

**Home Office Research Study 237**

# Rape and sexual assault of women: the extent and nature of the problem

Findings from the British Crime Survey

Andy Myhill and Jonathan Allen

*The views expressed in this report are those of the authors, not necessarily those of the Home Office (nor do they reflect Government policy).*

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# Foreword

Measuring levels of sexual victimisation has always been difficult. Only a small fraction of these offences are reported to the police and recorded by them, and even getting people to talk freely to interviewers can be difficult. The British Crime Survey (BCS) has developed methodologies designed to overcome these problems and this report presents the findings of innovative computerised self-completion questionnaires on sexual victimisation. These were included in the 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys and expanded on a similar questionnaire contained in the 1994 survey. The self-completion format encourages wider reporting of experiences than the main face-to-face part of the BCS and reveals sexual victimisation and rape in England and Wales to be a widespread problem.

The questionnaires also explore the nature of sexual victimisation in more depth than in the 1994 sweep of the survey. Information was gathered on, amongst other things, the relationship of the victim to the perpetrator, repeat victimisation, reporting to the police and survivors' perceptions of their experiences. The results provide policy makers, practitioners and CJS professionals with the information to challenge entrenched stereotypes of rape that are still evident in some areas.

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Jonathan Allen

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The 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys included computerised self-completion questionnaires designed to provide the most accurate-ever estimates of the extent and nature of sexual victimisation in England and Wales. The questions were asked of both men and women; this publication presents findings on the victimisation of women only<sup>1</sup>. A nationally representative sample of 6,944 women aged 16 to 59 answered the 2000 self-completion module. The responses of these women were used to estimate the extent of sexual victimisation. In order to examine the nature of incidents, the 1998 and 2000 modules were combined, to give a total of 1,183 female victims.

Respondents were filtered into the 2000 self-completion module via three 'screener' questions (see Chapter 2):

- *Since age 16*, has someone, either a stranger or someone you know, used violence, threats or intimidation to force you to do sexual things *against your will*?
- [Apart from this] *since age 16*, has someone, either a stranger or someone you know, used violence, threats or intimidation to force you to have sexual intercourse *against your will*? By sexual intercourse we mean either vaginal or anal penetration
- [Apart from this] *since age 16*, has someone, either a stranger or someone you know, *ever attempted* to force you to have sexual intercourse or make you do sexual things *against your will*?

Estimates of the proportion of women suffering sexual victimisation were derived from 'follow-up' questions contained in the module (see Appendix G). When considering the extent of sexual victimisation, estimates could be calculated for 'rape' (defined as penetration of the vagina or anus) and 'any sexual victimisation' (including rape). When exploring the nature of incidents, it was possible to generate separate categories of 'rape' and 'sexual assault'. There is currently no legal offence of sexual assault, but the questions in the module include the word 'force', which implies an assault.

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1. A separate Home Office publication will present the findings relating to the sexual victimisation of men.

## **Current levels of sexual victimisation**

The 2000 British Crime Survey (BCS) was conducted in the first half of 2000, with the majority of interviews taking place between January and April. Respondents were asked if they had experienced an incident of sexual victimisation since age 16 and also 'in the last 12 months' (preceding the date of the interview).

- 0.9 per cent of women aged 16 to 59 said they had been subject to some form of sexual victimisation (including rape) during the last year.
- 0.4 per cent of women said they had been raped in this period.
- In the year preceding the 2000 BCS it is estimated that 61,000 women were the victim of a rape in England and Wales.

## **Levels of lifetime (since age 16) victimisation**

- Around 1 in 10 women (9.7%) said they had experienced some form of sexual victimisation (including rape) since age 16.
- Around 1 in 20 women (4.9%) said they had been raped on at least one occasion since age 16.
- The BCS estimates that approximately three-quarters of a million women (754,000) have been raped on at least one occasion since age 16.
- There are several methodological reasons why these figures are likely to be under-estimates of the true levels of sexual victimisation in England and Wales.

## **Risk factors for sexual victimisation**

- Age is the biggest risk factor for experiencing sexual victimisation; young women aged 16 to 24 were more likely to say they had been sexually victimised in the last year than older women.



- Single women, students, and women living in privately rented households also experienced higher than average risks of sexual victimisation; it is likely, however, that this is the same pattern reflected for age – young women are disproportionately found in these socio-demographic groups.

## **Perpetrators**

- Women are most likely to be sexually attacked by men they know in some way, most often partners (32%) or acquaintances (22%).
- ‘Current partners’ (at the time of the attack) were responsible for 45 per cent of rapes reported to the survey.
- ‘Strangers’ were only responsible for 8 per cent of rapes reported to the survey.

## **Contact with the police**

- Eighteen per cent of incidents of sexual victimisation reported to the survey came to the attention of the police; the police came to know about 20 per cent of rapes.
- Of rape incidents the police came to know about, 52 per cent were reported by the victim, with 35 per cent being reported by somebody other than the victim; in 13 per cent of cases, the police found out in some other way.
- Of rape victims who had contact with the police, 32 per cent were ‘very satisfied’ with the way the police handled the matter, while 22 per cent were ‘very dissatisfied’.

## **Victims’ perceptions of their experiences**

- Less than two-thirds (60%) of female rape victims were prepared to self-classify their experience as ‘rape’.
- Less than three-quarters (70%) of women who self-classified themselves as having been the victim of ‘attempted rape’ also self-classified this incident as a crime.

- Women who were sexually victimised by either a current partner or a 'date' were the least likely to say they had been the victim of a crime.

Rape is one of the most horrific events anybody can experience. According to the British Crime Survey, it is the crime that women fear more than any other<sup>2</sup>. The issue of rape, and sex crime in general, has provoked fierce debate among commentators and researchers over the past couple of decades. In particular, feminist critics have long argued that official crime statistics (see Appendix E) *and* generic crime surveys tend to underestimate the true extent of rape. Conversely, some feminist authors have been accused of ‘advocacy research’ and of over-exaggerating the extent of rape. The relationship between rape, sexual victimisation and the law has also historically generated much debate, particularly in relation to the questions of rape within marriage and of the unequal application of rape laws between men and women.

## **The parameters of ‘sexual victimisation’**

### ***The legal framework***

The study of sexual victimisation is complicated by the wide range of definitions that exist legally, socially and in the academic literature. The legal position is complex. Laws on rape and sexual assault are found in both statute and common law, but ‘much of the law dates from a hundred years ago’ and has altered only through ‘piecemeal changes and amendments’ (Setting the Boundaries:1). The last time parliament considered the structure of sex offences as a whole was in 1956, but the resulting act of parliament was ‘a consolidation measure...passed with no real debate’ (ibid). There have been major developments since then, notably the legalisation of homosexuality in 1967 and the criminalisation of rape within marriage in 1994. The legal definition of rape was also altered in 1994, to include penile penetration of the anus. Thus, the offence of male rape has only been part of the criminal law for a short period of time, despite being recognised in the academic literature for some years.

Laws governing sexual victimisation are less codified and less prescriptive in England and Wales than in several other countries, notably the United States. In the US, states’ laws vary, but many have passed ‘reform statutes rape’ laws, defining rape as ‘nonconsensual sexual penetration’ (Koss, 1992:62). ‘Sexual penetration’ is defined as ‘sexual intercourse, cunnilingus, fellation, anal intercourse, or any other intrusion, however slight, of any part of a person’s body,

2. The 2000 British Crime Survey estimates that 29 per cent of women are ‘very worried’ about being raped (Kershaw et al, 2000:48). The survey does not ask about, for example, murder or child abduction.

but emission of semen is not required' (Michigan Stat. Ann., cited in Koss, *ibid*). Currently, the key offences relating to rape and sexual assault in England and Wales are 'rape' (penile penetration of vagina or anus), 'indecent assault' and 'burglary with intent to commit rape'. The offence of 'indecent assault' currently covers a broad range of criminal behaviours, ranging from 'groping' and 'unwanted fondling' to penetration with objects and forced fellatio. In early 1999 the Home Secretary announced a review of sex offences. The review was published as a consultation paper in July 2000<sup>3</sup>. It recommended new definitions of rape and sexual assault:

- rape be redefined to include penetration of the mouth, anus or female genitalia by a penis;
- a new offence of sexual assault by penetration to deal with all other forms of sexual penetration of the anus and genitalia (this should be equally as serious as rape and carry the same maximum sentence of life imprisonment);
- a new offence of sexual assault to replace other non-penetrative sexual touching now contained in the offence of indecent assault; and
- that consent should be more clearly defined.

