



Domestic Violence **2010-2012** *statistics*



Prepared by Tennessee Bureau of Investigation's CJIS Support Center



Bill Haslam
Governor

TENNESSEE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

901 R.S. Gass Boulevard
Nashville, Tennessee 37216-2639
(615) 744-4000
Facsimile (615) 744-4500
TDD (615) 744-4001



Mark Gwyn
Director

September 24, 2013

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Each year the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation releases annual reports of crimes reported by law enforcement agencies to the Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System (TIBRS) program in five different reports. The TIBRS data contains a wide range of incident level information including victim and offender demographics. In addition to the usual annual reports, the Criminal Justice Information Services Support Center focused on a data subset of domestic violence victims of crime for the last three years of reported data.

The issue of domestic violence is, by no means, a novel problem in the American society. The persistence of domestic violence and the large number of related incidents reported to law enforcement necessitates continued awareness about this issue. In an effort to gain more insight into the problem of domestic violence within the state of Tennessee, the current study analyzes crime data collected from the Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System, hereafter referred to as TIBRS. Utilizing this TIBRS crime data, offenses flagged as domestic related from 2010-2012 were examined.

Sincerely,

Mark Gwyn
Director



Quick Facts

- Of the domestic violence offenses reported to TIBRS from 2010 to 2012, 252,288 were reported as a known gender: male or female
- Simple Assault was, by far, the most frequently reported offense accounting for 69.2% of all domestic violence offenses, outnumbering all other offenses by more than 3 to 1
- Females (71.9%) were almost three times more likely to be victimized than males (28.1%) in domestic incidents in the state of Tennessee
- 99.0% of the domestic violence victims' race in Tennessee was either White (58.3%) or African-American (40.7%)
- Juveniles accounted for approximately ten percent of domestic violence victims each year from 2010 to 2012
- On average, juveniles accounted for 58.1% of victims reporting domestic abuse by a parent each year
- One in three perpetrators of Forcible Rape and Forcible Fondling offenses against juvenile victims were identified as Other Family Members
- From 2010-2012, victims were six times more likely to be abused by a Spouse than an Ex-Spouse in domestic offenses
- Boyfriend/Girlfriend relationships were the most frequently reported accounting for 44.2% of all domestic violence from 2010-2012
- Domestic violence resulted in 275 Murder/Non-negligent Homicides during the three-year study period
- Offenders against juveniles having a Child of Boyfriend/Girlfriend Victim to Offender relationship were overwhelmingly identified as males (80.9%): White males (46.0%) and African-American males (34.9%)
- Within Homosexual relationships, the largest group of domestic violence victims and perpetrators were African-American females at 41.6%

Introduction

The issue of domestic violence is, by no means, a novel problem in the American society. However, the persistence of domestic violence and the large number of related incidents reported to law enforcement necessitates continued awareness about this issue. In an effort to gain more insight into the problem of domestic violence within the state of Tennessee, the current study analyzes crime data collected from the Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System, hereafter referred to as TIBRS. Utilizing this TIBRS crime data, offenses flagged as domestic related from 2010-2012 were examined.

Domestic Violence Research

At the national level, the NCADV reports that approximately 1.3 million women are victims of domestic physical assault yearly. The 2005 National Crime Victimization Survey found that one in every three victims reported being physically attacked while two-thirds of domestic violence victims were threatened with attack or death. One report highlighting the impact of domestic violence on the state of Tennessee defines domestic violence as “a pattern of abusive behaviors used by one individual intending to exert power and control over another person in an intimate relationship. It can be physical, sexual, or psychological.” (Tennessee Economic Council on Women, 2006, p.2)

Domestic violence has often been documented as having far-reaching consequences. Not only have the emotional and psychological effects of domestic violence on victims and witnesses been intimately researched, other outcomes have also been examined. Domestic violence, though a crime against an individual, has significant effects on the greater local and state community. Perhaps not as widely known as the psychological, physical and emotional damage are the economic consequences of domestic abuse. Previous national and state-level studies have effectively quantified just such effects in dollars and cents. Results reveal that millions of dollars are lost each year in lost wages, sick leave, and absenteeism with one study by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention reporting 727.8 million dollars lost annually in work productivity as a direct result of domestic violence. (Tennessee Council on Women Impact Study, 2006)

According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV), intimate partner violence costs over 5.8 billion dollars per year and 18.5 million mental health care visits annually. In the state of Tennessee alone, an estimated 33 million dollars in annual healthcare costs can be attributed to known domestic violence cases. (Tennessee Council on Women Impact Study, 2006) Given the significant negative physical, psychological, social, and economic effects domestic violence has been proven to have on victims, witnesses, and even the greater community, it is imperative to evaluate the problem of domestic violence.

There is a plethora of research literature examining various facets of domestic violence ranging from victimization surveys to offender profiles. Due to the nature of domestic violence with close interpersonal relationships between victim and offender there exists underreporting of such offenses. The unfortunate result is that documented incidents by law enforcement agencies are usually not an accurate reflection of domestic violence within any particular jurisdiction. As such, much research on the topic relies heavily on self-reporting via victimization surveys. This seems to be the preferred method of

data collection of domestic violence information based on the premise that respondents are more likely to respond openly and honestly to survey questions when able to do so anonymously and without potential negative consequences or retaliation from his/her abuser. States that have recently utilized victimization surveys to assess domestic crimes include Minnesota (2010) and Indiana (2010).

