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CRIME AND OLDER AMERICANS

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Introduction

In recent years, interest in the elderly and crime--both as victims and offenders--has increased. In part, this interest is associated with the general "aging of America." The U.S. Bureau of Census estimates that in 1985, Americans 60 years of age and older totaled 39.5 million, a 21% increase over the past 10 years. Accompanying this rise in the number of older Americans is the perception that the elderly are frequently involved in crime.

This information package provides insight into the involvement older Americans have with the criminal justice system--specifically as victims, as offenders, and as participants in crime prevention activities.

The package contains:

- Statistical tables on the elderly as victims, the elderly as offenders, and the elderly's participation in crime prevention activities.
- A list of readings on crime and older Americans.
- Sources for further information.
- A Bureau of Justice Statistics bulletin entitled Crime and the Elderly.

Data about older Americans' involvement with the criminal justice system comes from a number of sources; two limitations are associated with all of the data sources cited in this package.

First, the definition of "elderly" varies from one data source to another. For victimization and crime prevention data obtained from the National Crime Survey, age is divided into two categories--persons aged 50 to 64 and persons 65 and older. Murder victimization rate data obtained from the FBI and presented in Table 11 is provided for each age grouping over 50 years of age. For arrest data, the categories are 50 to 54, 55 to 59, 60 to 64, and 65 and older. Murder victimization rate data obtained from the FBI and presented in Table 11 are provided for each age grouping over 50 years of age. For prison admissions, the categories are 45 to 54, 55 to 64, and 65 and older. Although these age groups may loosely be defined as "elderly," the data sources do not provide age categories for persons over 65 (e.g., 65 to 70, 71 to 75, and so forth). This is primarily because annual statistics within these

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age categories are relatively low. Narrowing of these age groupings would reduce the numbers even further.¹

The second limitation involves the difficulty in measuring certain types of crime. The elderly may be more vulnerable than other age groups to certain types of crime such as consumer fraud, con games, and swindles; however, these crimes are not included in the National Crime Survey because research has shown that it is difficult to measure such crimes using victimization surveys.

While the data sources for crime and older Americans have limitations, these statistics do provide valuable insight. As the number of older persons in America continues to grow, policymakers will need to use these data to make informed decisions that respond to the particular needs of the elderly.

¹ While the data sources do not publish statistics on specific age groupings over 65 (other than murder victimization rates published by the FBI), the statistics are collected and are available on data tape through the National Criminal Justice Data Archives at the University of Michigan. For further information, call the Archives at 313-763-5010.

Older Americans as Victims

Among all age groups, persons aged 50 and older are victims of crime less frequently than any other age group. The most highly victimized persons are 16- to 19-year-olds. Although older Americans are less likely to be victimized than younger Americans, fear of crime is one of their largest concerns and may be one of the major reasons they are less frequently victims of crime.

Data tables in this section include:

Table 1: Victimization rates for persons aged 50 and older by race, sex, and type of crime, 1984.

Table 2: Victimization rates for persons aged 12 and older by crime type and age of victim, 1984.

Table 3: Percent of victimizations involving strangers for persons aged 50 and older by sex and type of crime, 1984.

Table 4: Percent of victimizations in which persons aged 50 and older sustained physical injury by type of crime, 1984.

Table 5: Percent of victimizations in which victims aged 50 and older received hospital care by type of crime, 1984.

Table 6: Percent of victimizations in which injured victims aged 50 and older received hospital care by type of crime, 1984.

Table 7: Percent of distribution of incidents by place of occurrence and type of crime for persons aged 50 to 64, 1984.

Table 8: Percent of distribution of incidents by place of occurrence and type of crime for persons aged 65 and older, 1984.

Table 9: Percent of victimizations reported to the police by persons aged 50 and older by type of crime, 1984.

Table 10: Percent of victimizations reported to the police by persons aged 50 and older by the victim-offender relationship, 1984.

Table 11: Murder victimization rates by sex and race for persons aged 50 and over, 1985.

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Most of these data tables were obtained from the Bureau of Justice Statistics' 1984 National Crime Survey (NCS). The NCS, which is conducted annually, measures the levels and rates of crimes against persons (rape, robbery, assault, and personal crimes of theft) and households (burglary, household larceny, and motor vehicle theft). Interviews are conducted at 6-month intervals with a nationally representative sample of households. In 1984, about 96% of all eligible housing units--about 114,000 persons aged 12 and older in 54,000 households--participated in the survey.

The victimization tables have been footnoted to indicate when estimates are based on 10 or fewer unweighted sample cases. Because standard error formulas may not produce accurate confidence intervals around such estimates, caution should be used when comparing estimates based on 10 or fewer sample cases to similar small estimates.²

It is also important to note that although the NCS provides data on the number of older persons victimized each year, it does not measure fear levels. As the tables show, victimization rates among the elderly are relatively low compared to other age groups. However, the gerontology literature suggests that these low victimization rates may result from older persons' perceptions that crime is a great threat. Older persons therefore may restrict their lifestyles to prevent being victimized; for example, they may avoid going out alone or going out at night.

The victimization data also do not measure the impact of crime on older persons. Physical injury or financial loss that may be insignificant for a younger person may cause great suffering for an older person. Thus, while the NCS data can provide an indication of the prevalence of victimization among the elderly, it cannot measure the effects that crime or fear of crime have on the elderly.

The data on murder rates were derived from the 1985 Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) collected by the FBI. As part of the UCR program, the FBI collects supplemental data on all murders reported to police each year, including demographic characteristics of the victim and offender, the relationships between victims and offenders, and the circumstances surrounding the murders.

² For a complete description of the NCS sampling and estimation procedures, see Appendix III of Criminal Victimization in the U.S., 1984 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics), May 1986.