These recommendations, if implemented, would make the laws governing sexual victimisation clearer and easier to apply.

### ***The question of consent***

Trials for rape, in particular, often hinge on whether the victim consented or not. The notion of 'consent' is extremely complex, again with various definitions in existence. The law currently states that rape occurs if the victim does not consent, or the perpetrator is 'reckless as to whether there is consent' (Setting the Boundaries:10). It is up to the prosecution to prove there was no consent. What legally constitutes consent has evolved through case law and is judged not to be present when it was achieved by 'the use of force or fear of force (including threats to third parties), the victim was unconscious (including sleep), there is fraudulent misrepresentation of the act as not sexual, there is impersonation of another (e.g., a complainant's husband), the complainant is fundamentally mistaken as to the nature of the act, the complainant did not have understanding and knowledge to decide whether to consent or resist (e.g., age, disability, illness) or the complainant was so drunk or drugged they could not consent' (*ibid*).

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3. 'Setting the Boundaries: Reforming the law on sex offences'.

Many academics and activists have sought to define (the absence of) consent in much broader terms than the legal definitions. For example, Basile (1999) explored ways in which women in abusive relationships 'acquiesce' to sex with their partners. Her qualitative work revealed that the 'threat' of violence does not always have to be explicit or verbally articulated – in certain cases, women would accept 'unwanted sex' because they 'knew what would happen' if they refused (1999:1049). Instances such as these make it even more difficult to define exactly what constitutes rape and what does not. Some writers have provided extremely subjective definitions. Catherine Mackinnon, for example, has said 'politically, I call it rape whenever a woman has had sex and feels violated' (cited in Roiphe, 1993:4).

Empirical research on the prevalence of sexual victimisation has also been extremely controversial. In particular, a study produced by Koss (1987) was heavily criticised by, amongst others, Roiphe (1993), Farrell (1994) and Sommers (1994) and was accused of perpetrating a 'rape crisis myth'. Anderson (2001) went as far as to suggest a 'date rape epidemic myth' was generated in part by feminist sympathisers to win funds to support college courses and educational programmes espousing their own ideological views. In fact, Koss' work has often been widely misquoted and the figure of 'one in four' female college students having been raped, which has become inexorably associated with this debate, is a misinterpretation of her findings<sup>4</sup>. Although the original study was based solely on college students (a high-risk group) and could be said to have contained at least one 'leading' question, Koss' results have been broadly replicated by other studies (see for example, Brenner et al, 1999; Colorado Dept. of Public Health, 1999; and Tjaden and Thoennes, 1998, cited in Koss, 2000). This debate serves very well to emphasise the difficulties of definition associated with research on sexual victimisation.

### ***Social perceptions***

Popular perceptions of rape and sexual assault can certainly be seen to be based on misinformation. Soothill and Walby (1991) conducted an analysis of the media reporting of sex crime and found that 'the popular imagery of rape as represented in the newspapers...typically involves strangers, madmen, multiple attacks and reckless women, some of whom brought it on themselves' (cited in Walby and Myhill, 2001:514). The role of 'rape victim', in particular, is highly stigmatised, with a tendency for society to view rape victims as 'damaged goods' (Koss, 1992:61) with a 'degraded status' (Walby and Myhill, 2001:514).

4. Koss found that 15.4 per cent of female respondents admitted to experiences that matched the legal definition of rape and 12.1 per cent attempted rape. It is the combination of completed rapes and attempts (27.5%) that produces the '1 in 4' statistic (see Koss, 1987:168).

Narrow and sensationalist media coverage helps perpetuate the myth of most sex attacks being committed by strangers. Consequently, it may be difficult for a woman raped by a man known to her to identify herself as having been raped. 'Stranger rapes' may also be perceived as more serious than those involving known perpetrators, despite the fact that the latter also involve a breach of trust (Soothill and Walby, 1991:148). Certainly, many victims of sexual attacks do not acknowledge themselves as having been 'raped' (see Chapter 8). The social perceptions and stigmatisation of sex crime are a key obstacle for the researcher to overcome.

## Previous research

Research into sexual victimisation, as in other areas, is affected to some extent by the qualitative/quantitative paradox. Whilst qualitative work produces richer data, necessarily small samples mean inferences to the wider population cannot be made. Although some writers will claim it is impossible to adequately explore the experiences of a victim using rigid, closed questions; quantitative work is the only way in which the extent of a problem can be measured in a systematic way.

Quantitative surveys on the subject of sexual victimisation originated with the generic crime surveys of the 1970s and early 1980s; and with ground breaking dedicated studies such as that by Russell (1982). Such surveys have certain fundamental limitations (see Appendix C), which are accentuated when attempting to measure highly sensitive issues such as sexual victimisation. The United States 'National Crime Victimization Survey' (NCVS) and the British Crime Survey (BCS) have in the past had limited success in measuring levels of sexual victimisation. Koss (1992) provides a critique of the NCVS, highlighting the reasons why it almost certainly underestimates the incidence of rape in the US. Similarly, estimates of sexual offences generated from the main 'victim form' component of the BCS (see below) are not published, as they are considered to be too low. There are a number of possible reasons for this (see below).

Subsequent survey methodologies have sought to tackle some of the problems that generic crime surveys face when dealing with sexual victimisation and 'violence against women' more generally<sup>5</sup>. In the United States, Straus and Gelles (1975, 1986) undertook a dedicated domestic ('family') violence survey, seeking to take the issue out of the crime context of the NCVS. These studies, though, only explored physical abuse. Another crucial

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5. The majority of the literature in this field focuses on the victimisation of women. Of all the major quantitative surveys that have taken place abroad, only the US 'National Violence Against Women Survey' (NVAWS) broadened its sampling frame to include men.

study was undertaken by Römken (1997) in the Netherlands, who used mixed methods to try and more accurately explore the context of physical and sexual abuse. Data from this study was important in the development of subsequent methodologies.

Some of the most comprehensive data to appear on the sexual victimisation of women came with the dedicated 'violence against women' surveys, led by the Statistics Canada 'Violence Against Women Survey' (VAWS)<sup>6</sup>. So far, Australia and the United States have followed the Canadian example in mounting dedicated surveys and various dedicated surveys have been undertaken in Europe. These often seek to explore the whole range of violence suffered by women, including physical abuse, sexual abuse and 'stalking', and the dynamics of this violence. The European surveys are reasonably varied, with some covering only physical violence and some all violence against women (see Hagemann-White, 2001). Some of the surveys are also restricted to only violence within relationships. In England and Wales, there have been calls from academics and practitioners for a dedicated survey, but no such survey has been undertaken<sup>7</sup>.

The methodology used in dedicated surveys differs from that of generic surveys in a couple of key respects. Firstly, women are encouraged to report a wider range of experiences, some of which may not fit the legal criteria for a crime. Secondly, effort is invested in specially training (usually female only) interviewers. Römken (1997:109) argues for the importance of 'interviewer rapport' in encouraging the disclosure of sensitive information. The main component of the BCS has no gender-matching of interviewers and respondents and a third (33%) of the interviewers for the 1998 BCS were male (the sex of the interviewer was not recorded in 2000). Although it is next to impossible to compare the results from the various surveys that have covered sexual victimisation, due to methodological and country-specific differences (see Appendix B), it is noticeable that dedicated violence against women surveys have usually produced markedly higher rates of victimisation than their generic counterparts.