It should be noted that there may be some discrepancy when comparing studies and their findings as much of the domestic violence literature focuses solely on “intimate partner” violence often defined as the victim and offender being spouses, ex-spouses, partners, or ex-partners. The current study utilizes a more broad definition of domestic violence by including the previously stated intimate relationships as well as several familial relationships. Also, some research studies focus solely on female victims of domestic violence. The current study is based on incidents submitted to TIBRS by law enforcement agencies across the state of Tennessee as domestically related and includes both male and female victims.

Overall Findings

Upon initially examining the TIBRS data submitted for domestic violence offenses, several parameters for the study were established. The data included in this study met the following criteria: Crimes Against Persons offense(s); offense(s) flagged by the law enforcement agency as being domestically related; and victim gender cannot be reported as Unknown. A count of domestic violence victims reported from 2010 through 2012 in the state of Tennessee totaled 252,480. Of those, 252,288 reported a known gender and will serve as the total population for the study. It should be noted that individuals who reported domestic abuse in more than one incident during the study period will be duplicated accordingly in this study’s victim count. The majority of these victims were female (71.9%) outnumbering the male victims by almost 3 to 1. Analysis of race breakdown revealed that White victims were consistently the race majority for all offenses each year 2010 to 2012 accounting for as much as eighty percent of victims for the following offenses: Incest (87.2%), Sexual Assault with an Object (78.9%), and Statutory Rape (75.9%). In addition to sex and race, victim age was also analyzed. A total of 25,156 juveniles, or individuals under age eighteen, were reported as victims during the study period accounting for approximately 10 percent of all victims.

Though the overall numbers reveal a decrease in total reported offenses each year from 2010 to 2012 involving domestic violence, this trend should be cautiously interpreted. Over the three year period, domestic violence decreased by a total of only 3.4 percent. In 2011, domestic related offenses decreased by a fraction of a percent (.4%) to 84,816 from the previous year’s total (85,174). The year 2012 revealed the greatest year to year decrease seen during this study period reporting 2.9% fewer offenses than 2011. Three of the four TIBRS Assault Offenses combined account for ninety-seven percent of all domestic violence reported during the time period. These findings will be further examined later in the study.

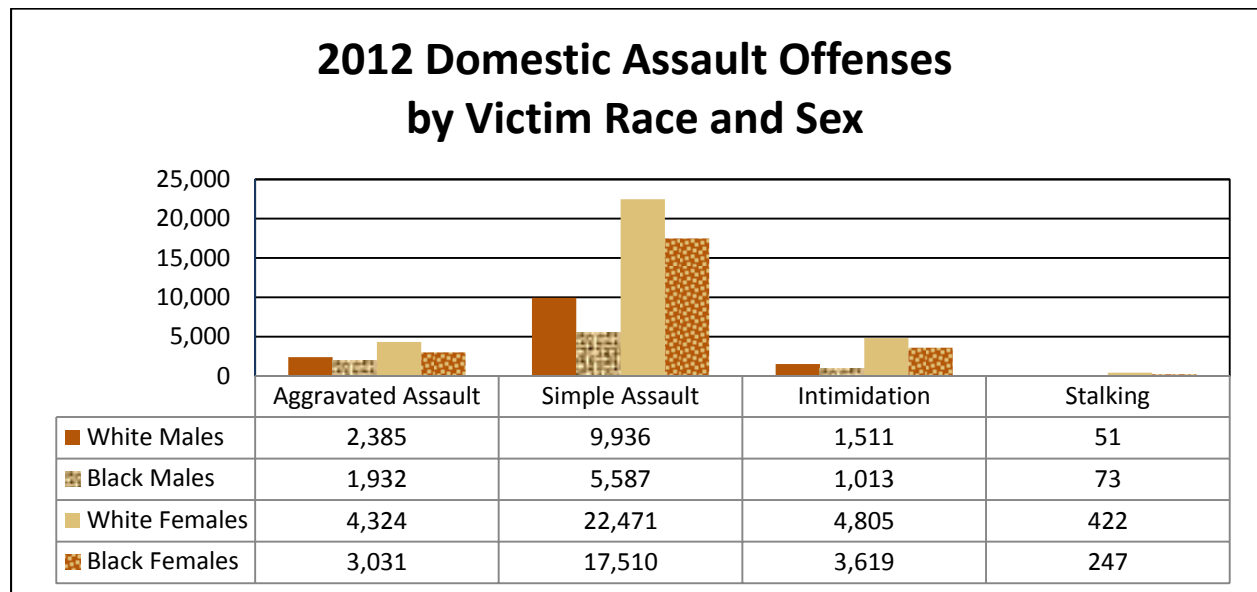
Domestic Violence Offenses

Crimes identified as domestically related in TIBRS must always have the victim type of Individual. Crimes Against Society and Crimes Against Property cannot be flagged as domestic violence in TIBRS. There are

14 offenses considered to be Crimes Against Persons. Of the 14 offenses, twelve were included in the study with the two omitted offenses being Negligent Manslaughter and Justifiable Homicide. The remaining offenses reported to TIBRS between the years of 2010 and 2012 as domestic violence were analyzed.

Results revealed that Simple Assault accounted for the greatest majority of all domestic offenses at 69.2%. Intimidation and Aggravated Assault were the second and third most frequently reported offenses accounting for 13.5% and 13.1% respectively. These three assault offenses accounted for 95.8% of all domestic violence offenses reported during the study period. During the three year time frame, Aggravated Assaults showed the greatest increase of all the TIBRS assault offenses at 11.4% followed by Stalking at 7.5%. The remaining assault offenses, Intimidation and Simple Assault, showed a decrease of at least 5.0% over the time period.