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Statistical Highlights

- For crimes of violence, persons aged 65 and older were the least victimized group in 1984--4.9 victims per 1,000 inhabitants. Persons 50 to 64 were the second least victimized group with a rate of 10.0 violent victimizations per 1,000 persons. The same pattern existed for personal crimes of theft. Again, persons 65 and older were the least victimized group with a rate of 20.0 per 1,000 inhabitants, followed by the 50 to 64 age group with a rate of 40.4. The most highly victimized persons were young persons aged 12 to 24, for both violent crimes and personal crimes of theft (Table 2).
- Almost 70% of persons aged 50 to 64 who were victims of violent crime were victimized by a stranger; 67% of persons 65 and older who were victimized by a violent crime were victimized by a stranger. Elderly men were more likely to be victimized by a stranger than elderly women. Robbery was more likely to involve a stranger than rape or assault (Table 3).
- Elderly persons were more likely to sustain physical injury from a robbery than an assault. Persons 50 to 64 years old were slightly more likely to be injured during the course of an assault or a robbery than persons 65 and older (Table 4).
- About 9% of all violent crime victims aged 50 to 64 received hospital care compared to about 3% of all violent crime victims aged 65 and older. Not all violent crime victims are injured. As a proportion of injured crime victims, about 35% of injured victims aged 50 to 64 and 10% of injured victims aged 65 and older received hospital care (Tables 5 and 6).
- Crimes can occur anywhere, but older Americans reported being victimized most frequently on the street, in parking lots, and on public transportation. The proportion of victims 65 and older who were victimized in their own home or inside another building on the property (28%), near their own home (28%), or on a street, in a parking lot, or on public transportation (30%) were nearly equal (Tables 7 and 8).
- Elderly persons reported crimes of robbery and assault more than any other type of crime. Persons aged 50 to 64 were slightly more likely to report robberies and assaults than persons 65 and older. Of the two age groups, 50- to 64-year-olds were more likely to report crimes of theft, but just as likely to report a violent crime as the 65 and older group (Table 9).

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- Older Americans were less likely to report crimes committed by strangers than by someone they knew. Persons aged 50 to 64 who were victimized by someone they knew reported the crime to the police 68% of the time, whereas they reported victimization by a stranger 57% of the time. The 65 and older age group followed much the same pattern. The percentage of persons over age 50 reporting crimes to the police was higher than the percentage of all age groups combined (Table 10).
- Elderly murder victimization rates varied in 1985 with a high of 8.03 per 100,000 individuals who were 50 years of age to a low of 3.11 per 100,000 individuals who were 82 years of age. Elderly males were more likely to be a victim of murder than elderly females. Nonwhites were more likely to be a victim of murder than whites (Table 11).

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Table 1

Victimization rates for persons aged 50 and older by race, sex, and type of crime, 1984 (rate per 1,000 population in each age group)

Sex, race, age	Type of crime	
	Violent crimes	Theft crimes
Male (N=91,930,860)		
50-64 (N=15,538,820)	11.5	40.3
65 and older (N=10,843,230)	4.8	24.0
Female (N=100,031,350)		
50-64 (N=17,372,970)	8.7	40.6
65 and older (N=15,688,310)	4.9	17.3
White Male (N=79,748,970)		
50-64 (N=13,870,690)	10.2	41.7
65 and older (N=9,835,240)	4.4	23.4
White Female (N=85,797,240)		
50-64 (N=15,288,880)	8.1	41.5
65 and older (N=14,208,510)	5.0	16.5
Black Male (N=9,891,900)		
50-64 (N=1,377,860)	25.1	26.3
65 and older (N=861,080)	10.3 ^a	27.7
Black Female (N=11,846,850)		
50-64 (N=1,749,240)	14.1	33.9
65 and older (N=1,326,360)	3.3 ^a	26.0

^a Estimate, based on zero or 10 or fewer sample cases, is statistically unreliable.

Source: National Crime Survey as cited in Criminal Victimization in the U.S., 1984, p. 19.

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Table 2

Victimization rates for persons aged 12 and older by crime type and age of victim, 1984
(rate per 1,000 population in each age group)

Type of crime	Age group						
	12-15	16-19	20-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Crimes of violence	53.2	67.6	64.2	37.4	21.1	10.0	4.9
Completed violent crimes	21.6	26.9	22.6	13.5	6.8	3.8	2.1
Attempted violent crimes	31.6	40.6	41.6	23.8	14.3	6.3	2.8
Rape	1.9	1.9	2.7	0.9	0.6	0.2 ^a	0.1 ^a
Robbery	8.9	10.5	10.8	7.2	4.0	2.9	2.2
Assault	42.5	55.2	50.8	29.3	16.5	7.0	2.6
Aggravated assault	9.6	22.2	19.7	11.1	5.3	3.2	0.7
Simple assault	32.8	33.0	31.1	18.2	11.2	3.7	1.9
Crimes of theft	120.3	120.4	114.4	83.9	63.0	40.4	20.0
Completed crimes of theft	118.7	115.7	106.1	77.4	60.0	37.3	17.6
Attempted crimes of theft	1.6	4.8	8.2	6.5	2.9	3.2	2.5
Personal larceny with contact	3.5	3.3	3.6	2.3	2.6	2.7	2.4
Purse snatching	0.3 ^a	0.4 ^a	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8
Pocket picking	3.2	2.8	2.8	1.7	1.9	2.1	1.6
Personal larceny without contact	116.8	117.2	110.7	81.6	60.4	37.7	17.5
Completed larceny without contact	115.2	112.4	102.9	75.3	57.6	34.7	15.4
Less than \$50	90.5	67.0	43.0	31.6	23.8	14.7	7.5
\$50 or more	21.1	41.4	55.9	40.6	31.3	17.8	6.6
Amount not available	3.6	4.0	3.9	3.1	2.5	2.3	1.3
Attempted larceny without contact	1.6	4.8	7.8	6.3	2.8	3.0	2.2

^a Estimate, based on zero or 10 or fewer sample cases, is statistically unreliable.