It should be noted, though, that although dedicated surveys have several advantages over generic surveys for the measurement of sexual victimisation, this does come at a price. Dedicated surveys are expensive and logistically fairly difficult to undertake: a major reason why England and Wales does not, at present, have one. There are significant economic advantages in attempting to minimise the problems associated with measuring sexual

6. See Johnson (1995, 1996).

7. There are also plans to introduce an 'International Violence Against Women Survey' that would ask a standardised set of victimisation questions across a range of countries. An International Project Team has been set up, comprising representatives of HEUNI, UNICRI and Statistics Canada, with a tentative view to beginning fieldwork in the first half of 2002.

victimisation within the context of a generic crime survey. Also, some of the problems of sex matching of interviewers appears to be circumvented by the Computer Assisted Self-Interviewing methodology now used by the BCS. Analysis of the 1998 self-completion screener prevalence estimates (see Chapter 2) revealed that women were no less likely to have reported sexual victimisation when the interviewer was male, as when the interviewer was female (see Table C.4, Appendix C).

## **Sexual victimisation and the British Crime Survey**

The British Crime Survey (BCS) is currently in its ninth sweep since 1982 (see Appendix C). During its lifetime, the BCS has attempted to measure the extent of sexual victimisation (and other sensitive topics) in England and Wales – with varying degrees of success. The methodologies employed to collect information on sensitive topics have evolved over the years.

### ***Main ‘victim form’ estimates***

The structure of the main crime-counting component of the BCS has remained fairly constant since its inception. At the end of the initial (‘main’) section of the questionnaire, there is a series of 25 ‘screener’ questions, asking the respondent whether or not they have been the victim of a particular offence during the survey reference period. Screener questions act as filters. If the respondent answers positively at any of the screeners, they are then asked a series of follow-up questions about the incident (the ‘victim form’). The victim form is a standard set of questions that applies to all incidents and offences.

There has always been a ‘screener’ question for sexual victimisation in the BCS. The sexual screener is asked towards the end of the series of screener questions, after property crimes and other violent crimes. Unlike other screener questions, which in the face-to-face BCS interview are asked verbally, the screener questions relating to sexual victimisation (and domestic violence) are printed on a ‘show card’. The interviewer hands the show card to the respondent, who reads it and answers simply ‘yes’ or ‘no’. This is because there are often other people present during the interview (see Appendix C). If a respondent answers positively to the sexual screener, and other people are present, the interviewer skips the victim form and tries to make arrangements to visit the respondent again, when privacy is possible. The sexual screener question contained in the main BCS is currently worded:

*"Since (reference period starting date) have you been sexually interfered with, assaulted or attacked, either by someone you knew or by a stranger?"*



There are numerous problems with this 'first generation' methodology (Walby and Myhill, 2001:502), notably:

- The 'crime context' – there is an understandable reluctance on the part of victims to disclose to interviewers the details of highly traumatic experiences in any context. Survivors of sexual attacks may be less likely to view themselves as victims of a 'crime' than people who suffer, for example, property crimes. This is particularly likely to be the case for people sexually victimised by a partner or other close relative, which can lead to under-reporting of sexual offences to generic surveys. It is also the case that questions about sensitive topics like sexual victimisation do not 'sit' well after a series of questions about other crimes – the sudden change of emphasis may result in 'knee jerk' responses of 'no' in many cases.
- Interview setting – the BCS takes place face-to-face in the respondent's home. Although interviewers try to arrange to interview respondents alone, this is not always feasible and often they have little control over who is present. It is almost certain that, when presented with the show card, respondents will be less likely to answer positively if there are other people present. This would particularly apply if the other person/people present included the perpetrator(s) of an attack.
- Interviewer sex and training – numerous commentators are agreed that during face-to-face interviews women are much more likely to disclose sexual victimisation to *trained female interviewers*<sup>8</sup>. It would be extremely difficult and prohibitively expensive for survey companies operating generic crime surveys to gender-match interviewers and respondents in all cases. Most dedicated violence against women surveys, on the other hand, have tended to use only female interviewers.

The Home Office recognises the problems presented by the main victim form count of sexual victimisation (see Percy and Mayhew, 1997). The estimates produced by the main survey have not been published, as it is acknowledged that they would be a massive undercount of the true levels of sexual victimisation in England and Wales.

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8. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that men, also, may be more willing to discuss their experiences with women than with other men (personal correspondence with Fay Maxted of Rugby Rape or Sexual Abuse Support Group); see also Sorenson, 1987.

### ***'Self-completion' estimates***

The 1992 BCS first introduced a self-completion component to try and deal with sensitive topics more robustly. Initially, the self-completion component was in a pen-and-paper (PAPI) format, like the rest of the survey. The first self-completion module dealt with personal use of illegal drugs. The respondents completed the questions in private and then put the completed script into a sealed envelope. The self-completion modules are undertaken at the end of the BCS interview, directly after the 'demographics' questions.

In 1994, the main part of the BCS moved to Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI). This opened up the possibility of utilising Computer Assisted Self-Interviewing (CASI) for the self-completion modules. With CASI, the respondent operates the laptop computer themselves, entering their answers which are then 'scrambled' once they have completed the module. CASI has two principal advantages over PAPI. Firstly, the question 'routing' is done automatically, improving data quality and virtually eliminating item non-response (see Erens et al, 2000:1). Secondly, there is evidence to suggest that respondents' feelings of confidentiality are increased using CASI – the so called 'black box' effect (see, for example, Tourangeau and Smith, 1996)<sup>9</sup>. When the BCS drugs self-completion module moved from PAPI to CASI, the percentage of 16 to 29 year-olds disclosing use of cannabis in the last year rose from 12 per cent in 1992 to 20 per cent in 1994. Although comparison was complicated by the issue of there being more missing data in the PAPI questionnaire, the rise was sharp enough to suggest a marked CASI effect. The CASI methodology is also likely to minimise the interviewer effects mentioned previously, as the interviewer does not usually become involved in the self-completion section.

The 1994 BCS contained the first self-completion module on the subject of sexual victimisation. Although it was acknowledged as 'less 'state-of-the-art' than a methodological toe in the water' (Percy and Mayhew, 1997:147) it was an important step in the right direction for the BCS. The 1994 module proved what had already been widely assumed – that the main BCS count of sexual victimisation is a serious undercount. Only 0.7 per cent of women who answered the 1994 main BCS screener question on sexual victimisation responded positively. In contrast, the self-completion module screener questions suggested that 7.5 per cent of women had been subject to some form of sexual victimisation in the last year.

The 1994 self-completion module had three screener questions to filter in incidents of sexual victimisation and included follow-up questions in order to try and estimate the prevalence of sexual victimisation (responses to screener questions are never used to generate prevalence

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9. It should be noted that some comparative studies have found conflicting or inconclusive evidence in relation to CASI improving disclosure of sensitive issues (see de Leeuw et al, 1995).

rates due to the possibility of the respondent answering positively to more than one screener with reference to the same incident; or self-coding an incident via the 'incorrect' screener). However, the follow-up questions revolved around the victim's own perception of the incident. The victim was asked to classify the incident as 'an indecent assault', 'an attempted rape', 'a rape', a 'behaviour you found offensive' or 'none of the above'; so the 'best estimate' of 2 per cent of women ever having been raped only included women who 'had experienced an incident *they called rape*' (Percy and Mayhew, 1997:139, emphasis added). As we have already noted, the status of rape victim is stigmatised and one that many survivors may be reluctant willingly to assume. Respondents were also excluded from answering the follow-up questions in the self-completion module if they had already answered a victim form relating to the same incident in the main part of the survey.

Subsequent BCS self-completion modules have sought to build on the CASI methodology. Other interpersonal violence topics (domestic violence<sup>10</sup> and 'stalking'<sup>11</sup>) have been explored. Sexual victimisation self-completion modules have appeared in the 1998 and 2000 sweeps of the BCS. These modules included enhanced follow-up questions after the initial screeners to (a) provide more accurate prevalence estimates and (b) discover more about the nature of sexual victimisation in England and Wales. The remainder of this report is dedicated to presenting the results generated from these modules and highlighting their methodological strengths and weaknesses.

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10. Mirrlees-Black (1999) 'Domestic Violence: Findings from a new British Crime Survey self-completion questionnaire', Home Office Research Study 191.

11. Budd and Mattinson (2000) 'The extent and nature of stalking: findings from the 1998 British Crime Survey', Home Office Research Study 210.



