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Special Report

Age Patterns of Victims of Serious Violent Crime

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Note to user of the ascii version of this report:

Age Patterns of Victims of Serious Violent Crime
contains 19 graphs and was designed to give its
information through those figures. The design
permits only a confused sequential presentation
of the findings in text. The data points from the
graphs are appended at the end of this file. We
encourage the user of the ascii version to refer
to the pdf or printed version for a better
understanding of the information presented.

Highlights

*Persons age 12 to 24 comprised:
22% of the population,
35% of murder victims, and
49% of serious violent crime victims.

*Persons age 25 to 49 constituted:
47% of the population
53% of murder victims, and
44% of serious violent crime victims.

*Persons age 50 or older made up:
30% of the population
12% of murder victims, and
7% of serious violent crime victims.

*Persons age 18 to 21 were the most
likely to experience a serious violent
crime, and blacks in that age group
were the most vulnerable--

72 victimizations per 1,000 blacks,
50 victimizations per 1,000 Hispanics, and

46 victimizations per 1,000 whites.

*More than 52% of all rape/sexual assault victims were females younger than 25.

*Serious violent crime rates for persons age 18 to 21 were 17 times higher than for persons age 65 or older.

Vulnerability to violent crime victimization varies across the age spectrum. The victimization rate increases through the teenage years, crests at around age 20, and steadily decreases through the remaining years. This pattern, with some exceptions, exists across all race, sex, and ethnic groups.

The patterns in this Special Report are shown primarily through graphs. The data from those graphs are available on the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) Internet site or through the BJS information clearinghouse. (See page 7.)

This report uses data from 1992 through 1994, providing a sufficient aggregate to examine serious violent crime across different age groups. It focuses on persons younger than 25 and highlights key facts about serious violent crime, grouped by age, race, and sex.

The reported statistics do not include victims under age 12: the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) does not interview children younger than 12, and the homicide data are analyzed to be comparable to the NCVS data.

Serious violent crimes include rape and sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault, as measured by the NCVS, and homicide from data reported by law enforcement agencies to the FBI.

The Bureau of the Census, under the supervision of the BJS, conducts the NCVS which interviews approximately 50,000 households. The NCVS measures crimes not reported as well as those reported to police.

Each year between 1992 and 1994, U.S. residents age 12 or older experienced about 4.3 million serious violent victimizations on average. Persons age 12 to 24 suffered about 49% (2 million) of the total, although they made up less than a quarter of the U.S. population age 12 or older. Individuals age 40 or older were 47% of the general population but sustained 19% of the serious violent victimizations.

Persons younger than 25 were the most vulnerable to serious violent crime, regardless of how age patterns were analyzed. Rates controlling for population show the young with the highest number of victimizations per 1,000 individuals. Considering

only adolescents and adults, the average age of violent crime victims is almost 11 years below the average age of the whole population, because of the overrepresentation of the young among crime victims.

The Highlights graph of trends presents age categories usually used in BJS reports; however, the remaining findings have age groupings identified with stages of life in the United States. This modified grouping is meant to help account for different life styles, which may suggest some additional factors for describing victims:

- Persons age 12 to 14 are generally in junior high school.
- Youth age 15 to 17 are usually in high school.
- Ages 18 to 21 include persons possibly enrolled in college or technical school or starting jobs.
- Young adults age 22 to 24 include many of those who have left college and are just beginning a career.
- Persons age 65 or older include a high proportion of retirees.

Also, there are too few sampled cases to analyze the age distribution of minority victims of rape or sexual assault (an estimated 1.1 million rapes of white non-Hispanic females, 236,000 rapes of black non-Hispanic females, and 121,000 rapes of Hispanic females for the 3-year period).

Although Hispanics are not a race, they are presented as a separate category within the racial categories.

All serious violent crimes: Murder, rape,
sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault

Rates of serious violent crime for 18-21 year olds -- 17 times higher than for persons age 65 or older.

Persons between ages 12 and 24 -- less than a fourth of the U.S. population age 12 or older, almost half of all serious victimizations.

Persons age 40 or older -- almost half of the population age 12 or older, less than a fifth of the serious violent victimizations.

On average each year, from 1992 to 1994, about 1 in 50 persons fell victim to a serious violent crime; among persons age 12 to 24, 1 in 23.

Age of victim	Number of persons in the population for each victim				
	All serious violent crime	Rape/Murder	sexual assault	Robbery	aggravated assault
Total	50	9241	416	164	86

12 to 24	23	5945	168	83	39
25 to 34	42	6170	378	132	73
35 to 49	67	10891	591	219	116
50 or old	424	23376	4272	494	424

Murder

Persons under age 25 -- 22% of the general population -- account for 35% of murder victims.

