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J. Robert Flores, Administrator

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JUVENILE JUSTICE BULLETIN

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Domestic Assaults by Juvenile Offenders

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According to data from the FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), 48% of all sexual, aggravated, and simple assaults reported to law enforcement in 2004 were committed by offenders having a domestic relationship with the victim (i.e., the victim and offender are connected by a family or romantic relationship). Most (91%) domestic assault offenders were adults—meaning that 1 of every 12 offenders who came to the attention of law enforcement for domestic assault offenses was younger than 18.* From the perspective of law enforcement, 53% of adults and 24% of juveniles who committed an assault were in a domestic relationship with their victims. Offenders were more likely to be arrested in domestic assault incidents than in acquaintance or stranger assault incidents.

These findings and those that follow come from an analysis of NIBRS files that describe incidents reported to law enforcement agencies in 30 States in 2004. Agencies provide the FBI with demographic information on victims, their offender(s), and any arrestees. In addition, characteristics of the crime are reported, such as the type of offense, whether a weapon was used, the degree of injury to victims, and each victim's relationship to each offender. This

enables the identification of sexual, aggravated, and simple assaults for which a domestic relationship existed between the victim and offender.

Other findings include:

- ◆ Females were 67% of the victims of juvenile domestic assault offenders.
- ◆ Half (51%) of juvenile domestic assault offenders victimized a parent and one-quarter (24%) victimized a sibling.
- ◆ The weapon most commonly used in domestic assaults by juveniles was a knife.
- ◆ About two-thirds (69%) of all juvenile domestic assault offenders victimized persons older than 18; however, the great majority (98%) of juvenile domestic sexual assault offenders victimized other juveniles.
- ◆ One-third (35%) of juvenile domestic assault offenders were female.
- ◆ Most (84%) juvenile domestic assault offenders acted alone.
- ◆ Most (88%) juvenile domestic assault offenders committed their crime in a residence.
- ◆ Juvenile offenders were less likely to be arrested in sexual assaults than in aggravated assaults and simple assaults reported to law enforcement. The same was true for adults.

* Throughout this Bulletin, persons younger than 18 are referred to as juveniles.

A Message From OJJDP

Domestic assaults constitute a significant proportion of juvenile offending and victimization in the United States. In one of every four assaults that youth commit, the victims are persons with whom the offender has a domestic relationship, i.e., family ties or intimate partnerships.

Juveniles are the victims in 3 of every 10 domestic assaults committed by their peers and in 1 of 10 committed by adults. However, juveniles are the victims in 98% of domestic sexual assaults committed by juveniles and 76% of domestic sexual assaults committed by adults.

The authors of this Bulletin analyze data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI's) National Incident-Based Reporting System to describe domestic assaults that occurred in 2004 to provide a profile of the relative occurrence of domestic assaults involving juveniles and adults as perpetrators and victims. In sum, the Bulletin offers a detailed report of the characteristics of domestic assaults reported to law enforcement.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) hopes that the information provided in these pages will assist policymakers and others concerned with the problem of domestic violence in their search for effective interventions.

Domestic violence is defined in many ways

To some, domestic violence is limited to violence between spouses. To others, it includes crimes against other household and/or family members. Still others extend the definition to include persons in a dating or intimate relationship. This report uses an inclusive definition of domestic relationships that encompasses parents, children, siblings, other family members (such as cousins, grandparents), and intimate partners (current and former spouses and current boy/girlfriends, including homosexual relationships). Assault of intimate partners is only a small part of juvenile domestic assault, accounting for 3% of juvenile assault offenders, as opposed to 39% of adult assault offenders. Definitions of domestic violence that focus solely on intimate partners to the exclusion of

parents, siblings, and other family members overlook most of the assaults that juvenile offenders perpetrated against persons linked to them by close relationships.

