

Connecticut Justice Commission
Research & Evaluation Division
75 Elm Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06115
(203) 566-7688

by

Catherine M. Donovan
Research Analyst

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Crimes Against the Elderly
"A Blueprint for Action"

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I. Introduction

There is no society which is totally free from crime and within societies no age group that is free from its effects. This is no less true for the American society or for older Americans as a group. A certain amount of crime is an inevitable and, as Durkheim would argue, a necessary circumstance, since acceptable behavior and the associated norm structure is reinforced by the contrast between socially acceptable and socially unacceptable behavior. There is, however, a point at which the crime rate surpasses the threshold of tolerance and the social framework is threatened.

The purpose of this research was to ascertain whether criminal victimization of older persons has so surpassed that threshold as to justify special efforts to combat it, above and beyond present criminal justice system responses to the problem of crime in general. The first five sections of this report, therefore, will examine the dynamics of victimization of older persons. The extent and nature of crimes against the elderly as well as the impact of victimization will be compared to that of crimes against other age groups. Current crime prevention efforts specifically targeted at the older segment of potential and actual victims will be assessed as to their structure and efficacy.

The final sections of the report consist of recommendations which might be considered if the reader is satisfied that some action should be taken to alleviate the problems of older Connecticut citizens with respect to crime. Problem areas are designated and strategies for achieving desired results in those areas are suggested on the basis of the research.

The methodology with which the study was conducted involved the gathering of data from research studies and surveys conducted throughout the country, acquisition of victimization data from local police departments in Connecticut, review of the literature, compilation of descriptions of current programs

throughout the country, and gathering of information on programs and resources in Connecticut.

Much of the information included in this study originated outside of Connecticut. Data on elderly victimization in Connecticut is not readily available from all local police departments, as is true at the local level throughout the country, due to the difficulties both in the police officer's obtaining age information from unwilling victims and in the department's retrieving and tabulating the information that is available.

After reviewing various research studies and discovering the similarities among their findings as well as between those and the data which was available for Hartford and the New Haven region, it was postulated that a statewide victimization study would not prove Connecticut to be substantially different in its elderly crime problem from the rest of the country. The utility of a statewide victimization survey merely to demonstrate the presence or absence of a problem which is already perceived to exist and, as the available data indicates, does exist appeared not to justify the effort. Further, in order to demonstrate the specific areas in Connecticut where the elderly do have more or less of a crime problem, a survey would have to encompass an enormous sample of the population, since the differences can be as great between localities as between neighborhoods within a locality. The latter purpose was felt to be more readily and more appropriately accomplished through other means.

The focus of this research, then, cannot be to define the problem of elderly victimization for these different areas, but to demonstrate the need for localities to define their unique problems, assess their resources, and take appropriate action.

II. Comparative Victimization Rates

A. Nationally

In searching for national data on victimization of older persons one finds that within the United States Department of Justice there are numerous systems collecting data on reported criminal activity, including the Uniform Crime Reports of the FBI. Unfortunately none of them correlate victimization rates to the age of the victim. The only source, therefore, of national data on criminal victimization of the elderly is the National Criminal Survey conducted by the Bureau of the Census in conjunction with the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA).

The National Crime Survey data collection program includes personal interviews with approximately 136,000 individuals in a national stratified probability sample of about 60,000 households annually. Respondents are asked about victimization experiences during the six months preceding the interviews. According to the aggregate data from the National Crime Survey comparison of 1975 and 1976 findings the elderly were not being victimized to an extent greater than their proportion in the general population; they were, in fact, undervictimized by comparison with the rest of the population. Some researchers concluded therefore that the elderly do not have a crime problem.

A closer look at the data, however, reveals that the largest increases in victimization for some types of crimes occurred in the age 65 and over category. For the crime of assault the largest increase (21.1%) was found in the 65 and over age group with the next largest increase (7.8%) occurring in the 16-19 year age group. For simple assault the 65 and over group experienced a 36.2% increase while the 16-19 year old group experienced the second highest increase of 6.8%

The NCS also asserted that victimization rates for some crimes were increasing. Although, for example, in the crime of robbery with injury, the age groups of 12-34 experienced an overall decrease, older age groups of 35-49, 50-64, and 65 and over experienced increases of 17%, 10.5%, and 8.3% respectively.

The aggregate data also mask the fact that elderly males experienced tremendous increases in victimization rates. Victimization by robbery with injury decreased overall but increased by 56.7% for males age 65 and over. Simple assault incidents against elderly males increased 136.9%, with the next largest increase of 0.7% occurring in the 12-15 year old age group (LEAA, 1977). Further, the NCS does not collect data for crimes such as purse snatch, fraud, medical quackery, and harassment by teenagers, which are frequently committed against older victims.

In its initial research efforts on crime and the elderly, the House Select Committee on Aging conducted a survey of 50 chiefs of police throughout the country which asked whether they felt that the elderly were disproportionately victimized and, if so, by what crimes. Thirty-four out of fifty responded. Hartford's chief of police was among the 10 who responded in the affirmative citing the crimes of purse snatching, mugging, and bunco. Other chiefs mentioned robbery, burglary, purse snatch, mugging, con games, commercial frauds, medical quackery, bunco, and swindles.

In the wake of initial NCS figures and the congressional hearings on crime against the elderly which began in 1971, several studies were conducted whose results support the affirmative responses to that questionnaire. A three year study of robbery in Oakland, California (Feeney & Weir) revealed that although the general population runs the risk of being victimized at the rate of 1 in 146, females over 65 have a victimization rate of 1 in 24.

A study done in Wilmington, Delaware, in conjunction with the FBI, of street crimes in fiscal year 1975 showed a victimization rate of 1 in 220 for persons under 60 years of age but a victimization rate of 1 in 124 for those aged 60 or over. Of the 421 street crimes committed during that period 128, or 30.4% were committed against the 60 and over age group. At that time the elderly represented 19.7% of Wilmington's population.

There are also indications that the elderly victimization rate is greater in urban areas. Of 3,742 elderly persons responding to a statewide survey in Texas, 496 or 13.3% purported to have been victimized in the previous year under the categories of robbery, burglary, auto theft, theft, swindling, purse snatching, assaults, and rape. A central city study done by the same group revealed a 29.8% rate. The crime most often perpetrated against the elderly was burglary, followed closely by theft (Forston et al, 1974).

Reported crime rates, the National Crime Survey, and other research studies throughout the country have indicated that there is a tendency for the elderly to be over-victimized in some categories of crime. Research in the area of crimes against the elderly is continuing, but since the mid-70's the focus of the bulk of the research has not been upon discerning whether or not the elderly are being disproportionately victimized but rather upon probing the questions of which crimes are committed against them, where they occur, by whom they are committed, and what are the effects of the victimization.

The most comprehensive, in-depth report to date on criminal victimization of the elderly was conducted by the Midwest Research Institute in Kansas City (Cunningham et al, 1976). In a study of nearly 3,000 criminal acts committed against persons aged 60 or over, 1,518 in the categories of burglary, robbery, larceny purse snatch, assault, fraud, rape, and homicide were probed in depth.

These categories were chosen because of the extent of their occurrence against the elderly as well as for the significance of their impact upon older victims.

Through personal interviews with the victims information was collected on demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, fear levels, and consequences of the crime for the victim from physical, financial, psychological, and behavioral perspectives. A comparison study of environment was undertaken examining population density, type of housing, and victimization rate by census tract. The project also included collection of demographic data on offenders, analysis for their methods of operations, and an examination of degrees of victim involvement in prosecution. Insights into the reasons offenders had victimized elderly persons in the past were elicited through interviews with inmates of the state prison.

Since the bulk of the Midwest Research Institute findings pertain to the causes, correlates, and impact of victimization of older persons and not to comparative victimization rates between age groups they will be discussed at appropriate points in subsequent chapters. The MRI Study did, however, make one of the most substantial contributions to research in the area of elderly victimization and its findings have been incorporated into several demonstration projects.

B. Connecticut

In Connecticut actual data on elderly (those age 60 and over) victimization rates was available for the City of Hartford and the New Haven region. In the discussion of those studies which follows the percentages cited must be qualified in that a substantial number of cases did not indicate the age of the victim. The percentages stated are of those incidents in which the age of the victim was known.

Hartford

The data analysis unit of the Hartford Police Department has completed an elderly victimization study which examined the crimes of purse snatch, on-street and residential robbery and burglary occurring in the city between January 1 and October 18, 1977. In the four types of offenses studied, the percentage of elderly victimization was collectively 13.5%. Since the elderly comprise 15.4% of Hartford's population the figures would not seem to indicate disproportionate victimization of that age group.

Taking the crime categories separately, however, does reveal some over-victimization for the crimes of purse snatch (24%), robbery purse snatch (29.6%), and robbery (16%). The elderly victimization rate for the crime of burglary is 10.4%, but, as indicated in the following table, the raw number of incidents involving elderly victims is higher for burglary than for other three crime categories.

Offenses Involving Elderly Victims		
Offense	#	% age of total crimes against all age groups
Purse Snatch	52	24%
Robbery Purse Snatch	40	29.6%
Robbery (on-street and residential)	151	16%
Residential Burglary	239	10.4%

The Hartford study also revealed that known offenders of the crimes of purse snatch, robbery purse snatch and robbery were predominantly under 19 years of age. The percentages ranged from 70 to 100 among the three categories.

Burglary is the crime most often committed against the elderly as it is against other age groups. Comparatively lower rates for the elderly, however, may be a result of the fact that in general, older persons are more often at home. Some occurrences which would have been burglaries will fall into other crime categories where a residence is unexpectedly found to be occupied.

