

Overview of Sexual Violence Data Available in Indiana

Quantifiable data are essential to program planning for health behavior change. Without data, there can be no definable problem to remedy. Thus, data serve to show existing circumstances and as the foundation and motivation for change. Indiana has progressed markedly in the realm of sexual violence data collection, giving its citizens a chance to recognize and resolve this social problem. However, it is important to review the history of this change in order to understand the purpose of its past and future paths. The following section will speak about this history and what the future holds for sexual violence data collection in Indiana. Specifically, past practices of sexual violence data collection will be discussed including how Indiana reported and shared its data nationally and within the state. A section will follow detailing the 2007 Female Victimization in Indiana Survey. This will include dialogue pertaining to the methodology and format of the survey, a brief summary of its findings, and various limitations to the survey. Data pertaining to youth and sexual violence will be discussed. Lastly, a comparison of Indiana's 2007 survey to other states' methods of collecting sexual violence data will complete this report.

Former Prevalence Measures

In 2006, the Indiana Coalition Against Sexual Assault (INCASA) conducted a study to assess the status of rape data collection within the state. They first looked at the Uniform Crime Report (UCR), a national source of crime data compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). They found the UCR to report 93,934 rapes nationally and 1,856 rapes in Indiana in 2005. These numbers, however, differ significantly from other studies. For example, in 2004, Legal Services Association (LSA) of Indiana conducted a review of sex crime cases brought to court. This study showed that approximately 9,000 rape cases were tried in court in 2004.

Furthermore, the national UCR rape estimate of 2005 differs considerably from the National Crime Victimization Survey rape estimates of 2004 and 2005 and from the National Violence Against Women Survey rape estimates of 1995 and 1996. In fact, these latter two surveys estimate two to three times the national UCR rape estimate respectively (INCASA, 2006).

Why are these estimates of rape prevalence so inconsistent? The answers lie with two caveats: underreporting and the utilization of different definitions of rape. First, those that report to the UCR each year are law enforcement agencies. Moreover, it is voluntary for these law enforcement agencies to report their crime statistics to the national database. Currently in Indiana, about one third of law enforcement agencies report their rape statistics to the national UCR. This means that the national and state rape estimates are grossly underestimated. Another example of this is the LSA study done in 2004. The LSA only reviewed sex crimes that reached court. They did not account for sex crimes that were pleaded out before they reached court, crimes reported to law enforcement that are not prosecuted at all, or for sex crimes that were never reported to authorities. Therefore, the estimate of 9,000 rapes in 2004 is another underestimation of the actual problem. Secondly, rape estimates are inconsistent with each other because of the differing definitions of rape utilized by data collecting agencies. For example, the definition of rape used by the UCR does not include male victims. However, the National Crime Victimization Survey and the National Violence Against Women Survey both use much broader definitions of rape that account for various sexually violent behaviors and gender equity of victims. Therefore, these latter two surveys have larger estimates than the UCR (INCASA, 2006).

Within the state of Indiana, agencies that collect rape data include law enforcement agencies, victim health service providers, and victim judicial assistance providers. In 2006,

INCASA surveyed a number of these agencies to see what data were gathered, to see how data were gathered, and to see how the data were used. A number of noteworthy observations were found. First, many of these institutions utilize different definitions of rape, a finding consistent with national data collectors. Additionally, different types of data were gathered between institutions based on what each institution felt was relevant to collect. Lastly, there was low information sharing between institutions across the state. From this study, INCASA recommended that each agency use a standardized data collection tool and that this information be made accessible to all rape victim assistance programs through electronic and web-based technology (INCASA, 2006).

The 2007 Female Victimization in Indiana Survey

In an effort to measure the prevalence of sexual violence in adult women living in the state of Indiana, INCASA partnered with the Survey Research Center at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) to conduct such an endeavor (Survey, 2008).

Methodology and Format

The Survey Research Center conducted a random telephone survey of 2,871 adult, female Indiana residents between October and December of 2007. The survey was voluntary for participants and confidential for their protection. Out of the 2,871 participants, 913 women finished the telephone survey completely, resulting in a response rate of 31.8 percent. The average interview lasted 6.88 minutes. After the data were collected, they were weighted to make up for under- or overrepresented populations (Survey, 2008).

