



Department of Justice



Office of Justice Programs

ADVANCE FOR RELEASE AT 4:00 P.M. EST
[SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2009]
WWW.OJP.USDOJ.GOV/BJS

BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS
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12 PERCENT OF ADJUDICATED YOUTH REPORT SEXUAL VICTIMIZATION IN JUVENILE FACILITIES

WASHINGTON – An estimated 12 percent of adjudicated youth (3,140) in juvenile facilities reported experiencing one or more incidents of sexual victimization by another youth or facility staff in a survey mandated by the Prison Rape Elimination Act, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) in the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, announced today. About 2.7 percent of youth (700) reported an incident involving another youth and 10.3 percent (2,670) reported an incident involving facility staff.

The survey limited reporting by youth to incidents occurring in the last 12 months or since their admission to the facility, if less than 12 months. Sexual victimization is defined as any unwanted sexual activity between youth and all sexual activity between youth and staff. About 4.2 percent of youth (1,090) reported having sex or sexual contact with staff as a result of force; 6.4 percent of youth (1,660) reported sexual contact with staff without any force, threat, or other explicit form of coercion.

The survey was conducted between June 2008 and April 2009 in 168 state owned or operated juvenile facilities and 29 locally or privately operated facilities, yielding 9,093 completed interviews from adjudicated youth. The survey was administered using an audio computer-assisted self-interview instrument (ACASI) on touch-screen laptop computers in a private setting.

Thirteen facilities were identified as high-rate based on the lower bound of the 95 percent confidence interval of at least 35 percent higher than the average rate among facilities. Six facilities had victimization rates of 30 percent or more; 4 had rates between 25 percent and 30 percent ; 3 had rates between 20 percent and 25 percent. Thirty-six facilities (18%) had no reported incidents of sexual victimization.

Males were more likely than females to report sexual activity with facility staff (10.8 percent compared to 4.7 percent), but less likely than females to report forced sexual activity with another youth (2.0 percent compared to 9.1 percent of females). Nearly 95 percent of all youth reporting staff sexual misconduct said they had been victimized by female facility staff.

(MORE)

Overall, youth with a sexual orientation other than heterosexual reported significantly higher rates of sexual victimization (20 percent) than heterosexual youth (11 percent). Youth who had experienced any prior sexual assault were more than twice as likely to report a sexual victimization in the current facility (24 percent) compared to those with no sexual assault history (10 percent).

Nearly 20 percent of youth sexually victimized by another youth reported being injured in the incident, compared to 5 percent of youth victimized by staff. Force or threat of force was reported by 46 percent of incidents between youth; no force was reported in 69 percent of staff sexual misconduct incidents.

The report, Sexual Victimization in Juvenile Facilities Reported by Youth, 2008-09 (NCJ 228416) was written by BJS statisticians Allen J. Beck, Paige M. Harrison, and Paul Guerino. Following publication, the report can be found at <http://www.ojp.gov/bjs/abstracts/svjfry09.htm>

For additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics' statistical reports and programs, please visit the BJS Web site at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs>.

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The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), headed by Assistant Attorney General Laurie Robinson, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice, and assist victims. OJP has five component bureaus: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; and the Office for Victims of Crime. In addition, OJP has two program offices: the Community Capacity Development Office, which incorporates the Weed and Seed strategy, and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking (SMART). More information can be found at <http://www.ojp.gov>.

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