New Haven

The South Central Connecticut Criminal Justice Supervisory Board, using data from the computerized police Case Incident Regional Reporting System (CIRRS) for the municipalities in that region, has been preparing a study in which the following preliminary conclusions were drawn:

- (1) Outside New Haven, the streets of the region's municipalities are relatively safe for the elderly.
- (2) The homes in which the elderly live, however, are not safe.
- (3) Many of the streets of New Haven are dangerous places for the elderly to be.
- (4) For certain crime categories the elderly in New Haven are overly victimized.²

In analysis of the crimes of on-street robbery and purse snatch in the New Haven region for 1976 significant over-victimization of the elderly was revealed for these crimes. Although the elderly account for 13% of New Haven's population they were the victims in 22% of the purse snatches and 16% of the on-street robberies.

It would appear from the preliminary figures for the city of Hartford and the New Haven region that the crime problem of older persons in Connecticut approximates the pattern found in other states. More detailed analysis is continuing on the part of both departments toward a more comprehensive understanding of the problem upon which to base future attempts at solving it.

²South Central Criminal Justice Supervisory Board, January, 1978.

C. Measuring Elderly Victimization

The previous enumeration of facts and figures regarding elderly victimization would seem to indicate that at least in some areas, by some types of crime the elderly are the victims in disproportionate numbers. There are some factors which should be taken into account, however, in interpreting crime rates, particularly with respect to elderly victimization.

Reported Crime Rates - The NCS surveys have shown that the actual amount of crime occurring may be two to three times the amount reported to the police. The number of crimes actually committed against the elderly would be higher also, but it is not known by how much. Although LEAA figures depict the elderly as having a tendency to report crimes at a slightly higher rate than the general population, there is still a tendency toward substantial under-reporting among elderly victims for somewhat different reasons from those given by victims in other age groups (Baggett & Ernst.)³

FBI Uniform Crime Reports - This source of data is presently of no value in estimating elderly victimization rates since it does not record the age of the victim. Although this is expected to change with the establishment of the National Bureau of Criminal Justice Statistics, there may still be a limit to its utility unless crimes to which the elderly are particularly vulnerable i.e. purse snatch, fraud, and medical quackery, are included.

Use of Aggregate Data - The use of aggregate figures can mask important rates from subsamples and variables which are lost when the data is averaged to form that aggregate figure. The assertion that the overall crime rate is decreasing, for example, does not necessarily preclude sharp increases for specific categories of crime.

³Criminal Victimization in Eight American Cities, April, 1975, P.29.

The "At Risk" Factor - In comparing victimization rates of different age groups it must be understood that the age groups of 12 to 16 or 36 to 40 for example may be more uniformly "at risk" of victimization than the age group 60 and over. Within this large category are included the young-old, middle-old, and old-old as distinguished by their health, habits, and life styles. Many of them are not at risk of street crime, for example, since they are too old and frail to leave their residences. Most studies show that crime decreases at this end of the aging spectrum as a function of the activity levels of these subgroups.⁴

In the Wilmington Delaware Study 86.7% of the sample of age 60 and over victims fell into the 60-77 range. The median age of elderly victims in the Midwest Research Institute Study, where all crime victims aged 60 and over were selected, was 66.3. These are indications that there may be a higher concentration of older victims in the 60-69 range. Although one might conclude that this would be due to the probability that persons aged 60 or over fall predominantly into that age group, that is not the case. More than 40% of older persons are aged 70 or over, and the ratio is increasing. There is a possibility, therefore, that the older population who are at risk of victimization have even higher rates of victimization than presently thought.

Differing definitions of "elderly" - Elderly victimization rates are often not comparable due to differing choices of the age cut-off for the category of elderly. The various categories of over 55, 60 and over 62, 65 and over, over 65, etc. have been used in accordance with social security or retirement criterion or the personal definition of the researcher as to when a person becomes elderly.

⁴Cunningham, 1975, p.49 and 51.

The final qualification that must be made in looking at statistics is that there is an unquantifiable human factor involved in victimization which cannot be ignored in assessing the severity of the problem of crimes against the elderly. The following chapter will consider the question of what makes the older victim of crime different.

III. Unique Characteristics of the Older Person

Vulnerability to Criminal Victimization

It is necessary not only to discover whether the older person is disproportionately victimized by crime but also to attempt an understanding of the factors which create the condition of increased vulnerability to the occurrence of crime as a person joins the ranks of the elderly. Although it must be stressed that the elderly are not a homogeneous group and that degrees of vulnerability are varied, there are some social and physical factors which are found to a greater degree among older persons and which may increase the likelihood of their being the victim of a crime. These include:

- (1) Greater likelihood of living alone. Especially in the case of robbery of a residence or burglary, living alone increases the likelihood of victimization. Traveling alone to do errands, for example, has implications for street crime victimization rates as well.
- (2) Diminished physical strength and stamina. The ability to escape threatening situations or to ward off an attacker decreases proportionally.
- (3) Decreased visual and sensory acuity. Failure to recognize a potential threat eliminates the possibility of taking precautionary measures and avoiding victimization.
- (4) Greater likelihood of living in high crime areas. Close proximity to potential offenders increases risk of victimization.
- (5) Dates of check cashing and cash carrying are known. Offenders are aware that older persons are likely to be carrying more substantial amounts of cash in the first few days after social security checks are due.

- (6) Greater reliance on walking and public transportation. Greater exposure increases vulnerability to street crime.
- (7) Offenders' knowledge of characteristic vulnerability of older persons.
Past offenders against older persons who were interviewed in the MRI study indicated that they did not choose older persons as victims simply because they were old. The combination of the older person's general weakness, reliance on cash transactions rather than credit, carelessness with money, tendency to live and walk the streets alone, and the fact that they are in the "right" place at the right time make them prime targets. This phenomenon is also evident in the high rate of fraud against older persons where low or fixed incomes, chronic ailments for which medical science can offer no relief, or sheer loneliness make the elderly prey to get-rich-quick schemes, medical quackery, and countless other ploys of persons who appear to be offering help. (Goldsmith and Tomas)

Differential Impact

Some of the same characteristics which increase the likelihood of the occurrence of a crime against an older person also eventuate a greater impact upon the older victim - physically, economically, behaviorally, and psychologically. This principle of differential impact must be considered when comparing crime statistics.

The physical process of maturation makes an older person increasingly fragile and increases the likelihood of injury. In Conklin's study of street robbery and fear, the elderly victims were found to resist less often but to be more often and more seriously injured. Younger victims were injured 25.2% of the time with 19.7% requiring hospital treatment. The older victims were

injured in 41.9% of the cases with 27.5% requiring hospital treatment. A similarly high rate of injury was noted in the Wilmington Study where 41.4% of elderly victims suffered injuries. This greater rate and severity of injury is compounded by the fact that the older victim has less recuperative ability and will take a longer time to heal than will a younger person with a similar injury.

Not all elderly persons are needy. Although 30% of the elderly have incomes below the poverty level, 50% of the assets in the banks and securities in the United States are owned by persons aged 60 or over. Elderly victims, however, tend to be poor. In the Detroit Cass Corridor Study (Bradely, 1976) 68% of the older victims had annual incomes below \$3,500. Similarly, the median annual income of older victims in the Midwest Research Institute study was less than \$3,000.

The lower the income of the victim of a crime involving loss of money or property the greater the relative loss. The higher percentage of the income lost and the inability to absorb the loss over a long term makes the impact much more significant for lower income groups. Application of the principle of relative deprivation would alter some of the present definitions of the severity of a crime. In terms of relative loss to the victim a personal robbery of a small amount of money is of ten more serious than a commercial robbery of a larger sum where the loss is often recovered through insurance payments.

In addition to these factors, the older person is more likely to have been previously victimized. Multiple victimization has been revealed in several studies and compounds the magnitude of the impact. Over 26% of the

elderly victims in the Midwest Research Institute Study had been previously victimized and the overwhelming majority were victimized in the same way as the first time, in some instances by the same offender. In Wilmington, a group of 105 older persons who were victims of street crimes in 1975 had been victimized a total of 144 times since they turned 60.

Older persons are highly likely to change their behavior as a result of victimization. Forty percent of elderly burglary and robbery victims in the MRI Study stated that they no longer go to certain places or do certain things due to fear of crime. Slightly over 12% moved from their homes or sold businesses, citing the burglary and general threat of crime in the neighborhood as the reasons. About 10% of robbery victims changed their work schedules and some abandoned employment as a result of the incident. The most drastic event was that several reported abandonment of their homes following a robbery or a burglary.

The most profound impact of victimization is an increased fear of crime, but fear of crime and behavioral effects of that fear exist among older persons who have not been criminally victimized. In a study by Rifai in Multnomah County, Oregon, of behavioral changes in the elderly caused by fear of crime, 84% of the respondents would not walk outside after dark, with 62% attributing this directly to fear of crime. Almost 25% of all those interviewed avoided certain areas in their own neighborhoods due to fear. And two-thirds felt that their homes would be burglarized.

Since fear of crime among the elderly has become at least as great a concern as crime itself, the following section is devoted to a discussion of that issue.

IV. Fear

Just as it is difficult to measure the actual magnitude of the problem of crimes against the elderly, it is also difficult to measure the extent of the fear of crime problem. Much has been written about the rampant fear supposed to exist among our older population. Several surveys have consistently revealed fear of crime as one of the most serious concerns, if not the most serious problem, which confront elderly persons. In two separate studies which the NRTA/AARP carried out in conjunction with the University of Michigan (1972) and the University of Southern California (1973), fear of crime as a problem was ranked second only to food and shelter by older persons. In a similar survey by the Chicago Planning Council on Aging, 41% of city residents aged 60 or over felt that crime was their most serious concern.

