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Violent Crime by Strangers and Nonstrangers

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Results from the National Crime Survey (NCS) indicate that between 1982 and 1984 less than half of all violent crimes were committed by total strangers. Another 11% of the violent crimes were committed by persons known to the victim by sight only. An additional 31% were committed by acquaintances and friends, and 8%, by relatives. Other findings include:

- Among violent crimes, robbery was most likely to be committed by a stranger; homicide, least likely.
- Most violent crimes by strangers (70%) were committed against males; most crimes by relatives (77%) were committed against females.
- Spouses or ex-spouses committed over half of all crimes by relatives and about two-thirds of all crimes by relatives against women.
- Crimes by strangers were more often committed by two or more offenders than were crimes by nonstrangers.
- Stranger-to-stranger crimes more often involved a weapon but less often resulted in an attack than nonstranger crimes. Crimes by relatives involved an attack and injury more often than crimes by either strangers or acquaintances.
- Of those injured, victims of stranger crimes and victims of crimes by acquaintances were more likely to require

It is often said that the fear of crime is largely a fear of strangers. As this Special Report indicates, while almost half of all violent crimes are committed by total strangers, almost 40% occur among friends, acquaintances, or relatives, including spouses or ex-spouses. This report, based upon data from the National Crime Survey for 1982 through 1984, expands our knowledge of the nature and extent of crime by strangers and by nonstrangers. It can assist policymakers as they seek to control not only "street crime" but also the violence among friends, neighbors, and family members that disrupts the lives of so many of our citizens.

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medical attention than victims of crimes committed by relatives.

Introduction

Although crime is often discussed as a single entity, crimes committed by strangers differ in many ways from crimes committed by nonstrangers. This report highlights some of the differences in the characteristics of the victims, the offenders, and the crimes themselves.

For this report, three basic victim-offender relationships were examined: stranger-to-stranger crimes, crimes committed by friends or acquaintances,

and crimes committed by relatives. Crimes by strangers refer to those committed by total strangers, in which the assailant was completely unknown to the victim, and to those in which the assailant was known only by sight.¹ Nonstranger crimes refer to those committed by friends, acquaintances, or relatives.

Past studies and evidence from the NCS indicate that violence involving nonstrangers, particularly relatives,² may be underreported in the survey. Individuals victimized by relatives may be reluctant to discuss the event, especially if the offender is present at the interview, for fear of reprisal or out of shame or embarrassment. Further, some victims of domestic violence may not perceive these acts as criminal. Consequently, the results reported here may underestimate crimes by persons known to the victim and therefore overestimate the proportion of crimes committed by strangers.

Victim-offender relationship

Of the violent crimes measured by the NCS—rape, robbery, and assault—46% were committed by total strangers. Another 11% were committed by persons known to the victim by sight only; 31% were committed by acquaintances.

¹ Offenders were considered to be known "by sight only" if the victim never said more than hello to the offender.

² A 1971 reverse records check in San Jose found that known victims of violent crime by a relative reported the incident to a survey interviewer only 22% of the time. Crimes by acquaintances were reported 58% of the time; crimes by strangers, 75% of the time. See also *Surveying Crime*, National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D.C., 1976.

tances and friends; and 8%, by relatives. Spouses or ex-spouses were involved in 5% of all violent crimes (table 1).

The typical relationship between the victim and offender varied by the type of crime. Of the violent crimes measured by the NCS between 1982 and 1984, robbery was most likely to be committed by a stranger. Seventy-one percent of robberies were committed by total strangers. Simple assault was least often committed by a total stranger (39%). Thirty-six percent of simple assaults were committed by friends and acquaintances. About 9% were committed by relatives, more than half of which involved spouses or ex-spouses.

Of the violent crimes included in the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports, homicide was least likely to be committed by a stranger. In 1984, 18% of homicides were known to be committed by a stranger, compared to 75% of robberies in that year.