Homicides determined to be the result of domestic violence decreased by 22.3% with 80 homicides reported in 2012 as compared to 92 in 2010. Three of the four TIBRS Forcible Sex Offenses showed an elevated percent change from 2010 to 2012: Forcible Rape, Forcible Sodomy, and Sexual Assault with an Object. The domestic violence offense showing the greatest percentage increase during the study period was Kidnapping/Abduction at 16.5%. Though this offense increased only a fraction of a percent (.8%) from 2010 to 2011, reported incidents increased from 2011 to 2012 by 15.6%. The greatest year to year percent change in this study was identified in the Incest offense which dramatically increased (85.7%) from 28 in 2011 to 52 in 2012. Forcible Fondling and Forcible Rape showed reductions in reported offenses changing by -2.0% and -17.1% respectively.



Domestic Violence Offenses by Gender (2010-2012)

| | Female | | Male | | Total | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|----------------|--------------|
| | Number | % | Number | % | Number | % |
| OFFENSE | | | | | | |
| Murder/Non-negligent Homicide | 159 | 57.8 | 116 | 42.2 | 275 | 0.1 |
| Kidnapping/Abduction | 1,633 | 72.1 | 633 | 27.9 | 2,266 | 0.9 |
| Forcible Rape | 1,866 | 98.8 | 22 | 1.2 | 1,888 | 0.8 |
| Forcible Sodomy | 228 | 42.8 | 305 | 57.2 | 533 | 0.2 |
| Sexual Assault with an Object | 243 | 86.8 | 37 | 13.2 | 280 | 0.1 |
| Forcible Fondling | 1,599 | 80.0 | 399 | 20.0 | 1,998 | 0.8 |
| Aggravated Assault | 20,101 | 60.7 | 13,000 | 39.3 | 33,101 | 13.1 |
| Simple Assault | 126,687 | 72.5 | 47,965 | 27.5 | 174,652 | 69.2 |
| Intimidation | 26,224 | 76.8 | 7,901 | 23.2 | 34,125 | 13.5 |
| Stalking | 1,948 | 84.1 | 367 | 15.9 | 2,315 | 0.9 |
| Incest | 106 | 84.8 | 19 | 15.2 | 125 | 0.1 |
| Statutory Rape | 695 | 95.2 | 35 | 4.8 | 730 | 0.3 |
| TOTAL | 181,489 | 71.9 | 70,799 | 27.8 | 252,288 | 100.0 |

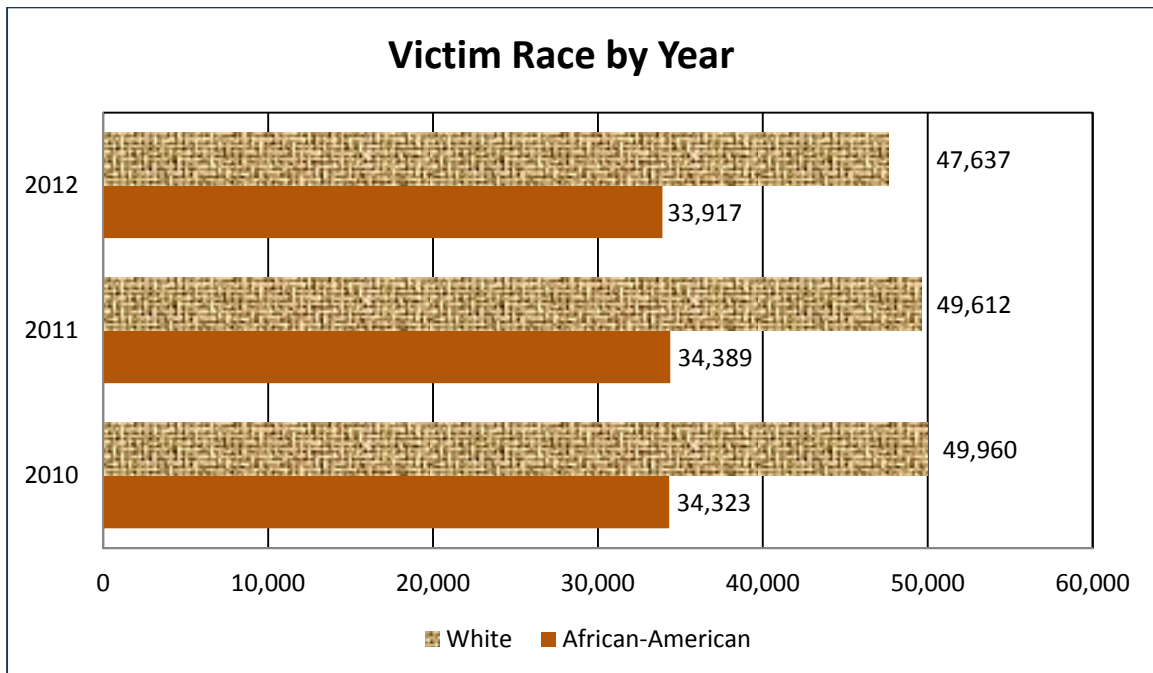
Domestic violence may often be perceived as violence against women. There are numerous agencies nationally and locally that advocate specifically for battered and abused women. The current analyses of domestic offenses in the state of Tennessee supports this notion that domestic violence is most often perpetrated on female victims. Data collected from TIBRS revealed that women were consistently the primary victims of domestic violence offenses each year from 2010 through 2012 with the exception of one offense, Forcible Sodomy. Of the domestic violence offenses, Forcible Rape had the highest number and percentage of Female victims each year with 660 (98.4%) in 2010; 655 (99.1%) in 2011; and 551 (99.1%) in 2012. Male victims accounted for 27.8 percent of all domestic violence victims. As such, females in Tennessee are three times more likely than males to become victims of domestic abuse.