Although abuse within families takes many forms, such as emotional abuse, economic abuse, and stalking, the focus of this report is on physical assault or the threat of assault. For this Bulletin, assaults include sexual assaults (forcible rape, forcible sodomy, sexual assault with an object, and forcible fondling), aggravated assault, and simple assault (including intimidation).

One-fourth of juvenile assaults were domestic violence

In 2004, almost half (48%) of all assaults reported to law enforcement agencies can be classified as domestic violence using

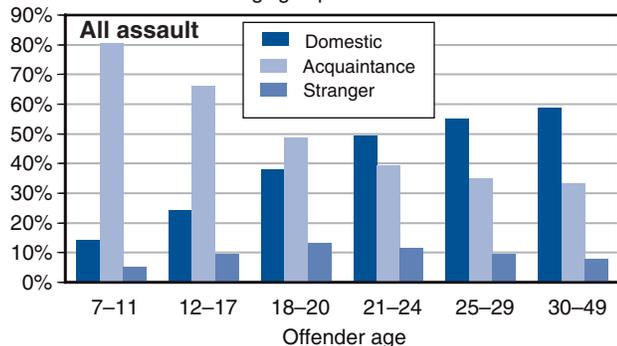
the inclusive definition above. Twenty-four percent (24%) of assaults by juvenile offenders were committed against domestic victims, compared with 53% of assaults by adult offenders. The domestic proportion of assaults increased steadily with offender age, from 16% of offenders younger than age 12, to 25% for offenders ages 12–17, to 44% of offenders ages 18–24, to 57% of offenders age 25 or older.

One of every 12 domestic assault offenders is a juvenile

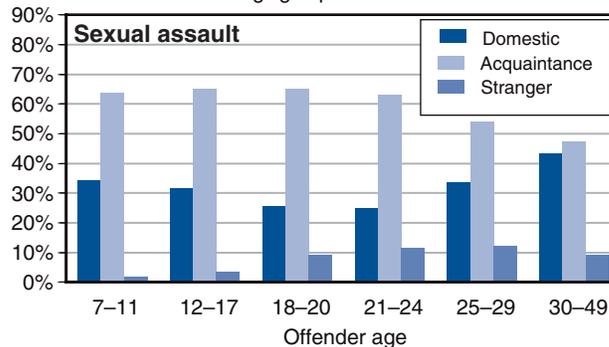
In the 2004 NIBRS data, juveniles were one-sixth (17%) of all assault offenders reported to law enforcement, and one-twelfth (9%) of domestic assault offenders. The juvenile proportion of domestic assault offenders was greater for sexual assaults (24%) than for other assaults (8%).

Overall, the proportion of assaults that can be classified as domestic violence increased with offender age

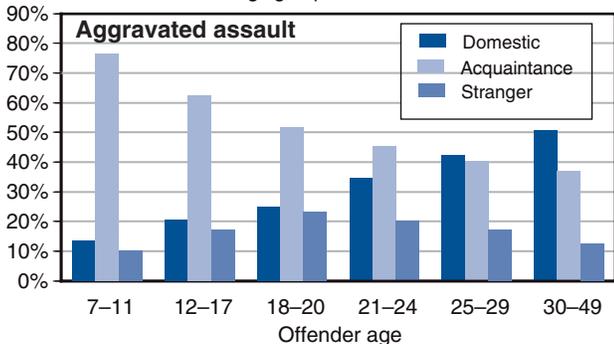
Percent of all offenders in age group



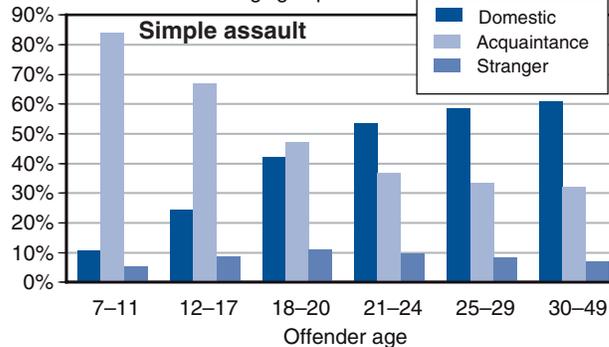
Percent of all offenders in age group



Percent of all offenders in age group



Percent of all offenders in age group



- ◆ The “All assault” and “Simple assault” patterns are so similar because, in this NIBRS sample, 80% of all assaults were simple assaults, 15% were aggravated assaults, and 5% were sexual assaults.
- ◆ The growing proportion of domestic assault with offender age was a characteristic of aggravated and simple assaults, not sexual assaults.