Victim-offender relationship	Homicide	Robbery
Stranger	18%	75%
Acquaintance	39	17
Relative	18	4
Unknown	26	4
Total	100	100

Note: Percentages may not total to 100 because of rounding.
Sources: FBI Uniform Crime Reports, 1984; National Crime Survey, 1984.

Table 1. Victim-offender relationship for selected violent crimes, 1982-84

Victim-offender relationship	Violent crime total	Rape	Robbery	Simple assault	Simple assault
Percent of victimizations					
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Nonstranger**	39%	40%	20%	39%	46%
Relative	8	4	4	7	9
Spouse	3	1*	1	3	4
Ex-spouse	2	1*	1	1	2
Parent	-	1*	-	1	-
Child	-	-	-	-	-
Brother/sister	1	-	1	1	1
Other relative	2	2*	1	1	2
Acquaintance	31	35	15	30	36
Boyfriend/ex-boyfriend	3	7	2	3	3
Girlfriend/ex-girlfriend	1	-	-	1	1
Friend/ex-friend	6	6	3	7	7
Other person well-known not related	6	6	2	6	8
Casual acquaintance	14	16	7	14	16
Stranger	57%	55%	77%	56%	52%
Completely unknown	46	49	71	44	39
Known by sight only	11	7	6	12	13
Relationship not ascertained	3%	4%	3%	5%	2%
Number of victimizations					
Total	19,999,000	504,000	3,715,300	5,289,600	10,490,200
Nonstranger**	7,879,500	202,700	743,800	2,082,100	4,851,000
Relative	1,502,400	21,200	148,200	389,900	943,200
Spouse	574,200	4,400*	46,500	153,400	369,900
Ex-spouse	322,600	5,600*	41,200	72,500	203,300
Parent	91,500	2,600*	13,800*	35,600	39,500
Child	52,900	0*	6,300*	21,500	25,100
Brother/sister	157,900	0*	20,100	34,500	103,300
Other relative	303,000	8,700*	20,200	72,300	202,100
Acquaintance	6,114,000	174,200	562,900	1,610,300	3,766,600
Boyfriend/ex-boyfriend	638,300	33,700	86,600	152,900	365,100
Girlfriend/ex-girlfriend	193,100	1,500*	17,300	52,800	121,500
Friend/ex-friend	1,283,100	29,500	128,400	344,900	782,200
Other person well-known not related	1,197,600	29,300	67,800	306,400	794,100
Casual acquaintance	2,802,000	80,200	284,700	753,500	1,703,600
Stranger	11,488,000	279,100	2,847,800	2,952,100	5,409,000
Completely unknown	9,291,400	245,300	2,629,800	2,333,900	4,082,500
Known by sight only	2,196,600	33,800	218,000	618,300	1,326,500
Relationship not ascertained	631,600	22,200	123,800	255,400	230,300

Note: Detail may not add to total because of rounding.
*Represents 10 or fewer sample cases; see Methodology section.
**Nonstranger totals include crimes for which detailed relationship was not ascertained.
- Less than 0.5%.

Victim characteristics

Sex and marital status

Victims of violent crimes by strangers were predominantly male (70%), while the majority of the victims of violent crimes by relatives were female (77%). Of the victims of crimes by acquaintances, slightly more than half were male (table 2).

The victims of violent crimes by both strangers and acquaintances were more likely to have never been married than to be married, divorced, separated, or widowed. More than half of the male victims and almost half of the female victims of crimes by strangers had never married. Among both males and females, crimes involving acquaintances were committed mostly against persons who had never been married.

Spouses or ex-spouses committed two-thirds of the violent crimes by relatives against women. More than half of the crimes by relatives against women were reported to the survey by women who were divorced or separated at the time of the interview. Another fourth were reported by married women. Of the male victims of crimes by relatives about a fourth were separated or divorced. Almost 4 in 10, however, were married.