Source: National Crime Survey as cited in Criminal Victimization in the U.S., 1984, p. 15.

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Table 3

Percent of victimizations involving strangers for persons aged 50 and older by sex and type of crime, 1984

Sex & age	Type of crime			
	Total crimes of violence	Rape	Robbery	Assault
Both sexes				
50-64	69.1	59.5 ^a	88.1	61.5
65 and older	67.0	100.0 ^a	82.6	53.6
Male				
50-64	73.7	100.0 ^a	87.2	66.0
65 and older	75.5	0.0 ^a	93.4	59.9
Female				
50-64	63.8	43.3 ^a	89.7	56.9
65 and older	61.2	100.0 ^a	74.6	33.6 ^a

^a Estimate, based on zero or 10 or fewer sample cases, is statistically unreliable.

Source: National Crime Survey as cited in Criminal Victimization in the U.S., 1984, p. 46.

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Table 4

Percent of victimizations in which persons aged 50 and older sustained physical injury by type of crime, 1984

Age	Type of crime		
	Robbery and assault	Robbery	Assault
50-64	27.1	44.9	19.7
65 and over	25.6	35.7	17.3a

Table 5

Percent of victimizations in which victims aged 50 and older received hospital care by type of crime, 1984

Age	Type of crime		
	Crimes of violence	Robbery	Assault
50-64	9.4	13.2a	8.1
65 and older	2.7a	6.0a	0.0a

Table 6

Percent of victimizations in which injured victims aged 50 and older received hospital care by type of crime, 1984

Age	Type of crime		
	Crimes of violence	Robbery	Assault
50-64	35.3	29.4a	4.0
65 and older	10.1a	16.8a	0.0a

^a Estimate, based on zero or 10 or fewer sample cases, is statistically unreliable.

Source: National Crime Survey cited in Criminal Victimization in the U.S., 1984, p. 71 and 74.

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Table 7

Percent of distribution of incidents by place of occurrence and type of crime for persons aged 50 to 64, 1984

Type of crime	Total	Place of victimization				
		Inside own home, inside other building on property	Near own home	Inside bar, other commercial building	On a street, in a parking lot, on public transportation	Other location ^a
Crimes of violence (276,730)	100	18.4	18.6	7.4	41.2	14.4
Completed violent crimes (109,210)	100	19.3	15.9 ^b	5.6 ^b	40.9	18.3
Attempted violent crimes (167,530)	100	17.8	20.3	8.5	41.4	11.9
Rape (5,370)	100 ^b	47.2 ^b	36.2 ^b	16.6 ^b	0.0 ^b	0.0 ^b
Robbery (87,280)	100	11.1 ^b	19.0 ^b	7.3 ^b	54.0	8.5 ^b
Assault (184,080)	100	21.0	17.9	7.1 ^b	36.3	17.6
Aggravated (76,880)	100	28.9	17.8 ^b	2.3 ^b	35.4	15.7 ^b
Simple (107,200)	100	15.4 ^b	18.0	10.6 ^b	37.0	19.1
Crimes of theft (1,315,770)	100	0.2 ^b	0.7 ^b	18.1	47.6	33.3
Personal larceny with contact (81,610)	100	4.0 ^b	11.8 ^b	25.0	49.4	9.8 ^b
Personal larceny without contact (1,234,160)	100	c	c	17.7	47.5	34.8

NOTE: Numbers in parentheses are numbers of incidents. Percents may not total 100% due to rounding.

^a Includes incidents that occurred in school, on school property, in a park, field, or playground, or in or near a friend's, relative's, or neighbor's home.

^b Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

^c By definition, personal larceny without contact cannot occur in or near home.

Source: National Crime Survey, 1984 (unpublished table).

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Table 8

Percent of distribution of incidents by place of occurrence and type of crime for persons aged 65 and older, 1984

Type of crime	Total	Place of victimization				
		In own home, inside other building on property	Near own home	Inside bar, other commercial building	On a street, in a parking lot, on public transportation	Other location ^a
Crimes of violence (118,200)	100	28.3	27.9	1.6 ^b	29.8	12.5 ^b
Completed violent crimes (51,890)	100	37.2 ^b	15.9 ^b	0.0 ^b	39.9	7.0 ^b
Attempted violent crimes (66,310)	100	21.3 ^b	37.3	2.8 ^b	21.8 ^b	16.9 ^b
Rape (1,400)	100 ^b	100.0 ^b	0.0 ^b	0.0 ^b	0.0 ^b	0.0 ^b
Robbery (54,400)	100	28.6 ^b	15.0 ^b	0.8 ^b	42.7	12.9 ^b
Assault (62,360)	100	26.4 ^b	39.8	2.2 ^b	19.1 ^b	12.4 ^b
Aggravated (14,539)	100 ^b	12.4 ^b	66.4 ^b	0.0 ^b	3.1 ^b	18.2 ^b
Simple (47,820)	100	30.6 ^b	31.7 ^b	2.9 ^b	24.0 ^b	10.7 ^b
Crimes of theft (512,130)	100	0.3 ^b	0.3 ^b	19.6	50.4	29.4
Personal larceny with contact (52,570)	100	2.8 ^b	3.1 ^b	32.8	58.8	2.5 ^b
Personal larceny without contact (459,560)	100	c	c	18.1	49.5	32.4

NOTE: Numbers in parentheses are numbers of incidents. Percents may not total 100 due to rounding.

^a Includes incidents that occurred in school, on school property, in a park, field, or playground, or in or near a friend's, relative's, or neighbor's home.

