



Sexual Violence Basics

How Much Does Sexual Violence Cost?

Monetary Losses

Beyond the suffering of victims, families and communities, sexual violence also has financial costs. These include medical, mental health, social and emergency services; insurance; legal costs; and lost productivity, wages, and fringe benefits.

Rape

- # Overall, rape is the costliest crime for victims in the United States, with annual costs to victims estimated at **\$127 billion** (*this estimate does not include child sexual abuse*).¹
- # The average cost of being a rape victim is estimated at **\$110,000**. This compares with victim costs of \$16,000 for robbery, and \$36,000 for drunk driving.²

Sexual Abuse of Children and Young Adults

- # Sexually violent acts against children (ages 0-14) cost **\$71 billion** every year, or **61%** of the cost of all violent crime associated with this age group.²
- # Sexual violence against adolescents (ages 15-24) costs **\$45 billion** per year, or **29%** of the cost of all violent crime associated with this age group.²
- # The average cost of mental health care for a child sexual abuse victim is estimated to be **\$5,800**.¹

Additional Costs of Sexual Violence

- # The average cost per adult prison inmate in Minnesota in 1997 was about **\$85 per day** (or about **\$31,000 per year**).³
- # The Workplace Violence Research Institute found that the cost of workplace violence - including rape and harassment - to American businesses and agencies was more than **\$35 billion** in 1995.⁴
- # Annually, victims pay about **\$44 billion** of the **\$57 billion** in expenses for traditional crimes of violence -- murder, rape, robbery, assault, and abuse and neglect. Employers pay out almost **\$5 billion** (primarily in health insurance bills), and the government - and taxpayers - bear the remaining **\$8 billion** through lost tax revenues and Medicare and Medicaid payments.¹

Non-Monetary Losses

- # An estimated **40%** of rape victims suffer from severe emotional distress (requiring mental health treatment).⁵
- # **10%** of rape victims suffer from severely disabling psychological injury.⁶
- # **61%** of rape victims suffer some form of nonfatal injury (based both on cases that are reported to law enforcement and on victims' self-report).⁶
- # Nearly **31%** of women who disclosed rape also reported developing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in their lifetimes. These victims were 6.2 times more likely to develop PTSD than women who had never been victims of crime.⁶
- # **80%** of children who have been sexually abused are reported to have some symptoms of PTSD.⁷
- # Compared with non-crime victims, women who revealed being raped are **4.1 times more likely** to report having contemplated suicide, and **13 times more likely** to report having attempted suicide.⁶
- # In one study, **11%** of pregnant and/or parenting teenage women reported becoming pregnant as a direct result of rape, and **66%** reported having had at least one experience with molestation, attempted rape, or rape.⁸

What are the Costs to Victims?

Beyond the losses discussed above, people may experience a variety of different responses to sexual victimization. Some of the ways their lives could be affected include:⁹

Physical

Intrusive physical exam

(i.e. oral, pelvic, rectal)

Acute injury

STDs/HIV infection

Pregnancy

Chronic:

- headaches
- stomach aches
- sexual dysfunction
- panic attacks
- insomnia/sleep problems
- somatic complaints

Eating disorders

Suicide attempts

Chemical use/abuse

Emotional

Post-traumatic stress disorder

Dissociation (*formerly known as
Multiple Personality
Disorder*)

Depression

Anxiety

Suicidal thoughts/ideation

Feelings of:

- Helplessness
- Fear
- Guilt/Self-blame
- Humiliation
- Anger
- Hopelessness

Social

Problems with:

- self-esteem
- confidence
- relationships
- parenting
- sexuality

Aggressive/delinquent behavior

Antisocial behavior

Developmental delays

Family stress/conflict

Legal

Making police reports

Recounting victimization

In person/photo lineups

Evidentiary exams

Trial readiness

Paperwork

Testifying

Impact statement

Legal costs

Occupational/Academic

Decreased or lost:

- attendance
- wages
- productivity
- concentration
- skills/abilities
- performance
- job/position

What are the Costs to Perpetrators?

Perpetrators' lives could be affected in these ways:

Physical

Intrusive physical exam
(i.e. oral, pelvic, rectal)
STDs/HIV infection
Pregnancy
DNA testing

Emotional

Personal defenses:

- Denial
- Minimization
- Justification
- Lying
- Victim-blaming

Guilt

Suicidal thoughts

Depression

Anger

Shame

Social

Problems with:

- relationships
- parenting
- sexuality

Loss of friends/loved ones

Public exposure

Registering as a sex offender

Divorce

Counseling/treatment

Legal

Search warrants

Investigation

Arrest

Bail

Indictment

Conviction

DNA analysis

Incarceration

Supervised release

Registration

Community notification

Criminal background

Occupational/Academic

Decreased or lost:

- attendance
- wages
- productivity
- concentration
- skills/ability
- performance
- job/position

¹ Miller, Cohen and Wiersema (1996)

² Children's Safety Network Economic and Insurance Resource Center

³ Minnesota Department of Corrections (1998)

⁴ Kaufer and Mattman (1998).

⁵ Miller, Cohen and Rossman (1993)

⁶ Kilpatrick, D., Edmunds, C. and Seymour, A. (1992)

⁷ Briere and Eliot (1994)

⁸ Boyer and Fine (1992)

⁹ Silverman, Reinherz, and Giaconia (1996),
Briere and Elliott (1994)