2012 Domestic Violence Victims by Race & Sex



Domestic Violence Victims by Race

Secondary analysis of the TIBRS data element Race found that of the 252,288 domestic abuse victims with a known gender reported during the study period, those identified as having a Race other than African-American or White accounted for less than one percent. As a result, African-American and White victims will be specifically highlighted in this study. Though not omitted from the total victim count, due to the very low representation, other victim races (i.e. Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and Unknown) will not be detailed in the current study. African-American males were the least likely to be victimized. Though with very little percentage change, the overall number of White victims decreased each year, while the number of African-American victims fluctuated showing a slight increase from 2010 to 2011 and then decreasing in 2012.



Though Whites were victimized at a higher rate overall than African-Americans, there were several offenses that showed even greater disparity between these two racial groups in terms of victimization. Of the Incest victims, 87.2% reported their race as White; 78.9% of Sexual Assault with an Object offenses had White victims; and a total of 69.1% of Murder/Non-negligent Homicides flagged as domestically related identified the victim race as White. Over the three year period, 961 victims of Kidnapping/Abduction were African-American accounting for 42.4% victims of that particular offense. This offense presents the highest percentage of African-American victims during the study. African-American victims accounted for 41.8% of all Aggravated Assaults and 41.1% of all Simple Assaults.

Intimate Relationships

Though domestic violence victims and offenders can have various interpersonal relationships, the intimate relationship is most often the center of attention when addressing domestic abuse. Intimate relationships may present as formal relationships such as marriage or less formal relationships such as dating. The National Violence Against Women Survey revealed that 25 percent of female respondents acknowledged that they “were raped and/or physically assaulted by a current or former spouse, cohabitating partner, or date at some time in their life” as compared to 7.6 percent of male respondents (NVAWS, 2012).

To examine just such relationships, one particular TIBRS data element was used. TIBRS collects information concerning the particular relationship between the victim and offender. This element, Victim to Offender (V-O) relationship, was used. More specifically, the intimate V-O relationships of Spouse, Ex-Spouse, and Boyfriend/Girlfriend were analyzed.

| TIBRS Domestic Violence Victim to Offender Relationships | |
|---|---------------------|
| Within Family | |
| Spouse | Grandchild |
| Common-Law Spouse | In-Law |
| Parent | Stepparent |
| Sibling | Stepchild |
| Child | Stepsibling |
| Grandparent | Other Family Member |
| Outside Family | |
| Boyfriend/Girlfriend | Ex-Spouse |
| Child of Boyfriend/Girlfriend | Homosexual |

Spouse/Ex-Spouse

The Spouse and Ex-Spouse relationships were examined together for comparison purposes. Results revealed that the number of domestic abuse victims reporting Spouse as the V-O relationship greatly outnumbered Ex-Spouse relationships each year by approximately 6 to 1. Over the three year period, a total of 42,372 domestic violence victims reported their relationship to the offender as Spouse; and 6,793 victims reported their V-O relationship as Ex-Spouse. Spouses were reported as offenders of domestic violence approximately four times more often than Ex-Spouses. African-American males were the least likely to be reported victims of domestic violence abuse by a spouse (6.1%) or ex-spouse (5.3%). African-American females were victimized at a higher rate than their male counterparts accounting for 18.4% of victims reporting Spouse V-O relationship and 16.5% of victims with Ex-Spouse

relationship. The researchers found that White males were victimized more often by Ex-Spouses than African-American females during the three year period accounting for 18.8% of reported victims in this category. White male victims reported a Spouse relationship in domestic violence offenses 18.1% (only .3% difference from African-American female victims). Of all the victims reporting Spouse and Ex-Spouse relationships with their domestic abuse offenders, White females account for over half of all victims (55.9% - Spouse V-O; 58.6% Ex-Spouse V-O).