Juvenile percentage of offenders:

Offense	Domestic assaults	All assaults
Total	9%	17%
All sex assaults	24	26
Forcible rape	18	18
Forcible sodomy	39	40
Assault w/ an object	25	27
Forcible fondling	25	31
Aggravated assault	8	15
Simple assault	8	17

One-third of juvenile domestic assault offenders were female

Overall, 31% of all juveniles who committed an assault were female. A juvenile female was the offender in 35% of juvenile domestic assaults, compared with 31% of juvenile assaults of acquaintances and 21% of juvenile assaults of strangers. The type of domestic assault committed by juveniles that was most likely to involve a female offender was the assault of a parent—41% of these juvenile offenders were female. In comparison, a female was most likely to be the offender in assaults by adults when the victim was the offender’s

child—35% of these adult offenders were female.

Female percentage of offenders:

Offense	Juvenile offenders	Adult offenders
Assaults	31%	25%
Domestic violence	35	23
Parent	41	29
Child	35	35
Intimate partner	29	20
Sibling	27	29
Other family	29	30
Acquaintance	31	29
Stranger	21	19

Two-thirds of juvenile domestic assault offenders victimized females

In general, females were the victims in the majority (60%) of assaults. Assault victims of adult offenders, however, were more likely to be female than were victims of juvenile offenders. Half (50%) of all victims of assaults that juvenile offenders committed were female, compared with 62% of the assault victims of adult offenders.

Domestic assaults were far more likely to have female victims (74%) than were assaults of acquaintances (51%) or those of strangers (32%). This was true if the offender was a juvenile or an adult. Two-thirds (67%) of domestic assault victims of juvenile offenders were female, as were three-fourths (75%) of the domestic assault victims of adult offenders. Seventy-three percent (73%) of parents assaulted by a juvenile child were female, compared with 64% of parents assaulted by an adult child. In comparison, 46% of acquaintances and 32% of strangers assaulted by juveniles were female, as were 52% of acquaintances and 32% of strangers assaulted by adults.

In general, most assaults (63%) by juvenile males were against male victims and most assaults (78%) by juvenile females were against female victims. However, this pattern of same-gender victimization was not seen in domestic assaults. For both juvenile male and juvenile female offenders, the domestic violence victims were primarily female (66% and 70%, respectively). When the domestic assault was against a parent, the parent was most likely the mother for both juvenile male (68%) and juvenile female offenders (81%).

A juvenile offender acted alone in five of every six domestic assaults

A juvenile offender was more likely to commit crimes with another offender than was an adult offender. For example, the NIBRS data indicate that when the crime was an assault, 37% of juvenile offenders and 21% of adult offenders co-offended (i.e., acted in concert with at least one other offender). These percentages varied substantially with victim characteristics. When the assault victim was a stranger, more than one-half (56%) of juvenile offenders and one-third (34%) of adult offenders co-offended. When the assault victim was an acquaintance, 42% of juvenile offenders and 26% of adult offenders co-offended. Co-offending was least likely in domestic assaults—for both juvenile and adult offenders. When the assault victim was a family member or an intimate partner, only 16% of juvenile and 11% of adult offenders committed the crime with another offender. Juveniles were least likely to commit an assault with another offender when the victim was a parent (11%).