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## 2. The 1998 and 2000 BCS self-completion modules

The British Crime Survey (BCS) first contained a computer-assisted self-completion questionnaire on sexual victimisation in the 1994 sweep. Subsequent modules in 1998 and 2000 sought to refine the questions from 1994 to provide both more accurate prevalence rates and to find out more about the nature of sexual victimisation.

### Prevalence estimates

Prevalence rates are the proportion of people who have been the victim of a particular offence or group of offences once or more in a fixed period of time. Most surveys of sexual victimisation have attempted to provide prevalence estimates for the proportion of women who have 'ever' suffered sexual victimisation in their lives and the proportion who have been victimised during the 'last year'. This report defines 'ever' victimisation as 'since age 16', as it has always been felt that child abuse is an issue too sensitive even for the self-completion module of a generic crime survey. A dedicated child abuse survey has been undertaken on behalf of the NSPCC by BMRB Social Research<sup>12</sup>. A relatively recent Home Office publication also comprehensively reviewed research and statistics in this area (Grubin, 1998).

The BCS self-completion modules are also restricted to those under the age of 60. It is felt that in relation to areas such as sexual victimisation, and domestic violence in particular, respondents aged 60 and over may be reporting different dynamics of violence to those of their younger counterparts. For example, rather than intimate partner abuse or acquaintance violence, older people may report abuse in 'care' settings. The concept of 'elder abuse' has been researched heavily in the United States as a self-contained topic and, like the abuse of children, would not sit comfortably in the present BCS self-completion questionnaires.

All prevalence estimates contained in this report are generated solely from the 2000 self-completion module. Unfortunately, the 1998 BCS sexual victimisation self-completion module was unable to produce prevalence estimates for rape, due to a saving error in the computer programme. Data from the supplementary questions prefixed with an 'X' (see Appendix F) were lost. The total number of women aged 16 to 59 who answered the 2000 sexual victimisation module was 6,944<sup>13</sup>. From this sample of women, 64 reported experiencing

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12. Cawson et al (2000) 'Child Maltreatment in the United Kingdom: a study of the prevalence of child abuse and neglect' (NSPCC).

13. Of those eligible to answer the self-completion, this represents a response rate of 98 per cent (see Appendix C).

some form of sexual victimisation in the last year. Of these 64 cases, 32 could be classified as rape. The prevalence and risk factor analysis in this report uses the categories of rape (32 cases) and any sexual victimisation (64 cases, including the 32 rapes).

***‘Screener’ prevalence estimates***

It has already been stated that prevalence estimates generated from the responses to screener questions are not accurate. However, comparison of the screener prevalence rates for ‘rape’ from the 1994, 1998 and 2000 BCS self-completion modules provides a useful contribution to the arguments surrounding the wording of questions designed to measure sexual victimisation. Table 2.1 presents the ‘rape’ screener questions from the 1994, 1998 and 2000 self-completion modules and the prevalence rates they generated.

<b><i>Table 2.1: Comparison of 1994, 1998 and 2000 BCS self-completion module screener estimates of the prevalence of rape</i></b>		
Year	Screener definition of rape	Prevalence
1994	Since you were 16 has anyone, either a stranger or someone you know, ever forced you to have sex against your will?	6.3%
1998	Since age 16 has someone, either a stranger or someone you know, forced you to have sexual intercourse against your will? By sexual intercourse we mean either vaginal or anal penetration.	4.4%
2000	Since age 16 has someone, either a stranger or someone you know, used violence, threats or intimidation to force you to have sexual intercourse against your will? By sexual intercourse we mean either vaginal or anal penetration.	4.5%
Notes:		
1. Source: 1994, 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys.		
2. Excluding don't knows, refusals and those who chose 'Don't want to answer'.		
3. Unweighted N's for 'Don't want to answer' – 1994 N=28, 1996 N=53, 2000 N=59.		

The first thing to note is that, despite the wording and emphasis changes between the different questions, the actual prevalence rates recorded are not wildly different. The highest rate is from the 1994 module. It is possible to argue that the screener question in 1994 is the ‘loosest’, as it is the least behaviourally prescriptive. There are no agreed norms as to what actually constitutes ‘having sex’ and it is likely that different respondents will have included (or excluded) certain incidents depending on their own personal perceptions. It is possible that in 1994 some respondents included non-penetrative forced ‘sexual acts’ when answering this screener.

The 1998 and 2000 screeners are both more behaviourally prescriptive than the 1994 screener. However, the 2000 screener includes the wording 'used violence, threats or intimidation to force you...'. This is also interesting as it could be argued that this wording makes the question more or less inclusive, depending upon personal perception. It could be argued that the inclusion of extra wording makes the 2000 question more prescriptive and therefore narrower and less inclusive. However, it could also be argued that, although more prescriptive, the question is also more inclusive than the 1998 version, as some respondents could interpret 'forced sex' as that solely involving the use of physical force. The 2000 question, then, could be seen to broaden the definition to include unwanted sex where no physical force was present.

Perhaps the most interesting thing to note is that, despite wording changes, the prevalence rates derived from the 1998 and 2000 screener questions are virtually identical. Of course, it is impossible to know the exact reasons for this. It does perhaps highlight, though, the problems associated with having one or two reasonably subjective screener questions acting as a filter for victims' experiences. It is extremely difficult to guess with any accuracy exactly what types of incidents are being recorded, bearing in mind different people's perceptions and subjective interpretations of certain words and phrases.

## **The nature of sexual victimisation**

In order to explore the nature of sexual victimisation it is necessary to analyse the responses from the victims answering the module. This is problematic due to the small number of sexual victimisations actually reported to the survey, even taking into account the improvements associated with the CASI methodology. Using only victims reporting to the 2000 survey would have restricted the scope for analysis of the nature of sexual victimisation quite considerably. Consequently, the data from the 1998 and 2000 self-completion modules were combined in order to provide more cases of victimisation. Checks were performed on the data to ensure that combining the modules was methodologically viable (see Appendix D).

The analysis of the nature of sexual victimisations is based on 1,183 'last incidents' of victimisation since age 16. When these incidents of victimisation were split into categories of 'rape' and 'sexual assault' (see Chapter 5) 60 incidents that could not be classified were excluded<sup>14</sup>, leaving 604 rapes and 519 sexual assaults.

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14. These were cases in which victims responded 'do not want to answer' to the 'rape' follow-up question 'Rainter' (see Appendix G).

The 1998 and 2000 self-completion modules between them recorded 16 cases of female-on-female victimisation. These incidents were included in prevalence analysis, but excluded from the analysis of the nature of incidents. This was because there were relatively few and such incidents may not have been similar enough in nature to include with male-on-female incidents.

### ***Reference periods***

Wherever possible, this report has attempted to follow the precedents set by previous surveys in this area, by reporting on 'lifetime' (in this case, since age 16) and 'last year' reference periods for victimisation. Socio-demographic data collected in the main BCS is correct *at the time of the interview* and a victim's circumstances may change in the period since they were attacked. This problem is obviously less acute when using more recent victimisation data. Throughout the report, analysis has been undertaken using last year victimisation data where possible. All the data on prevalence risks, contained in chapter four, are based on last year victims.

### **Structure of the report**

This report focuses on the sexual victimisation of women. The BCS self-completion modules were also completed by male respondents, the results of which will appear in a separate publication in 2002.

Chapter 3 reports on the *extent* of female sexual victimisation in England and Wales. Two main measures are presented: prevalence since age 16 and prevalence over the last year.

Chapter 4 presents prevalence *risks* for different types of victim, again based on experiences during the last year. Socio-demographic factors such as age, marital and employment status are considered.

Chapter 5 examines the *nature* of sexual victimisation, including the relationship of the victim to the perpetrator, repeat victimisation, whether threats and violence are used, and where incidents take place.

Chapter 6 reports on the *impact* sexual victimisation has on women, including the emotional consequences of being sexually attacked and what effects such attacks have on women's lifestyles.



Chapter 7 examines whether or not victims of sexual attacks *seek help* to cope with their experiences, for example from medical practitioners or support networks. Victims' contacts with the police are also considered.