Spouse/Ex-Spouse Relationship by Sex and Race

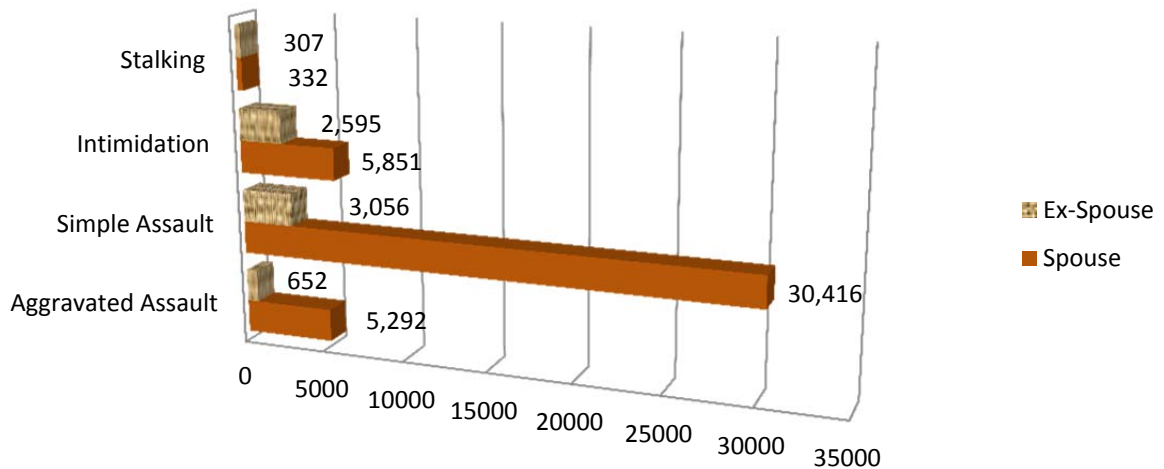
| Victim to Offender Relationship | 2012 | | 2011 | | 2010 | |
|---------------------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|
| | Total | % of Total | Total | % of Total | Total | % of Total |
| Spouse | 14,850 | | 14,629 | | 15,355 | |
| Male | 3,236 | 21.8% | 3,569 | 24.4% | 3,575 | 23.3% |
| African-American | 807 | 5.4% | 881 | 6.0% | 892 | 5.8% |
| White | 2,393 | 16.1% | 2,646 | 18.1% | 2,650 | 17.3% |
| Female | 10,021 | 67.5% | 10,873 | 74.3% | 11,098 | 72.3% |
| African-American | 2,463 | 16.6% | 2,590 | 17.7% | 2,737 | 17.8% |
| White | 7,410 | 49.9% | 8,105 | 55.4% | 8,164 | 53.2% |
| Ex-Spouse | 2,151 | | 2,310 | | 2,332 | |
| Male | 540 | 25.1% | 585 | 25.3% | 531 | 22.8% |
| African-American | 117 | 5.4% | 137 | 5.9% | 103 | 4.4% |
| White | 417 | 19.4% | 442 | 19.1% | 419 | 18.0% |
| Female | 1,611 | 74.9% | 1,725 | 74.7% | 1,801 | 77.2% |
| African-American | 365 | 17.0% | 385 | 16.7% | 368 | 15.8% |
| White | 1,236 | 57.5% | 1,325 | 57.4% | 1,422 | 61.0% |

Please note: Totals include Races of all victims reported as having a known gender. Adding only given figures for Black and White victims will not give an accurate total. Totals in bold are accurate totals for all victims reporting the given relationship and gender.

Examination of offenses committed by domestic violence offenders identified as having a Spouse or Ex-Spouse relationship with their victims found several noteworthy trends. Similar to the findings for the entire study population, Spouses and Ex-Spouses were most likely to be victims of assault between 2010 and 2012. Of the 42,372 victims reporting a Spouse victim to offender relationship, 71.8% were victims of Simple Assault. Similarly 45.0% of the 6,793 victims reporting an Ex-Spouse Victim to Offender Relationship were documented as being Simple Assaults. These two intimate relationships resulted in 58 Murder/Non-negligent Homicides during the three year period. The vast majority, 96.6% (56), were reported as having a Spouse V-O relationship. Demographically, victims of homicide by a Spouse were most likely to be White accounting for 71.4%, whereas African-American victims accounted for 26.8%.

More specifically, 53.6% were white females; 25.0% were African-American females; and 17.9% were White males. The remaining two victims were identified as an African-American male and an Asian/Pacific Islander male.