^b Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

^c By definition, personal larceny without contact cannot occur in or near home.

Source: National Crime Survey, 1984 (unpublished table).

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Table 9

Percent of victimizations reported to the police by persons aged 50 and older by type of crime, 1984

Crime type	Age group	
	50-64	65+
All personal crimes	38.2	32.1
Violent crimes	60.5	60.6
Rape	71.1 ^a	0.0 ^a
Robbery	74.6	72.1
Assault	54.3	52.2
Crimes of theft	32.7	25.2
Personal larceny with contact	37.0	34.5
Personal larceny without contact	32.4	23.9

^a Estimate, based on zero or on about 10 or fewer sample cases, is statistically unreliable.

Source: National Crime Survey as cited in Criminal Victimization in the U.S., 1984, p. 90.

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Table 10

Percent of victimizations reported to the police by persons aged 50 and older by victim-offender relationship, 1984

Age	All victimizations	Involvement of strangers and nonstrangers	
		Involving strangers	Involving nonstrangers
All ages	46.6	48.9	43.7
50-64	60.5	57.0	68.3
65 and older	60.6	56.9	68.1

Source: National Crime Survey as cited in Criminal Victimization in the U.S., 1984, p. 90.

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Table 11

Murder victimization rates by sex and race for persons 50 years of age and older, 1985^a

Age	Total	Sex		Race	
		Male	Female	White	Nonwhite
50	8.03	11.02	5.24	5.74	22.75
51	7.99	12.89	3.37	5.57	23.91
52	6.41	10.34	2.74	4.31	19.92
53	6.38	10.89	2.16	4.52	19.05
54	5.81	9.19	2.70	4.66	13.73
55	6.51	11.01	2.35	4.64	19.67
56	6.99	10.91	3.40	5.03	21.44
57	5.33	8.62	2.34	4.07	14.83
58	5.05	7.99	2.44	3.59	16.10
59	6.03	10.06	2.50	4.47	17.97
60	6.24	8.95	3.87	4.73	17.50
61	5.20	8.01	2.76	4.02	14.84
62	4.79	7.26	2.65	3.38	15.99
63	3.87	5.46	2.48	2.78	13.47
64	5.30	9.08	2.02	4.06	16.38
65	5.18	7.39	3.30	3.39	19.88
66	4.43	6.45	2.75	3.28	14.36
67	3.94	5.89	2.33	3.04	11.71
68	3.93	6.05	2.22	2.93	13.04
69	3.64	5.09	2.50	2.87	9.72
70	4.22	5.38	3.33	3.29	12.21
71	3.27	4.86	2.08	2.47	10.76
72	3.98	4.76	3.40	3.29	10.29
73	3.74	6.16	2.01	2.41	16.21
74	3.81	5.72	2.47	3.15	9.62
75	3.75	5.60	2.49	3.19	8.89
76	3.46	4.26	2.93	2.80	9.60
77	3.93	4.70	3.44	2.90	13.63
78	4.71	6.36	3.70	3.99	11.58
79	4.19	5.12	3.63	3.16	14.27
80	5.37	5.94	5.04	4.44	14.33
81	5.18	7.84	3.75	4.46	13.70
82	3.11	4.99	2.12	2.82	6.54
83	4.09	5.50	3.37	2.42	23.33
84	4.72	5.62	4.27	3.80	14.82
85	3.54	4.43	3.12	3.09	8.61

^a Murder victimization rates represent the number of individuals per 100,000 inhabitants within the specific age grouping and belonging to the particular race or sex category.

Source: Uniform Crime Reports as cited in Population-at-Risk Rates and Selected Crime Indicators (forthcoming FBI publication).

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Older Americans as Offenders

The words "crime and the elderly" generally conjure up images of the elderly as victims of crime. But persons between the ages of 50 and 64 accounted for 4.6% of all arrests reported by law enforcement agencies in 1985. This section presents data on the types of offenses older Americans commit, their arrest rates, and the extent to which they are admitted to prison.

Data presented on the elderly offender include:

Table 12: Total arrests by age for 1985.

Tables 13-18: Arrest rates for aggravated assault, larceny/theft, fraud, weapons offenses, sex offenses, and gambling for persons 50 and older for selected years, 1965 to 1985.

Table 19: State prison admissions by age for 1981 to 1983.

Table 20: Offenses for persons aged 45 and older who were admitted to State prison, 1983.

Table 21: Offenses for selected age groups for persons who were admitted to State prison, 1983.

Data in this section were gathered from two sources: The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program and the National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP), maintained by the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

The FBI publishes annual arrest statistics by age, as part of the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program. Arrest data for 1985 were submitted from more than 11,000 law enforcement agencies in the U.S. and published in Crime in the United States, 1985. UCR procedures for gathering these data require that an arrest be counted on each separate occasion that a person is taken into custody, notified, or cited. The arrest statistics do not measure the number of individuals arrested; they report the number of arrests. One person may be arrested several times during the year for the same or different offenses.

In addition to the 1985 arrest statistics, age-specific arrest rate data from 1965 to 1985 are included. These data were published in Age-Specific Arrest Rates and Race-Specific Arrest Rates for Selected Offenses, 1965-1985. Age-specific arrest rates refer to

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the number of arrests made per 100,000 inhabitants within specific age groupings. Arrest rates provide a more accurate measure of arrest trends because rate calculations adjust for changes in the population that occur each year. Percent change data are also provided to illustrate fluctuations that occurred between 1965 and 1985, and 1984 and 1985.

The second source of data on elderly offenders is derived from the National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP) maintained by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. The NCRP collects information on the characteristics of persons admitted to and released from State prisons. Data on the ages of those admitted to prison are from calendar years 1981 to 1983. In 1981, 33 States and the District of Columbia reported information; in 1982, 29 States and the District of Columbia reported; and in 1983, 30 States reported data.