The youngest and oldest of the population had the lowest rates of murder -- less than 0.05 per 1,000 persons.

The pattern of murder victims resembles that of victims of other serious violent crimes -- rates increasing from the very young, cresting at ages 18 to 21, then decreasing.

Rape or sexual assault (female)

1 in 89 females 12-24 were rape/sexual assault victims

Slightly more than a fifth of all rape/sexual assault victims were age 18 to 21. The average age for victims was 27.

Victims of murder, on average, were the oldest of serious violent crime victims. Over half of all murder victims were age 30 or younger (compared with age 25 for victims of other serious violent crimes).

Serious violent offense of victim	Median age
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Murder	29
Rape/sexual assault	23
Robbery	26
Aggravated assault	25

Rates of rape/sexual assault for individuals 18 to 21 were almost 22 times higher than those for age 25 to 29.

Persons age 50 or older -- almost a third of the general population age 12 or older -- comprised 3% of rape/sexual assault victims.

Persons under 25 made up almost 50% of everyone suffering a serious violent crime and almost 56% of rape/sexual

assault victims.

Age of victim	Percent of victims			
	All population	Rape/ violent crime	sexual assault	Robbery
Total	100	100	100	100
12 to 14	5	10	8	11
15 to 17	5	12	12	10
18 to 21	7	17	21	14
22 to 24	5	11	14	9
25 to 29	9	13	9	12
30 to 34	11	11	13	12
35 to 39	10	8	9	8
40 to 49	17	12	10	12
50 to 64	16	5	2	6
65 or older	15	2	1	4

Robbery

Robbery is completed or attempted theft, directly from a person, by force or threat of force, with or without a weapon, and with or without injury.

Half of all robbery victims were age 26 or younger; the most vulnerable to robbery were the young.

Persons age 21 or younger -- slightly less than a fifth of the general population -- suffered close to half of all robberies.

1 in every 79 persons age 12 to 21 were robbery victims, compared to 1 in every 211, age 22 or older.

Between 1992 and 1994, U.S. residents age 12 or older experienced an annual average of about 1.3 million robberies.

The average number of robberies each year was--

457,000 among persons age 12-21
118,000 for age 22-24
319,000 for age 25-34
263,000 for age 35-49, and
130,000 for age 50 or older.

Aggravated assault

Aggravated assault includes attacks with a weapon, with

or without injury and attacks without a weapon that result in serious injury such as broken bones, loss of teeth, internal injuries, or loss of consciousness -- or an undetermined injury requiring 2 or more days of hospitalization.

Murder, by race

Murder rates for males 18 to 21 were 6 times higher than for their female counterparts. Rates for men 65 or older were 1« times higher than for their female counterparts.

The average age for male murder victims was 32, compared to the female murder victim's average age of 37.

White murder victims had an average age of 35, while black murder victims had an average age of 30.

Over half of black murder victims were 29 or younger, compared to over half of white victims, 32 or older.

For whites and blacks, persons 18 to 21 were most at risk of becoming a murder victim.

Murder rates for blacks were 8 times higher than for whites -- 1 in every 894 and 1 in every 7,334 persons, respectively.

Blacks, about 12% of general population, comprised 51% of murder victims. Almost 1 in 10 of black murder victims were age 18 to 21.

Serious violent crime,
by race and Hispanic origin

Blacks and Hispanics across all age groups were more at risk from violence than whites of comparable age -- 1 in 30 blacks, 1 in 35 Hispanics, and 1 in 58 whites, from 1992 to 1994.

For 18-to-21 year olds, 1 in 14 blacks, 1 in 20 Hispanics, and 1 in 22 whites experienced a serious violent victimization.

Blacks and to a lesser degree Hispanics were overrepresented among victims, relative to their proportions of the general population age 12 or older.

Racial /ethnic groups	Population age 12 or older	Victims of serious violence	Rates per 1,000
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Total	100	100	20
White	77	65	17
Black	12	20	34
Other	3	4	24
Hispanic	8	12	29

Note: Whites, blacks, and others exclude Hispanics.

Robbery, by race and Hispanic origin

Blacks and Hispanics under age 22 had robbery rates approximately twice those for whites -- 1 in 48, 1 in 57, and 1 in 101 respectively, from 1992 to 1994.