Except for assaults within romantic relationships, juvenile female offenders were far more likely to assault females than were juvenile male offenders

Victim/offender relationship	Percentage of female victims by type of offender						
	All offenders			Juvenile offenders		Adult offenders	
	offenders	offender	offender	Female	Male	Female	Male
All	60%	50%	62%	78%	37%	50%	66%
Domestic	74	67	75	70	66	28	89
Parent	69	73	64	81	68	76	59
Child	58	41	59	45	39	62	57
Boyfriend/girlfriend	82	73	82	0	100	0	100
Other intimate partner	79	56	79	23	80	6	99
Sibling	56	57	56	66	54	74	48
Other family	61	61	61	74	56	69	58
Acquaintance	51	46	52	82	30	74	44
Stranger	32	32	32	65	23	58	26

- ◆ In domestic assaults against siblings, both juvenile male and juvenile female offenders were more likely to assault their sisters than their brothers (66% and 54%, respectively).
- ◆ Of all the boyfriends and girlfriends who are victims of juvenile offenders, 73% were female. This female percentage was greater for adult offenders (82%), and for the victims of adult offenders who were classified as spouses (79%).

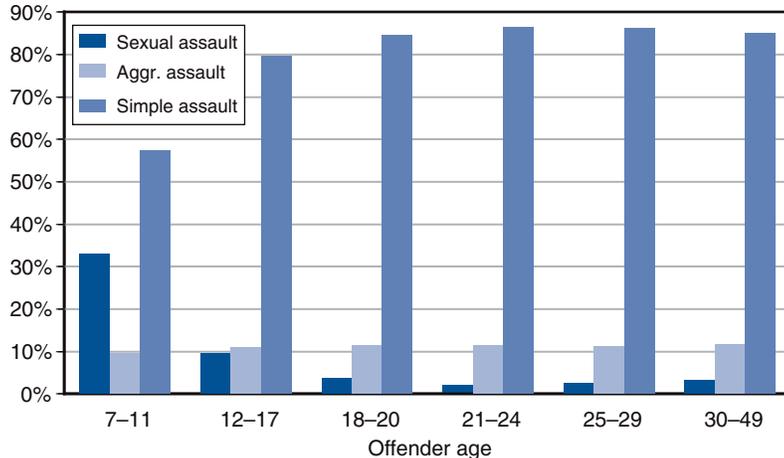
A parent was the victim in half of all domestic assaults that juvenile offenders committed

Offense	Victim/offender relationship profile of all assaults			Victim/offender relationship profile of domestic assaults					
	Stranger	Any acquaintance	Domestic	Parent	Child	Boyfriend/girlfriend	Other intimate partner	Sibling	Other family
Juvenile offenders									
All assaults	9%	67%	24%	51%	2%	10%	1%	24%	13%
Forcible rape	4	64	31	0	2	34	0	33	30
Other sex assaults	3	65	32	0	2	7	1	45	44
Aggravated assault	17	63	20	48	3	8	1	29	12
Simple assault	8	68	23	58	2	9	1	21	9
Adult offenders									
All assaults	10	37	53	5	10	38	34	5	8
Forcible rape	11	58	30	2	31	36	13	3	15
Other sex assaults	9	51	41	3	59	9	4	4	22
Aggravated assault	16	42	42	5	10	39	31	7	8
Simple assault	8	35	56	5	8	39	35	5	7

- ◆ One-fourth (24%) of the domestic assault victims of juvenile offenders were the offenders' siblings.
- ◆ An aggravated assault by an adult offender was more than twice as likely to be a domestic assault as was an aggravated assault by a juvenile offender (42% vs. 20%).
- ◆ Three of every 10 forcible rapes by both juvenile and adult offenders were crimes of domestic violence. The victims of domestic forcible rapes by juvenile offenders were equally likely to be siblings as boyfriends/girlfriends; for adult offenders, these victims were about as equally likely to be the offender's child as a boyfriend/girlfriend.
- ◆ Nearly 8 of every 10 domestic aggravated and domestic simple assault victims of juvenile offenders were parents or siblings. In contrast, 7 of every 10 domestic aggravated and domestic simple assault victims of adult offenders were boyfriends/girlfriends or other intimate partners.