Statistical Highlights

- Individuals between the ages of 50 and 54 accounted for 2% of all arrests reported by law enforcement agencies in 1985. Individuals between the ages of 55 and 59 accounted for 1.5% of these arrests; those between 60 and 64 accounted for 1%; those 65 and older represented about 1% of the arrests reported in 1985 (Table 12).
- Although aggravated assault arrest rates have increased since 1965, arrest rates for all four elderly age groups decreased between 1984 and 1985 (Table 13).
- Arrest rates for larceny/theft increased in all four elderly age groups between 1965 and 1985. The greatest increase was for persons 65 and older (172%) and the lowest increase was for persons aged 50 to 54 (116%). An increase was still noted for 1984 to 1985 even though an overall decrease occurred the year before (Table 14).
- Arrest rates for fraud between the years 1965 and 1985 increased among all four elderly age groups. The greatest increase was for those aged 65 and older--163%. Each elderly age group had an increase between 1984 and 1985, with the 65 and older age group again having the greatest increase--9% (Table 15).
- Arrest rates for weapons offenses for persons aged 50 to 64 decreased between 1984 and 1985. However, for persons 65 and older the arrest rate increased 3% between 1984 and 1985. Since

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1965, arrest rates in all age groups increased substantially (Table 16).

- Persons in the 50 to 64 age groups showed an increase in arrest rates between 1965 and 1985 for sex offenses, yet the 65 and older age group had about a 12% decrease. Between 1984 and 1985, persons in the 55 to 59 age group showed a 1.3% increase in arrest rates, whereas the rest of the age groups had a decrease (Table 17).
- Overall, persons 50 and older showed a decrease in gambling arrest rates, as much as 86% for persons over 65 between the years 1965 and 1985. The statistics show a steady decrease since 1965, with the most dramatic change between 1970 and 1975 (Table 18).
- State prison admissions for individuals 45 years old and older remained relatively stable between 1981 and 1982, but increased in 1983 for persons 45 and older (Table 19).
- Of the 43,379 individuals admitted to State prisons for violent crimes in 1983, 1,749 (4%) were between the ages of 45 and 54; 609 (1.4%) were between 55 and 64; and 146 (0.3%) were 65 and older (Table 20).
- In 1983, 52.9% of all individuals 65 and older who entered State prisons were admitted for violent crimes. Only about 36% of those between the ages of 55 and 64, and about 33% of those between 45 and 54 were admitted for violent offenses (Table 21).

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Table 12

Total arrests by age, 1985

Offense charged	Age group										
	All ages	Under 10	10-12	13-14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
TOTAL	10,289,609	47,983	137,146	400,616	335,837	401,239	439,718	480,368	493,216	494,530	492,825
Percent ^a	100.0	.5	1.3	3.9	3.3	3.9	4.3	4.7	4.8	4.8	4.8
Murder	15,777	3	18	144	216	391	539	674	755	725	833
Forcible rape	31,934	85	351	1,240	969	994	1,191	1,289	1,293	1,412	1,469
Robbery	120,501	255	1,480	6,072	6,092	7,634	8,621	8,405	8,142	7,235	6,959
Aggravated assault	263,120	824	2,721	7,745	6,731	8,421	9,815	9,876	10,802	11,454	11,905
Burglary	381,875	4,304	13,034	37,064	29,241	30,432	31,179	29,017	24,842	20,495	18,040
Larceny/theft	1,179,066	15,604	47,862	104,431	71,438	74,156	72,726	66,126	57,318	49,720	45,033
Motor vehicle theft	115,621	247	1,376	9,403	10,407	11,633	10,880	8,744	7,562	6,201	5,385
Arson	16,777	1,236	1,223	1,948	1,012	773	714	667	517	549	505
Other assaults	550,104	2,545	7,974	20,820	15,538	17,275	19,259	19,430	21,419	23,516	25,576
Forgery/counterfeiting	75,281	26	221	1,000	1,414	2,218	2,942	3,728	4,420	4,306	4,121
Fraud	286,941	199	1,418	5,635	5,890	1,706	2,932	5,676	8,280	10,875	12,536
Embezzlement	9,799	5	31	80	75	182	323	489	472	473	509
Stolen property	110,415	358	1,497	6,031	5,649	6,545	7,611	7,998	7,510	6,329	5,839
Vandalism	224,046	7,935	15,871	28,270	16,820	16,060	15,397	12,394	10,568	9,577	8,685
Weapons/offenses	157,304	258	1,407	5,620	5,177	6,160	7,241	8,198	8,103	7,673	7,733
Prostitution and vice	101,167	8	32	204	353	656	1,194	3,375	5,311	5,939	7,437
Sex offenses (except rape and prostitution)	86,861	707	1,728	4,512	2,792	2,526	2,571	2,625	2,816	2,857	3,045
Drug offenses	702,882	183	1,373	11,582	15,159	22,771	29,323	37,724	41,244	43,009	43,732
Gambling	28,034	11	34	135	123	167	284	427	563	670	737
Offenses against family and children	48,699	549	176	450	372	428	425	1,228	1,406	1,635	1,732
Driving under the influence	1,503,319	152	128	331	905	5,132	13,786	33,338	48,432	59,557	73,610
Liquor laws	467,149	148	636	9,037	17,239	35,471	54,781	67,609	53,433	43,368	20,537
Drunkenness	834,652	253	248	2,530	3,986	6,388	10,483	19,530	25,229	28,437	35,262
Disorderly conduct	583,532	1,911	5,915	17,513	14,926	19,070	23,868	29,497	31,312	32,980	33,525
Vagrancy	29,825	79	130	502	456	644	918	1,647	1,582	1,431	1,309
All other offenses (except traffic)	2,142,121	7,110	16,562	53,883	47,354	74,421	82,147	100,255	109,430	113,654	116,310
Suspicion	11,229	198	244	633	527	524	474	492	455	453	461
Curfew and loitering law violations	71,608	584	3,234	16,585	16,837	18,926	15,442
Runaways	139,970	2,206	10,222	47,216	38,139	29,535	12,652

^a Because of rounding, the percentages may not total 100%.