But even older people themselves overestimate the seriousness of the fear of crime among their own age group. In a national survey on the problems of the elderly conducted in 1974 by Louis Harris and Associates and sponsored by the National Council on the Aging, the elderly ranked fear of crime as the most serious problem they experience. But although 50% of the general public and 57% of the 65 and over public believed that fear of crime is one of the very serious problems facing most older Americans, only 23% of the same 65 and over respondents reported that it is a very serious problem for them. There are indications that respondents to surveys may be confusing individual and societal levels when answering questions about the problems of the elderly making accurate measurement of fear levels difficult.

High levels of fear, however, do tend to exist in a positive correlation with the presence of certain variables. Focusing on these relationships rather than on attempting to measure the extent of fear as an overall problem for all

elderly persons holds greater potential for identifying solutions by enabling a determination as to where the problem will be the greatest. Although the elderly do appear generally to be at least slightly more fearful than younger persons the consensus of researchers is that the level of fear is not correlated to age alone. High fear levels have been found to correlate with being female, having a low income, being black, living in a large community, and believing that one's neighbors would not call the police if he or she were being victimized. Neither are fear levels necessarily correlated with previous victimization or the actual crime rate in a given area.⁵

It becomes immediately apparent that if high fear levels exist irrespective of past victimization or high crime rates the criminal justice system might have difficulty in reducing fear since it has little if any control over the other variables which affect fear. In explaining fear, however, it is not enough to know that such correlations exist but how those variables affect fear levels and whether there are intervening variables in the causation of fear. It is necessary, therefore, to understand the psychological condition of the older person.

The normal process of aging is punctuated by a series of losses. The elderly are generally faced with a reduction of income and the consequent loss of economic power and lessened ability to purchase goods and services. A significant number live in inadequate housing, are constrained in their access to transportation, or have difficulty with mobility. Many suffer from poor nutrition. There is also a breakdown of the social network — often loss of spouse, loss of meaningful peer relationships, and gradual loss of meaningful

⁵for a review of recent surveys, see Pope and Feyerherm.

roles. Physical changes in vision, hearing, muscular strength and coordination, and reaction time conspire to reduce information processing efficiency. Any one or a combination of these losses is associated with a devaluation of one's self-image and creates a situation of heightened vulnerability to stress.

Dr. M. Powell Lawton et al (1976) have explained how this condition is related to the threat of crime. A threat is perceived by an individual not only in terms of the magnitude of the threat but also in terms of one's ability to deal with it. They describe vulnerability as the "host factor" in fear. Not only are older persons more vulnerable in stressful situations they are also aware of their lessened effectiveness and this feeling of vulnerability colors their perceptions and affects their behavior.

The fact that fear levels among the elderly are not necessarily correlated with previous victimization or the actual crime rate in a given area is compatible with Lawton's theory. National surveys (LEAA, 1977) have shown that victims of crime are only slightly more fearful of further attacks on their security than non-victims, but that victims of the less serious crimes of purse snatching, pocket picking and robbery without injury were more fearful than victims of the more serious crimes of assault and robbery with injury. This result is attributed to age and sex differences. Assault victims are more often young males who generally feel much safer in spite of high victimization rates.

The relationship of vulnerability to fear may also provide a partial explanation of why the levels of fear of some elderly persons are high even when their actual risk of victimization is low. In one neighborhood where the crime rate was low the older residents were found to be experiencing extremely high fear levels. It was later discovered that many of them had

moved there from high crime areas and had no real knowledge of the actual crime rate in the new neighborhood. (Rifai, The Police Chief, 1977). Their fear levels remained high because they were perceiving the threat of crime in terms of their ability to deal with it if it confronted them, no matter how low the probability of its occurring. In addition, their isolation from new neighbors prevented their getting valid feedback as to the real magnitude of the threat.

The interrelationships of stress, perceptions about crime rates, and isolation are crucial in determining the individual's level of fear, and more importantly, behavioral reactions to fear. Any time a threat is perceived, behavior is modified to cope with the threat. The coping mechanism, however, can be either adaptive or maladaptive. Many people respond to crime by limiting their exposure, curtailing participation in social activities and eliminating superfluous travel. Considering the already limited activity levels of many older persons, further reduction of exposure may mean restriction of essential trips (i.e., doctors, shopping, all social activity). While this response may reduce the risk of victimization the resultant isolation exacerbates the problems of loneliness, fear, and loss of self-esteem. As long as fear of threats against their physical security pervades their existence, satisfaction in other areas is blocked.

Whether the object of one's fear is real or imagined its effects are equally debilitating both to the individual and to the criminal justice system. The question is how to approach the seemingly nebulous task of reduction of fear. In his analysis from an exploratory study of fear, Sundeen (1977) found that reduction of the crime that goes on around older persons would assist in allaying their fears. But other research has suggested that the actual crime rate is less important in generating fear than are perceptions about the crime rate and feelings of personal vulnerability. Simple reduction of crime may not reduce fear; and fear may, in fact, be reduced in the absence of a change in crime rate.

Crime prevention education can increase the capacity of older persons to reduce their individual risks of victimization by alerting them to real dangers and providing them with adaptive mechanisms for coping with them. It can, and should, also serve to dispell imaginary fears by assuring older persons that the likelihood of their being victimized is not as high as perhaps the media would make it appear.

A prevention program which emphasizes security and avoidance techniques without making a concious effort not to escalate fear is counterproductive to the individual. Older persons should be shown that it is not necessary or desirable for them to become or remain isolated. Giving them the ability to protect themselves should they encounter a real threat to their security will reduce their victimization rates as well as gain them a measure of self-confidence and peace of mind.

Reduction of fear, as well as reduction of crime, is not easily accomplished. It becomes less difficult, however, the more we learn about its causes and effects. On the basis of research to date, crime prevention efforts which stress the reduction of personal vulnerability, recognition and response to real threats, realistic portrayal of victimization rates, and establishment of police/elderly relationships which engender self-help measures among the elderly as a group, in block watches for example, should be emphasized. A self-confident older person who feels part of a social network which is concerned about his or her welfare will have no reason to live in fear.

V. Overview of Current Responses

Nationally

There have been numerous programs developed throughout the country designed to impact upon the problem of crimes against the elderly. The following is a descriptive overview of some of the types of programs which have been implemented.

Public Education - Many programs focus on improved public education as a means to more effective crime prevention for older persons. Information and instruction disseminated variously through the news media, workshops, presentations at club meetings, and distribution of pamphlets and newsletters has had significant impact upon community cohesion and police-community relations.

Utilization of Older Volunteers - The recognition of the elderly volunteer as a valuable resource in the prevention of crime, coupled with the increasing conviction that law enforcement agencies cannot effectively prevent crime without the cooperation and support of the community has resulted in the inclusion of a volunteer component in many crime prevention programs.

Target-hardening and Security Strategies - This type of activity is a widespread and basic component of most crime prevention programs. The strategies include such things as neighborhood watch, marking of valuables with personal identification, improved street lighting and installation of effective locks. Some programs provide home security checks, escort services, or special police patrols.

Victim Services - A shift from the traditional focus upon crime and the offender to a recognition of the plight of the forgotten victim in criminal justice has given rise to post-victimization programs which provide crisis intervention, emergency assistance, and information and referral services. The services are often expanded to include counseling on how to follow a case through the courts and procedures for applying for victim compensation and restitution programs.

Delivery of Non-Crime Related Services - Many programs go beyond law enforcement and crime control activities to strengthen the older individual's personal support system and thereby reduce vulnerability to crime. These services, often performed by police officers, include escort and transportation services, daily telephone check-in services, and distribution of identification cards for check cashing and other purposes.

Specialized Police Training - Training programs to enhance understanding of and sensitivity to older persons have grown out of the conviction that overcoming stereotypical thinking about and alertness to the needs of the elderly is an important step toward reducing crime against the elderly.

Research - In addition to research studies per se most current programs include a research component for collection and analysis of data which can be used in future programming efforts.

(An appendix of descriptions of and sources of information about individual programs is included at the end of this report. Where they have been implemented they have had demonstrable effects in prevention of crimes against the elderly and reduction of fear. In addition their research and evaluation components have provided valuable information both for their own programming decisions and for replication purposes.)

Governmental Support and Legislation - The sources of possible funds for programs in prevention of crimes against the elderly are varied, but many of the projects which have been implemented have been supported with federal funds. The primary source of these has been the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration which is responsible for managing funds for the improvement of the criminal justice system.

The United States Congress has recognized the severity of crime against the elderly and has required that the problem be addressed not only with LEAA funds but also by the funds provided in aging services and other substantive areas.

The effect has been to increase the potential sources of funds for elderly crime prevention activities by broadening the scope of possible uses for federal dollars to include services pertaining to residential security and emergency services for victims for example.

Funding for a wide range of activities, which might include those pertaining to security against crime for the elderly, is made available through Community Development Block Grants administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The grants are paid to local governments and spending priorities are determined at the local level. Programs could include home improvements or neighborhood facilities for the elderly. Funds for housing repair assistance are made under the Home Improvement Loan Insurance program, Title of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974.

Under Title III of the Older Americans Act, which authorizes support for State and Community Programs for the Elderly, the Administration on Aging allocates funds to designated State Departments on Aging which in turn make awards to area agencies on aging to foster development of comprehensive and coordinate services to the elderly. Home repair services for older Americans constitute one of the program areas given priority status under the 1975 Amendments to the Act. Although home repair assistance is not intended primarily to improve security of homes against crimes, this can be one of the benefits of such home repairs. Legal services for the elderly is another area given priority status under the amendments.

Connecticut

Although the focus of this report is crime prevention, the presence of a minimal level of social services to the individual is necessary in making the older person less vulnerable to the occurrence and impact of crime. The

mandate for these types of services comes under the purview of the Connecticut Department on Aging. The Department was established in 1969, replacing the Connecticut Commission on Services for the Elderly and is responsible for the overall planning, development, and administration of a comprehensive social service delivery system for the elderly.

