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**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

**Law Enforcement**

**Assistance Administration**

**National Criminal Justice**

**Information and Statistics Service**

**SD-NCS-N-10A, November 1978**

**Criminal Victimization  
in the U.S.:**

**A Comparison of  
1976 and 1977 Findings**

**Advance Report**

Assault was the only major crime measured by the National Crime Survey to show a definite change in the rate of victimization for 1977, increasing by 6 percent over the 1976 figure. This increase was concentrated in the sub-category of simple assault, which rose 9 percent, whereas there was no measurable change in the victimization rate for aggravated assault. Reflective of this change in assault was a 4 percent rise in the overall rate for crimes of violence, of which assault is the major component; this increase, however, was statistically less conclusive than the change in assault. There were no significant changes in victimization rates for rape, robbery, personal crimes of theft (i.e., larcenies), household burglary, household larceny, or motor vehicle theft. (The commercial portion of the National Crime Survey, which measured burglary and robbery against business establishments, was suspended during 1977.)

The National Crime Survey has now collected data for 5 full years, beginning in 1973, so that it is possible to examine trends extending beyond change from one year to the next. Over the entire period, from 1973 to 1977, all of the major crimes except rape and robbery exhibited significant change at least at the 90 percent confidence level. Definite increases were recorded in the incidence of assault (8 percent), personal larceny without contact (8 percent), and household larceny (15 percent), whereas motor vehicle theft declined 11 percent. The increase in the assault victimization rate was attributable to the simple form of the crime, as there has been no discernible trend with respect to aggravated assault. There was a tendency for the residential burglary rate to decline during 1973-77.

Closer examination of the data reveals further refinements in trends between 1973 and 1977. The rate of household larceny, for example, increased sharply between 1973 and 1974, but there has been

no measurable change since the latter year. The robbery victimization rate, on the other hand, has appeared to decline steadily since 1974. Although none of the year-to-year decreases were statistically significant, the cumulative result was a clear-cut 13 percent lower robbery rate in 1977 as compared with 1974. Burglary exhibited a similar pattern of decline between 1974 and 1977, with an overall drop of 5 percent. The victimization rate for motor vehicle theft dropped substantially between 1975 and 1976. Although there was no measurable change between 1976 and 1977, the victimization rates for motor vehicle theft for these 2 years remain significantly below those for 1973-75.

The rise between 1976 and 1977 in the incidence of assault was attended by a relatively sharp drop (8 percent) in the rate at which these offenses were reported to the police. Whether committed by persons who were strangers or non-strangers to their victims, assaults were brought to police attention at lower rates during 1977 than a year earlier. The reduction in the proportion of assaults reported to the police centered chiefly on the aggravated form of the crime, which dropped 12 percent. Apparent changes in the police reporting rates for simple assault, rape, or robbery were statistically insignificant.

With respect to the property crimes measured by the National Crime Survey, there were appreciable decreases in the relative number of larcenies, whether against individuals (i.e., crimes of theft) or households, reported to the police in 1977. Although the police notification rate for personal larceny with contact was somewhat higher than for all personal larcenies, it remained basically unchanged from a year earlier. There were no significant changes in the rates at which the authorities were informed about the occurrence of residential burglaries or motor vehicle thefts.

Data for the National Crime Survey are

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collected by means of interviews with a representative national sample of persons age 12 and over living in approximately 60,000 households across the Nation. The survey is designed and carried out for the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Data in this advance report are subject to revision. Further analyses will be

contained in two forthcoming reports: the first of these will focus in more detail on changes in the rates of victimization from 1973 to 1977, and the second, which will be a more comprehensive review of the 1977 data, will examine, in addition to victimization rates, other characteristics related to incidents, victims, and offenders.

Personal and household crimes: Comparison of changes in victimization rates, by type of crime, 1973-77

Sector and type of crime	Percent change in the victimization rate			
	1973-77	1974-77	1975-77	1976-77
Personal sector				
Crimes of violence	**+4.1	+2.8	+3.2	**+4.1
Rape	-6.3	-9.2	-2.2	+6.0
Robbery	-7.7	*-13.4	**+8.0	-3.7
Assault	*+7.7	*+7.9	*+6.4	*+6.0
Aggravated assault	-0.9	-3.9	+3.9	+1.2
Simple assault	*+13.6	*+16.4	*+8.0	*+9.1
Crimes of theft	*+6.8	**+2.3	+1.3	+1.2
Personal larceny with contact	**+13.7	*-14.8	*-14.2	-8.3
Personal larceny without contact	*+7.5	*+2.8	+1.8	+1.5
Household sector				
Household burglary	**+3.4	*-4.9	**+3.4	-0.4
Household larceny	*+15.2	-0.4	-1.7	-0.7
Motor vehicle theft	*-11.1	*-9.8	*-12.9	+3.0

\*Statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level.

