0	365,200.0	376,600.0
Bernalillo County	36.0	55.0	37.0	26.0	38.0	62.0
University of New Mexico	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	3.0
Albuquerque (city)	103.0	154.0	169.0	183.0	181.0	186.0
State Police	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0
County Total	139.0	209.0	206.0	209.0	220.0	254.0
Rate per 100,00 population	42.2	61.6	58.1	58.3	60.2	67.4
Population	2,200.0	2,200.0	2,200.0	2,500.0	2,100.0	2,100.0
Catron County	1.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Rate per 100,000 population	45.0	0.0	90.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Population	45,500.0	46,400.0	46,400.0	46,500.0	48,200.0	49,400.0
Chaves County	5.0	0.0	2.0	2.0	0.0	2.0
Roswell (city)	6.0	4.0	3.0	1.0	1.0	2.0
County Total	11.0	4.0	5.0	3.0	1.0	4.0
Rate per 100,000 population	24.2	8.6	10.8	6.5	2.1	8.1
Population	12,100.0	12,100.0	12,400.0	12,800.0	12,900.0	13,000.0
Colfax County	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Raton (city)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0	1.0
Springer (city)	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0
State Police	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0
County Total	0.0	3.0	0.0	1.0	5.0	4.0
Rate per 100,000 population	0.0	24.8	0.0	7.8	38.7	30.8
Population	41,500.0	40,900.0	42,800.0	42,800.0	43,200.0	44,700.0
Curry County	0.0	0.0	3.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
Clovis (city)	8.0	4.0	8.0	17.0	10.0	10.0
County Total	8.0	4.0	11.0	18.0	10.0	10.0
Rate per 100,000 population	19.3	9.8	25.7	42.1	23.1	22.4
Population	2,500.0	2,500.0	2,800.0	2,700.0	2,600.0	2,500.0
De Baca County	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Population	71,300.0	73,600.0	74,500.0	77,500.0	80,000.0	82,000.0
Dona Ana County	6.0	9.0	5.0	6.0	8.0	9.0
Las Cruces (city)	4.0	8.0	9.0	11.0	10.0	8.0
Mesilla	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0
New Mexico State University	1.0	0.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	0.0
County Total	11.0	17.0	16.0	19.0	21.0	18.0
Rate per 100,000 population	15.4	23.1	21.5	24.5	26.3	22.0
Population	40,900.0	40,900.0	41,200.0	41,500.0	42,400.0	43,000.0
Eddy County	1.0	3.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	2.0
Artesia (city)	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	1.0	6.0
Carlsbad (city)	1.0	2.0	11.0	6.0	2.0	1.0
County Total	2.0	5.0	12.0	9.0	4.0	9.0
Rate per 100,000 population	4.9	12.2	29.1	21.7	9.4	20.9
Population	22,500.0	22,600.0	23,500.0	23,800.0	24,600.0	23,700.0
Grant County	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
Bayard (city)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0
Silver City (city)	1.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
County Total	2.0	0.0	1.0	2.0	4.0	4.0
Rate per 100,000 population	8.9	0.0	4.3	8.4	16.3	16.9
Population	4,900.0	4,900.0	4,700.0	4,900.0	4,900.0	5,100.0
Guadalupe County	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Santa Rosa (city)	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
County Total	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
Rate per 100,000 population	0.0	20.4	21.3	20.4	0.0	0.0
Population	1,300.0	1,300.0	1,300.0	1,200.0	1,200.0	1,300.0
Harding County	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