The Department's major service programs include:

Elderly Nutrition Program - The nutrition program is funded under Title VII of the Older Americans Act and is administered by the State Department on Aging. There are 11 Operating Agencies with 130 meal sites and home-delivered meals to homebound individuals.

In addition to the meal, the program provides ancillary services such as transportation, health screening, counseling, information and referral, and social and recreation programs to individuals 60 years of age and older.

SAIL - Strengthened Assistance for Independent Living - This program, begun on July 1, 1976, is administered by the Department on Aging under Title XX (Social Service provisions) of the Social Security Act. It is offered in a limited number of towns and municipalities. Services provided include homemaker and home health aide, personal care, hot meals, chore and handyman services, rehabilitation therapy, escort and other essential services.

Area Agencies on Aging - The five area agencies on aging (AAA's) are charged with the responsibility of administering programs under Title III of the Federal Older Americans Act. The AAA's allocate funds for services such as the establishment of senior citizen centers, transportation programs, health services, information services and some social service programs.

A 1977 Connecticut Statute expanded the network of aging services by mandating the appointment of a municipal agent for the elderly in each municipality whose duties include referral and information services for elderly residents.

The Department also has responsibilities for developing legal services for the elderly and planning for reduction of crime against older persons. In order to fulfill the latter function the Department has been seeking to foster coordination among various social service and law enforcement agencies throughout the state. Since the Connecticut Justice Commission has a responsibility for planning in the area of reducing crimes against the elderly the two agencies have been working closely over the past year and have been involved in two joint undertakings.

Elderly Task Force - Members of the Justice Commission and the Department on Aging have been meeting on a regular basis with representatives of state and local police departments, aging groups, and other agencies to assess the crime related needs of Connecticut's older citizens. The purpose of the task force is "to study and support current relevant legislation, making recommendations where appropriate, technology transfer to foster statewide cooperation of available resources, and the review of programs for support where appropriate".

First Connecticut Conference on Criminal Victimization of Older Persons - The Connecticut Justice Commission and the Department on Aging co-sponsored a conference in April of 1978 which was attended by more than one hundred persons including criminal justice and social services, educators, and representatives of civic and elderly organizations. The conference was designed to bring together for the first time persons from across the state who have been engaged in elderly services and crime prevention programs and those interested in doing so to share information and express their recommendations for future efforts in prevention, education, and services.⁸

⁸The proceedings of the conference including transcripts of the panel discussions and recommendations of the workshops are available from the Justice Commission.

The network of Aging services in Connecticut is a substantial resource for providing assistance to elderly victims as well as for the dissemination of crime prevention and social service information to elderly residents. Some components of that network have already been involved in those activities and in developing actual programs in crime prevention and reduction of fear. The Elderly Services Bureau of Hamden has applied to LEAA for a \$24,000 grant to set up an anti-crime program called "Elderly Youth Escort Service" (EYES). The grant would allow the town to hire a project coordinator and a part-time secretary plus five paid escorts recruited from the high school and local colleges. The service would be available to all local residence 60 years old and over.

There are numerous private and public organizations in Connecticut which have been operating programs to impact on crime against the elderly in the past few years. Police departments in the state have initiated numerous responses to elderly victimization.

The Data Analysis Unit of the Hartford Police Department, for example, has distributed the findings of its elderly victimization study throughout the department and has gathered information as to the current efforts in its different districts to deal with the problem of crimes against the elderly. Various efforts have been initiated to educate senior citizens in crime prevention measures as well as to provide in-service training to supervisors and patrol officers in the problems of the elderly. Special details of plain clothes, uniform police and auxiliary forces have been instituted in areas of high elderly population. Elderly participation has been solicited in public safety committees and block watcher programs. Plans are being formulated to involve explorer scouts in an elderly escort service. Police personnel have

been instructed to work closely with the Department of Aging when they encounter elderly persons in need of assistance.

All bureaus and divisions of the department have requested more detailed information on crimes against the elderly in order to enhance the effectiveness of prevention strategies. Although the initial study dealt with crime on a city-wide basis, future analysis is intended to provide timely information to specific areas of the city. The department's goals include prevention and increased suspect apprehension. Subjects arrested for committing crimes against the elderly are being identified and tracked through the court system. The Investigation Services Bureau has also been working with the Youth Services Division in the identification and apprehension of juvenile offenders victimizing the elderly.

The police departments in New Haven, New Britain, Norwalk, West Haven, Waterbury, Meriden, Middletown, the State Police and others have all been involved in crime prevention lectures, distribution of crime prevention literature, film presentations, operation identification and other efforts. These services are performed for the general public but special presentations are very often made at senior citizen centers. One of the more unique police services for Connecticut is provided by the East Hartford Police Department which recently began a telephone reassurance program for Seniors. This involves daily check-in by elderly residents with a group of volunteers who investigate when the senior citizen fails to call in within a designated time period.

The New Haven and Hamden police departments have programs operated by Victim Service Units which help victims cope with the aftereffects of crime. The New Haven program was initiated in early 1977 with a 140,000 grant from LEAA and has since made contacts with 2,700 persons victimized by robberies,

assaults, thefts, and purse snatchings. The Hamden program began in the fall of 1977 with a \$200,000 grant under the federal Comprehensive Employment and Training Act and became fully operational in January of 1978. Although services are not provided exclusively to elderly victims they are tailored to the needs of the individual. Other victim services programs in Connecticut include one operated by the Quinebaug Valley Health and Welfare Council in Putnam and a statewide Victim/Witness Bureau funded by the Connecticut Justice Commission and operating through the Chief State's Attorneys Office. The Judicial Department's Restitution Services Project is another potential source of assistance to elderly victims in the arrangement of restitution to victims by offenders.

Organizations such as the Hartford Institute for Criminal and Social Justice, the United Way, Connecticut Federation of Women's Clubs, the Senior Security Council of Greater New Haven, housing authorities and countless others have been involved in various programs throughout the state to reduce elderly victimization and to give services to elderly victims. Past initiatives have generally been locally-based, often on the impetus of a single group or individual. The Departments of Education in Redding, Brookfield and Middletown, for example, support a program which sets up elderly volunteers as tutors of 12-15 year olds in order to decrease intergenerational conflict and prevent delinquency. Large-scale efforts, however, which cut across city and agency lines are beginning to emerge.

The Poor People's Federation in Hartford was recently awarded \$250,000 for a community crime prevention program which includes a component addressing the elderly crime problem. In the New Haven region an area-wide anti-crime consortium under the leadership of the South Central Connecticut Area Agency on Aging has initiated a program which seeks to reduce fear and the physical, psychological and social gaps between age groups and to heighten police department responsive-

ness to older members of the community. Locally based projects would include block watch, hardware installation, escort and errand service and intergenerational discussion groups and counseling.

The proposed Danbury Community Anti-Crime Program will also involve a multi-project approach including the establishment of an escort and educational program for the elderly. Housatonic Community College has applied for a higher education grant which would enable them to offer seminars and workshops in crime prevention using visual aids and television resources.

Recognition of the severity of crime against the elderly at the state level was evidenced in a 1977 statute concerning assault of persons aged 60 or over which provides for harsher penalties for offenders convicted of assaulting older persons. In the most recent session of the legislature a victim compensation bill which can provide assistance to elderly persons who are injured through crime was passed and signed into law.

The interest in the problems of crimes against older persons in Connecticut is evident. Much is being done, much more is planned, but much more remains to be accomplished. The following section consists of recommendations. They do not encompass the entire universe of possible prescriptions for preventing crimes against the elderly but are concerned instead with the most generally applicable solutions and most immediate needs. They take into account the resources available and past success in using them to combat the older person's vulnerability to crime.

VI. Recommendations

Traditionally there have been two basic approaches to the problem of crime in general and crime against the elderly in particular. The first emphasis had always been upon prevention. Focusing on the crime and the offender was viewed as the most effective means of dealing with the crime problem. The failure of this approach gave impetus to the birth of the victim assistance, advocacy, and finally the compensation approach which was designed to appease the victim for the failure of the law enforcement system to adequately protect him.

Both approaches treat the symptoms of the disease since the generally accepted causes of crime--poverty, unemployment, dissatisfaction with lessened means of gratification in the light of rising expectations and the general breakdown and fragmentation of social norms--are something which the criminal justice system cannot alone alleviate. The failure of traditional crime prevention measures has led to a tendency to de-emphasize prevention and concentrate on victim assistance while waiting for the social changes not thought to be the responsibility of the criminal justice system.

If law enforcement is to be effective it must attack the problem of crimes against the elderly on all three fronts: prevention through traditional measures, prevention through social change, and victim assistance for those whom it cannot protect. The task is monumental and cannot be accomplished, nor should it be undertaken, by law enforcement personnel alone. The resources of the criminal justice system are limited, as are those of all government agencies, while the range of desirable uses for those resources is infinite.

Although criminal victimization of older persons is a serious problem and deserves attention it would be unrealistic to think that it can be eliminated by buying more policemen, for example. The recommendations which follow emphasize different use of available resources, changes which do not require new

expenditures, and - for those strategies which require additional resources - the use of volunteers and other mechanisms for minimizing costs.

Futher activities which might be undertaken such as crime prevention education, should be area-specific and based on a needs and resource assessment. The choice of appropriate project strategies will flow from knowledge of the unique problems of the older persons in a given target population. For information on implementing particular strategies refer to the index of programs.

A. Residential Security

I. Desired Result - Improved safety and security of all housing in which the elderly live while allowing the older person autonomy of choice as to where he or she wants to live.