A relatively high proportion of domestic assaults committed by young juveniles and reported to law enforcement were sexual assaults

Percent of all domestic assault offenders in age group



- ◆ Sexual assault offenses accounted for 33% of domestic assault offenders younger than 12, compared with 10% of offenders ages 12–17 and 3% of adult offenders.
- ◆ Aggravated assault offenses accounted for a similar proportion of domestic assault offenders across the age range.
- ◆ Simple assault offenses accounted for the vast majority (85%) of all domestic assault offenders. The proportion of simple assaults increased through offender juvenile years as the proportion of sexual assaults declined.

Nearly all domestic assault occurs in a residence

A substantial portion of juvenile (88%) and adult (83%) domestic assault offenders committed their crime in a residence (either the offender's, a victim's, or someone else's). In comparison, only about one-fourth (24%) of strangers were assaulted in a residence regardless of whether the offender was an adult or a juvenile. Juvenile and adult offenders differed in where they assaulted acquaintances, with adults far more likely than juveniles to assault acquaintances in a residence (57% vs. 28%).

Victims of domestic assaults by juveniles were least likely to be physically injured

Law enforcement reported more than half (53%) of all victims of assault to be physically injured. Injury was more common with adult offenders (54%) than with juvenile offenders (48%). Injury was somewhat more common in domestic assaults by adults than in other assaults by adults: domestic 56% vs. acquaintance 52% and stranger 50%. The reverse was true with

juvenile offenders. Domestic assaults by juvenile offenders were the least likely to result in victim injury: domestic, 43%, vs. acquaintance, 50%, and stranger, 52%. Domestic assaults reported to law enforcement with juvenile offenders were far less likely to involve an injured victim than domestic assaults that adult offenders committed (43% vs. 56%).

Arrest was more likely for domestic assault than other assault offenders

Forty-eight percent (48%) of juvenile domestic assault offenders were arrested, compared with 31% of juvenile offenders who assaulted acquaintances and 32% of juvenile offenders who assaulted strangers. Similarly, almost half (47%) adult domestic assault offenders were arrested, compared with 28% of adult offenders who assaulted acquaintances and 38% of adult offenders who assaulted strangers. A juvenile was most often arrested when the assault victim was a parent (56%) or a sibling (46%). In domestic assaults, an adult offender was less likely to be arrested when the victim was the offender's child (39%) than when the victim was a parent (51%), an intimate partner (51%), or a sibling (44%).

Juvenile female assault offenders were more likely than males to victimize their parents

In 2004, 31% of all juvenile offenders in assault incidents were female. This percentage increased to 35% when the focus is only domestic assaults. Of all juvenile assault offenders, 16% of female and 10% of male offenders assaulted their parents. When limiting the crimes to domestic assaults, a greater proportion of female (60%) than male juvenile offenders (46%) assaulted their parents. In contrast, a greater proportion of the domestic assaults by male juvenile offenders than female juvenile offenders victimized siblings (27% vs. 19%).

In 2004, 25% of all adult offenders in assault incidents were female. This percentage decreased slightly to 23% when the focus is only domestic assaults. Similar percentages of adult female (6%) and adult male (5%) domestic assault offenders victimized their parents. In contrast, a greater proportion of the domestic assaults by adult male (41%) than adult female (30%) offenders victimized

Compared with other types of assault, domestic assaults by juvenile offenders were less likely to involve a firearm and more likely to involve a knife