City and County Totals	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
Population	4,600.0	4,600.0	4,700.0	5,400.0	5,700.0	5,300.0
Hidalgo County	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	2.0	0.0
Lordsburg (city)	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	0.0
County Total	1.0	1.0	1.0	3.0	4.0	0.0
Rate per 100,000 population	21.7	21.7	21.3	55.6	70.2	0.0
Population	49,600.0	49,400.0	48,800.0	49,800.0	51,200.0	53,000.0
Lea County	3.0	4.0	2.0	4.0	6.0	4.0
Eunice (city)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Hobbs (city)	3.0	0.0	10.0	7.0	4.0	8.0
Jal (city)	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Lovington (city)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	0.0
County Total	6.0	4.0	13.0	11.0	13.0	13.0
Rate per 100,000 population	12.1	8.1	26.6	22.1	25.4	24.5
Population	7,800.0	8,000.0	8,400.0	9,300.0	9,500.0	9,200.0
Lincoln County	0.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	1.0
Ruidoso (city)	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
County Total	0.0	5.0	0.0	2.0	4.0	3.0
Rate per 100,000 population	0.0	62.5	0.0	21.5	42.1	32.6
Population	15,400.0	15,400.0	15,500.0	15,400.0	15,900.0	16,800.0
Los Alamos County	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Los Alamos (city)	2.0	1.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0
County Total	2.0	1.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0
Rate per 100,000 population	12.9	6.5	0.0	12.9	0.0	0.0
Population	12,200.0	12,500.0	13,100.0	13,700.0	14,500.0	14,900.0
Luna County	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	0.0
Deming (city)	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	2.0	3.0
County Total	0.0	0.0	1.0	2.0	4.0	3.0
Rate per 100,000 population	0.0	0.0	7.6	14.6	27.6	20.1
Population	44,700.0	46,800.0	49,300.0	48,800.0	51,200.0	51,600.0
McKinley County	12.0	0.0	7.0	9.0	16.0	14.0
Gallup (city)	5.0	8.0	11.0	9.0	12.0	11.0
Zuni (city)	1.0	1.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
County Total	18.0	9.0	20.0	18.0	28.0	25.0
Rate per 100,000 population	40.3	19.2	40.6	36.9	54.7	48.4
Population	4,600.0	4,500.0	4,600.0	4,800.0	4,900.0	4,200.0
Mora County	2.0	0.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Wagon Mound (city)	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
County Total	2.0	0.0	4.0	1.0	0.0	1.0
Rate per 100,000 population	43.5	0.0	86.9	20.8	0.0	23.8
Population	41,900.0	41,100.0	41,500.0	42,200.0	42,700.0	43,800.0
Otero County	4.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	3.0
Alamogordo (city)	0.0	3.0	5.0	3.0	5.0	3.0
Mescalero (city)	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0
County Total	4.0	6.0	5.0	4.0	7.0	6.0
Rate per 100,000 population	9.5	14.6	12.0	9.5	16.4	13.7
Population	11,300.0	11,000.0	11,100.0	11,200.0	11,400.0	11,800.0
Quay County	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Tucumcari (city)	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	2.0
County Total	1.0	1.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	2.0
Rate per 100,000 population	8.8	9.1	18.0	0.0	0.0	16.9
Population	25,800.0	26,000.0	26,600.0	27,400.0	28,000.0	29,100.0
Rio Arriba County	3.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	6.0	1.0
Espanola (city)	0.0	4.0	3.0	1.0	3.0	1.0
State Police	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
County Total	3.0	4.0	6.0	1.0	9.0	12.0
Rate per 100,000 population	11.6	15.4	22.6	3.6	32.1	41.2
Population	16,700.0	16,800.0	16,800.0	17,100.0	16,300.0	17,500.0
Roosevelt County	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Portales (city)	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	1.0
County Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	2.0
Rate per 100,000 population	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.7	0.0	11.4