Problem - Although national statistics and surveys have not shown the elderly in general to be disproportionately victimized by the crime of burglary as compared to other age groups, the highest percentage of crimes which are committed against the elderly fall into that category. Since the elderly often tend to stay at home much of the time many crimes which would have been burglaries are elevated to the categories of robbery, assault, rape, or even murder when the offender is surprised by an elderly victim in a supposedly unoccupied home. In addition, the majority of crimes committed against the elderly occur in or near the home. At least half of the burglaries involving older victims are committed by forced entry into single-family dwelling units, and not, as commonly thought, primarily in multi-family apartments or complexes (Cunningham). In Connecticut only a small percentage of the elderly live in public assisted elderly housing. Many (65% nationally, 48% in Hartford) own their own homes. Others live with relatives or in apartments. In order to insure that all elderly persons are safe from burglary it will be necessary to secure all types of housing in which they live.

A. Public Assisted Elderly Housing

Desired Result - Older persons who desire to do so will be able to live in age-segregated public housing whose location and design take into account the principles of residential security and defensible space (Newman), the

desires of the elderly for balconies, porches and visual access to neighbors, and the need for safe access to services.

Problem - The benefits of age-segregated housing have been outlined by Sherman and others who have concluded that the advantages of age segregation for security reasons outweigh the disadvantages inherent in separating the elderly from younger persons. All elderly housing under construction or planned in Connecticut is age-segregated with 10% reserved for handicapped persons. Admittedly, not every older person would wish to live in this type of housing but the fact that every housing authority in Connecticut has a sizeable waiting list for these complexes is an indication that the requisite amount of such housing to meet the demand has not yet been reached. The construction requirements for this type of housing, however, do not include any security standards. In addition they indicate that where possible the housing should be made up of two story buildings rather than high rise complexes. For security purposes, as Oscar Newman has pointed out, high rise complexes are preferable for elderly public housing.

Alternate Strategies:

(1) The Department of Community Affairs should include security standards in its requirements for construction of elderly public housing.

Reasons - At present elderly public housing is relatively secure and due to scarcity of available land space most are high rise complexes. Where access to services is difficult local agencies provide transportation and most have senior citizen's centers located within them. A change in DCA requirements would not become a hardship to most builders since the present patterns would mirror the proposed standards. However, new standards would insure consistent and adequate standards for the future when the increasing number of elderly, and therefore the increasing need for housing, combined with diminishing

resources and scarcity of desirable locations might spur a less than adequate emphasis on quality versus quantity.

(2) The Connecticut Justice Commission might provide technical assistance to architects, builders, and city planners in the principles of defensible space in the design of elderly housing.

Reasons - The opportunity for consultation with a criminal justice agency as to the adequacy of security measure in proposed housing should be available where there is a need and is an appropriate activity for the Connecticut Justice Commission to undertake. This alternative where necessary, preferably in conjunction with the first, would provide a mechanism for helping those who require assistance in designing secure residences or in complying with the new security standards at a relatively low cost.

B. Older Victims in High Crime Areas

Desired Result - Elderly victims residing in high crime areas who wish to relocate to age-segregated public housing would be able to do so.

Problem - At present all housing authorities in Connecticut have long waiting lists for their public housing for the elderly and preference on those waiting lists is based upon an objective determination of need. Public housing is desirable for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is low cost. It has been demonstrated that the older victim of crime, especially the crime of burglary, is more often than younger persons fearful of remaining in the home and may desperately desire to move. The problem is particularly acute for multiple victims and those residing in high crime areas. Many older victims would not wish to leave their present residences, but for many who would the only viable alternative is public housing. The problem then becomes the lack of availability of such housing and long waiting lists.

Strategy

(1) That "objective determination of need" include recent victimization by crime in or near one's residence or living in a "dangerous" neighborhood whereby crime victims might be given preference on waiting lists where appropriate.

Reason - Where the older victim's fear of and desire to leave his present residence cannot be alleviated by securing the residence and where public housing is the only viable alternative he or she should be given a degree of preference in assignment to available units.

C. Milti-family Building Units

Desired Result - All multi-family building units in which the elderly reside would be secure from forced entry.

Alternate Strategies

(1) Minimum security codes (see Blanchard, 1973) with specifications based on effectiveness in preventing forced entry should be enacted for all multi-family residential building units.

Reason - The State of Ohio has enacted a deadbolt lock ordinance. In San Francisco, all multi-family residential buildings and units must be equipped with deadbolt locks by 1980. Such requirements reflect an increasing awareness that minimum security codes are as important for the safety of citizens as are health and fire safety codes. This strategy places the initial burden of cost of securing an apartment upon the landlord or the builder who is thought to be best able to afford it and eliminates the necessity for the tenant to purchase and install security devices on his own.

D. Single-family Homes

Desired Result - Elderly homeowners would have both the knowledge and resources to make their homes safe from burglary.

Problem - A substantial number of the elderly own their own homes. The most common response to victimization in the home is to buy locks, but indications are that many of the elderly purchase inadequate or inappropriate security devices.⁹ Elderly persons who have limited incomes may not be able to afford even minimal security devices, however, even if they are apprised of which are the most effective. In addition, many of the homes which the elderly own are 30 to 40 years old and in deteriorating condition. Making some of these homes secure would require substantial renovation and repair before locks could even be installed.

Alternate Strategies

- (1) Police-trained volunteers, including the elderly, should be enlisted to carry out security surveys in their neighborhoods and to educate the public in home security crime prevention techniques.
- (2) The same volunteers could also be trained to install the devices which are purchased by the homeowners.
- (3) In addition to security surveys and installation volunteers could arrange for the purchase of security devices in bulk and make them available to homeowners at cost.
- (4) The program could also include provision of free locks to qualified homeowners.
- (5) In extreme cases where major repairs are necessary the home could be rehabilitated in addition to installation and provision of locks.

Reasons - The strategies suggested involve an increasing burden of cost not borne by the elderly homeowner which would have to be absorbed by another source. Implementing the first three strategies involves minimal program costs since volunteers are utilized and the cost of the devices is still met by the homeowner. These strategies have reduced the costs to the purchaser from approximately \$300 to \$50 in other program (D'Angelo).

⁹ "The Response of the Older Adult to Criminal Victimization," Rifai, 1977.

Provision of free locks to qualified homeowners, as suggested in the fourth alternative, of expense depending on the qualifications established. If they include the requisites of being elderly, a homeowner, having a low income and being the victim of a burglary, for example, the eligible population becomes relatively small. Only 15% of the population is elderly, half of those own homes, an even smaller percentage have low incomes, and even fewer will have been the victim of a burglary. At \$50 per such eligible home the cost is relatively low. Funds could be provided through federal grants or through a state victim compensation fund. There is a good possibility that the federal government will pass legislation which will provide matching funds to states whose victim compensation legislation provides such services.

Finally, the federal government has included efforts to keep the elderly in their own homes as a priority in its funding programs and there are federal funds available for home repair through the Older Americans Act for example. The number of homes requiring the substantial renovations described in the fifth alternative would be in the minority and the availability of funds justifies the inclusion of these repairs in a home security program.

B. Effective Legislation and Programs

I. Desired Result - Legislation which attempts to address the problem of crime and the elderly will have the intended impact of alleviating the perceived problem.

Problem - It is virtually impossible for the legislature to fully research all bills which come to its attention. Active lobbying is necessary. Decision-makers themselves have said that they are hungry for information about the problems of the elderly but that they don't get it from research, but from their own elderly contacts (Bangston, 1977). The inadequacy of this information source has been evidenced in some of the legislation resulting from it.

At the national level Supplemental Security Income legislation was drafted based on the assumption that few of the elderly would own homes (65% of them do), property, cars, etc. Consequently they placed limits on their worth. Medicare is based on an institutional, curative priority when in fact most of the elderly require outpatient, preventive medical treatment. Services such as podiatry and dentistry which the elderly themselves say they are most in need of are the most difficult to get under these laws.

All of these inadequacies stem from the lack of utilization of a valid data base in policy-making. The blame does not rest solely with the legislators. Unless we begin to form a data generation/data utilization network, we will continue to promulgate laws which, while well-meaning in intent, fail to fulfill their purpose.

Strategy

The Connecticut Justice Commission should have input where possible into critiques of proposed legislation impacting on the criminal justice system.

Reasons

One of the most glaring examples of Connecticut legislation which is not having the impact upon the elderly crime problem which the public and some people in the criminal justice system expected is Public Act No. 77-422 concerning assault of persons aged sixty or over. This law was perceived as a potential deterrent to the commission of crimes against the elderly, but there are several factors which preclude that result.

(1) The crime of assault is not the crime most frequently committed against older persons. If an elderly person is injured in an attempt to steal money the charge becomes robbery or robbery purse snatch. This is much more often the case than is a pure assault.

(2) Where the charge is assault plea-negotiations enter in. In order for this law to be applied there would almost have to be a trial since the accused would not have anything to gain by pleading guilty to a charge which would automatically bring a stiffer penalty. The most common occurrence then would be for the accused to plead guilty to another charge, circumventing the statute.

(3) Although the law calls for a mandatory minimum prison sentence for those convicted under this law, there could still be the possibility of probation.

(4) Many of the crimes against the elderly are perpetrated by juveniles. Carl Cunningham found that "the most salient factor" in the MRI Study was that in 59.7% of the cases the elderly were victimized by younger persons. (These figures include percentages for fraud where the average age of the offender is higher). In the Boston Study the elderly were found to be more often held up by young robbers (aged 10-19) than were victims aged 60 or under. In Wilmington Delaware 85% of those arrested from crimes against the elderly were aged 13-21.

The Detroit Study found that in street crimes against the elderly 66% of the offenders were 13-18. In Hartford for the crimes of purse snatch and robbery the offenders were predominately (70% - 100%) under age 19. Within that group those juvenile (under 16) offenders who are apprehended will ultimately be diverted from the adult court system making the statute inapplicable to them.