Figure 1. A Summary of the 2007 Female Victimization in Indiana Survey Methodology.

Approximate Total Number of Women Surveyed	2,871
Total Number of Women Who Completed the Survey	913
Response Rate	31.8%
Average Single Interview Time	6.88 minutes
Voluntary	Yes
Confidential	Yes

Source: *Female Victimization in Indiana – 2008: Summary of Methods and Findings*, Survey Research Center at IUPUI

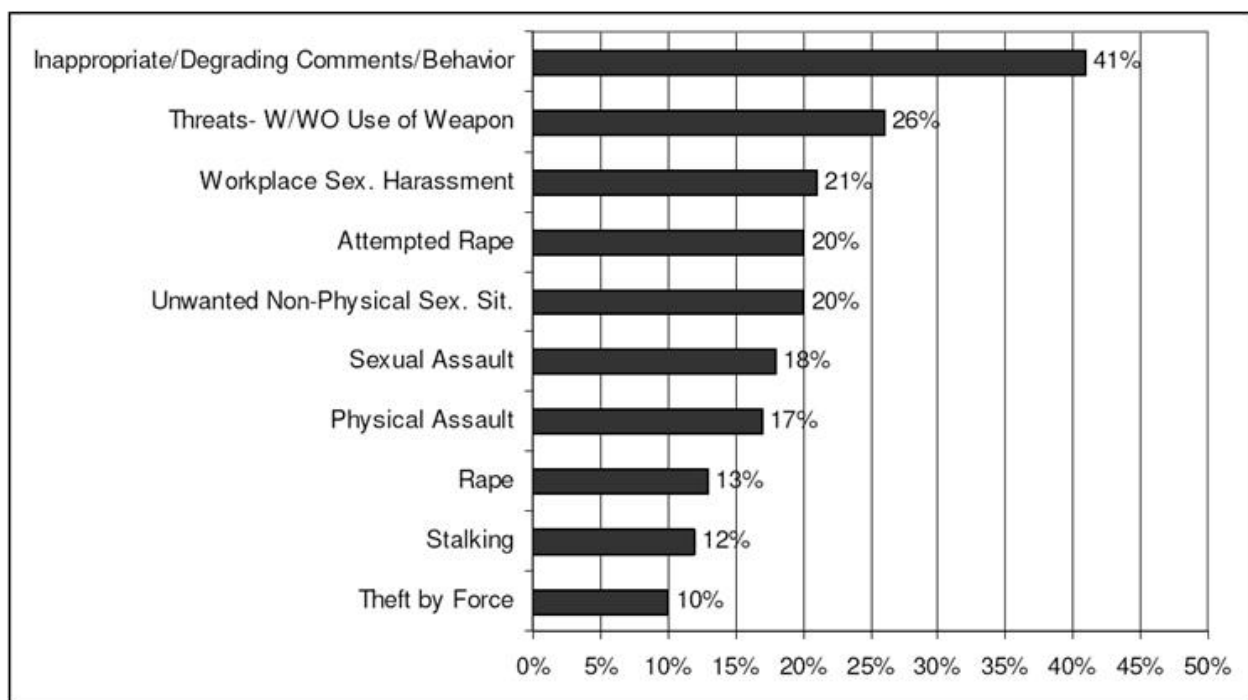
The main goals of the survey were to measure the prevalence of specific crimes against adult women in Indiana as well as measure the prevalence of adult women reporting these crimes to authorities. The survey consisted of ten main questions that asked if women had been victims of a specific crime. These ten crimes, in order, included: theft, stalking, verbal threats, physical assault, sexism, workplace sexual harassment, unwanted non-physical sexual situations, sexual assault, attempted rape, and completed rape. Therefore, the survey was designed with the least severe crimes asked first and the most severe asked last. This deliberate design was to “warm the participants up” to answering questions about victimization.

As well, for each question, the timeframe of the incident occurrence and whether the incident was reported to the authorities was asked. For questions pertaining to sexual assault, attempted rape, and completed rape, relationship to the perpetrator was asked. The demographic variables collected included age, marital status, race/ethnicity, religious preference, Christian denomination (if applicable) and frequency of attending religious services, educational attainment, and income level (Survey, 2008).