City and County Totals	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
Population	18,600.0	14,300.0	20,800.0	22,400.0	22,600.0	25,000.0
Sandoval County	2.0	0.0	6.0	2.0	5.0	7.0
Bernalillo (city)	1.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
Corrales (city)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0
County Total	3.0	0.0	6.0	3.0	6.0	8.0
Rate per 100,000 population	16.1	0.0	28.8	13.4	26.5	32.0
Population	53,500.0	55,400.0	58,800.0	61,400.0	65,300.0	65,000.0
San Juan County	0.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	1.0
Aztec (city)	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	5.0
Bloomfield (city)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0
Farmington (city)	3.0	12.0	5.0	10.0	16.0	1.0
State Police	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.0
County Total	4.0	14.0	7.0	13.0	20.0	18.0
Rate per 100,000 population	7.5	25.3	11.9	21.2	30.6	27.7
Population	22,100.0	23,200.0	23,800.0	23,400.0	23,500.0	23,500.0
San Miguel County	1.0	2.0	1.0	0.0	2.0	0.0
Las Vegas (city)	6.0	8.0	3.0	10.0	14.0	6.0
State Police	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0
County Total	7.0	10.0	4.0	10.0	16.0	9.0
Rate per 100,000 population	31.7	43.5	16.8	42.7	68.1	38.3
Population	55,200.0	57,700.0	59,400.0	60,600.0	62,000.0	63,400.0
Santa Fe County	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	10.0	3.0
Santa Fe (city)	5.0	6.0	18.0	25.0	31.0	34.0
State Police	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.0
County Total	6.0	7.0	20.0	26.0	41.0	45.0
Rate per 100,000 population	10.9	12.1	33.7	42.9	66.1	70.9
Population	7,300.0	7,800.0	8,000.0	8,000.0	8,500.0	8,000.0
Sierra County	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
Truth or Consequences (city)	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0
County Total	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	3.0
Rate per 100,000 population	0.0	12.8	12.5	12.5	0.0	37.5
Population	9,800.0	9,500.0	9,700.0	9,700.0	9,800.0	9,300.0
Socorro County	1.0	2.0	0.0	1.0	2.0	3.0
Socorro (city)	1.0	2.0	0.0	1.0	2.0	1.0
State Police	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
County Total	2.0	4.0	0.0	1.0	4.0	4.0
Rate per 100,000 population	20.4	42.1	0.0	10.3	40.8	43.0
Population	18,000.0	18,000.0	18,500.0	18,700.0	19,300.0	19,600.0
Taos County	1.0	2.0	3.0	1.0	1.0	0.0
Questa (city)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0
Taos Pueblo	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
Taos (city)	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	4.0	2.0
State Police	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0
County Total	1.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	6.0	5.0
Rate per 100,000 population	5.6	11.1	16.2	16.0	31.1	25.5
Population	5,300.0	5,300.0	5,800.0	6,200.0	6,400.0	6,800.0
Torrance County	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Moriarity (city)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
County Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Rate per 100,000 population	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.7
Population	5,000.0	4,800.0	4,800.0	5,100.0	4,900.0	5,000.0
Union County	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Clayton (city)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
State Police	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0
County Total	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	2.0
Rate per 100,000 population	0.0	0.0	20.8	19.6	0.0	40.0
Population	41,400.0	42,000.0	43,000.0	44,200.0	46,000.0	47,200.0
Valencia County	7.0	2.0	7.0	0.0	6.0	4.0
Belen (city)	2.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	2.0	0.0
Grants (city)	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	2.0	1.0
Milan (city)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
State Police	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0
County Total	9.0	3.0	8.0	1.0	10.0	8.0
Rate per 100,000 population	21.7	7.1	18.6	2.3	21.7	16.9

City and County Totals	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
State Police	19.0	32.0	0.0	17.0	30.0	33.0
State Total	262.0	347.0	356.0	385.0	467.0	475.0
Rate per 100,000 population	25.1	32.6	32.4	34.4	40.7	40.5
Population	1,044,800	1,066,000	1,099,200	1,119,000	1,147,100	1,173,100

*State Police handling of crimes were not separated by County in the State Uniform Crime Report until the 1976 citation

Reported rapes have increased by 213 between 1971 and 1976, or 82%. It is impossible to know to what degree this indicates an increase in this violent crime catefory or an increase in reporting of the crime due to the improved treatment of rape victims in the last few years due to the development of Rape Crisis Centers and more sensitive treatment from Law Enforcement Agencies, the courts, and emergency room staffs in hospitals.

1. Population Figures 1971-1975, New Mexico Statistical Abstract 1976, Bureau of Business and Economic Research, University of New Mexico, p. 81; 1976 estimates from "New Mexico Population to 1985 and Impact on Job Outlook," by John Temple, Bureau of Business and Economic Research, University of New Mexico, April 1976, p. 21;

2. Crime Statistics from Uniform Crime Report, New Mexico State Police Department, years 1971-1976.

New Mexico State Police Department
Planning and Research Division

SEXUAL ASSAULTS BY COUNTY, NEW MEXICO - January-September 1977

COUNTY	Forced Sexual Assault	Attempted Sexual Assault	Total
Bernalillo	141	25	166
Catron	0	0	0
Chaves	3	1	4
Colfax	1	0	1
Curry	4	1	5
De Baca	0	0	0
Dona Ana	17	2	19
Eddy	9	0	9
Grant	0	0	0
Guadalupe	1	0	1
Harding	0	0	0
Hidalgo	1	0	1
Lea	13	2	15
Lincoln	0	0	0
Los Alamos	2	0	2
Luna	1	0	1
McKinley	20	4	24
Mora	0	0	0
Otero	4	0	4
Quay	1	0	1
Rio Arriba	2	0	2
Roosevelt	2	0	2
Sandoval	1	0	1
San Juan	14	1	15
San Miguel	4	2	6
Santa Fe	6	3	9
Sierra	2	2	4
Taos	2	1	3
Torrance	0	0	0
Union	0	0	0
Valencia	5	2	7
STATE TOTAL Thru September	282	47	329

END