If the statute was intended to punish offenders who commit crimes against the elderly then its effect will only occur against those offenders who commit this particular crime, and who are apprehended, tried in adult court under this statute, convicted and sentenced. Obviously, that number would be extremely small relative to the number of all offenses actually committed against older persons. If the intent of the statute lies in special deterrence the same list of inadequacies apply. Further, there is a great deal of doubt as to whether or not a prison sentence will be a deterrent to future crime by the individual after he or she is released.

The general deterrent value of the statute would also appear to be minimal in that the crime of assault against an older person is more often than not an impulsive and somewhat irrational act which injures the victim but gains the offender nothing. Even if this legislation were applied to purse snatch and robbery where some monetary gain is possible it would have limited effect as a general deterrent, particularly upon the nonprofessional opportunist juvenile offender.

On the other hand, fraud and more severe property crimes are good areas for legislating more stringent sentences since they are more likely than crimes of violence to be motivated by considered self-interest and rational predatory judgment. The point has been made by the late Senator Philip Hart..."One businessman or politician can watch another get fired without feeling serious psychological discomfort. But to see your counterpart...marched away in blue denims with black stenciling is highly unnerving...On the other hand, the threat

of the same jail term would likely be wasted on an unemployed ghetto youth with an impulse to burglarize a record shop. So why not allocate some of our prison space where it would do the most good."¹⁰

If police data and a knowledge of the way the Connecticut criminal justice system operates were combined in a thoughtful analysis of what type of legislation could best afford protection to the potential older crime victim the statute would have been, or at least should have been, radically different. Where legislation concerns the criminal justice system the Justice Commission should be called upon for information since it is in a position to project the feasibility and impact of such legislation as it pertains to the system as a whole.

II. Desired Result - Local police departments will have the capability of determining whether or not an identifiable segment of the population which they serve is being over-victimized by particular types of crime and be able to provide services based upon that knowledge.

Problem - Although police case incident reporting forms generally include space for the age of the victim it is often not recorded. This is in part due to the victim's unwillingness in many cases to give that information. This may not be the only reason, however, since in some departments virtually all cases record the age of the victim and in others the percentage is quite low. The absence of the information prohibits the ability to determine the presence or absence of an elderly crime problem and therefore the capability of making area and crime specific analyses of where the problem, if it exists, is the most severe for planning efficient allocation of resources.

As an illustration of the problem we can focus on the reported burglary rates of one town in the New Haven area. In 1976 there were 120 reported burglaries. The percentage of victims who were elderly, in those incidents in which the age of the victim were known, was 33%. The age of the victim was known, however, in only 36 of those incidents. No age of the victim was recorded in the other 84 cases. We only know, therefore, that in 12 cases the victim was elderly. The actual percentage of burglaries against the elderly could conceivably have ranged anywhere from 10% to 75%.

The degree to which victim age is recorded does not appear to be a function of whether the city is large or small. Neither can it be explained totally by victim unwillingness to give his age.

¹⁰as quoted by Geis, Gilbert, "Defrauding the Elderly" in Crime and the Elderly, p.9.

Strategy - Police departments should actively seek the full cooperation of their police officers and victims in obtaining victim age information by providing officers with an answer to the victim's question, "Why do you need to know my age?"

Reason - Police officers have indicated that it is not uncommon for a victim to ask why they are so concerned with his age rather than with catching the criminal. By emphasizing the need for age information and giving police officers an explanation for the question when they encounter a recalcitrant victim both the asking of the victim's age and the receipt of an answer are better insured. Further strategies such as Hartford Police Department's requirement of at least a "guestimate" of the victim's age can also increase the possibility of a more adequate picture of the victim population where a guess is noted as such.

C. Sensitization to the Needs of Older Persons

Desired Result - Improvement of Police/Elderly relations.

Problem - Stereotypical images of elderly persons are not the monopoly of police officers. They exist throughout our society but police/elderly relationships are particularly important since they can affect elderly crime reporting rates and willingness, as well as ability, to cooperate with the criminal justice system in general. Bagget and Ernst have indicated that many of the elderly do not report crimes against them because they feel that the crime is relatively insignificant in terms of monetary loss, that the police would not or could not do anything about it, they fear retaliation by the offender, and, to a higher degree than the general population, they fear that they will be blamed for failing to take proper precautions. In addition, they feel inadequate as witnesses since they may have difficulty in remembering details, especially under pressure.

Strategy - Law enforcement personnel should receive training which will sensitize them to the needs of older persons as well as their capabilities in assisting in crime prevention activities. Such training is available through the NRTA/AARP.

Reason - The NRTA/AARP has based its crime prevention efforts on three priorities, crime prevention education, utilization of older volunteers, and police/elderly relations. As an outgrowth of these emphases they have prepared a training manual which can be used for the purpose of developing elderly needs awareness in police officers and enumerates the mechanism involved in utilization of older volunteers. The package can be used for both recruitment and in-service training at a relatively low cost. In addition the NRTA/AARP will, upon request, provide seminars in a state on using the training manual at no charge.

D. Victim Assistance

Desired Result - The elderly victim of crime will be aided in whatever area necessary to repair the physical, psychological, economic, and social effects of crime.

Problem - There are a substantial number of social services available to the elderly residents of Connecticut. While it is difficult for most people to find the pathways to services in a sprawling bureaucracy, the problem is even more acute for the elderly who are less accustomed to bureaucracy than younger persons and may have transportation problems in obtaining services through a system which is facility-oriented rather than person-oriented.

Unfortunately, criminals do not keep regular working hours. The initial and often full responsibility, therefore, of providing services to victims of crimes occurring after hours falls upon the police department which may or may not have the resources to accommodate the victim's needs. Where the department has the information necessary to make proper referrals to social services it does not inevitably follow that the services will be solicited by the victim, or that the services which are solicited and provided will be adequate.

Strategies

(1) That the municipal agent for the elderly in each locality who is responsible for keeping information on available services for the elderly, in towns where there is no established victim services program, use the police department as a case-finding resource. The municipal agent should seek names of elderly victims from the police and contact them to insure that their needs are met.

(2) That police departments use photographs as evidence in stolen property cases to expedite return of property to victims.

(3) Wherever possible the elderly victim should be questioned at home. Use of portable mug shot albums and fingerprinting kits can facilitate this procedure.

(4) The current Victim Compensation legislation should be amended to include compensation for loss of essential property through crime to low income elderly victims and all crime-related medical expenses not reimbursable from other sources.

Reasons - As previously indicated, there are various municipal agents, police departments, and other agencies attempting to provide services to victims of crime. In the absence of funds for such programs there is a certain minimum level of victim assistance which can be achieved. The first strategies involve resources which are already available or easily acquired where funds are limited. The fourth strategy is suggested for a variety of reasons.

The Victim Compensation bill in Connecticut is similar to those passed in a number of other states in that it restricts compensation to medical expenses for injuries due to crime where the victim is not related to the offender nor involved in precipitating the crime. In order to qualify the victim must have incurred a minimum of \$100 in out-of-pocket medical expenses or have lost at least two weeks of work due to the injury. The compensation will only cover expenses above those minimums which are not reimbursable from other sources. Considering the low incomes of many older persons and the kinds of crimes which are most often committed against them i.e. burglary, personal theft of small amounts of money, vandalism, harassment, etc., the impact of this type of legislation upon the losses suffered by the elderly victim in many cases will be nil.

Without this legislation an older person who is physically injured through a crime and is covered under medicare is responsible for paying the medicare deductible. Under this legislation that cost is still borne by the victim. Further, medical aids such as eyeglasses, false teeth, and hearing aids which might be lost, damaged or stolen in a criminal attack or through malicious "pranks" are not covered by medicare, regardless of cost. With or without this legislation the victim incurs the expense.

The bill should also provide emergency cash assistance, at least on a loan basis where checks or cash which are needed to pay for the essentials of food, fuel and rent are stolen. The low income older victim whose social security check is stolen and who must wait months for the replacement of a check does not often have the ability to absorb the loss out of savings.

These types of services can and should be provided by a victim compensation bill which is truly designed to compensate the victim of a crime. The minimum compensation limits will deprive many more victims of a greater amounts of money than will the upper limit of \$10,000 which may appear generous but will be exceeded in loss to the victim only in rare cases.

The United States congressional committees on aging have recommended that state victim compensation legislation incorporate such provisions. In addition, they have suggested that low income elderly victims be compensated for stolen television sets and radios which are crucial in staving off isolation and loneliness for the homebound elderly. ¹¹

Cost is of course a prohibitive factor, especially in providing compensation for stolen property. If, however, there are reasonable requirements to limit eligibility the cost can be controlled. Whether or not the provisions of the

¹¹ "In Search of Security", United States Congress, 1977, pp. 81-88.

bill are expanded to the level of utmost protection there is a strong case for provision of some increased protection to the low income elderly victim.

VII. Conclusion

In 1970, according to the United States Census, the elderly comprised 13.7% of Connecticut's population. The Connecticut Office of Policy and Management estimates that at present 15% of our population is aged sixty or over and projects that in 1980 the figure will reach 20% level. The trend will continue at least until the end of the century and the ramifications will be great, not only for the social security program and aging services but for the criminal justice system as well.

Many researchers have expressed the notion that the elderly population is increasing at a rapid rate because of medical advances which have increased the average life expectancy. Although medical advances provide a partial explanation the dramatic increase in the elderly population which is expected to occur after the year 2,000 will be due in large part to the coming of age 60 of those born during the "baby boom" of the 1940's.

Decisions regarding responses to the problem of crime against the elderly should take into account not only the increasing proportion of older citizens but also the generational changes which will occur between present and future generations of the elderly. Given the higher degree of education, increased political involvement, and the changing role of women, the elderly men and women of the future can be expected to exhibit even greater mobility, involvement in aging organizations and influence in public policy making than to the present generation of older persons.