Robbery rates for blacks peaked twice, for ages 18 to 21 and 30 to 34, at 24 robberies per 1,000 blacks -- at 5 times the rate for age 50 or older, 5 per 1,000. Blacks and to a lesser degree Hispanics were overrepresented among victims, relative to their proportion of the general population age 12 or older. (eee)

The average age for robbery victims was about 30 for whites and blacks, and 28 for Hispanics.

Aggravated assault, by race and Hispanic origin

Slightly more than 1 in every 60 blacks, 1 in every 63 Hispanics, and 1 in every 96 whites were aggravated assault victims.

Blacks and Hispanics -- 20% of the general population -- were about 28% of aggravated assault victims.

The average age of aggravated assault victims was 25 for Hispanics, 26 for blacks, and 29 for whites.

Minority victims of aggravated assault were relatively younger than white victims--

Aggravated assault victims' race and age	Percent of population		Rates per 1000
	General	Victim	
White	100	100	10
12 to 24	20	47	24
25 to 34	19	25	14
35 to 49	27	21	8

50 or older	33	7	2
Black	100	100	17
12 to 24	28	53	31
25 to 34	22	23	17
35 to 49	27	20	13
50 or older	23	5	3
Hispanic	100	100	16
12 to 24	33	61	29
25 to 34	26	19	12
35 to 49	24	17	11
50 or older	17	4	3

Murder, by sex of victim

1 in 10 murder victims were males, age 18 to 21.

Serious violent crime, by sex of victim

1 in 41 males and 1 in 62 females were violent crime victims.

Aggravated assault, by sex of victim

For ages 15-24, men were twice as likely as women to be a victim.

Robbery, by sex of victim

Boys 12 to 14 and young women 18 to 21 reported the highest rates for robbery.

About 1 in every 54 boys age 12 to 14 was a robbery victim, compared to 1 in every 473 men age 65 or older.

The average ages for male and female robbery victims were at least 10 years younger than the average age of males and females in the general population.

Average age	
Male	Female

General population 12 or older	40 yrs	42 yrs
Robbery victims	30	31

Methodology

Except for homicide data provided by the Uniform Crime Reports, the tables in this report include data from the redesigned National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) for 1992, 1993, and 1994. The NCVS obtains information about crimes, including incidents not reported to police, from a continuous, nationally representative sample of households in the United States. Approximately 50,000 individuals age 12 or older are interviewed for the survey annually.

Calculations of NCVS rates

The rates in this report were annual average rates for 1992-94. The numerator of a given rate was the sum of the estimated victimizations that occurred for all three years for each respective demographic group; the denominator was the sum of the annual population totals for these same years and demographic groups.

Calculations of NCVS ratios

The ratios in this report were annual average ratios. The numerator of the given ratio was the sum of the annual population totals for all 3 years for each respective demographic group; the denominator was the sum of the estimated victimizations that occurred for all 3 years for each demographic group.

Application of standard errors

The results presented in this report were tested to determine whether the observed difference between groups was statistically significant. Comparisons mentioned in the report passed a hypothesis test at the .05 level of statistical significance (or the 95-percent confidence level), meaning that the estimated difference between comparisons was greater than twice the standard error of the difference.

Although the data in this report were collected over 3 years, some estimates were based on a relatively small number of sample

cases, particularly for certain demographic groups.

Caution should be used when comparing estimates not discussed in the text because since seemingly large differences may not be statistically significant.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics is the statistical agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. Jan M. Chaiken, Ph.D., is director.

BJS Special Reports address a specific topic in depth from one or more datasets that cover many topics.

Craig A. Perkins wrote this report. Patsy Klaus provided analytical and programming assistance; Cathy Maston provided statistical review; and Diane Craven reviewed the computer programs. Rhonda Keith produced and edited the report, supervised by Tom Hester. Marilyn Marbrook, assisted by Jayne Robinson and Yvonne Boston, administered final production.

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The numerical tables for the graphed information may also be gained by calling the BJS Statistics Clearinghouse, operated by the National Criminal Justice Reference Service, 1-800-732-3277.