Results and Limitations

The majority of the surveyed population was Caucasian, aged forty-five to fifty-four, married, Protestant, a high school graduate or earner of a GED, and an earner of twenty to forty thousand dollars a year. The top two crimes most experienced by adult women in Indiana were sexism and verbal threats. Attempted rape ranked fourth with twenty percent of women responding to being a victim. Sexual assault ranked sixth with eighteen percent of women responding to being a victim, and completed rape ranked eighth with thirteen percent responding to being a victim. The crime of theft ranked last.

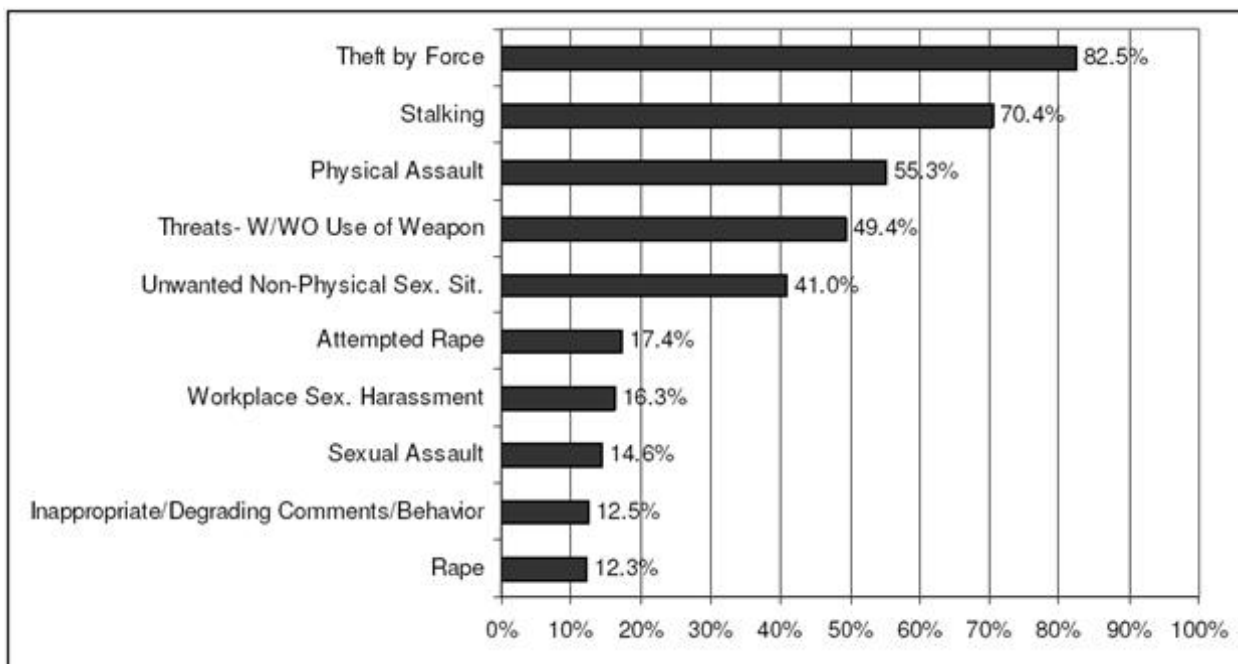
Figure 2. Frequency Compilation of Crimes Experienced.



Source: *Female Victimization in Indiana – 2008: Summary of Methods and Findings*, Survey Research Center at IUPUI

Of those women who experienced a crime, theft, stalking, and physical assault were the crimes most likely to be reported to authorities (82.5 percent, 70.4 percent, and 55.3 percent respectively). Attempted rape and sexual assault ranked sixth (17.4%) and eighth (14.6%) on the list of crimes likely to be reported to authorities by adult women in Indiana. Completed rape ranked last with only 12.3 percent of victims reporting the crime to authorities.