Weapon/offense	Juvenile Offender				Adult Offender			
	Domestic	Acquaintance	Stranger	Total	Domestic	Acquaintance	Stranger	Total
Firearm								
All assaults	1%	2%	7%	2%	1%	4%	7%	3%
Forcible rape	0	1	7	1	1	1	7	2
Other sex assault	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
Aggravated assault	6	15	25	15	11	22	24	18
Simple assault	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Knife								
All assaults	5	2	3	3	3	4	4	3
Forcible rape	0	1	2	1	1	1	5	2
Other sex assault	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1
Aggravated assault	41	19	12	22	24	21	15	21
Simple assault	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blunt object								
All assaults	12	17	19	16	17	30	24	22
Forcible rape	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	1
Other sex assault	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aggravated assault	21	21	26	22	23	26	29	25
Simple assault	12	18	18	16	16	33	24	23

◆ Six percent (6%) of juvenile offenders in aggravated assaults of domestic victims had a firearm, while 41% had a knife. To a lesser extent, this same pattern was found when the offender was an adult (11% vs. 24%).

Both juvenile and adult assault offenders were least likely to be arrested in sexual assaults than in other types of assaults

Victim/offender relationship	Juvenile Offender				Adult Offender			
	All assault	Sexual assault	Aggr. assault	Simple assault	All assault	Sexual assault	Aggr. assault	Simple assault
All victims	35%	26%	42%	35%	39%	27%	49%	38%
Domestic	48	29	61	49	47	28	59	46
Parent	56	*	66	54	51	28	60	50
Child	38	*	*	39	39	26	50	40
Boyfriend/girlfriend	34	19	53	35	47	28	60	46
Other intimate partner	43	*	*	44	52	33	65	50
Sibling	46	33	61	46	44	25	53	42
Other family	36	28	51	39	35	30	47	34
Acquaintance	31	25	38	31	28	26	42	25
Stranger	32	21	37	31	38	23	43	37

* Too few cases for reliable analysis.

Juvenile offenders were least likely to be arrested in a sexual assault when the victim was a boyfriend/girlfriend.

Regardless of whether the offense was an aggravated assault or simple assault, a juvenile offender was most likely to be arrested when the victim was a parent.

◆ Regardless of the type of assault, an adult offender was more likely to be arrested when the victim was an other intimate partner (i.e., spouse) than when the victim was a boyfriend/girlfriend.

White juvenile assault offenders were more likely than black offenders to have victimized their parents

Relatively equal proportions of white and black adult assault offenders were domestic assault offenders (52% and 54%); in contrast, a much larger proportion of white than black juvenile assault offenders were reported to law enforcement for a domestic assault (28% vs. 17%). For all offenders younger than 13, domestic assaults accounted for 10% of the assaults by black offenders and 21% of the assaults by white offenders. For juveniles ages 12–17, domestic assaults accounted for 19% of black and 30% of white juvenile assault offenders.

Parents were the victims in a larger proportion of domestic assaults by white juvenile offenders (54%) than black (44%). Similar proportions of white and black juvenile domestic assault offenders victimized siblings (23% vs. 25%).

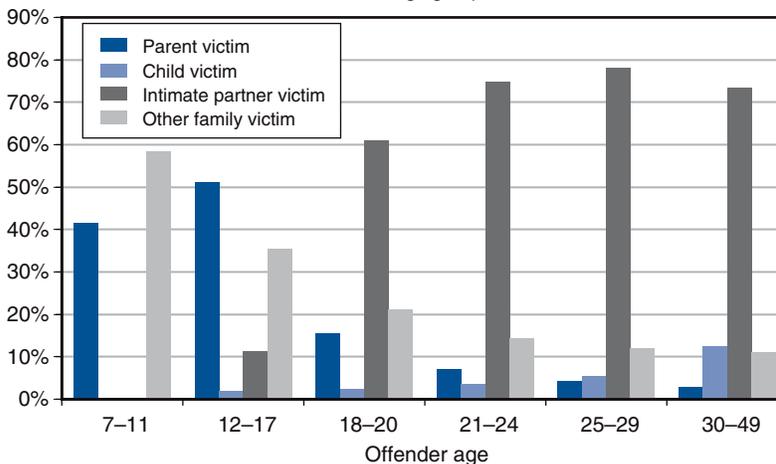
Among adult domestic assault offenders, a larger proportion of the victims of black offenders than of white offenders were their children (11% vs. 6%). And a larger proportion of the victims of black offenders than of white offenders were intimate partners (76% vs. 70%); however, a greater proportion of adult black offenders' victims were boyfriends/girlfriends (50%, compared with 33% for whites) and a greater proportion of adult white offenders' victims were spouses or ex-spouses (38%, compared with 27% for whites).