Source: Uniform Crime Reports as cited in Crime in the United States, 1985, Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice (Washington: USGPO, pp. 174-175).

Table 12 (cont.)
Total arrests by age, 1985

Offense charged	Age group											
	22	23	24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65 +
TOTAL	471,486	456,093	446,095	1,083,471	1,226,564	794,079	487,908	310,976	219,376	157,287	101,087	91,709
Percent	4.6	4.4	4.3	17.5	11.9	7.7	4.7	3.0	2.1	1.5	1.0	.9
Murder	735	753	723	3,106	2,169	1,446	896	526	402	319	178	226
Forcible rape	1,406	1,396	1,430	6,256	4,325	2,851	1,671	936	558	365	222	225
Robbery	6,426	5,841	5,603	20,466	11,166	5,515	2,304	1,014	556	316	196	203
Aggravated assault	11,872	11,732	12,041	50,670	35,622	23,347	14,425	8,781	5,616	3,887	2,391	2,442
Burglary	15,916	13,881	12,852	47,229	27,148	13,840	6,260	3,095	1,830	1,096	572	508
Larceny/theft	40,993	38,395	36,190	151,986	110,059	69,505	40,177	25,725	19,587	15,411	11,359	15,265
Motor vehicle theft	4,746	4,267	3,840	14,015	7,955	4,245	2,140	1,128	664	378	206	199
Arson	456	491	483	1,924	1,459	1,033	620	443	310	217	107	90
Other assaults	26,035	26,079	26,087	110,043	74,308	47,215	27,359	15,880	9,986	6,316	3,837	3,607
Forgery/counterfeiting	3,932	3,943	3,769	15,745	10,992	6,163	2,928	1,551	887	505	272	198
Fraud	13,118	13,487	13,780	62,489	49,395	34,803	20,349	10,701	6,184	3,776	1,968	1,744
Embezzlement	569	485	503	1,917	1,302	1,022	579	298	237	133	85	30
Stolen property	5,164	4,609	4,268	16,451	10,608	6,195	3,355	1,863	1,151	665	425	294
Vandalism	7,980	7,099	6,770	25,353	15,307	8,946	4,690	2,541	1,540	1,004	640	599
Weapons/offenses	7,417	7,065	6,753	28,135	18,387	12,231	7,495	4,515	3,026	2,076	1,318	1,406
Prostitution and vice	8,221	7,811	7,600	27,586	13,152	5,826	2,536	1,449	931	655	531	360
Sex offenses (except rape and prostitution)	2,998	3,105	3,145	13,867	11,162	8,884	5,810	3,759	2,664	2,100	1,563	1,625
Drug offenses	45,504	41,203	40,061	155,280	90,976	46,052	20,117	9,287	5,192	3,012	1,808	1,290
Gambling	769	845	882	4,483	3,828	3,208	2,916	2,306	1,969	1,513	1,073	1,091
Offenses against family and children	1,831	2,087	2,274	10,719	9,343	6,641	3,658	1,889	909	499	263	185
Driving under the influence	75,202	76,305	76,934	322,803	229,659	163,182	110,499	75,857	54,931	38,787	24,378	19,411
Liquor laws	16,810	14,257	13,030	41,666	26,634	17,853	11,634	8,264	5,770	4,146	2,595	2,231
Drunkenness	33,661	33,520	34,523	153,645	120,388	90,625	69,322	51,097	42,775	33,796	21,557	17,397
Disorderly conduct	31,645	30,309	28,881	105,131	65,764	39,824	24,794	15,435	11,033	8,500	6,391	5,308
Vagrancy	1,158	1,144	1,092	4,775	4,116	3,181	1,972	1,395	959	651	387	297
All other offenses (except traffic)	109,470	105,481	102,124	405,660	269,941	169,586	98,981	60,970	39,571	27,079	16,709	15,423
Suspicion	452	503	457	2,071	1,399	860	421	271	138	85	56	55
Curfew and loitering law violations
Runaways

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Table 13

Arrest rates for aggravated assault for persons 50 and older for selected years, 1965 to 1985 (rate per 100,000 in specified age groups)

Year	Age group			
	50-54	55-59	60-64	65+
1965	46.9	29.3	19.8	8.5
1970	50.7	34.5	22.8	9.8
1975	63.4	40.4	28.6	11.8
1980	64.9	41.3	26.6	10.9
1981	64.4	41.8	27.4	10.9
1982	68.5	42.9	29.2	11.6
1983	63.8	40.8	27.4	10.2
1984	66.0	40.7	28.9	10.1
1985	59.6	39.8	25.2	9.9
Percent change: Arrest rates per 100,000				
1985/1984	-9.7	-2.2	-12.8	-2.0
1985/1965	27.0	35.8	27.2	16.47

Source: Uniform Crime Reports as cited in Age-Specific Arrest Rates and Race-Specific Arrest Rates for Selected Offenses, 1965-1985, pp. 27-35.