Race

The race of victims varied only slightly by the victim-offender relationship. The proportion of violent crimes committed against whites was higher for crimes by relatives (88%) than for crimes by either acquaintances (83%) or strangers (84%). The proportion of violent crimes committed against blacks was higher for crimes by acquaintances (16%) than for crimes by strangers (14%) or relatives (10%).

Age

Violent crime is predominantly targeted against younger persons; the average age of violent crime victims between 1982 and 1984 was 27. The age profile of victims, however, varied by the victim-offender relationship.

The average age of victims was lower for crimes by acquaintances (25) than for crimes by relatives (30) or strangers (28). This lower age distribution was due, in part, to the large number of violent crimes occurring in

³Crimes against married women, however, are probably underreported to a larger extent than crimes against separated or divorced women. See Family Violence, BJS Special Report, NCJ-93449, April 1984.

schools. Also, more than half of the victims of crimes by acquaintances had never been married. In contrast to this, the average age of victims of crimes by relatives was higher largely because these crimes predominantly involved spouses or ex-spouses.

The average age of stranger-to-stranger crime victims was only slightly

higher than the average for all violent crime victims. More than three-fourths of the victims of a violent crime by a stranger were under age 35. About 3% were age 65 or older.

Residence

Violent crimes committed by strangers were most likely to have been

committed against city dwellers, followed closely by suburbanites. Violent crimes by relatives were least often committed against city dwellers. Victims of crimes by relatives resided mostly in suburban areas, followed closely by rural areas. The highest percentage of victims of violent crimes by acquaintances lived in suburban areas.

Residence of victim	Percent of victimizations		
	Relative	Acquaintance	Stranger
City	26%	33%	43%
Suburban area	39	37	39
Rural area	35	30	18
Total	100	100	100

Table 2. Violent crime victimizations, by victim characteristics and victim-offender relationship, 1982-84

Victim characteristics	Victim-offender relationship		
	Relative	Acquaintance	Stranger
Percent of victimizations			
Sex of victim	100%	100%	100%
Male	23	54	70
Female	77	46	30
Race	100%	100%	100%
White	88	83	84
Black	10	16	14
Other	2	1	2
Age	100%	100%	100%
12-19 years old	15	39	25
20-24	26	20	23
25-34	34	24	29
35-49	18	12	15
50-64	6	4	6
65 and over	2	1	3
Marital status			
Male	100%	100%	100%
Married	39	26	33
Widowed	2*	—	1
Divorced	14	7	7
Separated	14	3	3
Never married	31	64	56
Female	100%	100%	100%
Married	27	18	31
Widowed	3	3	4
Divorced	26	14	12
Separated	30	8	6
Never married	15	56	47
Number of victimizations			
Total	1,502,400	6,114,000	11,488,000
Sex of victim			
Male	343,300	3,318,900	8,045,100
Female	1,159,200	2,795,100	3,442,900
Race			
White	1,323,900	5,063,100	9,650,700
Black	145,300	977,900	1,582,500
Other	33,300	73,000	254,800
Age			
12-19 years old	221,000	2,377,900	2,928,500
20-24	387,000	1,250,200	2,620,100
25-34	509,900	1,446,000	3,291,200
35-49	274,000	732,400	1,681,300
50-64	85,000	225,200	674,100
65 and over	25,500	82,300	292,900
Marital status			
Male	343,300	3,318,900	8,045,100
Married	134,200	862,400	2,688,100
Widowed	5,400*	10,000*	66,500
Divorced	46,500	226,400	548,900
Separated	49,400	98,500	226,900
Never married	107,800	2,113,200	4,484,000
Female	1,159,200	2,795,100	3,442,900
Married	307,700	505,900	1,065,000
Widowed	35,500	84,100	137,600
Divorced	295,900	400,200	412,100
Separated	347,000	228,900	203,600
Never married	170,600	1,570,800	1,608,500

Note: Percentages may not total to 100 because of rounding. Totals may include cases for which detail was not ascertained. *Represents 10 or fewer sample cases; see Methodology section. - Less than 0.5%.