Data from graphs

Violent crime rates by age

Adjusted victimization rate per 1,000 persons, age 12 and older

Year Age of victim

	12-15	16-19	20-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
1973	81.8	81.7	87.6	52.4	38.8	17.2	9.1
1974	77.5	90.6	83.5	58.6	37.5	15.5	9.5
1975	80.3	85.7	80.9	59.5	36.9	17.8	8.3
1976	76.4	88.8	79.7	61.5	35.9	16.1	8.1
1977	83.0	90.2	86.2	63.5	35.8	16.8	8.0
1978	83.7	91.7	91.1	60.5	35.8	15.0	8.4
1979	78.5	93.4	98.4	66.3	38.2	13.6	6.2

1980	72.5	91.3	94.1	60.0	37.4	15.6	7.2
1981	86.0	90.7	93.7	65.8	41.6	17.3	8.3
1982	75.6	94.4	93.8	69.6	38.6	13.8	6.1
1983	75.4	86.3	82.0	62.2	36.5	11.9	5.9
1984	78.2	90.0	87.5	56.6	37.9	13.2	5.2
1985	79.6	89.4	82.0	56.5	35.6	13.0	4.8
1986	77.1	80.8	80.1	52.0	36.0	10.8	4.8
1987	87.2	92.4	85.5	51.9	34.7	11.4	5.2
1988	83.7	95.9	80.2	53.2	39.1	13.4	4.4
1989	92.5	98.2	78.8	52.8	37.3	10.5	4.2
1990	101.1	99.1	86.1	55.2	34.4	9.9	3.7
1991	94.5	122.6	103.6	54.3	37.2	12.5	4.0
1992	111.0	103.7	95.2	56.8	38.1	13.2	5.2
1993	118.4	114.2	91.2	57.9	42.1	17.0	5.6
1994	113.0	120.5	97.7	60.4	39.1	15.1	5.1

Note: Violent crimes included are homicide, rape, robbery, and both simple and aggravated assault. The light gray area indicates that because of changes made to the victimization survey, data prior to 1992 are adjusted to make them comparable to data collected under the redesigned methodology. The adjustment methods are described in Criminal Victimization 1973-95.

All serious violent crimes: Murder, rape, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault

Rates of serious violent crime per 1,000 persons

Victims' age	Rate
12 to 14	37
15 to 17	47
18 to 21	50
22 to 24	40
25 to 29	27
30 to 34	21
35 to 39	16
40 to 49	14
50 to 64	6
65 or older	3

The average age of U.S. residents age 12 or older was almost 41. The average age of victims of serious violent crimes other than murder was 30 or under.

Mean Median

Overall U.S. population 40.9 39

Murder	34.6	30
Rape/sexual assault	26.6	23
Robbery	29.9	26
Aggravated assault	27.8	25

Murder

Rates of murder per 1,000 persons

Victims' age Rate

12 to 14	0.03
15 to 17	0.13
18 to 21	0.26
22 to 24	0.23
25 to 29	0.18
30 to 34	0.14
35 to 39	0.11
40 to 49	0.08
50 to 64	0.05
65 or older	0.04

Murder, the least frequent violent crime, victimized fewer than 1 in 1,000 persons, age 12 or older.

Violent crime Total

Murder	0.11
Rape/sexual assault	2.4
Robbery	6.1
Aggravated assault	11.6

Rape or sexual assault

Rates of rape or sexual assault per 1,000 persons

Victims' age Rate

12 to 14	3.6
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15 to 17	5.9
18 to 21	7.6
22 to 24	6.4
25 to 29	2.2
30 to 34	3.0

35 to 39	2.1
40 to 49	1.5
50 to 64	0.3
65 or older	0.1

Rape or sexual assault

1 in 89 females 12-24 were rape/sexual assault victims

Rates per 1,000 females

Victims' age	Rates
12 to 14	6.7
15 to 17	12.0
18 to 21	13.8
22 to 24	11.8
25 to 29	3.7
30 to 34	5.4
35 to 39	4.0
40 to 49	2.6
50 to 64	0.6
65 or older	0.3

Robbery

Rates of robbery per 1,000 persons

Victims' age	Rate
12 to 14	12.6
15 to 17	12.4
18 to 21	12.8
22 to 24	10.3
25 to 29	7.9
30 to 34	7.2
35 to 39	4.9
40 to 49	4.4
50 to 64	2.5
65 or older	1.5

Age patterns of robbery victims fall into 5 distinct ranges:
The 12-21 robbery rate is 6 times that of 50 or older.