Chapter 8 explores victims' *perceptions* of sexual victimisation. Women are asked whether they consider themselves to have been the victim of a legally-defined sexual offence and also whether they consider what happened to them criminal.

Chapter 9 is a discussion of the data presented, methodological issues and the implications of the findings for policy-makers and practitioners. It also details forthcoming work in this area currently being prepared by the Home Office.



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### 3.

## The extent of sexual victimisation

This chapter provides prevalence estimates of the amount of sexual victimisation and ‘rape’<sup>15</sup> against women for England and Wales. Estimates for male sexual victimisation will appear in a separate publication. Prevalence indicates the proportion of respondents who have been victimised once or more, in a given period of time.

The 2000 self-completion module contains three screener questions, the second and third of which could provide proxy measures for ‘rape’ and ‘attempted rape’ (see Appendix G). However, screener questions do not provide accurate prevalence measures, as respondents often answer more than one screener question with reference to the same incident, or may ‘self-code’ their experience to the ‘incorrect’ screener question. Consequently, the prevalence estimates presented in this chapter are generated from the follow-up questions in the 2000 self-completion module. It is only possible, when using the follow-up questions, to generate prevalence rates for two succinct categories of incidents – ‘rape’ and ‘any sexual victimisation’. Rape incidents are included in this second category. Prevalence rates (percentages) are presented for sexual victimisation over the ‘lifetime’ (defined as since age 16) and the ‘last year’<sup>16</sup>.

### Prevalence since age 16

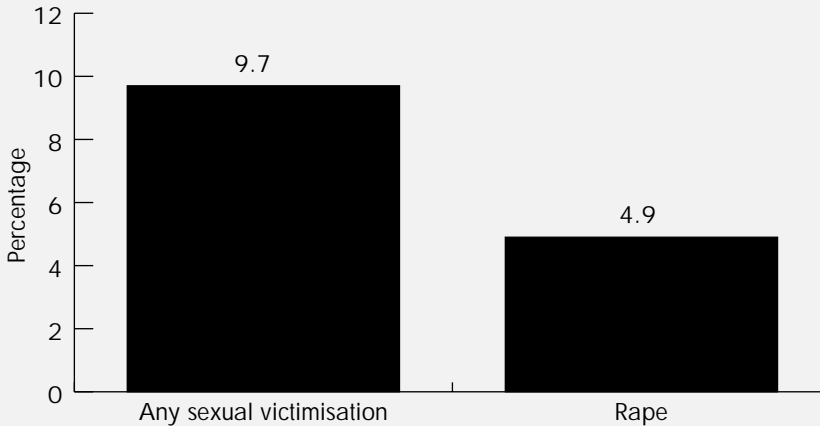
The BCS estimates that 4.9 per cent of women have been raped at least once since age 16 and that 9.7 per cent of women have suffered some form of sexual victimisation since that age.

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15. Defined throughout as penetration of the vagina or anus. This definition closely mirrors the British legal terminology but is not exactly synonymous with it. The legal definition of rape stipulates penetration must be ‘penile’. The question used to classify an incident as rape in the self-completion module stipulates ‘forced to have sexual intercourse’ (vaginal or anal penetration). It is possible that victims could have included incidents of, for example, penetration by objects when answering the questions.

16. The recall period for last year victimisation will vary between respondents, depending on what point in the fieldwork period they were interviewed. The question asks ‘Has this happened in the last 12 months’, so somebody interviewed in March 2000 would have a recall period from April 1999 to March 2000.

**Figure 3.1:** *Proportion of women aged 16 to 59 who have experienced sexual victimisation, since age 16*

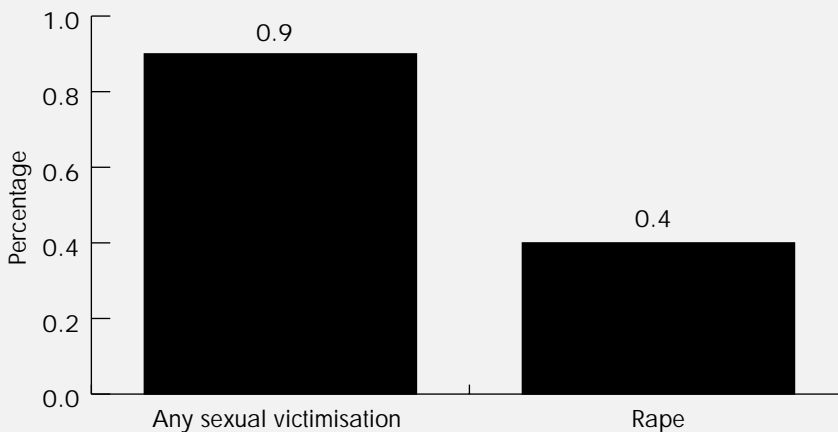


Source: 2000 British Crime Survey.

### Last year prevalence

The 2000 BCS estimates that 0.9 per cent of women suffered some form of sexual victimisation during the last year and that 0.4 per cent of women suffered rape.

**Figure 3.2:** *Proportion of women aged 16 to 59 who have experienced sexual victimisation in the 'last year'*

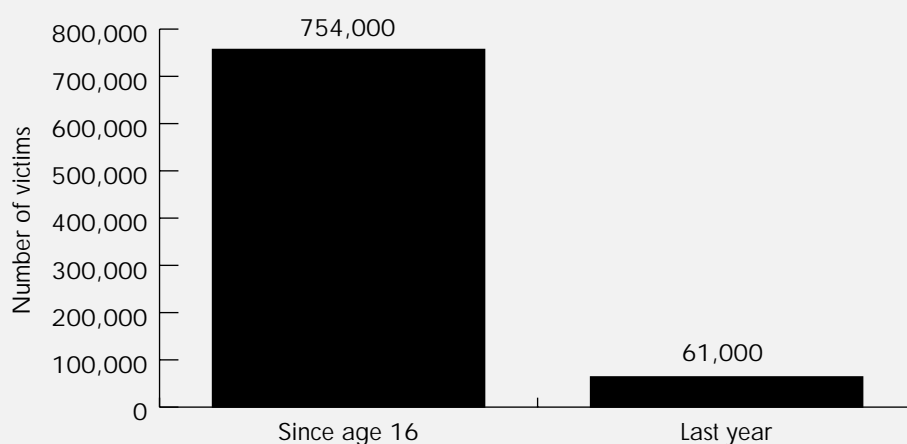


Source: 2000 British Crime Survey.

## Number of victims

The 2000 BCS estimates that there are approximately 754,000 females aged 16 to 59 in England and Wales who have been the victim of rape once or more since the age of 16. This includes approximately 61,000 victimised in the last year<sup>17</sup>.

**Figure 3.3: Estimates of the number of rape victims in England and Wales – since age 16 and in the ‘last year’ (to the nearest thousand)**



Source: 2000 British Crime Survey and ONS mid-1999 population estimates.

Figure 3.3 presents the best estimates of the number of female rape victims. Since estimates are based on a sample of the population, they are subject to sampling error. This means the estimates may not exactly represent the true number of victims in the population. Table 3.1 shows the best estimates and the range within which there is a 95 per cent chance that the true figures lie. For example, there is a 95 per cent chance that the true number of ‘since age 16’ female rape victims lies between 660,000 and 849,000. Sampling error is further discussed in Appendix C.

17. Estimates of the number of adult women who had been victims of rape are derived by multiplying prevalence rates by the estimated total number of women aged 16 to 59 in England and Wales in 1999.