Offender characteristics

Violent crimes against most victims—whether male or female—were committed by male offenders (table 3). Males were most likely to be victimized by a male in a stranger-to-stranger confrontation (97%) and least likely in a confrontation involving a relative (65%). Females, however, were most often victimized by a male in a crime by a relative (93%) and least often when the crime involved an acquaintance (67%).

Most violent crimes involved victims and offenders of the same race (table 4). Crimes by strangers were more interracial, however, than crimes involving acquaintances or relatives. White victims were assaulted by white offenders in 70% of stranger-to-stranger crimes, 86% of acquaintance crimes, and 95% of crimes involving relatives. Black victims were assaulted by black offenders in 77% of stranger-to-stranger crimes, 91% of acquaintance crimes, and 95% of crimes by relatives.

Regardless of the victim's relationship with the offender, people were most likely to be victimized by an offender in the same age group as themselves (table 5). For example, 77% of violent crimes by relatives against persons age 30 or older involved offenders

Table 3. Violent crime victimizations, by victim-offender relationship and sex of victim and offender, 1982-84

Victim-offender relationship	Percent of victimizations by sex of victim and offender					
	Male victim			Female victim		
	Total	Male offender	Female offender	Total	Male offender	Female offender
Stranger	100%	97%	3%	100%	81%	18%
Acquaintance	100	93	7	100	67	33
Relative	100	65	35	100	93	7

Note: Table includes only victimizations committed by one offender. Total includes victimizations for which victims could not ascertain the offender's sex.

age 30 or older.⁴ These were mostly domestic crimes. Seventy-three percent of crimes by acquaintances against victims between ages 12 and 17 were committed by offenders under age 18.

Stranger-to-stranger crimes were a little less likely to involve individuals of the same age group. For example, 43% of the offenders in stranger-to-stranger crimes against victims 30 and older were in the same age group, while 48% were between ages 18 and 29.

⁴The age groupings used for these comparisons were constrained by victims' abilities to estimate the ages of their assailants. The three offender age groups roughly correspond to teenagers, young adults, and older adults. It was felt that victims would be better able to place their offenders into such age groupings than to accurately guess their exact ages. The ages of victims were grouped to match those for offenders.

Number of offenders

Crimes by strangers involved multiple offenders more often than did crimes by acquaintances or relatives. About a third of the stranger-to-stranger incidents involved multiple offenders. Among these incidents, 54% of robberies, 29% of assaults, and 16% of rapes involved more than one assailant.

	Percent of incidents		
	Relative	Acquaintance	Stranger
One offender	93%	84%	65%
Two or more	7	16	35
Total	100	100	100

Table 4. Violent crime victimizations, by victim-offender relationship and race of victim and offender, 1982-84

Victim-offender relationship	Percent of victimizations by race of victim and offender											
	White victim				Black victim				Other race victim			
	Total	White offender	Black offender	Other race offender	Total	White offender	Black offender	Other race offender	Total	White offender	Black offender	Other race offender
Stranger	100%	70%	24%	4%	100%	19%	77%	3%	100%	46%	36%	13%
Acquaintance	100	86	10	4	100	8	91	-*	100	52	4*	44
Relative	100	95	2	2	100	5*	95	-*	100	47*	-*	33*

Note: Percentages may not total to 100 because of rounding. Table includes only victimizations committed by one offender. Total includes victimizations for which victims could not ascertain the offender's race. *Represents 10 or fewer sample cases; see Methodology section. - Less than 0.5%.