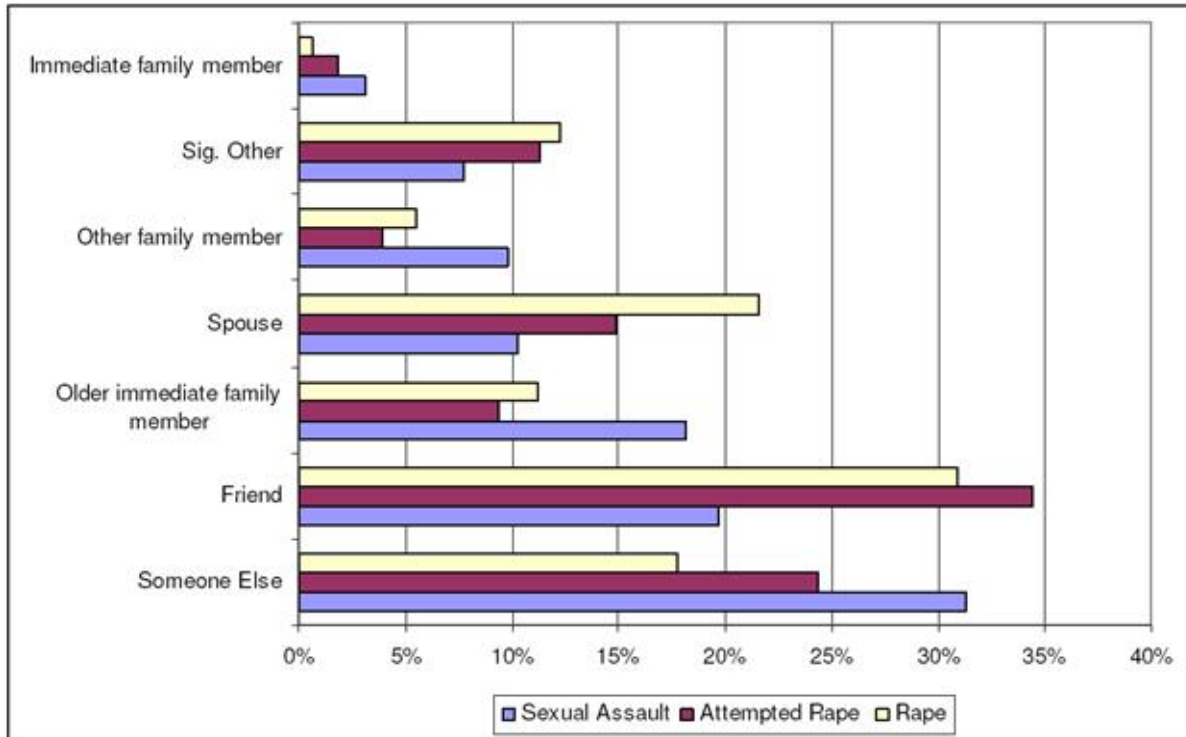
Figure 3. Summary of Proportions of Those Who Experienced and Reported Crimes.



Source: *Female Victimization in Indiana – 2008: Summary of Methods and Findings*, Survey Research Center at IUPUI

Lastly, those that reported being a victim of attempted rape and/or completed rape reported that the most likely person to perpetrate these crimes was a friend in relation to the victim (Survey, 2008).

Figure 4. Relationship to Person Committing Sexual Assault, Attempted Rape, or Rape.



Source: *Female Victimization in Indiana – 2008: Summary of Methods and Findings*, Survey Research Center at IUPUI

The major limitations to this survey are three-fold. First, geographic location was not used in the analysis of these data. Therefore, no geographic mappings have been done to cluster cases together. This would give a visualization of where hotspots of sexual violence were occurring. However, due to lack of geographic data, this cannot be done. Secondly, males, children, and other special populations were not included in the sample. The reason for this is that this survey was the first of its kind and its priority was to assess prevalence of sexual

violence in female populations, giving baseline data to build upon and in the future to assess the impact of sexual violence in the general population, including males. Additionally, the legal issues involved with contacting the under-18 population to ask these types of questions are difficult to overcome. Thus, there is an enormous realm open for discovery with these populations. Lastly, this telephone survey utilized landlines exclusively. Thus, exclusive cell phone users were excluded from the study (Survey, 2008). According to the Pew Research Center, cell phones are the biggest challenge to the commonplace landline telephone survey because exclusive cell phone usage is increasing drastically among younger, more mobile citizens. The Pew Research Center specifically describes this special population as significantly different from landline users. Therefore, this growing population is not being captured with common landline surveys (Keeter, 2007).

