



Sexual Violence in Wisconsin



Sexual violence, including **any** sexual contact without a person’s consent, affects people of all identities, ages, and abilities. Perpetrators can be acquaintances, family members, intimate partners, trusted individuals, or strangers. Sexual violence can have a profound effect on a person’s well-being as well as family, friends, and the community as a whole.

Purpose: This factsheet is intended to describe the impact of sexual violence in Wisconsin to help programs and agencies develop a response.

Data call to action: The data presented here are Wisconsin-specific and come from health care systems, crime reports, and surveys. Data by race, ethnicity, and/or identification as LGBTQ are not available from all sources at the state level. In order to truly understand disproportionate burden among all communities, it is urgent that those responsible for developing data collection systems focus on obtaining complete and accurate information on race, ethnicity, gender identity, and LGBTQ identification.

Community call to action: Institutional and community response focused on addressing factors associated with sexual violence are critical to prevention, deterrence, reporting, treatment, and resilience.

Population Impact based on Survey Data: A Starting Point

What can anonymous survey data tell us? It may provide the most accurate information on the number and percentage of our population who have experienced sexual violence.

About **1.2 MILLION** Wisconsin adults have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime.¹



About **1 out of 3** adult women



Almost **1 out of 5** adult men

Approximately **50%** of survivors indicated the perpetrator was a current or former intimate partner.¹

Limits to data: Survey data are estimates based on a sample of the population which we assume is similar to the overall demographic make-up of the community of interest (e.g. Wisconsin). Participation is critical to success. It may be difficult to provide data for some communities if there are too few participants of these communities completing the survey.

Emergency Health Care

Emergency Department (ED) visits with sexual violence injury from 2017-2019²

What can ED rates tell us? These data can be used to determine the volume of ED visits with sexual violence injury and characteristics of those seeking care.

State Rate*: **19.0** ED visits per 100,000 residents – an average of **986** annually

Females had an ED rate **8.5 times** higher than **males**

Racial and Ethnic Differences

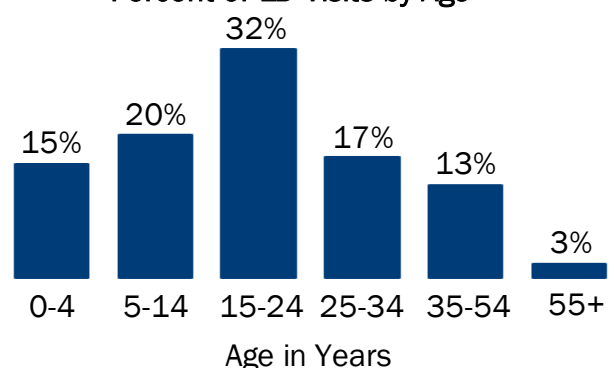
3.2x **Black** patients had a rate 3.2 times higher than **white** patients

2.4x **American Indian** patients had a rate 2.4 times higher than **white** patients

2.6x **White** patients had a rate 2.6 times higher than **Asian** patients

1.2x **Non-Hispanic** patients had a rate 1.2 times higher than **Hispanic** patients

Percent of ED Visits by Age



Emergency Health Care, continued

Limits to data: Not all who experience sexual violence seek or require medical care for a resulting injury. Characteristics of survivors and circumstances of the sexual violence can lead to different patterns of health care-seeking behaviors. Feelings of shame or embarrassment, lack of belief or support from the health care system, absent or inadequate medical services, or additional choices in services (beyond ED care) can all influence these behaviors.

Health care call to action: Health care providers need to look for signs of sexual violence, ask questions in a sensitive manner, and provide assistance. The ED visit rate likely represents only a small portion of those injured by sexual violence. An increase in health-seeking behavior will require staff with skills to respond to this type of injury.

*Rates are age-adjusted based on number of visits, not unique patients. Includes ED visits with confirmed or suspected sexual violence injury **not** resulting in death or hospitalization. Racial and ethnic differences are all statistically significant; visits with “other” or unknown race and/or ethnicity are excluded from this analysis. Data not available by identification as LGBTQ.