Table 5. Violent crime victimizations, by victim-offender relationship and age of victim and offender, 1982-84

Victim-offender relationship	Percent of victimizations by age of victim and offender											
	Victim 12-17 years old				Victim 18-29 years old				Victim 30 years old and older			
	Total	Offender under 18	Offender 18-29	Offender 30+	Total	Offender under 18	Offender 18-29	Offender 30+	Total	Offender under 18	Offender 18-29	Offender 30+
Stranger	100%	50%	36%	12%	100%	6%	65%	27%	100%	6%	48%	43%
Acquaintance	100	73	20	7	100	6	66	27	100	7	33	58
Relative	100	15*	21	64	100	3	66	31	100	4	18	77

Note: Table includes only victimizations committed by one offender. Total includes victimizations for which victims could not ascertain the offender's age. *Represents 10 or fewer sample cases; see Methodology section.

Incident characteristics

Time and place of occurrence

About half of all violent crimes occurred during the day (between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m.). This proportion did not differ substantially for the three victim-offender relationships (table 6). A little more than half of the crimes by acquaintances (56%) and a little less than half of the crimes by strangers (44%) occurred during the daytime. About half of the crimes involving relatives occurred during this time period (49%).

Crimes involving relatives and acquaintances most often occurred in or near the victim's home (69% and 32%), while crimes by strangers most often occurred on the street (39%). About 4% of stranger-to-stranger incidents occurred inside the victim's home, compared to 18% of crimes by acquaintances and 58% of crimes by relatives. A higher percentage of violent crimes by acquaintances than crimes by relatives or strangers occurred in school or on school property.

Level of violence

In general, a weapon was more likely to be present in stranger crimes than in crimes committed by nonstrangers. Offenders had a weapon in a fourth of the nonstranger crimes compared to over a third of the stranger crimes.

Was a weapon present?	Percent of victimizations		
	Relative	Acquaintance	Stranger
Yes	26%	28%	36%
No	71	70	54
Don't know	4	4	10
Total	100	100	100

Note: Percentages may not total to 100 because of rounding.

Violent crimes by nonstrangers, however, were more likely than crimes by strangers to involve an attack (table 7). Among nonstranger crimes, those committed by relatives involved an attack more often than those committed by acquaintances.

Violent crimes by relatives also involved injury more often than crimes by either acquaintances or strangers. Close to half of all victimizations involving a relative resulted in injury compared to about a third of the crimes committed by acquaintances and about a fourth of those committed by strangers. This may be the case because the definition of a crime may vary in the mind of the victim, depending on the victim's relationship to the offender. For example, victims who are threat-

Table 6. Time and place of occurrence of violent crime incidents, by victim-offender relationship, 1982-84

Time and place of occurrence	Relative	Percent of incidents	
		Acquaintance	Stranger
Time of occurrence	100%	100%	100%
Day, 6 a.m.-6 p.m.	49	56	44
Night, 6 p.m.-6 a.m.	49	43	56
Don't know	1	-	1
Place of occurrence	100%	100%	100%
In own home	58	18	4
Near own home	11	14	9
Friend's, relative's, or neighbor's home	15	12	4
On the street	6	13	39
Commercial/retail establishment	4	12	16
Parking lot	3	6	11
In school, on school property	1*	16	6
Park, field, or playground	1*	2	3
Other location	1	7	7
Total number of incidents	1,367,700	5,310,400	9,585,900

Note: Percentages may not total to 100 because of rounding. Total may include cases for which detail was not ascertained.
*Represents 10 or fewer sample cases; see Methodology section.
- Less than 0.5%.

Table 7. Violent crime victimizations resulting in attack, injury, or medical care, by victim-offender relationship, 1982-84

Result of victimization	Relative	Percent of victimizations	
		Acquaintance	Stranger
Attack	62%	51%	44%
Injury**	47	33	27
Gun or knife wound	1*	1	1
Other serious injury	4	4	3
Minor injury	43	27	22
Injury requiring:			
Medical attention	20	16	14
Hospital care	4	4	4
Total number of victimizations	1,502,400	6,114,000	11,488,000

*Represents 10 or fewer sample cases; see Methodology section.
**Types of injury add to more than total because victim may have received more than one injury. Minor injuries include bruises, black eyes, cuts, scratches, and chipped teeth.

ened or attacked by relatives (but not injured) may not perceive the incident as serious or as a crime at all and may not report it to a survey interviewer. On the other hand, threats or attempted attacks by strangers may be perceived as serious and therefore are reported to an interviewer more frequently.