Approximate robbery rates per 1,000 persons

Victim's age	Rate
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12 to 21	13
22 to 24	10
25 to 34	8
35 to 49	5
50 or older	2

Aggravated assault

Rates of aggravated assault per 1,000 persons

Victims' age	Rate
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12 to 14	21.1
15 to 17	28.9
18 to 21	29.3
22 to 24	22.9
25 to 29	16.7
30 to 34	11.0
35 to 39	9.2
40 to 49	8.3
50 to 64	3.4
65 or older	1.2

Annual average number of victimizations, 1992-94

Age	Aggravated assault	Robbery	Rape/ sexual assault	Murder
12 to 24	1,225,517	575,131	284,402	8,021
25 to 49	1,075,742	582,215	209,027	12,129
50+	151,236	129,798	15,006	2,743

Serious violent crime, by race and Hispanic origin

Rates of serious violent crime per 1,000 persons

Victims' age	White	Black	Hispanic
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12 to 14	31.0	58.6	51.2
15 to 17	42.9	56.7	57.0
18 to 21	46.4	71.5	50.3
22 to 24	38.6	50.0	36.5
25 to 29	25.3	33.8	31.7
30 to 34	19.0	40.0	17.0
35 to 39	13.6	27.2	23.3
40 to 49	12.7	23.7	18.8
50 to 64	5.5	10.9	10.5
65 or older	2.3	6.2	8.2

Serious violent crime, by sex of victim

1 in 41 males and 1 in 62 females were violent crime victims

Rates per 1,000 persons

Victims' age Male Female

12 to 14	45.4	28.7
15 to 17	55.8	38.4
18 to 21	58.0	41.9
22 to 24	44.7	35.0
25 to 29	31.1	23.0
30 to 34	23.2	19.5
35 to 39	19.6	13.0
40 to 49	17.9	10.7
50 to 64	7.9	4.8
65 or older	4.1	2.1

Murder, by race

Rates of murder per 1,000 persons

Victims' age White Black

12 to 14	0.02	0.09
15 to 17	0.07	0.47
18 to 21	0.11	1.08
22 to 24	0.10	0.97
25 to 29	0.09	0.73
30 to 34	0.08	0.57
35 to 39	0.07	0.42
40 to 49	0.05	0.30
50 to 64	0.04	0.16
65 or older	0.03	0.14

Murder, by sex of victim

1 in 10 murder victims were males, 18 to 21

Rates per 1,000 persons

Victims' age Male Female

12 to 14	0.04	0.02
15 to 17	0.22	0.04
18 to 21	0.45	0.07

22 to 24	0.37	0.07
25 to 29	0.29	0.07
30 to 34	0.22	0.07
35 to 39	0.17	0.05
40 to 49	0.12	0.04
50 to 64	0.08	0.02
65 or older	0.05	0.03

Robbery, by race and Hispanic origin

Rates of robbery per 1,000 persons

Victims' age White Black Hispanic

12 to 14	9.9	20.5	18.4
15 to 17	9.0	17.2	20.0
18 to 21	10.4	24.3	15.2
22 to 24	9.2	16.7	10.1
25 to 29	6.1	10.4	13.5
30 to 34	4.6	23.8	5.3
35 to 39	3.4	11.2	8.3
40 to 49	3.3	9.9	8.1
50 to 64	1.9	5.3	6.9
65 or older	1.0	4.6	4.7

Robbery, by sex of victim

Almost 1 in 10 robbery victims were males 18 to 21

Rates per 1,000 persons

Victims' age Male Female

12 to 14	18.4	6.5
15 to 17	16.5	8.2
18 to 21	16.6	9.0
22 to 24	12.1	8.5
25 to 29	8.9	7.0
30 to 34	10.1	4.4
35 to 39	6.5	3.4
40 to 49	5.9	2.9
50 to 64	3.5	1.6
65 or older	2.1	1.1

Aggravated assault, by race and Hispanic origin

Rates of aggravated assault per 1,000 persons

Victims' age White Black Hispanic

12 to 14	18.0	31.4	29.1
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15 to 17	27.2	35.3	32.9
18 to 21	28.2	33.5	30.8
22 to 24	22.6	23.6	25.2
25 to 29	16.5	21.8	16.4
30 to 34	11.5	13.3	7.2
35 to 39	8.0	12.5	13.4
40 to 49	7.7	12.6	9.4
50 to 64	3.3	4.7	3.2
65 or older	1.1	1.5	3.5

Aggravated assault, by sex of victim

For 18 to 21, men twice as likely as women to be victimized

Rates per 1,000 persons

Victims' age Male Female

12 to 14	26.4	15.5
15 to 17	39.1	18.2
18 to 21	39.5	19.1
22 to 24	31.2	14.6
25 to 29	21.1	12.3
30 to 34	12.3	9.7
35 to 39	12.8	5.5
40 to 49	11.6	5.1
50 to 64	4.4	2.5
65 or older	1.9	0.7