

Elder Victimization

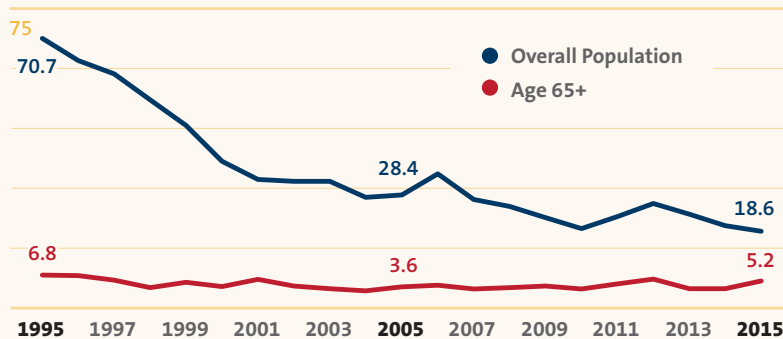
Elder victimization is an important subset of crime. While people age 65 and older experience the same crimes as the rest of the population, they are at increased risk for certain types of victimization, including financial victimization, neglect, and physical, sexual, or emotional abuse. Researchers estimate that approximately 10% of the population will be victimized after the age of 65; however, studies have also shown that elder victimization is highly underestimated. Persons with degenerative diseases or cognitive disabilities—including dementia, Alzheimer's, and Parkinson's—or who are living in institutional settings, such as hospitals or nursing homes, are often not included in survey results. Additionally, studies have demonstrated that while elderly individuals are most commonly maltreated by family members or acquaintances, violent victimizations reported to the police are most commonly perpetrated by strangers. Maltreatment is not always a criminal offense, but the intimate nature of many of these victimizations means that elderly victims are less likely to report offenses committed by someone they know.

Trends

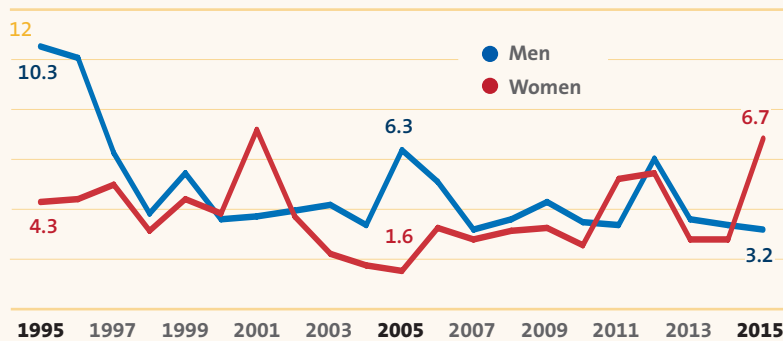
From 1995 to 2015, the rate of violent victimization against individuals age 65 and older **declined about 24%**, from 6.8 violent victimizations per 1,000 individuals to 5.2 in 2015. In comparison, the total rate of violent victimization declined by 74% between 1995 and 2015, from 70.7 per 1,000 individuals to 18.6.^A

In 2015, the rate of violent victimization against **women** age 65 and older was both **higher than the rate for men** in the same age group and **2.4x greater** than the previous year's rate. However, violent victimization rates for this age group have not been consistently greater for men or for women over the past 20 years.^A In contrast, researchers estimate that elderly women experience **maltreatment** more frequently than men.^E

Violent Victimization^A
rate per 1,000 people



Violent Elder Victimization by Sex^A
rate per 1,000 people



Did You Know?

Almost **50%** of individuals with **dementia** are **abused** or neglected by their caregivers.^B

Injuries to older adults from violent crime account for more than **\$5.3 billion annually in direct medical care**.^C

Individuals age 65+ are more than **30% more likely to lose money** to financial fraud, compared to individuals in their 40s.^D

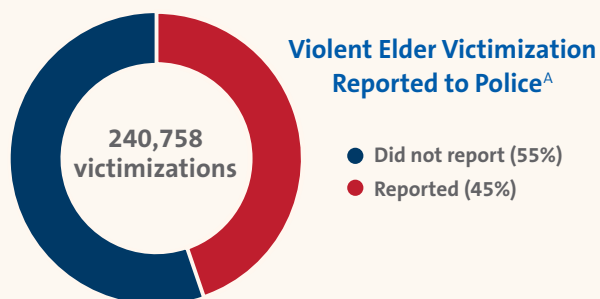
Younger elders have a higher risk of victimization, possibly because they are more likely to live with a spouse or adult children—two groups that are often abusers.^E

Individuals who were **abused earlier in life** are at greater risk of victimization as they age.^E

Individuals with **less social support** are more likely to be victims of abuse as they age.^F

