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NEW BJS REPORT ON CALCULATING THE PREVALENCE OF CRIME IN THE U.S.

WASHINGTON – The Justice Department’s Bureau of Justice Statistics released a report today on a new procedure for calculating the prevalence of crime in the U.S. each year. A prevalence rate counts the number of persons who experienced at least one victimization during the year, compared to a victimization rate, which counts the number of victimizations per year.

Together these two rates shed light on the amount and concentration of crime and a victim’s risk for repeat victimization. Victimization and prevalence rates describe how much of the change in criminal victimization is due to a change in the number of victims compared to the number of victimizations per victim.

For example, the decline in violent victimization rates (down 76 percent) from 1993 to 2010 was greater than the decline in prevalence rates (down 63 percent). Both the number of victims and the average number of crimes experienced by each victim declined over time, but the number of victimizations declined at a faster rate. In 2010, the average number of violent crimes per victim was 1.8, down from 2.7 violent crimes per victim in 1993.

About one percent of the population age 12 or older experienced one or more violent victimizations in 2010. The 4.9 million violent victimizations that occurred were experienced by 2.8 million victims. The percentage of violent crime victims who experienced two or more victimizations during each year declined from 23 percent in 1993 to 17 percent in 2010.

The percentage of serious violent crime (including rape or sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault) victims who experienced repeat victimization during the year declined from 16 percent in 1993 to eight percent in 2010. In 2010, victims of rape or sexual assault were more likely to experience repeat victimization than victims of robbery. Victims of intimate partner violence (21 percent) were more likely to experience repeat victimization within the year than victims of stranger violence (nine percent).

In 2010, the prevalence rate for violent crime was similar for males (20 per 1,000 persons age 12 or older) and for females (19 per 1,000). However, prevalence rates were higher for persons ages 18 to 24 (20 per 1,000) than for persons ages 25 to 34 (14 per 1,000) and persons 35 or older (seven per 1,000).

(MORE)

Other findings from the report include the following:

- In 2010, the 17 percent of violent crime victims who experienced repeat victimization accounted for 54 percent of all violent victimizations.
- For serious violent crimes, the victimization rate decreased 77 percent from 1993 to 2010, while the prevalence rate decreased 66 percent.
- The decline in total household property crime victimization rates (down 64 percent) from 1993 to 2010 was greater than the decline in prevalence rates (down 48 percent).
- The proportion of household property crime victims who reported two or more incidents during each year decreased from 25 percent in 1993 to 18 percent in 2010. In 2010, the 18 percent of repeat household victims accounted for about 41 percent of all household property victimizations.

The report, *Measuring the Prevalence of Crime with the National Crime Victimization Survey* (NCJ 241656), was written by BJS visiting fellow Janet Lauritsen and Maribeth Rezey from the University of Missouri - St. Louis. The report, related documents and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics' statistical publications and programs can be found on the BJS website at <http://www.bjs.gov/>.

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The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), headed by Assistant Attorney General Karol V. Mason, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice, and assist victims. OJP has six components: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking. More information about OJP can be found at <http://www.ojp.gov>.