

# fact sheet

## sexual assault

**Why It Matters:** Sexual violence is a devastating problem that impacts the lives of many women, men and children each year. Because rape is one of the most underreported crimes, available data greatly underestimate the true magnitude of the problem. Victims who are both physically and sexually abused are at higher risk of being injured or killed than victims who suffer from only one form of abuse.<sup>1</sup>

**Week  
without  
Violence**

*The YWCA Week Without Violence™, the third week in October, is an international initiative that was created by YWCA USA in 1995 to mobilize the women, men and children to take action against violence in our homes, schools, work places and communities.*

### did you know?

In America, one in five women and one in 33 men have experienced an attempted or completed rape.<sup>2</sup>

Every 2.5 minutes someone in the U.S. is sexually assaulted.<sup>3</sup>

According to a report from the U.S. Department of Justice, nearly 25% of women and 7% of men have been raped or sexually assaulted by a current or former partner.<sup>4</sup>

Between one-third and one-half of all battered women are raped by their partners at least once during their relationship.<sup>5</sup>

The FBI estimates that one in ten men will be sexually assaulted during their lifetime.<sup>6</sup>

62% of women raped more than once by the same partner reported that the abuse lasted one year or more.<sup>7</sup>

62% of sexual assaults are not reported to the police.<sup>8</sup>

### marital rape

Marital rape can occur in any marriage regardless of age, social class, race or ethnicity.<sup>9</sup>

Marital rape accounts for 25% of all rapes, affecting well over 75,000 women each year.<sup>10</sup>

Between 10% and 14% of married women will be raped at some time during their marriages.<sup>11</sup>

Married women are particularly likely to be raped multiple times by their husbands before escaping the violence.<sup>12</sup>

Women who are raped and battered by their partners experience the violence in various ways. Sexual assault may follow a battering incident or when the abuser wants to reconcile after a “fight” and then coerces his partner into having sex.<sup>13</sup>

### children

The U.S. Department of Justice has estimated that one in six victims of sexual assault are under age 12.<sup>14</sup>

**eliminating racism  
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More than half of all rapes of women (54%) occur before age 18.<sup>15</sup>

52% of surveyed women and 66% of surveyed men were sexually assaulted by a caretaker as a child.<sup>16</sup>

**other considerations**

Women who are disabled,<sup>17</sup> pregnant,<sup>18</sup> or attempting to leave their abusers<sup>19</sup> are at an increased risk of intimate partner rape.

Youth are particularly impacted by intimate partner violence. Women ages 16 to 24 experience the highest per capita rates of violence.<sup>20</sup>

25% of women will be raped during their college career and 90% of victims know the person who sexually assaulted or raped them.<sup>21</sup>

**consequences**

Victims of sexual assault are:

Three times more likely to suffer from depression.<sup>22</sup>

Four times more likely to be suicidal.<sup>23</sup>

Six times more likely to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).<sup>24</sup>

Twenty-six times more likely to abuse drugs.<sup>25</sup>

36% of women raped by an intimate partner sustained an injury other than the rape itself during their most recent assault. Only 29% of these injured women received medical attention.<sup>26</sup>

**perpetrators <sup>27</sup>**

**Perpetrator’s Relationship to Victim**

Unknown. . . . .	2%
Stranger . . . . .	26%
Intimate Partner . . . . .	28%
Friend/Acquaintance. . . . .	38%
Other Relative. . . . .	6%
Total Known*. . . . .	72%

*\*72% of victims are sexually assaulted by someone they know.*

**how to help**

Encourage your primary care physician and OB/GYN to screen women for signs of physical and sexual violence and ask if they are in a violent or abusive relationship during regular checkups.

Ask your local schools and universities to address the issues of sexual violence in their classrooms and through victim assistance programs.

Ask your Member of Congress to support funding for direct services and programs created in the Violence Against Women Act, such as the Sexual Assault Services program that creates a funding stream of federal money for direct services for victims of sexual assault.

Volunteer at your local rape crisis center or state sexual assault coalition.

**if you need help**

For more information or to get help, please call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-HOPE National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE

## sources

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- <sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Justice. (1998)
- <sup>5</sup> U.S. Justice Department and Centers for Disease Control. (2000)
- <sup>6</sup> Catalano, S. M. (2005)
- <sup>7</sup> The American Medical Association.
- <sup>8, 9</sup> R.K. Bergen. *Wife Rape: Understanding the response of survivors and service providers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage (1996).
- <sup>10, 11</sup> National Center for Policy Analysis. *Crime and Punishment in America: 1999*
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- <sup>14</sup> P. Mahoney & L. Williams, *Sexual Assault in Marriage: Prevalence, consequences and treatment of wife rape*. In J. Jasinski & L. Williams (Eds.). *Partner violence: A comprehensive review of 20 years of research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage (1998) .
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- <sup>16, 17, 18</sup> P. Tjaden & N. Thoennes. (2000) *Full Report of the Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women*, National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- <sup>19, 20</sup> Bergen (1996).
- <sup>21</sup> Fisher, Bonnie S., et al. (2000). *The sexual victimization of college women*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice.
- <sup>22–25</sup> World Health Organization. (2002) "The World Report on Violence and Health."
- <sup>26</sup> Reuters News Service. (2000) "Many Women Do Not Report Sexual Assault By Partner." *Annals of Emergency Medicine*, Vol. 36.