**Table 3.1:** *Estimates of the number of rape victims in England and Wales – since age 16 and in the ‘last year’*

	Best estimate	Lowest estimate	Highest estimate
Since age 16	754,000	660,000	849,000
Last year	61,000	34,000	89,000

Notes:

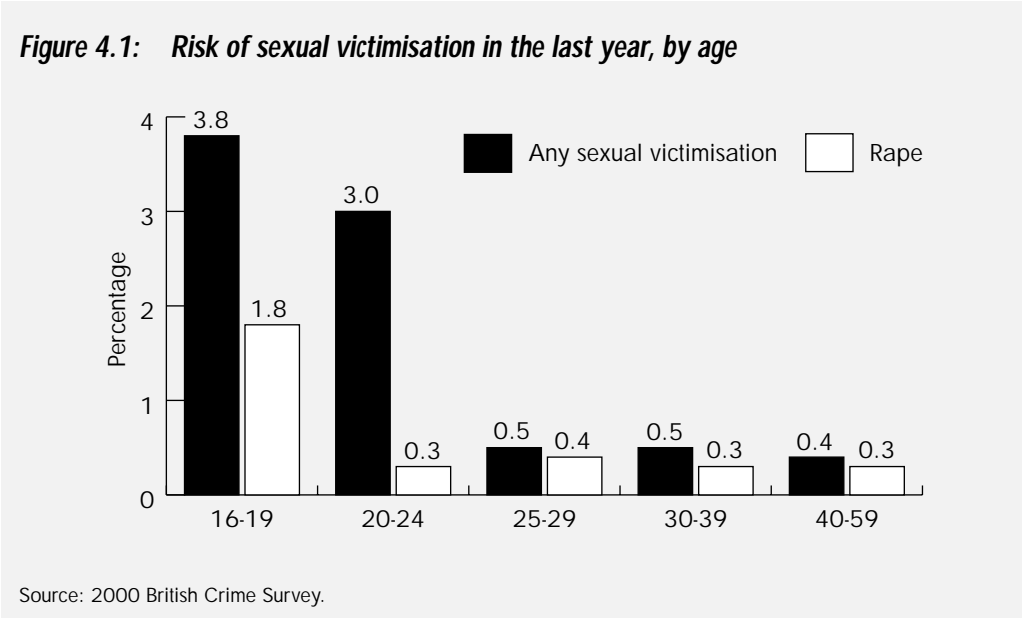
1. Source: 2000 British Crime Survey and ONS mid-1999 population estimates.
2. The estimates are subject to sampling error. The lowest and highest estimates are based on 95 per cent confidence intervals and assume a design effect of 1.2.

This chapter covers how socio-demographic factors influence the risk of being a victim of sexual offences, based on last year incidents of victimisation. Although there are no questions in the self-completion module that ask victims for key demographic information (e.g., marital status) at the time of the attack, using last year victimisation data minimises the risk of victims' socio-demographic characteristics having changed between the attack and the time of the interview.

Last year victimisation data is, though, relatively rare; with a national prevalence rate of only 0.9 per cent. It is therefore difficult to detect significant differences in risks. Table A4.3 in Appendix A gives the prevalence risks for all the groups considered in this chapter and indicates where differences are significantly higher than the national average. Throughout this chapter, where results are presented as 'statistically significant' this is at the 10 per cent significance level (in other words, there is only a 10 per cent chance that the results could have been due solely to sampling variation).

## Age

Age is the biggest risk factor for being a victim of a sexual offence. Young women aged 16 to 19 are most likely to be victimised. Women aged 20 to 24 have an almost equally high risk of experiencing some form of sexual victimisation. With regard to rape, 16 to 19-year-old women were over four times as likely to have reported being raped in the last year than women from any other age group. The risks for these younger women are statistically significant (Table A4.2).

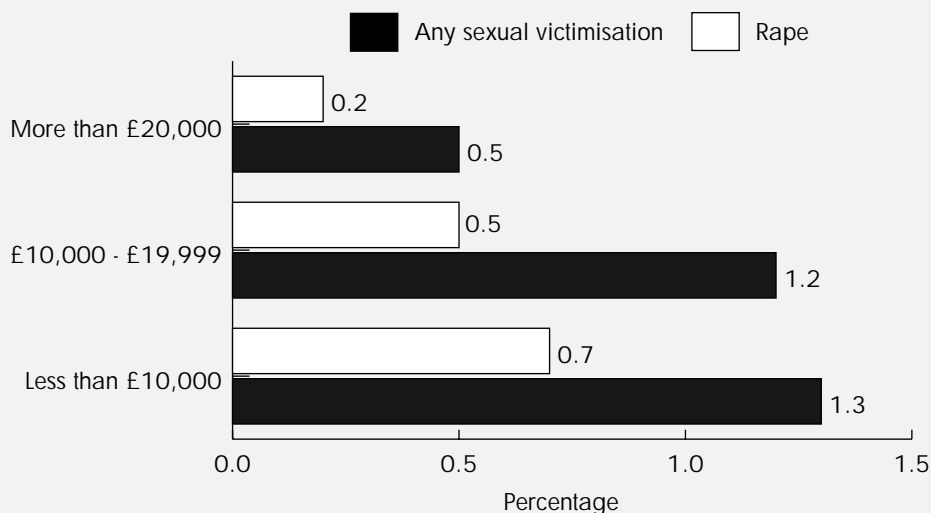


This finding is in line with those from most other surveys on violence against women. The significantly higher risks revealed for younger women are likely be ‘real’, reflecting the lifestyles and circumstances of younger women. It may also be possible that levels of sexual activity have changed over the years. If young people are becoming sexually active earlier and having more sexual partners, this could have an effect on levels of victimisation. A related point is that the key characteristics could be those of men, rather than women – young women are more likely to socialise and be around young men aged under 25, who are more likely to be the perpetrators of crime than any other group.

### Income

Risks were highest for women from households with low levels of income. For instance, women from households with an income of less than £10,000 per year were more than three times as likely to have reported being raped than women from households with an income of more than £20,000 a year (Table A4.3).



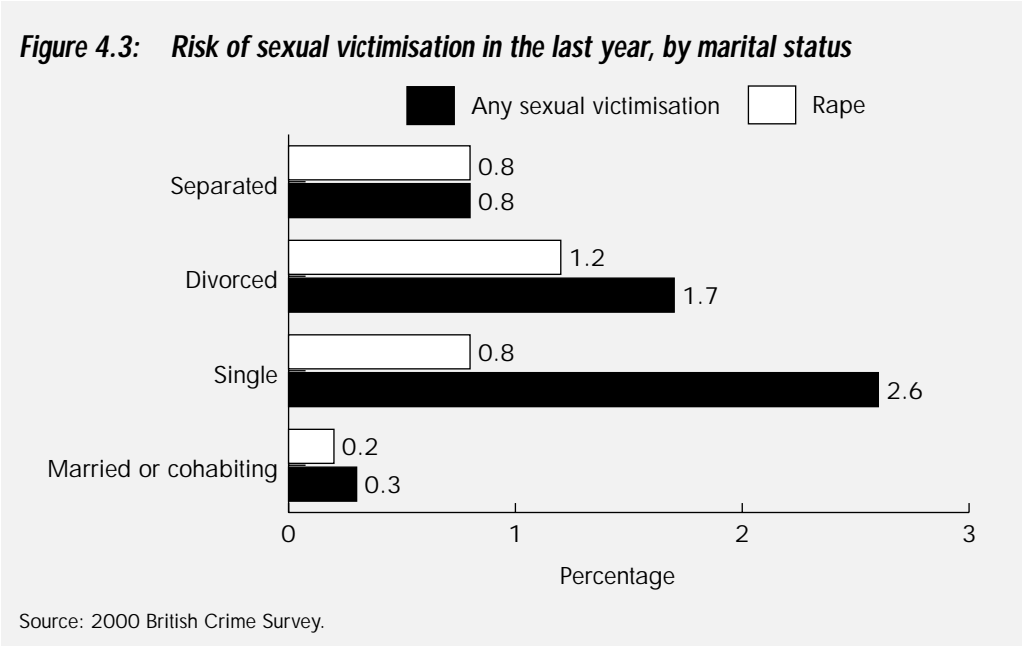
**Figure 4.2: Risk of sexual victimisation in the last year, by household income**

Source: 2000 British Crime Survey.

For any incident of sexual victimisation, women from lowest income households were also more likely to report being victimised than women from the most affluent households. The risks for any sexual victimisation (which includes rape) were statistically significant – but the differences were not as marked as for rape. Young women were not disproportionately represented in the lowest income bracket. Indeed, this is a pattern of victimisation replicated for crime more generally: the 2001 British Crime Survey also suggests people from low income households are more likely to be the victim of a violent offence, or a burglary.