Older persons are now using their influence in the area of crime control as they previously did in policy areas such as housing, transportation, health, education, social services and property taxes.

This is not an undesirable phenomenon, however, since their focus is not upon demanding increased police protection but upon working with law enforcement to establish cooperative policy/elderly relationships and to educate fellow older persons in methods of protecting themselves from victimization by crime.

Older persons must be viewed not as the source of a victimization problem but as a resource in identifying and implementing solutions to a problem. And helping people to help themselves is as appropriate a strategy for crime prevention as it is for other social welfare programs.

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A - Programs

I. Research and Demonstration Projects

Denton, Texas: Research in crime and its impact on the elderly at the Center for Studies in Aging at North Texas State University has culminated in the development of training materials, video tapes and handbooks for the elderly. The project's special emphasis has been upon increasing the reporting of crime by older persons and has included extensive research into the reasons for reporting and nonreporting of crime by elderly victims. The center has also developed training materials for police departments.

Dr. Marvin Ernst, Center for Studies in Aging, North Texas State University, Denton Texas 76203, (817) 788-2181.

Mid-America Regional Council: "Aid to Elderly Victims of Crime" was jointly funded as a national demonstration program by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration and the Administration on Aging. The three major components of the project are education, community crime prevention, and elderly victim assistance. The crime prevention component included provision of free locks to older persons on a first come, first served basis. There was a large response particularly among the elderly living in high crime areas. A portion of the funds were reserved to accomodate referrals from the victim assistance component.

In the first year of operation the project revealed that (1) soliciting volunteers for participation in crime prevention activities through the public education component brings a better response than does door-to-door canvassing for volunteers; (2) The education program should be more varied and include role playing and other participant techniques to make the programs more interesting, especially since many were attending more than once; (3) More multi-media publicity was needed to reach the isolated elderly; and that (4) victim assistance should be extended to the Part II crimes of vandalism, non-aggravated assault, fraud, and arson because of their prevalence and high impact. Project recommendations also included an emphasis on monitoring to determine the effects of target-hardening activities.

Cindy Fern, Mid-America Regional Council, 20 West 9th St., Kansas City, Missouri 64105, (816) 474-4240.

Mid-West Research Institute: This comprehensive study of the elderly victims of crime in Kansas City examined the patterns of elderly victimization in order to develop prevention strategies. The conclusion was that police patrols cannot effectively prevent crimes against the elderly. Considering the older person's inability to relocate, resistance to change in lifestyle, and limited finances for locks, the most effective means of prevention were felt to be (1) education relative to criminal tactics and deterrence; (2) encouragement of neighborhood alertness to suspicious activity; and (3) assistance in obtaining and installing security devices. Operation Identification, security survey training, mobile checkcashing, improved access to transportation, and separate housing were also recommended. The research findings themselves give valuable insights into the dynamics of victimization, victim and offender characteristics and offender modes of operation.

Mary Simister, Mid-West Research Institute, 425 Volker Blvd., Kansas City, Missouri, (816) 561-0202.

Multnomah County, Oregon: The Division of Public Safety in Portland has undertaken research on criminal victimization of the elderly which includes participant observation of high crime neighborhoods, case studies of victims, an environmental survey, and the development of educational programs for the elderly and in age sensitization for criminal justice practitioners. The objectives of the research are to reduce the older person's fear of crime, improve communication between the elderly and the criminal justice system, and curb excessive victimization of older persons.

Dr. Marlene A. Young Rifai, Multnomah County Division of Public Safety, 10525 Southeast Cherry Blossom Drive, No. 101, Portland, Oregon 97216, (503) 255-1891.

Muskogee, Oklahoma: The Eastern Tennessee Development District has a multi-faceted program funded by LEAA called Law Enforcement for the Aged. In addition to research and analysis of crimes committed against the elderly, they have developed educational programs on crime prevention. More unique are the educational programs they have developed for criminal justice personnel which address crime prevention methods for assisting elderly victims of crime. They have also developed a coordinated delivery mechanism for services to the elderly by criminal justice and social service agencies.

Ge. Wallace, Eastern Oklahoma Development District, 800 West Okmulgee, P.O. Box 1367, Muskogee, Oklahoma 74401, (918) 682-7891.

National Council of Senior Citizens: The National Elderly Victimization Prevention and Assistance Program was initiated in 1975. Demonstration projects in six of the nation's largest urban centers were funded as part of a national program by the Community Services Administration and the Administration on Aging.¹ The major goals of the program are to prevent crimes against the elderly and to minimize the impact of crime on those who have been victimized. The local projects emphasize citizen participation and neighborhood strengthening.

The Program on Criminal Justice and the Elderly is funded by LEAA and the Dept. of Housing and Urban Development and is primarily the research, evaluation and public information arm of the national effort. It is sponsored by the National Council of Senior Citizens and by Legal Research and Services for the Elderly. The program's research is focused primarily on what happens to the elderly victim of crime after the crime has occurred. Two major research undertakings for 1978 are: (1) a critical examination of statutory victim compensation programs as they affect elderly victims and (2) a multi-jurisdictional assessment of the treatment of the elderly crime victim in the criminal justice process.

The program's evaluation is directed to assessing the efficacy of the techniques of crime prevention and assistance used in the local demonstration projects. The program intends to become a central clearinghouse for information on programs and projects concerned with crime against the elderly.

¹The demonstration project sites are Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, District of Columbia, Milwaukee, and New Orleans.

Rita Nitzberg, Resource Analyst, National Council of Senior Citizens,
1511 K St. NW, Suite 540, Washington, D.C. 20005, (202) 638-4848.

St. Petersburg, Florida: The Crime Analysis Division of the St. Petersburg Police Department has prepared an analysis of crime and the elderly detailing incidents which occurred in 1976. Of the 18,905 crimes chosen for analysis, 2,399 involved an elderly victim. It was discovered that in most crime categories the elderly are not over-victimized. In incidents such as robbery, purse snatch, and pickpocket, however, their representation is excessively high. The type of premise most frequently victimized was the single family dwelling (70%). One in every six homes was entered via pried front doors. Another 12% were entered through windows easily pushed or pulled open. All victims of purse snatch were white females. Suspects were described as 74% black males, 26% white males. Most were teenagers. (Interestingly, the report also included in examination of crimes committed by the elderly.)

The police department, the Junior League of St. Petersburg, and several other groups initiated an LEAA funded program entitled Project: Concern. Its goals are (1) improved delivery of social services to blacks and the elderly; (2) increased crime prevention activities through the training of volunteers; and (3) impact on juvenile delinquency by addressing the problem of incorrigible truancy. Volunteers, parents, and police cooperate in locating children who are truant, runaway, or incorrigible and offering tutoring, counseling and employment services in an effort to prevent juvenile delinquency.

Art Scroggs, or Phyllis Cummings, City Hall Annex, 440 2nd Ave., North,
St. Petersburg, Florida 33731, (813) 893-7274.

Wilmington, Delaware: As a result of a 1975 study of street crimes the Wilmington Police Department initiated a crime prevention program which includes educating women not to carry a purse on the street, provision of escort companion services utilizing students, efforts to keep truants in school, and a court monitoring program. The latter phase seeks to unite the elderly through their participation as volunteer monitors and to bring about reform in the court system.

Captain Stanley Friedman, Wilmington Crime Resistance Task Force,
P.O. Box 1872, Wilmington, Delaware 19899, (302) 658-4300 or 571-4505.

II. Crime Prevention Education and Target Hardening

Baltimore, Maryland: The mayor's office has developed three one and a half hour video taped training modules on the crimes of assault, robbery, and burglary. Each tape focuses on the behaviors, skills, and procedures senior citizens should utilize if threatened by these crimes. The LEAA funded program includes discussion techniques and role playing activities to facilitate the learning of these skills.

Mayor's Coordinating Council on Criminal Justice, Holiday and Lexington Sts., Room 342, Baltimore, Maryland 21202, (301) 396-4370.

Cleveland, Ohio: The Senior Safety and Security Program, funded through LEAA, has prepared slide presentations and role playing activities for teaching crime prevention techniques to elderly residents. Volunteers are trained to make these presentations, to assist with Operation Identification, and to carry out home security checks.

Fred D. Middleton, Director, Senior Safety and Security Program, 1276 West 3rd St., Marion Bldg., No.512, Cleveland, Ohio 44113, (216) 623-7000.

Jacksonville, Florida: The Jacksonville Mayor's office has developed various senior citizen crime prevention projects through the use of existing staff and volunteer crime and donations. They have demonstrated that innovative programs can be carried out without any special funds. Four basic steps are recommended in starting a crime prevention program. They include:

- (1) Identification of needs - finding out where the senior citizens in your area live, what their activities are, how many of them are there, how much they are being victimized. Develop a crime survey which can be distributed at crime prevention lectures.
- (2) Identification of resources - identifying existing agencies and civic groups who are working in or interested in the area of crime and the elderly. Consider training volunteers to carry out crime prevention activities.
- (3) Locate senior citizens - compile a list of all senior citizen clubs and other locations where senior citizens can be reached and begin scheduling crime prevention education programs.
- (4) Institutionalize the program - insure that crime prevention activities will continue in senior citizen centers, the police department, and the other agencies with which your program interacts. Continue to expand your program and evaluate your progress.

The Crime Prevention Office has participated in the design of senior citizen centers, dissemination of a crime prevention newsletter to senior citizens, television presentations for homebound elderly, special police training, security surveys, volunteer recruitment, operation identification, inclusion of crime prevention lectures in the community college outreach program for senior citizens, victim services daily reassurance telephone calls and other non crime related services without special funding.

Carla Miller, Mayor's Crime Prevention Office, 1245 E. Adams, Jacksonville, Florida 32202.