Domestic assault victims differed for older juveniles and younger adults

Half (51%) of the victims of older juvenile domestic assault offenders (ages 13–17) were parents, compared with 10% of the victims of young adult offenders (ages 18–24). In contrast, 11% of the victims of older juveniles and 51% of the victims of young adults were boyfriends/girlfriends. The domestic victims of older juveniles were more likely to be siblings than were the victims of young adults (23% vs. 9%).

Unlike victims of adult offenders, only a small portion of victims of domestic assaults by juvenile offenders were romantic intimates

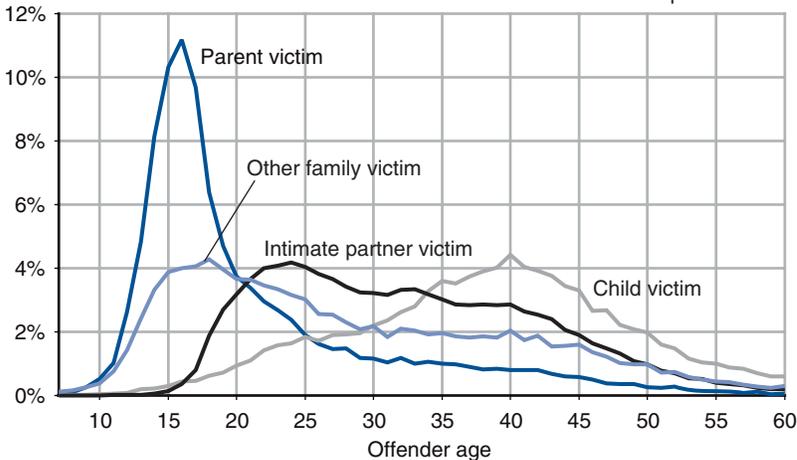
Percent of all domestic assault offenders in age group



- ◆ Boyfriends and girlfriends were a much smaller portion of the victims of domestic assaults by juvenile offenders than by adult offenders. They were 8% of the domestic assault victims for juvenile female offenders, 11% of juvenile male offenders, 30% of adult female offenders, and 41% of adult male domestic assault offenders.

Almost half of assault offenders who victimized their own parents were juveniles

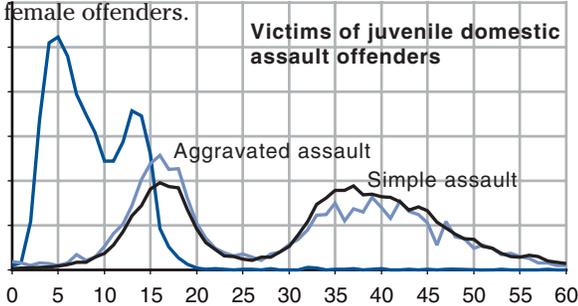
Percent of all domestic assault offenders within victim relationship



- ◆ Of all assault offenders who assaulted their own parents, 49% were between the ages of 7 and 17, with almost two-thirds of all these offenders ages 15–17.
- ◆ The peak offending age for assaults against the offender's child was age 40.
- ◆ The age profile of assault offenders against intimate partners showed a broad plateau for offenders ages 20–35, accounting for 56% of such offenders.