Crime Reporting

Survivors of forcible sex offenses reported from 2017-2019³

What can crime data tell us? These data can inform us of the volume of reported crimes and their impact on the criminal justice system, as well as provide characteristics of survivors, perpetrators and offenses.

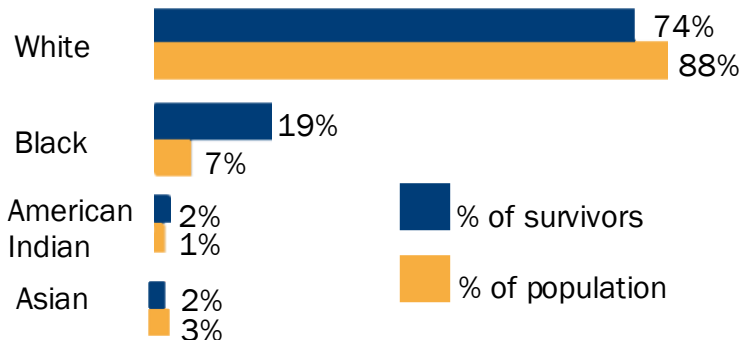
Statewide count: **13,235** survivors* – an average of **4,412** annually

87% female

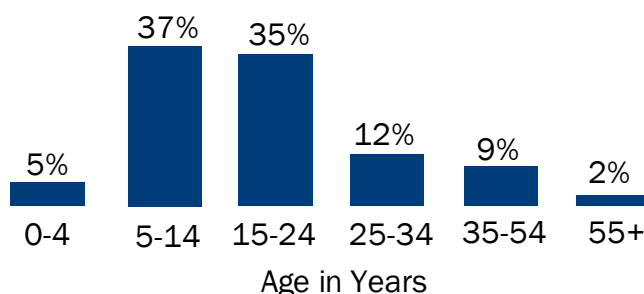
13% injured during the assault

11% assaulted by a current or former intimate partner

Survivor Racial Distribution Compared to State Population



Percent of Survivors by Age



Limits to data: Crime data are underestimated. In 2018 in the US, approximately 75% of sexual assaults (defined more broadly to include threatened attacks involving unwanted sexual contact) were not reported to police⁴. Based on this, we estimate over 17,600 survivors of sexual assault annually in Wisconsin. The identity and characteristics of the perpetrator and/or survivor, circumstances of the assault, and community relations with the criminal justice system may all influence reporting to law enforcement.

Criminal justice call to action: All aspects of the criminal justice system are encouraged to build community relations and provide safe environments for survivors to report. Demonstration of belief and support of survivors along with arrest, prosecution and conviction of perpetrators may initially lead to increases in reporting while at the same time curtail perpetration.

*Counts are based on number of victims (referred to here as *survivors*), per incident, of forcible sex offenses that occurred in Wisconsin, including rape, anal/oral sex, sexual assault with object, and fondling. Unfounded incidents are not included. Survivors with unknown race are not included in racial distribution bar graph. Data not available by Hispanic ethnicity or identification as LGBTQ.

Data sources: ¹National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (2010-2012) responses from adults ages 18 and older; data refers to *contact sexual violence* defined as rape or attempted rape, being made to penetrate someone else, sexual coercion (nonphysical unwanted sexual penetration) and unwanted sexual contact. ²Hospital ED visits, Office of Health Informatics, Wisconsin Department of Health Services; nonfatal, treated and released ED visits only; includes visits with ICD-10-CM codes for confirmed and suspected sexual abuse or sexual abuse complicating pregnancy, childbirth, and puerperium. ³Wisconsin Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Information and Analysis, 2017-2019 Uniform Crime Reporting, Wisconsin-specific analytic dataset (accessed 6/5/2020). ⁴National Crime Victimization Survey, 2018; data based on persons 12 years and older.