

# NATIONAL COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

## SEXUAL ASSAULT AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

### WHY IT MATTERS

Perpetrators who are physically violent towards their intimate partners are often sexually violent as well. Intimate partner sexual assault is a widespread form of domestic violence affecting more than 1.3 million women each year in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Women who are both physically and sexually abused are at higher risk of being injured or killed than women who suffer from only one form of abuse.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- 5.3 million intimate partner victimizations occur each year among U.S. women ages 18 and over.<sup>2</sup>
- In America, 1 in 5 women and 1 in 33 men have experienced an attempted or completed rape.<sup>3</sup>
- Three in four women over age 18 who reported being raped were physically assaulted by a current or former husband, cohabitating partner, or date.<sup>4</sup>
- 19% of all incidents of domestic violence include sexual assaults.<sup>5</sup>
- 7.7% of women over age 18 in the U.S. have been raped by an intimate partner.<sup>6</sup>
- Between one-third and one-half of all battered women are raped by their partners at least once during their relationship.<sup>7</sup>
- More than half (52%) of women raped by an intimate partner were sexually assaulted multiple times by the same partner.<sup>8</sup>
- 62% of women raped more than once by the same partner reported that the abuse lasted one year or more.<sup>9</sup>
- FBI data show that rapes are up nearly 5% since 2000.<sup>10</sup>

### MARITAL RAPE

- Marital rape occurs in all types of marriages regardless of age, social class, race or ethnicity.
- Marital rape accounts for 25% of all rapes, affecting well over 75,000 women each year.<sup>11</sup>
- Between 10% and 14% of married women will be raped at some time during their marriages.<sup>12</sup>
- Married women are particularly likely to be raped multiple times by their husbands before escaping the violence.<sup>13</sup>
- Women who are raped and battered by their partners experience the violence in various ways. Sexual assault may follow a battering incident or when the abuser wants to reconcile after a "fight" and then coerces his partner into having sex.<sup>14</sup>

### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Women who are disabled,<sup>15</sup> pregnant,<sup>16</sup> or attempting to leave their abusers<sup>16</sup> are at an increased risk of intimate partner rape.
- Youth are particularly impacted by intimate partner violence. Women ages 16 to 24 experience the highest per capita rates of violence.<sup>17</sup>
- 70% of sexual assaults against teenage and college women are committed by a date or acquaintance.<sup>18</sup>
- 52% of participants in a study of sexual coercion in gay and lesbian relationships reported at least one incident of sexual assault.<sup>19</sup>
- Only 16% of all sexual assaults are reported to the police. Among women raped by their partners, the reporting level drops to 7.5%.<sup>20</sup>
- When asked why they chose not to report their sexual assault, 21.2% said they were scared their attacker would retaliate, 16% said they wanted to keep the incident private, and 13% believed the police could not do anything.<sup>21</sup>

### CONSEQUENCES

- 36% of women raped by an intimate partner sustained an injury other than the rape itself during their most recent assault.<sup>22</sup> Only 29% of these injured women received medical attention.<sup>23</sup>
- Individuals who are victims of physical and sexual aggression in their intimate partner relationship are at higher risk for more severe physical and psychological issues. These survivors often suffer from overwhelming feelings of endangerment, flashbacks, depression, and suicidal thoughts.
- The cost of intimate partner rape and physical assault exceed \$5.8 billion each year, of which \$4.1 billion is spent on direct health services.<sup>24</sup>



The Public Policy Office of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) is a national leader in the effort to create and influence Federal legislation that positively affects the lives of domestic violence victims and children. We work closely with advocates at the local, state and national level to identify the issues facing domestic violence victims, their children and the people who serve them and to develop a legislative agenda to address these issues. NCADV welcomes you to join us in our effort to end domestic violence.

## IF YOU NEED HELP

If you or someone you know is in a physically or sexually abusive relationship and wants help, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE or visit [www.ndvh.org](http://www.ndvh.org). For the Rape, Abuse, Incest, National Network (RAINN) call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-HOPE or visit [www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org).

## HELP SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

- Encourage your Primary Care Physicians and OB/GYNs to screen women for signs of physical and sexual violence and ask if they are in a violent or abusive relationship during regular checkups.
- Demand that state Legislators enact policy and laws that punish perpetrators but also provide funding and assistance for victims of sexual assault.
- Ask your local schools and universities to address the issues of sexual violence in their classrooms and through victim assistance programs.
- Ask your Member of Congress to support the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. VAWA includes a provision, the Sexual Assault Services Act, that will create a funding stream of federal money for direct services for victims of sexual assault. Visit [www.vawa2005.org](http://www.vawa2005.org) for more information.
- Volunteer at your local rape crisis center or state sexual assault coalition. Visit the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence at [www.naesv.org](http://www.naesv.org) or RAINN at [www.rainn.org/scasa.html](http://www.rainn.org/scasa.html) to learn about organizations in your state.

## SOURCES

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- <sup>4</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>5</sup> R. Bachman & L. Salzman, *Violence Against Women: Estimates from the Redesigned National Crime Victimization Survey*, Bureau of Justice Statistics (1995).
- <sup>6</sup> Tjaden & Thoennes, (2000).
- <sup>7</sup> R.K. Bergen *Wife Rape: Understanding the response of survivors and service providers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage (1996).
- <sup>8</sup> Tjaden & Thoennes, (2000).
- <sup>9</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>10</sup> Sherman, Mark. *Rape Up, While Murders Down in 2004*. The Washington Post. 17 October, 2005. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/17/AR2005101700508.html>.
- <sup>11</sup> M. Randall & L. Haskall, *Sexual Violence in Women's Lives*, *Violence Against Women*, 1(1), 6-31. (1995),
- <sup>12</sup> D.E.H. Russell (1990). *Rape in Marriage*, New York: MacMillian Press.
- <sup>13</sup> P. Mahoney & L. Williams, *Sexual Assault in Marriage: Prevalence, consequences and treatment of wife rape*. In J. Jasinski & L. Williams (Eds.), *Partner violence: A comprehensive review of 20 years of research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage (1998) .
- <sup>14</sup> R.K. Bergen, *Wife Rape: Understanding the response of survivors and service providers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage (1996).
- <sup>15</sup> Mahoney & Williams, (1998).
- <sup>16</sup> Bergen, (1996).