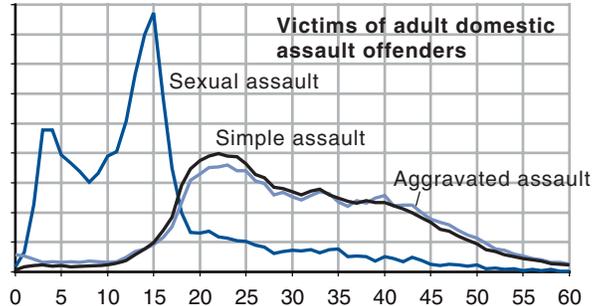
boyfriends/girlfriends. A greater proportion of all juvenile domestic assault offenders (8%) victimized adults. However, looking at raw numbers, the number of adult males assaulting their children was about double the number of female offenders.

Of all juvenile domestic assault offenders, 69% victimized adults



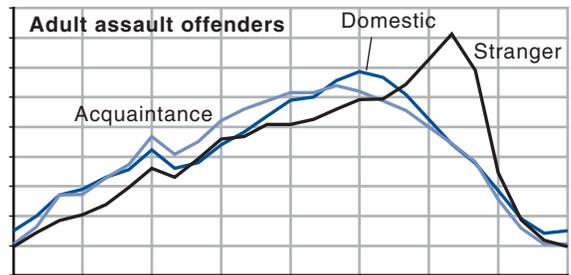
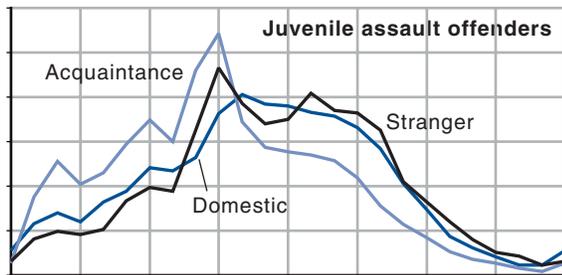
- ◆ For juvenile offenders, the ages of domestic victims of aggravated and simple assaults peaked in the late teens and late thirties, reflecting assaults on siblings and parents. For juvenile offenders, 70% of domestic victims of aggravated assault were adults, as were 78% of domestic victims of simple assaults.
- ◆ In contrast, for juvenile offenders, the age of domestic victims of sexual assaults peaked at age 5, with a less pronounced peak at age 13. In all, 98% of the domestic sexual assault victims of juvenile offenders were younger than 18.

Of all adult domestic assault offenders, 11% victimized juveniles



- ◆ For adult offenders, the ages of domestic victims of aggravated and simple assaults peaked in the early twenties and then gradually declined, reflecting primarily assaults on intimate partners. For adult offenders, 10% of domestic victims of aggravated assault were juveniles, as were 8% of domestic victims of simple assaults.
- ◆ In contrast, for adult offenders, the age of domestic victims of sexual assaults peaked at age 15, with a less pronounced peak at ages 3 and 4. In all, 76% of the domestic sexual assault victims of adult offenders were younger than 18.

Juvenile offender domestic assaults were more likely to occur in the afternoon and early evening than at other times



- ◆ Domestic assaults by juvenile offenders did not display a pronounced peak in the after school hours as did assaults of acquaintances and strangers.
- ◆ More than half (52%) of all domestic assaults by juveniles occurred in the 7 hours between 3 p.m. and 10 p.m.
- ◆ Adult assault offenders were more likely than juvenile assault offenders to act in the evening or early morning hours, regardless of the victim-offender relationship.
- ◆ Domestic assaults and acquaintance assaults by adult offenders peaked in the early evening, while assaults of strangers peaked after midnight.

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Methods

The data used in this bulletin were derived from the information on assaults that occurred in 2004 that were reported to the FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System. These data came from law enforcement agencies in the District of Columbia and 29 States (Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin). The incidents selected for the analysis were those for which the most serious offense was forcible rape, forcible sodomy, sexual assault with an object, forcible fondling, aggravated assault, or simple assault. The unit of count is the offender. Offenders were selected for analysis if they were age 7 or older (a total of 863,481 offenders) and the victim-offender relationship was known.

Data source note

Federal Bureau of Investigation. 2004. National Incident-Based Reporting System Master Files for 2004 [machine-readable data files]. Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Acknowledgments

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