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ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL VICTIMIZATION IN PRISONS AND JAILS ROSE FROM 2009 TO 2011; SUBSTANTIATED INCIDENTS REMAINED STABLE

WASHINGTON – Correctional administrators reported 8,763 allegations of sexual victimization in prisons, jails and other adult correctional facilities in 2011, a statistically significant increase over the number of allegations reported in 2009 (7,855) and 2010 (8,404), the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) announced today.

In 2011, 902 allegations of sexual victimization (10 percent) were substantiated (i.e., determined to have occurred upon investigation). The total number of substantiated incidents has not changed significantly since 2005 (885).

About half of all allegations (51 percent) involved nonconsensual sexual acts (the most serious, including penetration) or abusive sexual contacts (less serious, including unwanted touching, grabbing and groping) of inmates with other inmates. Nearly half (49 percent) involved staff sexual misconduct (any sexual act directed toward an inmate by staff) or sexual harassment (demeaning verbal statements of a sexual nature) directed toward inmates.

An estimated 44 percent of substantiated inmate-on-inmate sexual victimizations involved physical force or threat of force, while 11 percent of staff-on-inmate sexual victimizations involved physical force, abuse of power or pressure. Victims were physically injured in 18 percent of substantiated incidents of inmate-on-inmate sexual victimization, compared to less than 1 percent of incidents of staff-on-inmate victimization.

More than half (54 percent) of all substantiated incidents of staff sexual misconduct and a quarter (26 percent) of all incidents of staff sexual harassment were committed by female staff. Among all substantiated incidents between 2009 and 2011, the majority (84 percent) of those perpetrated by female staff involved a sexual relationship that “appeared to be willing,” compared to 37 percent of those perpetrated by male staff. Any sexual contact between inmates and staff is illegal, regardless of whether it “appeared to be willing.”

(MORE)

Overall, more than three-quarters (78 percent) of staff perpetrators were fired or resigned. Nearly half (45 percent) were arrested, referred for prosecution or convicted.

Solitary confinement was the most frequent sanction imposed on perpetrators of inmate-on-inmate sexual victimization (73 percent of substantiated incidents). Perpetrators were subject to legal action in about half (48 percent) of substantiated incidents of nonconsensual sexual acts, compared to about a fifth (19 percent) of incidents of abusive sexual contact.

The most common location for inmate-on-inmate sexual victimization was in the victim's cell or room (50 percent of substantiated incidents), while the most common location for staff-on-inmate sexual victimization was in a program service area (48 percent), such as a commissary, kitchen, storage, laundry, cafeteria or workshop.

The findings are based on annual surveys of adult prison systems, public and private jails, private prisons, jails in Indian country and facilities operated by the U.S. military and Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The surveys have been conducted since 2004 to meet the mandates of the Prison Rape Elimination Act. Data represent official records on allegations and substantiated incidents of inmate-on-inmate and staff-on-inmate sexual victimization.

The reports, *Sexual Victimization Reported by Adult Correctional Authorities, 2009-11* (NCJ 243904), and *Survey of Sexual Violence in Adult Correctional Facilities, 2009-11—Statistical Tables* (NCJ 244227), were written by Allen J. Beck, Ramona R. Rantala and Jessica Rexroat of BJS. The reports, related documents and additional information about BJS's 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>.