Assault Offenses with Spouse and Ex Spouse Victim to Offender Relationships

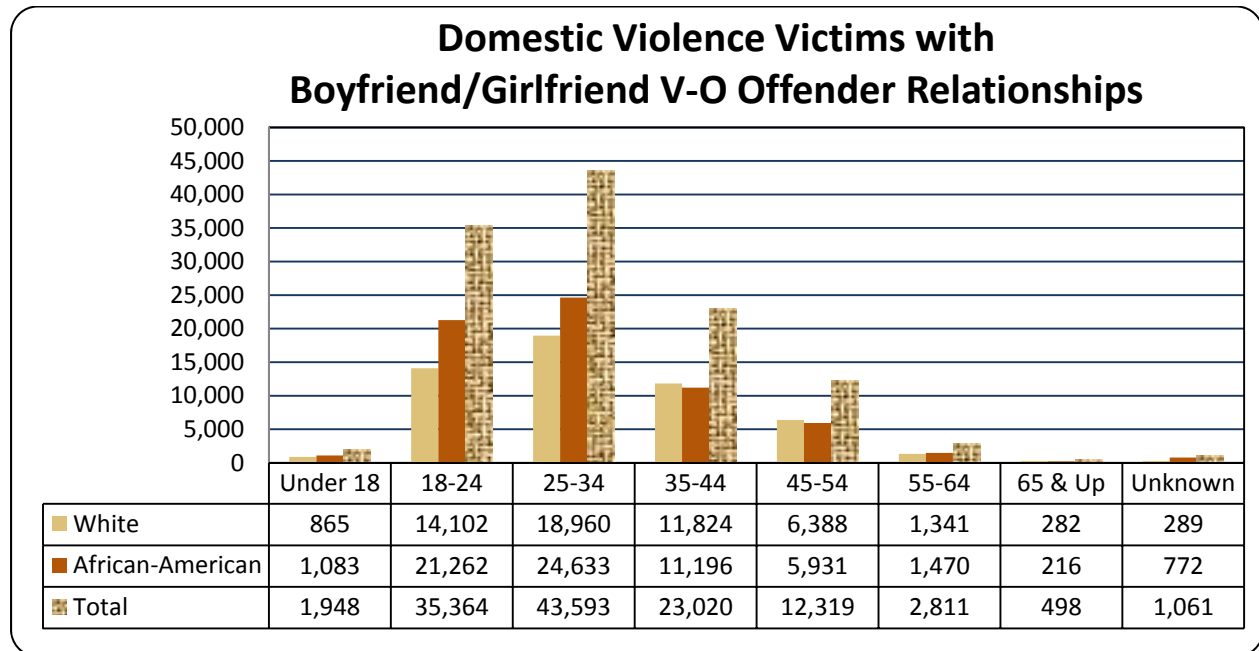


Boyfriend/Girlfriend

The research literature often documents the relationship between domestic victims and their abusers as Boyfriend/Girlfriend. From 2010 to 2012, Tennessee law enforcement agencies reported 111,534 Boyfriend/Girlfriend Victim to Offender relationships flagged as domestic violence incidents. Specific demographic information of both victims and offenders was examined to better understand domestic abuse within Boyfriend/Girlfriend relationships. Of these victims, 48.6% identified their Race as White and 50.7% were African-American which combined for a total of 99.3%. Victims reporting their offender as a Boyfriend/Girlfriend were most frequently females. Of the 111,534 abuse victims reporting this relationship, 88,794 were females accounting for 79.6%. When adding in the factor of Race, analysis revealed approximately a two percent difference between White and African-American female victims at 38.6% and 40.4%. Similarly, only a fraction of a percentage separated African-American and White male victims reporting 10.2% and 10.0% respectively. Since the previous domestic violence study was published, African-American women have surpassed White women in the frequency of reported violence at the hands of a Boyfriend. A breakdown of age groups showed age ranges 18 to 24 and 25 to 34 had the highest frequency of domestic abuse victims reporting Boyfriend/Girlfriend relationships to his/her abuser.

Perpetrators of domestic violence against a Boyfriend or Girlfriend were most often documented as males with three in every four incidents during this period having a male offender. More specifically,

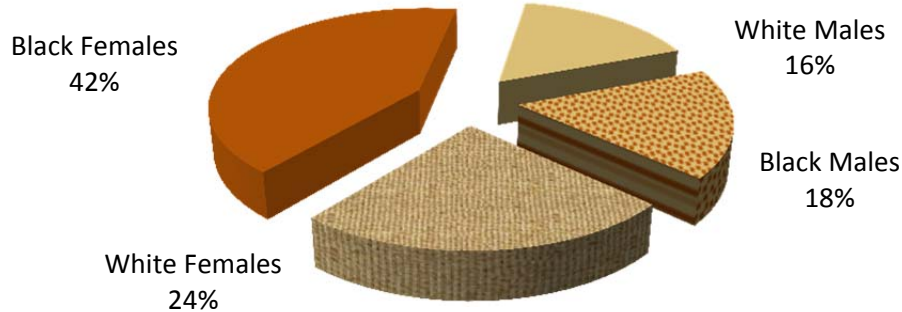
African-American males accounted for 43.3% of reported offenders followed by White males at 31.9%. Offenders aged 25 to 34 years old accounted for 36.1% of offenders, the largest age group. When cross examining the demographic variables of Race and Age, results revealed the largest group of offenders was identified as African-American within the age group of 25 to 34 at 20.3%.



Homosexual Relationship

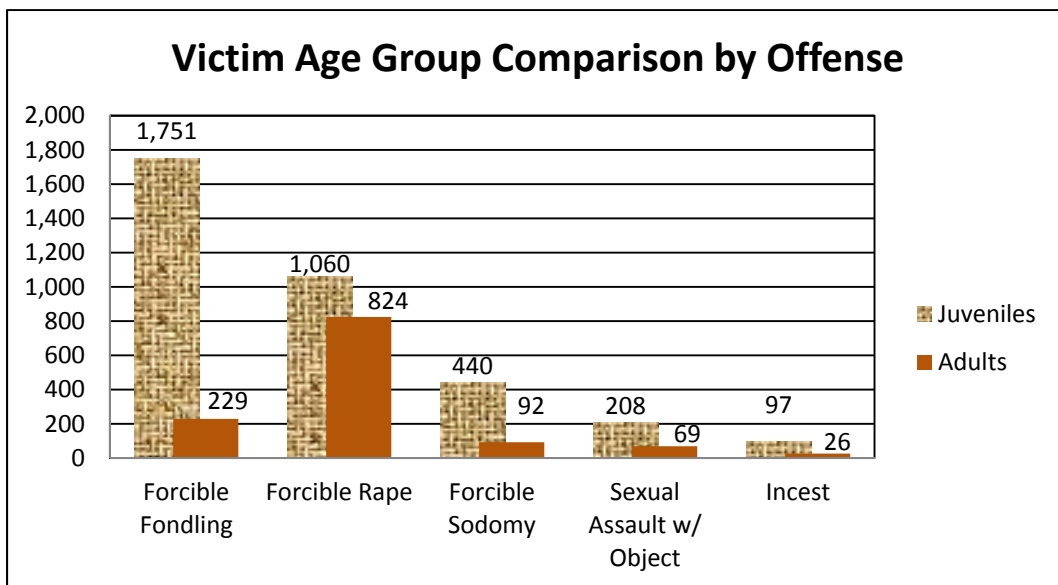
A total of 3,879 Homosexual Victim to Offender relationships were documented as domestic violence during from 2010 through 2012. This particular TIBRS code specifies the victim and offender as being individuals of the same sex that are involved in an intimate relationship. Given this definition, the gender data element being reported for victims will inherently be mirrored for the respective offenders. Examination of the domestic violence offenses reported reveal that 72.4% of the reported offenses were Simple Assault. Aggravated Assault was the second most frequently reported offense at 545 (14.1%). Females were most likely to be victims and offenders (66.1%) of domestic violence between same-sex couples. When cross examining race and gender, African-American females accounted for the largest percentage of victims and perpetrators at 41.6%. White and African-American males showed very little difference in the number of Homosexual Victim to Offender relationships at 16.3% and 17.4% respectively.