Though the victims were injured less often, the injuries resulting from crimes by strangers and acquaintances required medical attention or hospital care more often than those resulting from crimes by relatives.

Injury requiring:	Percent of victims injured by:		
	Relative	Acquaintance	Stranger
Medical attention	42%	47%	51%
Hospital care	9	13	16
Total number of injured victims	707,800	2,020,000	3,049,300

Most injuries resulting from an attack were minor regardless of the victim-offender relationship. About four-fifths of the injuries inflicted by strangers and acquaintances and about nine-tenths of those inflicted by relatives were in this category, which includes bruises, black eyes, cuts, and scratches. Injuries resulting from the use of a gun or knife were a very small proportion of total injuries for all three groups of victims.

Self-protection

Overall, about 3 out of 4 violent crime victims did something to protect themselves during the crime incident (table 8). Methods of self-protection included fleeing from the offender, reasoning with the assailant, trying to get help, using physical force, and using or brandishing a weapon. Victims of a stranger crime were less likely to protect themselves than victims who knew the assailant.

The most frequently mentioned method of self-defense (employed by nearly a third of the victims) was non-violent resistance, which included locking a door, fleeing from the offender, hiding, and shielding oneself. Non-violent resistance was more frequently used by victims of a crime committed by a relative than a crime by an acquaintance or stranger.

Victims of a violent crime by a relative were also more likely to try to get help or frighten the offender than victims of a violent crime committed by an acquaintance or stranger. They were, however, less likely to use physical force. Victims of a crime by a relative or acquaintance more frequently tried to reason with or threaten the offender than did victims of a crime by a stranger.

The least common method of self-protection for all violent crime victims was the use or display of a gun, knife, or other weapon. Victims confronted by a stranger, however, were more likely to use or display a weapon (5%) than were victims of crime by a relative (2%) or an acquaintance (3%).

Reporting crimes to the police

Less than half of all violent crimes were reported to the police from 1982 through 1984 (table 9). Stranger-to-stranger crimes were reported 47% of the time. Crimes by relatives were most likely to be reported (53%), and crimes by acquaintances were least likely (40%).

The higher police reporting rate for violent crimes by relatives should, however, be interpreted with caution. The true proportion of crimes by relatives that are reported to the police is probably lower than the survey estimate. Those victims of crimes by relatives who were willing to discuss their victimization experiences possibly comprise a special group of domestic assault victims. They may be more willing to discuss their experiences with an interviewer because they have already

Table 8. Self-protective measures employed by victims of violent crimes, by victim-offender relationship, 1982-84

Self-protective measures	Percent of victimizations		
	Relative	Acquaintance	Stranger
Tried to protect themselves	82%	79%	76%
Used or brandished a gun, knife, or other weapon	2	3	5
Used physical force	20	26	25
Tried to get help or frighten offender	27	17	17
Threatened, argued, or reasoned with offender	27	25	18
Used nonviolent resistance, including evasion	37	30	30

Note: Types of self-protection add to more than total because victim may have used more than one measure.

Table 9. Violent crime incidents reported to police, by victim-offender relationship, 1982-84

Incident reported to police	Percent of incidents		
	Relative	Acquaintance	Stranger
Total	100%	100%	100%
Reported to police	53	40	47
Not reported	47	59	51
Respondent not sure	-*	1	1

Note: Percentages may not total to 100 because of rounding.
*Represents 10 or fewer sample cases; see Methodology section.
- Less than 0.5%.