\*\*Statistically significant at the 90 percent confidence level.

Personal and household crimes: Change in police reporting rates, by type of crime, 1976-77

(Percent of victimizations reported to the police)

Sector and type of crime	Total			Stranger			Nonstranger		
	1976	1977	Percent change	1976	1977	Percent change	1976	1977	Percent change
Personal sector									
Crimes of violence	48.8	46.1	*-5.5	50.7	48.6	-4.0	45.4	41.8	**+7.8
Rape	52.7	58.4	+10.9	56.1	62.0	+10.5	44.9	51.9	+15.8
Robbery	53.3	55.5	+4.2	53.4	56.2	+5.2	52.6	53.0	+0.8
Assault	47.5	43.5	*-8.4	49.5	45.9	*-7.4	44.6	40.2	*-9.9
Aggravated assault	58.4	51.5	*-11.8	60.9	51.9	*-14.8	54.1	50.8	-6.1
Simple assault	40.6	38.8	-4.3	41.6	41.9	+0.7	39.1	34.7	**+11.4
Crimes of theft	26.6	24.8	*-6.6	...	...	...	...	...	...
Personal larceny with contact	36.2	37.2	+2.5	...	...	...	...	...	...
Personal larceny without contact	26.3	24.5	*-6.8	...	...	...	...	...	...
Household sector									
Household burglary	48.1	48.8	+1.3	...	...	...	...	...	...
Household larceny	27.0	25.4	*-6.0	...	...	...	...	...	...
Motor vehicle theft	69.5	68.5	-1.5	...	...	...	...	...	...

\*Statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level.

\*\*Statistically significant at the 90 percent confidence level.

... Represents not applicable. The distinction between stranger and nonstranger is not made for property crimes because victims rarely see the offenders.

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Personal and household crimes: Number of victimizations and  
victimization rates, by type of crime, 1973-77

(Rate per 1,000)

Sector and type of crime	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
<b>Personal sector</b>					
Crimes of violence					
Number	5,351,000	5,510,000	5,573,000	5,599,000	5,902,000
Rate	32.6	33.0	32.8	32.6	33.9
Rape					
Number	156,000	163,000	154,000	145,000	154,000
Rate	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.9
Robbery					
Number	1,108,000	1,199,000	1,147,000	1,111,000	1,083,000
Rate	6.7	7.2	6.8	6.5	6.2
Assault					
Number	4,087,000	4,148,000	4,272,000	4,344,000	4,664,000
Rate	24.9	24.8	25.2	25.3	26.8
Aggravated assault					
Number	1,655,000	1,735,000	1,631,000	1,695,000	1,738,000
Rate	10.1	10.4	9.6	9.9	10.0
Simple assault					
Number	2,432,000	2,413,000	2,641,000	2,648,000	2,926,000
Rate	14.8	14.4	15.6	15.4	16.8
Crimes of theft					
Number	14,971,000	15,889,000	16,294,000	16,519,000	16,933,000
Rate	91.1	95.1	96.0	96.1	97.3
Personal larceny with contact					
Number	504,000	520,000	524,000	497,000	461,000
Rate	3.1	3.1	3.1	2.9	2.7
Personal larceny without contact					
Number	14,466,000	15,369,000	15,770,000	16,022,000	16,472,000
Rate	88.0	92.0	92.9	93.2	94.6
Total population age 12 and over	164,363,000	167,058,000	169,671,000	171,901,000	174,093,000
<b>Household sector</b>					
Household burglary					
Number	6,458,700	6,720,600	6,743,700	6,663,400	6,764,900
Rate	91.7	93.1	91.7	88.9	88.5
Household larceny					
Number	7,537,300	8,933,100	9,223,000	9,300,900	9,418,300
Rate	107.0	123.8	125.4	124.1	123.3
Motor vehicle theft					
Number	1,343,900	1,358,400	1,433,000	1,234,600	1,296,800
Rate	19.1	18.8	19.5	16.5	17.0
Total number of households	70,442,400	72,162,900	73,559,600	74,956,100	76,412,300

NOTE: Detail may not add to total shown because of rounding.

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