Domestic Violence Victims & Offenders with Homosexual V-O Relationship



Juvenile Victims

Of the domestic violence victims, juveniles accounted for approximately ten percent of victims each year of the study with 8,660 (10.2%) in 2010, 8,412 (9.9%) in 2011, and 8,084 (9.8%) in 2012. Female juveniles were reported as victims around 60.0% each year while Male juveniles were reported as victims around 40.0% each year. This trend was true in the previous three-year domestic violence study as well. The most frequently reported offense for female victims was Forcible Rape for each year. This mirrors the trend found in the adult female domestic violence victims. Similarly, the four TIBRS Assault offenses combine to account for the vast majority (79.0%) of crimes against juvenile victims just as was found to be true for the entire study population.



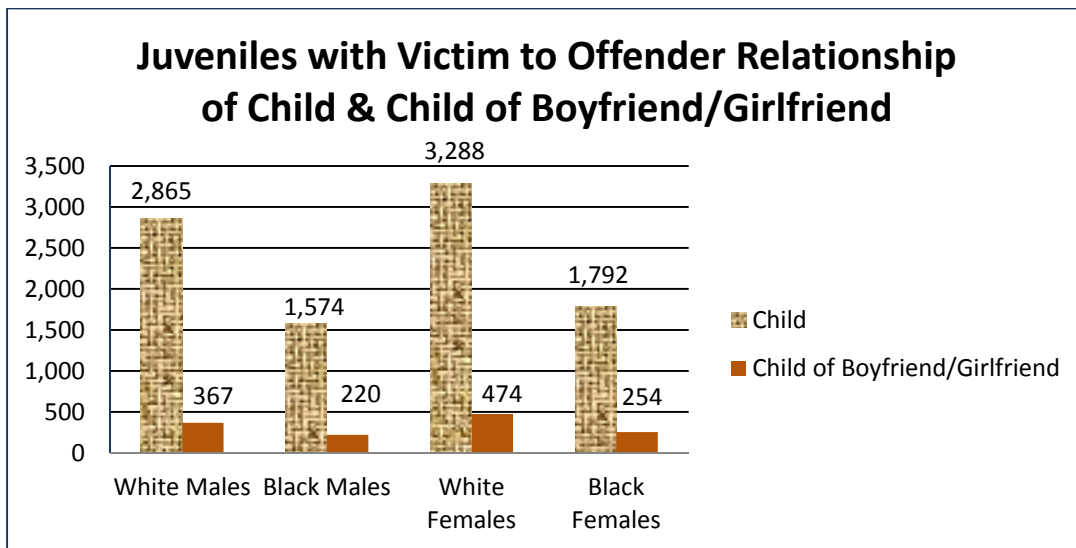
The chart above depicts five offenses in which juveniles are victimized at a higher rate than adults. Juveniles were more than seven times more likely to be victims of Forcible Fondling in a domestic assault than adults. Juveniles accounted for 56.1% of all reported Forcible Rapes during the study period and 82.6% of all Forcible Sodomy offenses. Further examination of Victim to Offender relationships for

these specific Sex offenses revealed that one in three perpetrators of Forcible Rape and Forcible Fondling offenses against juvenile victims were identified as Other Family Members.

Child

The Victim to Offender (V-O) relationship *Child* denotes the offender as being the parent (mother or father) of the victim. In the state of Tennessee, a total of 16,639 such relationships were reported in domestic violence offenses. This particular TIBRS data element, when specifically addressing juvenile victims, can be considered a direct indication of child abuse. The majority of domestic violence incidents indicating a Child V-O relationship reported to TIBRS between 2010 and 2012 had victims under age 18. For TIBRS purposes these individuals are considered to be juveniles and any physical assaults perpetrated against them are inherently child abuse. The same is true for the Child of Boyfriend/Girlfriend domestic violence relationship code when the victim’s age is under 18. Several local and state agencies such as the Department of Children’s Services and Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee advocate strongly on behalf of juveniles that are abused and/or neglected and try to prevent future abuse.

Three year totals for the Child V-O relationship for domestic violence offenses show several trends in the data. Each year juveniles, on average, accounted for 58.1% of victims abused by one or more parent(s). More specifically, females under age 18 were most frequently reported as being victimized by their parents accounting for 31.0% of all Child V-O relationships at 5,154. Representing 34.0% of those victims were White Females under age 18. This demographic group was victimized at a higher rate than any other combination of race, sex, and age group within this study.



Whites were victimized by their parents at approximately 1.5 times the rate of African-Americans. Analysis of Race showed approximately a 29.0% disparity between African-American and White victims of domestic abuse having a Child V-O relationship. Of the 3,366 juvenile victims with a Child V-O relationship identified as having a Race of African-American, 1,792 (53.2%) were female and 1,574 (46.8) were male.

Child of Boyfriend/Girlfriend

During the three-year study period, a total of 1,338 domestic violence offenses were committed against juveniles by the boyfriend or girlfriend of the child's parent. This particular relationship information is captured via the Child of Boyfriend/Girlfriend code in the TIBRS Victim to Offender data element. Eight juvenile victims of Murder/Non-negligent Homicide were reported as having a Child of Boyfriend/Girlfriend relationship with his/her offender. Additionally, 252 offenses classified as Aggravated Assault were documented accounting for 18.8% of victims. The majority of offenses, where the offender was determined to be the parent's boyfriend or girlfriend, were Simple Assaults at 55.1% of victims in this relationship category. Similar to the "Child" V-O relationship, a distinct race disparity of about 27.4% exists between White and African American juvenile victims.