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Table 14

Arrest rates for larceny/theft for persons 50 and older for selected years, 1965 to 1985 (rate per 100,000 in specified age groups)

Year	Age group			
	50-54	55-59	60-64	65+
1965	98.9	67.3	53.6	23.1
1970	114.0	86.7	65.3	33.3
1975	146.0	108.4	89.5	47.5
1980	184.1	141.9	108.8	57.9
1981	200.3	156.7	121.0	63.2
1982	222.2	169.6	127.5	66.2
1983	219.0	163.8	122.1	63.4
1984	205.3	156.5	117.9	60.1
1985	213.2	160.5	121.4	62.8

Percent change: Arrest rates per 100,000

1985/1984	3.8	2.6	3.0	4.5
1985/1965	115.6	138.5	126.5	171.9

Source: Uniform Crime Reports as cited in Age-Specific Arrest Rates and Race-Specific Arrest Rates for Selected Offenses, 1965-1985, pp. 43-49.

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Table 15

Arrest rates for fraud for persons aged 50 and older for selected years, 1965 to 1985 (rate per 100,000 in specified age groups)

Year	Age group			
	50-54	55-59	60-64	65+
1965	29.2	15.3	10.0	2.7
1970	31.1	17.3	8.4	3.7
1975	43.8	22.7	11.7	3.5
1980	61.5	35.9	17.5	7.0
1981	65.4	37.3	22.1	6.3
1982	69.3	38.9	22.0	6.6
1983	68.1	36.9	19.8	7.0
1984	64.5	36.6	19.8	6.5
1985	65.8	38.7	20.8	7.1
Percent change: Arrest rates per 100,000				
1985/1984	2.0	5.7	5.1	9.2
1985/1965	125.3	152.9	108.0	163.0

Source: Uniform Crime Reports as cited in Age-Specific Arrest Rates and Race-Specific Arrest Rates for Selected Offenses, 1965-1985, pp. 75-81.

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Table 16

Arrest rates for weapons offenses for persons aged 50 and older for selected years, 1965 to 1985 (rate per 100,000 in specified age groups)

Year	Age group			
	50-54	55-59	60-64	65+
1965	23.6	15.4	10.7	4.5
1970	38.5	28.9	19.1	8.1
1975	38.3	24.7	18.9	7.1
1980	36.4	24.7	16.4	6.8
1981	39.8	26.2	17.5	6.8
1982	29.3	18.2	18.3	2.6
1983	40.1	26.5	16.8	6.4
1984	36.1	23.7	15.6	5.9
1985	34.2	22.4	14.7	6.1
Percent change: Arrest rates per 100,000				
1985/1984	-5.3	-5.5	-5.8	3.4
1985/1965	44.9	45.5	37.4	35.6

Source: Uniform Crime Reports as cited in Age-Specific Arrest Rates and Race-Specific Arrest Rates for Selected Offenses, 1965-1985, pp. 99-105.

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Table 17

Arrest rates for sex offenses for persons 50 and older for selected years, 1965 to 1985 (rate per 100,000 in specified age groups)

Year	Age group			
	50-54	55-59	60-64	65+
1965	26.3	18.5	16.3	7.6
1970	18.8	13.9	9.6	5.4
1975	17.8	12.7	9.0	4.2
1980	19.5	15.7	10.2	4.1
1981	21.6	15.9	11.7	4.5
1982	23.3	17.0	13.0	5.1
1983	25.8	18.7	13.7	5.6
1984	30.0	21.6	17.2	6.8
1985	29.1	21.9	16.8	6.7
Percent change: Arrest rates per 100,000				
1985/1984	-3.0	1.4	-2.3	-1.5
1985/1965	10.6	18.4	3.1	-11.8

Source: Uniform Crime Reports as cited in Age-Specific Arrest Rates and Race-Specific Arrest Rates for Selected Offenses, 1965-1985, pp. 107-113.

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Table 18

Arrest rates for gambling for persons 50 and older for selected years, 1965 to 1985 (rate per 100,000 in specified age groups)

Year	Age group			
	50-54	55-59	60-64	65+
1965	147.1	109.6	91.1	38.4
1970	96.1	83.9	67.5	33.2
1975	40.8	30.9	26.8	12.1
1980	37.4	29.0	22.7	10.8
1981	29.6	24.0	18.3	8.3
1982	30.0	22.6	17.1	8.1
1983	30.1	23.6	16.6	7.1
1984	27.4	21.2	15.5	6.4
1985	23.8	17.8	13.0	5.2
Percent change: Arrest rates per 100,000				
1985/1984	-13.1	-16.0	-16.1	-18.8
1985/1965	-83.8	-83.8	-85.7	-86.5

Source: Uniform Crime Reports as cited in Age-Specific Arrest Rates and Race-Specific Arrest Rates for Selected Offenses, 1965-1985, pp. 123-129.

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Table 19

State prison admissions by age, 1981-1983

Age	Number and percent of admissions					
	1981		1982		1983	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total	108,901 ^a	100.0%	113,378 ^b	100.0%	138,919 ^c	100.0%
Under 18	1,445	1.3	2,834	2.5	2,223	1.6
18-24	46,565	42.8	50,113	44.2	55,984	40.3
25-34	42,439	39.0	41,950	37.0	55,151	39.7
35-44	12,785	11.7	12,812	11.3	17,643	12.7
45-54	4,154	3.8	4,195	3.7	5,695	4.1
55-64	1,250	1.1	1,247	1.1	1,806	1.3
65 +	263	0.2	227	0.2	278	0.2
unknown age	-	-	-	-	139	0.1

^a Of the 121,211 admissions reported by 33 States and the District of Columbia in 1981, 108,901 provided data by age.

^b Of the 114,391 admissions reported by 29 States and the District of Columbia in 1982, 113,378 provided data by age.

^c Of the 144,804 admissions reported by 30 States in 1983, 138,919 provided data by age.

Source: National Corrections Reporting Program, 1981-1983 as cited in Prison Admissions and Releases, 1981 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics), September 1984, p. 2; Prison Admissions and Releases 1982, July 1985, p.2; 1983 data were derived from an unpublished table.