Table 10. Most important reason for reporting violent crime victimizations to the police, by victim-offender relationship, 1982-84

Reason for reporting	Percent of victimizations		
	Relative	Acquaintance	Stranger
Total	100%	100%	100%
To stop or prevent this incident from happening	28	21	14
To keep it from happening again or to others	31	33	24
To collect insurance or to recover property	2*	3	9
Needed help after incident	4	3	3
There was evidence or proof	-*	1*	1*
To punish the offender	7	14	14
Respondent's duty/because it was a crime	5	10	16
Other	16	9	13
Not ascertained	6	6	8

Note: Percentages may not total to 100 because of rounding.
*Represents 10 or fewer sample cases; see Methodology section.
- Less than 0.5%.

reported the crimes to the police and discussed them with others. Those who have not done so may be more reluctant to report them in a survey interview.

Of those violent crime victims who reported the crime to the police, about 1 out of 3 victims of a nonstranger crime and 1 out of 4 victims of a stranger crime stated that the most important reason for notifying the police was to keep the incident from happening again, either to themselves or to others (table 10). Another common reason for reporting victimizations was to stop or prevent the incident from occurring, such as when the police are called to prevent an imminent attack. Victims of crimes by strangers and acquaint-

ances more often notified the police to seek punishment of the offender than did victims of crimes by relatives.

Of the victims who did not report the crime to the police, about 4 out of 10 victims of crimes by relatives or acquaintances stated that the most important reason was because the incident was a private or personal matter (table 11). The most common reason victims of crime by a stranger gave for not calling the police was because the incident was not important enough to warrant police attention.

Methodology

The data for this report were obtained from the 1982-84 National Crime Survey. An average sample of 58,000 households and 123,000 individuals were interviewed twice a year about crimes—including those crimes not reported to the police. Series crimes (those representing three or more incidents about which the victim could not provide detail on separate events) were included in the counts as one incident, each based on details of the most recent incident. Because the survey population includes only persons age 12 and over, child abuse is insufficiently measured and is therefore not discussed in this report.

Survey respondents who were victims of a violent crime were asked a series of questions to determine their prior relationship with the offender. Victims responded to questions based on their perceptions of this relationship. Victims also provided information about their perceptions of the age, race, and sex of the offender(s).

With the exception of the tables on offender characteristics, the tables in this report combine both single- and multiple-offender crimes. When two or more offenders were involved in a crime, the most intimate relationship with the victim was considered to represent the victim-offender relationship. For example, if the victim reported that a boyfriend and a stranger were involved in an incident, the relationship was considered to have involved a boyfriend.

The findings in this report are presented in terms of victimizations and incidents. One criminal incident may involve more than one victim. Between 1982 and 1984, there were an average of 1.17 victimizations per violent crime incident. Victim weights were used in generating crime level estimates, victim characteristics, and offender characteristics. Incident weights were applied for estimating characteristics of the crime itself (such as number of offenders and place of occurrence).

All comparisons presented in this report are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level or above. It is not possible to construct accurate confidence intervals around estimates based upon 10 or fewer sample cases because standard error formulas may not produce accurate values for such estimates. Therefore caution should be used when comparing estimates based upon 10 or fewer sample cases to other small estimates.

Table 11. Most important reason for not reporting violent crime victimizations to the police, by victim-offender relationship, 1982-84

Reason for not reporting	Percent of victimizations		
	Relative	Acquaintance	Stranger
Total	100%	100%	100%
Private or personal matter	46	38	18
Not important enough	9	19	24
Reported to someone else	5	14	10
Fear of reprisal	15	5	3
Police would not want to be bothered	5	5	6
Police would be ineffective, inefficient, and insensitive	7	2	5
Lack of proof, no ID number, not aware crime occurred until later	-*	1	12
Object recovered, offender unsuccessful	1*	2	6
Too inconvenient or time consuming	1*	1	3
Other	10	10	11
Not ascertained	-*	2	3

Note: Percentages may not total to 100 because of rounding.
 *Represents 10 or fewer sample cases; see Methodology section.
 - Less than 0.5%.

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