Los Angeles, California: In 1972 California Attorney General Evelle J. Younger began a crime prevention and consumer protection program for senior citizens. The emphasis of the program is a partnership between older Californians and the criminal justice department. The objectives of the program are:

(1) To alert and inform senior citizens in the community about consumer fraud, street crime, bunco, and burglary as it would affect their age group, and present methods of avoiding such incidents;

(2) To inform older persons of their rights and entitlements under laws governing health, welfare, consumerism, and crime;

(3) To inform seniors where and how to complain if victimized;

(4) To inform and orient local law enforcement and regulatory agencies regarding crime and consumer fraud problems of the elderly; and

(5) To train and organize senior volunteers throughout the state to act as crime prevention chairpersons in local senior centers, neighborhoods and organizations.

The Consumer Information and Protection Program For Seniors (CIPPS) is predicated on the belief that any crime prevention program must involve the citizen if it is to be effective.

The CIPPS method is to hold a day-long conference for older persons, or representatives of senior citizen groups in their local community. At the conference, information is provided on street safety, purse snatching, mugging, bunco, sales gimmicks, health frauds, medical quackery, etc. The presentations are made by experts in these fields--policemen specializing in street crimes, sheriffs with specialties in protection and neighborhood organizing, district attorneys, and fraud specialists. Brochures are provided to participants so that they can review the material at other times and also to assist them in presenting a similar program to their own nutrition site, senior center, church group, or whatever group they are involved with. A major thrust of the one-day program is to encourage the older participants to become community crime preventers and to organize programs of their own. Updated and continuous training in crime prevention is carried on through a bi-monthly newspaper, Senior Crime Preventers' Bulletin. This paper is free and is mailed by the attorney general's office to anyone who requests it. The bulletin reviews and supplements information provided at the conference. It also gives the most current suggestions and ideas available. Many of the innovative ideas are sent in by the readers themselves.

Melanie Ingram, Staff Services Analyst, Office of the Attorney General, Crime Prevention Unit, 3580 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 938, Los Angeles, California, 90010; (213) 736-2372.

South Bend, Indiana: The South Bend Police Department, under an LEAA grant, developed a program designed to reduce the vulnerability to burglary of low income elderly homeowners. Locks are installed in the homes of qualified applicants free of charge. Those applicants not meeting the requirements

pay a minimal cost for the locks and installation. Over one hundred homes have been secured with deadbolt locks since the program's inception. In many of the homes burglaries had been successfully perpetrated prior to the installation of the locks. Since installation of the hardware, however, no burglaries have been reported in those homes.

Sgt. Joel H. Wolovs, South Bend Police, 701 West Sample St., South Bend, Indiana, (219) 284-9265.

U.S. Postal Service: Many older persons find it convenient to transact business by mail. The Consumer Protection Program of the U.S. Postal Service is intended to assist postal customers who have experienced unsatisfactory mail order transactions. The rate of resolution of mail fraud complaints is lower than the rate for general mail order complaints which are generally resolved to the satisfaction of the consumer. The Postal Inspection Service investigates fraudulent schemes but is not empowered to adjudicate disputes between the parties to a mail transaction or to compel performance or refund by the seller. Even where the operator of a fraudulent scheme is arrested, tried, and convicted, the likelihood of restitution to the victim is small. The enlightenment and education of elderly citizens in the recognition of fraudulent schemes is the most effective means of preventing victimization. The Postal Service Programs in Crimes Against the Elderly are working toward this goal while continuing investigations to obtain evidence against the perpetrators of mail order frauds.

C. Neil Benson, Chief Postal Inspector, U.S. Postal Service, 475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Washington, D.C. 20260.

III. Utilization of Older Volunteers

Cottage Grove, Oregon: Faced with a sharply increasing crime rate and a reduction in their budget the Cottage Grove Police Department recruited four senior citizens for a volunteer crime prevention program in March, 1975. In July, after training and orientation to the city government the volunteers launched "Operation Identification" through a door-to-door campaign, marking valuables and educating residents in security measures. Not only did the volunteers raise the public consciousness about crime they were also able to offer information regarding social services. The volunteers also keep statistical data on crime trends and make crime prevention presentations at senior centers.

Chief Ron L. Willis, Cottage Grove Police Department, 28 South Sixth St., Cottage Grove, Oregon 97424.

International Association of Chiefs of Police: Crime, Safety, and the Senior Citizen is a model project funded by the Administration on Aging, U.S. Dept. of Health, Education, and Welfare. The program goals are to increase the security of the older person's environment, develop stronger links between the older American and the police, and to provide voluntary employment opportunities for the elderly. The project included a survey of police departments and development of a "Crime and the Senior Citizen" survey for use by local police departments in assessing the attitudes and problems of local seniors with respect to crime. The cities participating as demonstration sites for this project are Miami Beach, Florida; Omaha, Nebraska; Jersey City, New Jersey; Syracuse, New York; and Mansfield, Ohio.

Philip J. Gross, Technical Research Services Division, International Association of Chiefs of Police, Eleven Firstfield Rd., Gaithersburg, Md. 29760; (301) 948-0922.

Mansfield, Ohio: The Mansfield Police Department was one of five law enforcement agencies selected by the IACP as a demonstration site for implementing crime prevention programs for senior citizens. In Mansfield 8,500 persons over age 60 represent approximately 15 percent of the population. The department sought to interest senior citizens in participating in a program to decrease the opportunities for commission of burglaries and robberies and set a goal for recruitment of 600 volunteers into the Senior Power Neighborhood Watch Program. During a one-day registration period over 2,200 persons signed up to be blockwatchers; most of these were elderly citizens. After the program was implemented crime rates showed monthly decreases of up to 25 percent, perhaps due to the efforts of the volunteers. Whether or not the decreases are a direct result of the program the volunteers have generated a new enthusiasm on the part of the public to assist in the fight against crime.

Lt. Wayne L. Cairns, Project Director, Crime Prevention Program for the Elderly, 27 West Second St., Mansfield, Ohio 44902.

Maricopa County, Arizona: Maricopa County Sheriff's Office has evolved the most inclusive community participant crime prevention program in the country.

The sheriff's staff was augmented with a volunteer Community Resources Division of 2,500 men and women (between the ages of 15-94) organized into posses to work in security training and community relations. The largest of the volunteers posses is in Sun City, a retirement community which had been faced with a severe burglary and robbery problem. The posse members maintain an almost constant patrol in every section of the city. Working in two-person teams, they patrol in their own unmarked cars, supply their own uniforms, and purchase and operate their own equipment.

Sgt. Don Blankenship, Bureau of Crime Resistance, Maricopa County Sheriff's Department, 120 South First Ave., Phoenix, Arizona 85003, (602) 262-1124.

San Diego, California: One of the most innovative programs in senior citizen recruitment is housed in the Crime Analysis Unit of the San Diego Police Department. Thirteen retirees have been coding the data from crime reports for computer programs used by police to help solve serious crimes through faster suspect identification as part of the Career Criminal Program funded by LEAA. The timeliness of the information provided to the officer on the street is crucial in the success of the program and the efforts of the seniors make it possible to computerizing the information quickly. In addition to saving the Department money by employing the retirees on a part-time basis the program has been welcomed by police officers who prefer doing "police work" to computer coding.

George Sullivan, Director, Crime Analysis Unit, San Diego Police Dept., San Diego, California 92101.

IV. Specialized Police Training

NRTA/AARP: The National Retired Teachers Association/American Association of Retired Persons has published the first major national training course in crime and the elderly for police officers. The 574-page training manual entitled "Law Enforcement and Older Persons" is designed to sensitize police personnel not only to the needs and concerns of older persons but also to their capabilities. The manual examines the type, frequency, and impact of crime against the elderly; explains the physical, mental, and psychological changes commensurate with the aging process and demonstrates the ways in which older volunteers can serve as valuable resources in the reduction of crime.

*George Sunderland, Project Director, AARP/NRTA, 1909 K St. NW,
Washington, D.C. 20049, (202) 872-4700.*

v. Victim and Supportive Services

Bronx, New York: The Bronx Area Senior Citizens Robbery Unit was created in 1974, without additional cost to the police department, to conduct investigations of robberies committed against older persons. In addition to intensive investigation and rapid transmission of data on suspects to anti-crime units the unit emphasizes immediate attention to the needs of the victim and ensures services through coordination with social service agencies. Older victims are interviewed in the home, instructed in crime prevention measures, and escorted through the criminal justice system during prosecution and even provide transportation to court. The success of this victim-oriented approach has resulted in its extension to all five boroughs of New York City. The concept was also extended to fraud investigations since the majority of victims were found to be senior citizens.

Sgt. James Bolte, New York City Police Dept., Bronx Area Senior Citizens Robbery Unit, 450 Cross Bronx Expressway, Bronx, New York 10457, (212) 220-5395.

Huntington, West Virginia: The Huntington Police Department operates a comprehensive telephone reassurance program for senior citizens and handicapped persons. Participants are scheduled to call in to the program daily within a pre-determined time period. If a call is not received a call is placed to the participant and in cases where no response is received an ambulance is dispatched to the residence. "Operation Good Morning" has been well received by senior citizens and is of great value in ensuring their safety and peace of mind.

Robert E. Harris, Huntington Police Department, Crime Prevention Unit, Huntington, West Virginia 25717, (304) 696-5575.

Pasadena, California: Police in Pasadena have trained twelve senior volunteers to become a Victim Assistance Team as part of a crime prevention and victim/witness assistance program for the elderly. The project goals are to inform older citizens of crime prevention methods, build neighborhood cohesiveness to reduce burglaries, aid crime victims through counseling and referral services, and help witnesses before and during court proceedings.

Police Agent Donald Silverman, Pasadena Police Department, 142 N. Arroyo Pkwy., Pasadena, California 91109.

Fuller Graduate School of Psychology, Gerontology Center, Pasadena, California, (213) 449-1745.

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