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Table 20

Offense distribution of individuals ages 45 and older admitted to State prisons, 1983

Most serious offense type	Total number of admissions (for all age groupings) ^a	Age group					
		45-54		55-64		65+	
		N	% of all offense admissions	N	% of all offense admissions	N	% of all offense admissions
All offenses	126,839	5,251	4.1%	1,677	1.3%	276	0.2
Violent offenses	43,379	1,749	4.0	609	1.4	146	0.3
Murder	4,820	343	7.1	138	2.9	34	0.7
Manslaughter	2,410	184	7.6	80	3.3	32	1.3
Rape	3,044	93	3.1	31	1.0	7	0.2
Other sexual assault	3,298	297	9.0	139	4.2	34	1.0
Robbery	18,138	311	1.7	59	0.3	4	0.02
Assault	8,879	432	4.9	134	1.5	30	0.3
Kidnapping	1,268	32	2.5	7	0.6	1	0.07
Other violent	1,522	57	3.7	21	1.4	4	0.3
Property offenses	61,644	1,814	2.9	486	0.8	51	0.01
Burglary	33,359	572	1.7	111	0.3	12	0.03
Arson	888	63	7.1	22	2.5	3	0.3
Auto theft	2,790	73	2.6	28	1.0	3	0.1
Forgery/fraud	7,230	394	5.4	122	1.7	13	0.2
Larceny	14,333	601	4.2	166	1.2	16	0.1
Stolen property	1,776	56	3.2	17	1.0	1	0.06
Other property	1,268	55	4.3	20	1.6	3	0.2
Drug offenses	10,527	619	5.9	163	1.5	18	0.2
Public order offenses	9,640	990	10.3	388	4.0	57	0.6
Other offenses	1,649	79	4.8	31	1.9	4	0.2

^a Of the 144,804 admissions reported by 30 States in 1983, 126,839 provided data by age and offense.

Source: National Corrections Reporting Program, 1983 (unpublished table).

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Table 21

Offense distribution within selected age groups for
State prison admissions, 1983

Most serious offense	Age at admission		
	45-54	55-64	65+
All offenses ^a	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Violent Offenses	33.3	36.3	52.9
Murder	6.5	8.2	12.3
Manslaughter	3.5	4.8	11.6
Rape	1.8	1.8	2.5
Robbery	5.9	3.5	1.4
Assault	8.2	8.0	10.9
Kidnapping	0.6	0.4	0.3
Other violent crimes	1.1	1.3	1.5
Property offenses	34.5	29.0	18.5
Burglary	10.9	6.6	4.3
Larceny	11.4	9.9	5.8
Auto theft	1.4	1.7	1.1
Forgery/fraud	7.5	7.3	4.7
Arson	1.2	1.3	1.1
Stolen property	1.1	1.0	0.4
Other property offenses	1.0	1.2	1.1
Drug offenses	11.8	9.7	6.5
Public order offenses	18.9	23.1	20.7
Other offenses	1.5	1.8	1.4

^a Because of rounding, the percentages may not total 100%.

Source: National Corrections Reporting Program, 1983 (unpublished table).

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Crime Prevention and Older Americans

This section of the information package contains data on home crime prevention measures and the participation of older Americans in neighborhood watch programs. Data presented include:

Table 22: Home crime prevention measures, 1985.

Table 23: Percentage of participation in a neighborhood watch program for households in neighborhoods with programs, 1985.

These statistics were obtained from a Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report entitled Crime Prevention Measures. The Victimization Risk Survey (VRS), administered in February 1984, was a supplement to the National Crime Survey. It contains information about crime prevention activities in which households engage. The survey was completed by 21,016 individuals in 11,198 households. It is important to note that the household respondent is not necessarily the head of the household; the respondent is a knowledgeable person selected to answer questions about the housing unit. (In 94% of the households surveyed in the VRS, however, the household head or spouse was the respondent.)

These data provide some indication about the action elderly take as a response to their fear of crime. However, they do not address some of the other, more subtle prevention techniques such as simply staying home or avoiding going out alone.

Statistical Highlights

- For households where the household respondent was 50 to 64 years old, 8% of households had a burglar alarm as a crime prevention measure; 9% participated in a neighborhood watch program, and 23% engraved their valuables with an identification number to facilitate identification of stolen property (Table 22).
- When the household respondent was aged 65 or older, 6% of the households had a burglar alarm, 6% participated in a neighborhood watch program, and 16% had their valuables engraved (Table 22).
- When the household respondents reported that a neighborhood watch program existed in their area, 45% of those aged 50 to 64 reported that their household participated compared to 32% of persons 65 and older (Table 23).

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Table 22

Home crime prevention measures, 1985

Age of household respondent	Percent of households that:			
	Have burglar alarm	Join neighborhood watch program	Engrave valuables	Have taken at least one of these measures
Total ^a	7%	7%	25%	33%
16-19	-	6	36	41
20-24	4	4	30	34
25-34	5	7	29	35
35-49	8	10	29	38
50-64	8	9	23	32
65+	6	6	16	23

^a Percentages do not total 100 because not all respondents used these crime prevention methods.

Source: Victimization Risk Survey as cited in Crime Prevention Measures (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics) March 1986, p. 2.

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Table 23

Percentage of participation in a neighborhood watch program for households in neighborhoods with programs, 1985

Age of household respondent	Participate	Do not participate	Not ascertained ^a
Total ^b	38%	60%	2%
16-19	33	67	-
20-24	26	73	-
25-34	35	62	3
35-49	43	56	-
50-64	45	53	-
65+	32	64	4

^a Includes responses of "don't know."

^b Because of rounding, the percentages may not total 100%.

Source: Victimization Risk Survey as cited in Crime Prevention Measures, p. 4.