

Elder Sexual Violence



Introduction

Sexual violence against people in later life involves a broad range of contact and non-contact sexual offenses perpetrated against people age 60 and beyond. Oftentimes, older victims have experienced multiple victimizations throughout their lives. Historically, older people have not been considered potential or actual targets of sexual assault and, as a result, have been under-identified and underserved as victims.

National Sexual Violence Resource Center, "Sexual Violence in Later Life," 2010

- Sexual assault perpetrated against older victims involves rape, molestation, sexual threats, harassment, and forced exposure to pornography.
Journal of Elder Abuse & Neglect, "Comparing Routes of Reporting in Elder Sexual Abuse Cases," A. Burgess, et al., 2008
- Most identified older victims are female; however male victims have been reported in almost every study.
Victimization of the Elderly and Disabled, "Researching Clinical Practice: Findings from the Study of Sexual Abuse in Care Facilities," H. Ramsey-Klawnsnik, 2008
- Studies have found that the majority of identified victims experience cognitive, functional, and physical limitations.
American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology, "Older Victims of Sexual Assault: An Under-Recognized Population," L. Eckert, et al., 2008 and *Journal of Elder Abuse & Neglect, "Sexual Predators Who Target Elders: Findings from the First National Study of Sexual Abuse in Care Facilities," H. Ramsey-Klawnsnik, et al., 2008* and *The Gerontologist, "The Sexual Abuse of Older Adults: APS Cases and Outcomes" P. Teaster, et al., 2004*
- A high percentage of victims experience significant health problems and disabilities that increase vulnerability and reduce help seeking.
American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology, "Older Victims of Sexual Assault: An Under-Recognized Population," L. Eckert, et al., 2008 and *The Gerontologist, "The Sexual Abuse of Older Adults: APS Cases and Outcomes," P. Teaster, et al., 2004*
- Older victims are also more likely to be admitted to a hospital following assault.
American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology, "Older Victims of Sexual Assault: An Under-Recognized Population," L. Eckert, et al., 2008
- Sexual violence in later life occurs in private homes, community locations, and healthcare facilities.
National Sexual Violence Resource Center, "Sexual Violence in Later Life," 2010
- Perpetrators of sexual violence against people in later life span a wide range in age and can be juveniles as well as other older adults.
Journal of Elder Abuse & Neglect, "Comparing Routes of Reporting in Elder Sexual Abuse Cases," A. Burgess, et al., 2008
- The majority of identified perpetrators in domestic settings are spouses/partners and incestuous sons and other relatives.
Journal of Elder Abuse & Neglect, "Elder sexual abuse within the family," H. Ramsey-Klawnsnik, 2003

This material was adapted, with permission, from the National Sexual Violence Resource Center's publication entitled Sexual Violence in Later Life Factsheet. This report is available by visiting www.nsvrc.org.