The Youth Risk Behavioral Survey

The Youth Risk Behavioral Survey is a national, school-based survey conducted at the state level and analyzed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This survey's eight main purposes are to measure the prevalence of behaviors that result in unintentional injuries or violence, tobacco use, alcohol and other drug use, sexual behaviors that result in sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infections, unhealthy diet behavior, physical inactivity, obesity, and asthma. In 2007, Indiana's Youth Risk Behavior survey included questions pertaining to physically forced or coerced sexual intercourse. As a result, 9.4 percent of high school students, both male and female, reported being physically forced to have sexual intercourse when they did not want to. Moreover, when this statistic is broken down by gender, 13.2 percent of female high school students and 5.3

percent of male high school students reported being physically forced to have unwanted sexual intercourse (YRBS, 2007).

What Other States Have Done

Prevention of sexual violence is beginning to focus more on primary prevention rather than tertiary prevention. Put another way, prevention efforts are being focused on stopping sexual violence from ever occurring as opposed to treating victims, perpetrators, and the aftermath of sexual violence. Because of this, other states have made the effort to measure the prevalence of this social problem in their communities in order to build a foundation for evidence-based social change. However, it is important to note that each state is or has measured different indices using different definitions of sexual violence behaviors according to what each state's agenda desires to accomplish.

The state of Oklahoma conducted a random telephone survey in 2005 to 2006 that focused on sexual violence behavior prevalence. However, instead of collecting pure quantitative data, this survey asked participants their attitudes and beliefs surrounding sexual violence. As well, if the participant was a victim, they were asked to describe the risk factors that might have lead to the assault such as alcohol and/or drug use. Victims were also asked their likelihood of reaching out to and knowledge of victim service providers (Oklahoma, 2006). In Iowa and Massachusetts, however, sexual violence data have been gathered via their state Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance System survey, a telephone survey similar to the Indiana State Victimization Survey. Only two to four questions are asked pertaining to sexual violence. Thus, the data gathered create a brief and incomplete picture of the problem in those states (personal communication, Abby Kelly-Smith, March 12th and 13th, 2008). In New Hampshire, a random telephone survey was conducted in 2005 to 2006 that was modeled closely after the

National Violence Against Women Survey conducted in 1995 and 1996. The telephone survey also included some questions borrowed from psychological scales on victimization. This particular survey was lengthy and focused on issues ranging from attitudes and beliefs, to barriers to care, to prevalence of sexual violence victimization (New Hampshire, 2006). Lastly, in Virginia, a random telephone survey was conducted in 2002 to 2003 that assessed both females *and* males. Data collected pertained to prevalence of sexual violence, risk factors to the assault experience, reporting rates, and attitudes and beliefs relating to service needs and access/barrier issues. As well, Virginia has been able to use these data to extrapolate the prevalence of child sexual violence (Virginia, 2003). Thus, it is easy to see what each state's main focuses are in assessing sexual violence in their communities. This remains a positive aspect because each state has the chance to use their abilities to assess the unique needs of their individual communities. However, a downside to this process is that state-to-state comparisons cannot be accurately completed because of the inconsistencies of types of data collected between states.

Conclusion

Indiana has come a long way in the realm of data collection of sexual violence behavior. The first major step was completed in 2007 by conducting a statewide survey that measured sexual violence and other crime victimization among adult females. This survey has given the state a foundation, a starting point, for assessing this social problem and beginning to create change within Indiana communities. Specifically, the state aims to use this data as part of its needs and resources assessment to help determine a plan for primary prevention of sexual violence for all populations living in Indiana. While this may sound like a daunting task, Indiana's history of data collection is headed in the right direction to help make this aspiration a

reality. Imagine what it would be like to live with no worries of sexual violence occurring in your community. Indiana remains on that track with the progress it has made in sexual violence data collection.

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