The examination of offender demographics provides excellent insight into what groups are most likely to commit crimes against a child of their boyfriend or girlfriend. Males are, by far, more likely to offend against the child of their girlfriend, accounting for 80.9% of all offenders reported in domestic violence offenses with the corresponding Child of Boyfriend/Girlfriend Victim to Offender relationship. When adding the variable of race, White males are reported in 46.0% of cases, and African-American males are the offenders 34.9% of the time.

Clearance of Domestic Violence Offenses

TIBRS offenses can be cleared two ways, arrest or exceptional means, by law enforcement agencies. Per TIBRS, incidents are exceptionally cleared "when an element beyond law enforcement control prevents a physical arrest." (TIBRS Data Collection Manual, 10th ed., 2012, p. 9)

Clearing domestic violence incidents can be difficult when considering the compounding factors that contribute to the cooperation of victims and potential witnesses. Because of the very nature of domestic violence and the close interpersonal relationships that exist between the victim and offender, it can be challenging for law enforcement to complete an arrest. Fear of retaliation is a very strong deterrent for domestic violence victims. Cohabiting domestic violence victims and offenders can present an obvious challenge in clearing an incident due to victims not cooperating in order to prevent subsequent abuse and turmoil within the household. One of the most common variables contributing to the lack of victim cooperation is the fear of retaliation. Additional future physical and/or mental abuse and loss of residence are just a few potential negative consequences when pressing charges against the offender or cooperating in the investigation by the victim.

Over half of the domestic violence incidents reported during the study period were cleared (55.4%). Of the 140,637 domestic violence incidents cleared in TIBRS from 2010 through 2012, 81.5% were cleared by arrest. The remaining 18.5% of cleared incidents were cleared exceptionally. In order for Tennessee law enforcement agencies to clear an incident exceptionally, the following conditions must be met: the investigation established identity of at least one offender; sufficient probable cause must have been developed to support the arrest, charging, and prosecution of the offender; the exact location of the offender must be known; there must be a reason outside of law enforcement control preventing arrest. (TIBRS Data Collection Manual, 10th ed., 2012)

| Domestic Violence Exceptional Clearances 2010-2012 | |
|---|---------------|
| Offense Type | Totals |
| Death of the Offender | 125 |
| Prosecution Declined | 4,271 |
| Extradition Denied | 29 |
| Victim Refused to Cooperate | 21,514 |
| Juvenile/No Custody | 145 |
| Total | 26,084 |

The vast majority of exceptional clearances, 82.5%, were documented as Victim Refused to Cooperate. As defined by TIBRS, Victim Refused to Cooperate can only clear an incident when the victim has actually stated or made it known to the agency that they refuse to cooperate or pursue prosecution of the offender. Death of the Offender, Extradition Denied, and Juvenile/No Custody each accounted for less than one percent of all clearances during the study period.

Summary

The problem of domestic violence has consistently plagued our society. Given the prevalence of domestic violence and its consequences to individuals as well as the local and state community, the current study assessed domestic abuse within the state of Tennessee. Findings of the study revealed that the number of incidents reduced each year during the study period from 2010 to 2012 for a total percentage decrease of 3.0%. Overall, females were 2.5 times more likely to be reported as victims than males, and victim Race was most often documented as White (69.1%). This victim demographic information gives insight into what populations are most at-risk for domestic violence in the state.

The overwhelming majority of domestically related offenses reported during the study period were assaults. The four assault offenses combined to account for 96.8% of all domestic violence incidents in the state of Tennessee. Simple Assault was the most frequently reported offense at 69.2%.

Examination of Victim to Offender relationships revealed that Spouses are abused at a rate almost four times that of Ex-Spouses. The data from the Boyfriend/Girlfriend Victim to Offender relationship element showed very little percentage difference between African-American and White female victims: 40.4% and 38.6% respectively. Perpetrators of domestic abuse against a boyfriend or girlfriend were most often African-American males accounting for 43.3% of all perpetrators.

Another significant finding revealed that over half (58.1%) of the victims reporting Child Victim to Offender relationships were juveniles. A 36.0% racial disparity was found with Whites under age 18 being victimized at greater rate than African-Americans within the same age group. It is vital to assess

the prevalence of juveniles being abused at the hands of parents as this implicates child abuse within the community.

TIBRS data supports the fact that women and children generally have the highest potential for domestic abuse victimization. Local, state, and national agencies across several disciplines including law enforcement and social and child services avidly oppose domestic violence and advocate for its victims. These various institutions and coalitions battle domestic abuse by providing prevention training, intervention, shelter, and counseling for both victims and potential victims of domestic violence. Hopefully, the current assessment of domestic violence in Tennessee exposes the need for continued and increased efforts in the battle against domestic abuse within our community.

References

National domestic violence fact sheet (2012). Retrieved from

[http://www.ncadv.org/files/DomesticViolenceFactSheet\(National\).pdf](http://www.ncadv.org/files/DomesticViolenceFactSheet(National).pdf)

Tennessee Bureau of Investigation Crime Statistics Unit (2012). *TIBRS Data Collection: An instructional manual for the implementation of the Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System* (10th ed.)

Tennessee Economic Council on Women (2006). *The impact of domestic violence on the Tennessee economy*. Retrieved from http://www.tn.gov/sos/ecw/domestic_violence.htm