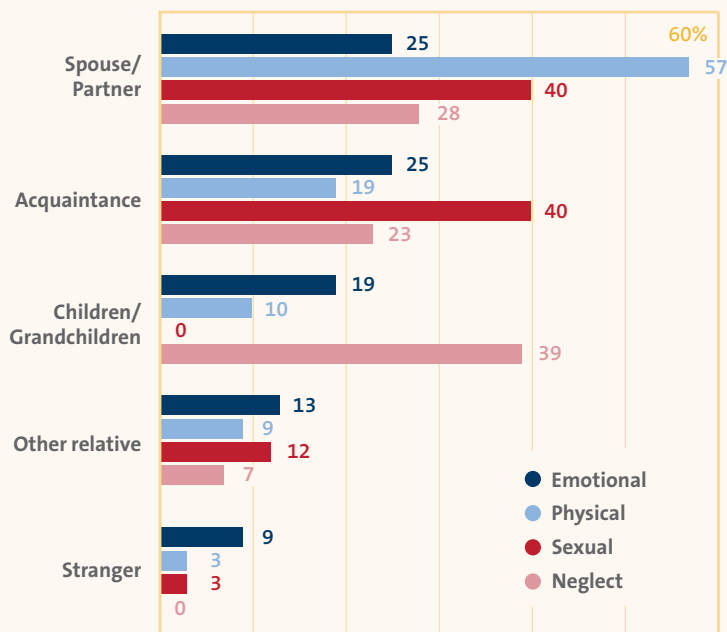
Current Data on Elder Victimization

Although the violent victimization rate of individuals age 65 and older is less than the national rate, crimes against this age group are the **least reported**. In 2015, **45%** of surveyed victims of violent crime over age 65 also **reported that crime to the police**.^A However, the National Center for Elder Abuse estimates that **less than 5%** of individuals over the age of 65 report their victimization to the police.^G

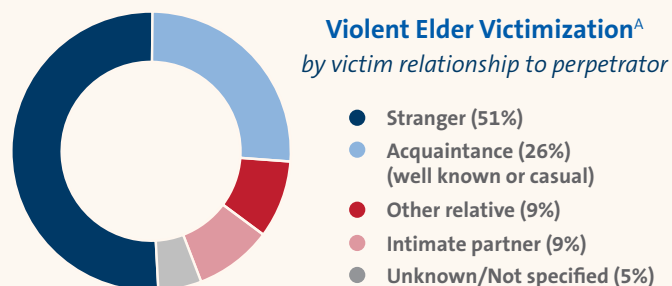


A 2009 study found that **the vast majority of elder maltreatment is committed by someone familiar to the victim**. Emotional and sexual maltreatment are most frequently committed by either a partner, spouse, or acquaintance; neglect by a child or grandchild; and physical maltreatment by a partner or spouse.^E

Perpetrator of Most Recent Maltreatment^E
by type of maltreatment

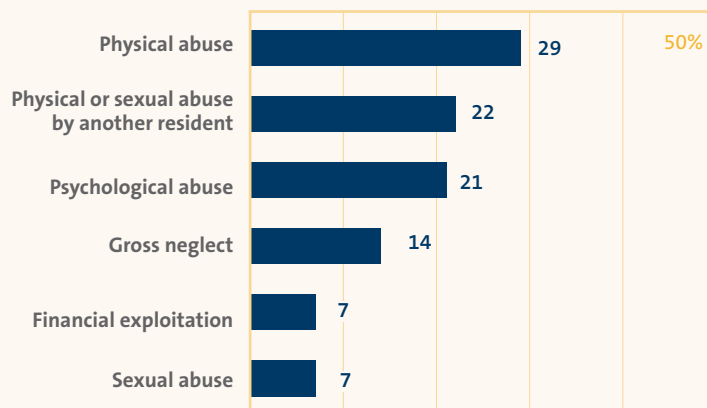


In 2015, **51% of violent crime victimizations** against people older than 65 involved victims who **did not know** their perpetrator; **44%** were committed by an acquaintance, relative, or intimate partner.^A



Residents of **nursing homes** are also vulnerable to abuse, neglect, or exploitation by nursing home staff and fellow residents. A study of nursing home facilities found that more than **50% of staff** admitted to engaging in physical violence, mental abuse, or neglect of older patients. Furthermore, nearly **1/4** of the 190,592 complaints filed against nursing homes in 2012 constituted **resident-on-resident** physical or sexual abuse.^G

Types of Complaints Against Nursing Homes^G



SOURCES

- A** Bureau of Justice Statistics, *National Crime Victimization Survey, Concatenated File, 1995-2015*, (U.S. Department of Justice)
- B** A. Wiglesworth et al., "Screening for Abuse and Neglect of People with Dementia," *J Am Geriatrics Soc* vol. 58, 3(2010): 493-500
- C** X. Q. Dong, "Medical Implications of Elder Abuse and Neglect," *Clinics in Geriatric Medicine* vol. 21, 2(2005): 293-313

D *Financial Fraud and Fraud Susceptibility in the United States*, (Applied Research and Consulting, 2013), <https://www.saveandinvest.org/sites/default/files/Financial-Fraud-And-Fraud-Susceptibility-In-The-United-States.pdf#page=18>

E R. Acierio et al., "The National Elder Mistreatment Study," *Am J Public Health* vol. 100, 2(2010): 292-97, <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/226456.pdf>

F E. Laumann, S. Leitsch, and L. Waite, "Elder Mistreatment in the United States," *J Gerontol B Psychol Sci Soc Sci* vol. 63, 4(2008): S248-S254

G National Center on Elder Abuse, <https://ncea.acl.gov/whatwedo/research/statistics.html#08>; *Abuse of Residents in Long-Term Care Facility*, 2013, <https://ncea.acl.gov/resources/docs/Abuse-LongTermCare-Facilities-2012.pdf>