## Marital status

Women who were either married or cohabiting at the time of the interview were the least likely to report being sexually victimised in the last year. For any incident of sexual victimisation, risks were highest for single women. For rape, risks were highest for divorcees (Table A4.3). The risk of suffering any sexual victimisation for single women reflects the same pattern as the risks for young women – the vast majority of single women reporting sexual victimisation in the last year were from the 16 to 24 age group. The risk of suffering any sexual victimisation and of suffering rape was identical for women who were separated. This was because all separated women reporting any sexual victimisation had been raped.



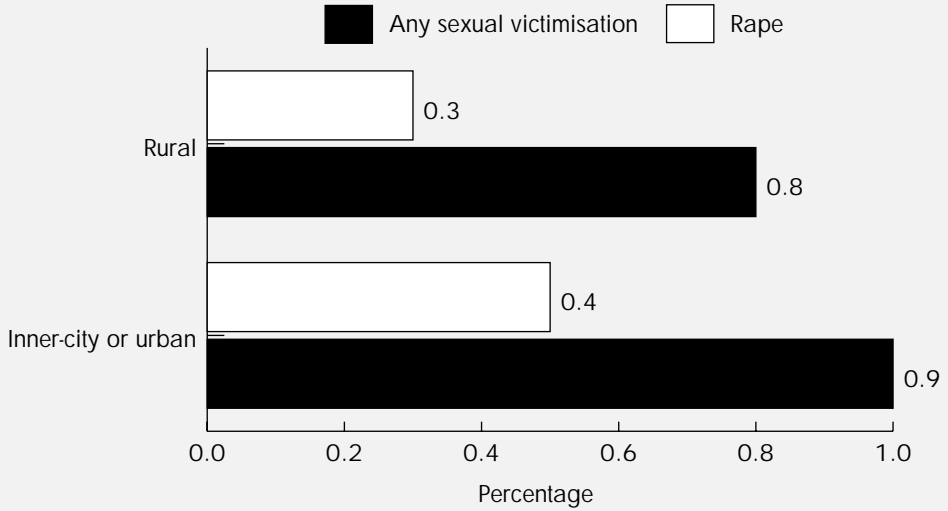
As mentioned earlier, the respondent's marital status is recorded at the time of the interview, but not at the time of the incident. Consequently, these prevalence risks can be slightly misleading. Although divorcees reflected much higher last year prevalence risks than women who were married or cohabiting, further analysis revealed that around a half of these women were victimised by a partner or ex-partner. It is possible that sexual victimisation may be a contributory factor in the break-up of some abusive relationships.<sup>18</sup>

## Area

Women presently living in inner-city or urban areas were fractionally more likely to report an incident of sexual victimisation to the survey than women living in rural areas. For both any sexual victimisation and rape, the risks were similar and were not statistically significant (Table A4.3).

18. It should be noted that there were only 12 divorcees who reported last year sexual victimisation to the 2000 self-completion module. Three of these were attacked by a then current husband/partner and two by an ex-husband/partner. There is no way of telling if a 'current husband/partner' was the same partner from whom the victim was divorced. Consequently, these findings should be treated with caution.

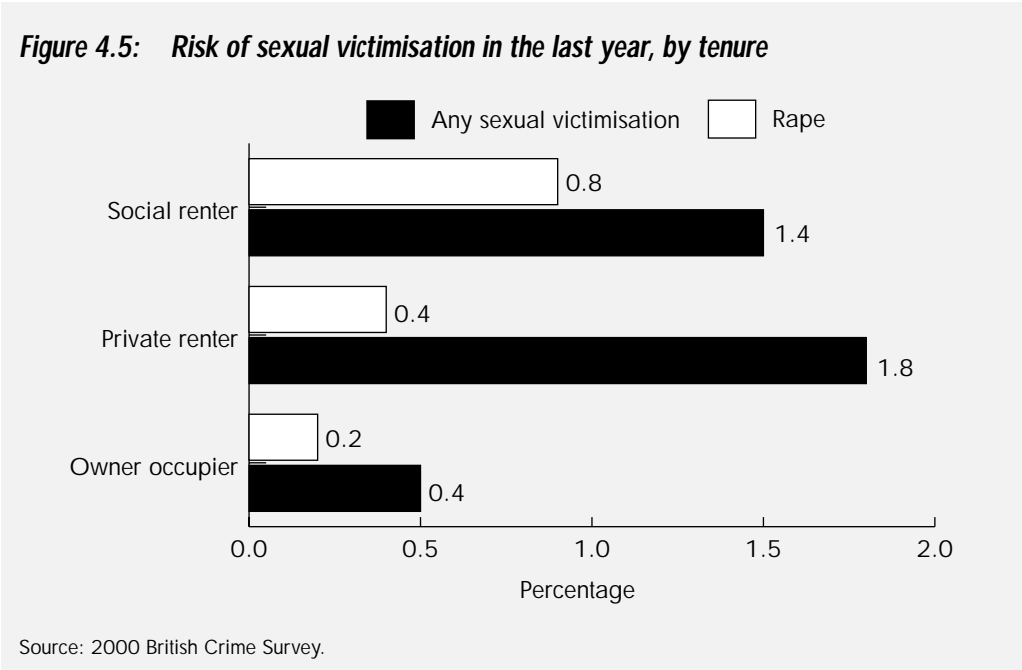
**Figure 4.4: Risk of sexual victimisation in the last year, by area**



Source: 2000 British Crime Survey.

## Housing tenure

Women living in the social rented sector (accommodation rented from local authorities or housing associations) were more likely to report having been raped. Their risks were twice as high as women living in the private rented sector and four times as high as women in owner-occupier households (Table A4.3).



When the scope is broadened to include any incident of sexual victimisation, women from privately rented households are more at risk than those from the social rented sector. Women from owner-occupier households still experience lower risks and this is statistically significant. The risk of experiencing any incident of sexual victimisation is, for women who are private renters, partly reflecting the same pattern as age. Young women are most likely to be in the private rented sector and around three-quarters of private renters reporting any sexual victimisation in the last year were aged 16 to 24.

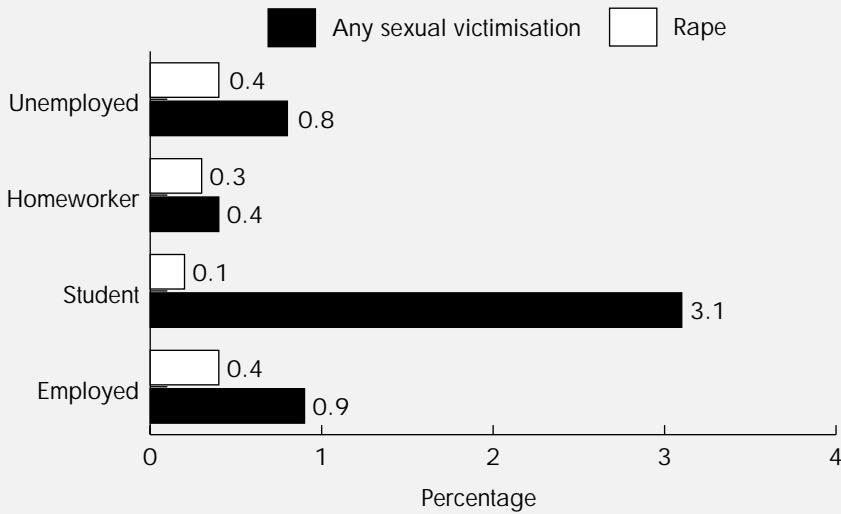
### Employment status

Students<sup>19</sup> were much more likely to report an incident of sexual victimisation than any other occupational group. However, in terms of rape, students were the least likely to have reported an incident to the survey (Table A4.3). Although the risk of suffering any sexual victimisation was statistically significant for students, the risks in relation to rape were not significant for any occupational group.

19. The BCS is a random sample of private residential households and therefore does not cover students living in university halls of residence.

The high risks of experiencing any sexual victimisation by students should be treated with extreme caution. Firstly, the numbers of students picked up by the survey were not large. Secondly, the results could again be simply reflecting those for age – all but one of the students interviewed were aged 16 to 24.

