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BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS
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VIOLENCE COMMITTED BY STRANGERS DECLINED 77 PERCENT SINCE 1993

WASHINGTON – Strangers committed about 1.8 million nonfatal violent crimes in 2010, or about 38 percent of all nonfatal violent victimizations during the year, the Justice Department’s Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) announced today. This represents a 77 percent decline from 7.9 million nonfatal violent crimes committed by strangers in 1993, according to the earliest available data from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS).

During a more recent period from 2001 to 2010, the rate of violence committed by strangers declined 47 percent and the rate committed by offenders the victims knew declined by 41 percent. The percentage declines for these two rates were not statistically different.

In the NCVS, nonfatal violent crimes include rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault and simple assault. Simple assault (assault not involving an injury or a weapon) made up 60 percent of violent victimizations committed by strangers in 2010, followed by aggravated assault (20 percent), robbery (17 percent) and rape or sexual assault (two percent).

More than half (52 percent) of all robberies in 2005-10 were committed by strangers, down from nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of robberies in 1993-98. Aggravated assaults and simple assaults committed by strangers also declined between the two periods, while the percentage of rapes and sexual assaults remained stable.

Based on data from the FBI’s Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR), among homicides in which the victim-offender relationship could be determined, strangers committed between 21 percent and 27 percent of homicides from 1993 to 2008, compared to between 73 percent and 79 percent of homicides committed by offenders known to the victims.

In 2010, males (9.5 victimizations per 1,000 males) experienced violence by strangers at nearly twice the rate of females (4.7 per 1,000). From 1993 to 2010, males (down 83 percent) experienced a larger decline than females (down 76 percent) in the rate of violence committed by strangers.

In each time period studied, young adults ages 18 to 24, people who were never married, and American Indians or Alaska Natives had the highest rates of violent victimization by a stranger among all groups in the respective categories. In 2005-10, people age 65 or older experienced the lowest rates (1.6 per 1,000) of violent victimization by strangers.

(MORE)

Other findings from 2005-10 include—

- Persons in urban areas experienced higher rates of violent victimizations by strangers than persons in suburban and rural areas.
- A higher percentage of violence by strangers occurred in public places (51 percent) (e.g., commercial establishments, parking lots or garages, open areas, streets or aboard public transportation) than in private places (26 percent).
- Strangers committed about nine percent of violent crimes that occurred in the victim's home.
- About half of violent victimizations committed by strangers occurred while the victims were away from home traveling, shopping or doing leisure activities.
- About 10 percent of violent crimes committed by strangers involved a firearm, compared to five percent of violent crimes committed by someone the victim knew.
- About 22 percent of victims of violence committed by strangers were injured, compared to 31 percent of victims who knew the offender.

The NCVS collects information from victims on the frequency, characteristics and consequences of criminal victimization, using a nationally representative sample of about 40,000 households comprising nearly 75,000 persons. In the FBI's SHR program, a part of the Uniform Crime Reporting program, law enforcement agencies report monthly supplemental data about homicide incidents with details on location, victim, and offender characteristics.

The report, *Violent Victimization Committed by Strangers, 1993-2010* (NCJ 239424), was written by BJS statistician Erika Harrell. 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 Acting Assistant Attorney General Mary Lou Leary, 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>.