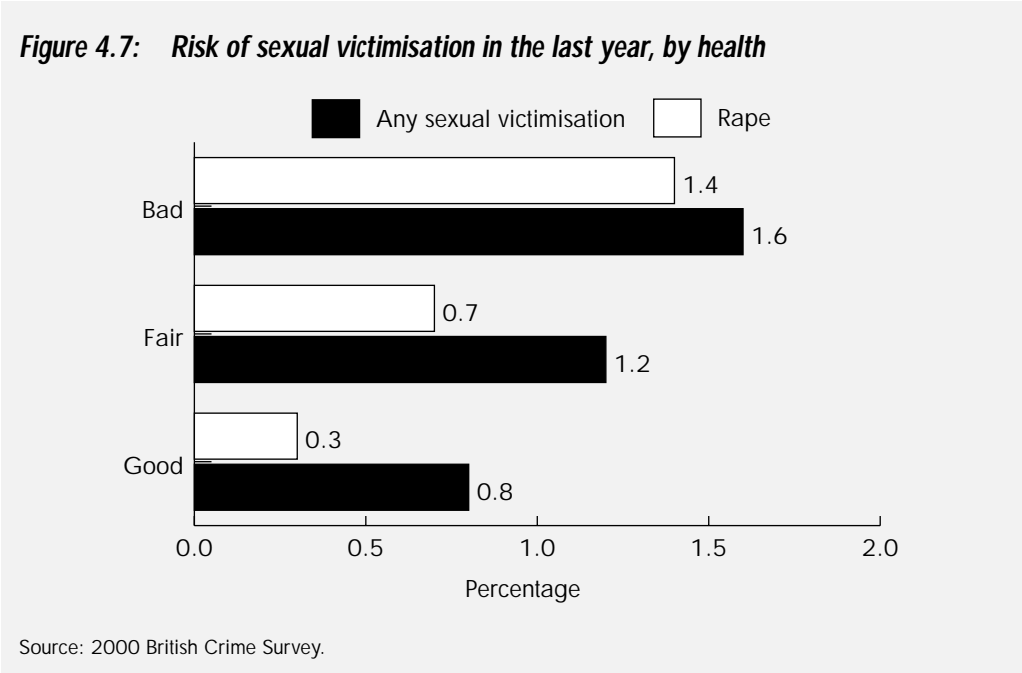
**Figure 4.6: Risk of sexual victimisation in the last year, by employment status**



Source: 2000 British Crime Survey.

## Health

Women who, at the time of the interview, self-classified their health as 'bad' were most likely to have reported an incident of sexual victimisation. These women were twice as likely to have reported an incident than women who classified their health as 'good'. For rape, the pattern was even more marked. Women in bad health had twice the risk of those in 'fair' health and almost five times the risk of those in good health (Table A4.3).



It should be further reiterated here that self-classified demographic information may have altered since the time of the incident, even using last year victimisation data. In particular, it is possible that the victim's health may have deteriorated as a result of an attack. However, the finding that respondents who classify themselves as in bad health are at greater risk of victimisation mirrors findings from the main British Crime Survey for other crime types.

This chapter explores the nature of sexual victimisation, including the relationship of the victim to the perpetrator, the question of repeat victimisation, whether force and threats were used in attacks and, if there was force, whether this resulted in injury. The location in which the event took place is also examined.

Of the 1,183 incidents of sexual victimisation since age 16 examined on the combined dataset (see Appendix D) 604 could be classified as rape. The follow-up questions in the self-completion modules ask the respondent to focus only on the 'last incident' of victimisation when answering. Many violence against women surveys prefer to ask about the most serious incident of victimisation in their follow-up questions. The 1994 BCS self-completion adopted this approach, due to the assumption that some respondents, when asked about the most recent incident, will in any case substitute the most serious incident they have experienced. There is an argument that the latter data is more useful in targeting support towards those most in need of it. However, it can be argued that using 'most recent incident' provides a more representative picture, as the 'seriousness' of an incident is subjective.

The focus on a single incident permits the creation of two separate categories of 'rape' and 'sexual assault' when examining the nature of incidents<sup>20</sup>. The validity of the analysis relies upon the assumption that, across the range of victims, the 'last incidents' will be representative of attacks generally experienced. As mentioned previously, the category of 'rape' as used in this report closely mirrors the legal criteria for the offence, but does not match it, as it is possible that victims answering the self-completion modules could have included incidents of penetration by objects. There is currently no legal offence of sexual assault in England and Wales, but the authors felt the term 'sexual assault' to be appropriate for the kinds of incidents being reported to the self-completion modules: as screener questions for both the 1998 and 2000 modules contained the word 'force', which implies an assault.

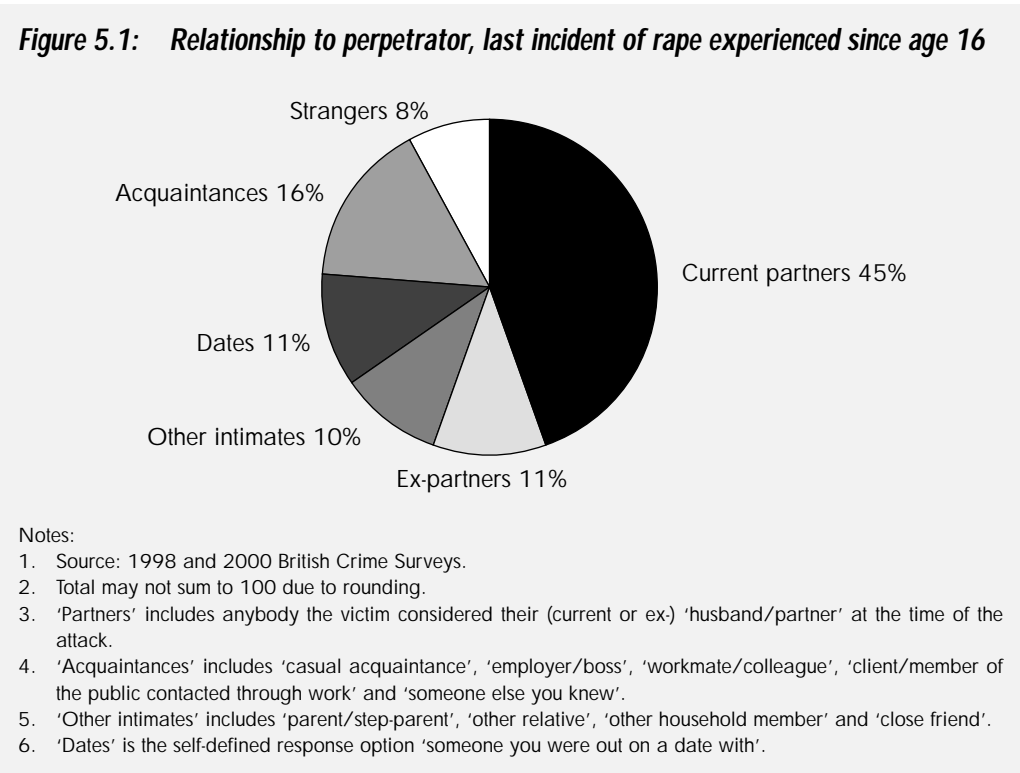
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20. The generation of separate categories of rape and sexual assault was not possible for prevalence rates. If respondents had been victimised more than once, it was not possible to tell whether all or some of the previous incidents were actual rapes or not.

## The dynamics of sexual attacks

### *Relationship of victim to perpetrator*

Women are most often sexually assaulted by men they know. Harris and Grace (1999) found that only 12 per cent of rapes recorded by the police in 1996 were categorised as 'stranger' rapes (down from 30% in 1985). The definition used to categorise the police cases as 'stranger' rapes was 'where the suspect had had no contact with the complainant prior to the attack' (ibid:2). The BCS self-completion modules rely on the victim's self-definition of the perpetrator as 'a stranger' (see Appendices F and G) and the evidence from them helps to further debunk the popular stereotype of the majority of rapes being committed by strangers in public places. The BCS found an even lower proportion of rapes to be committed by strangers (8%). Nearly half (45%) of rapes reported to the survey were committed by perpetrators who were victims' partners at the time of the incident.



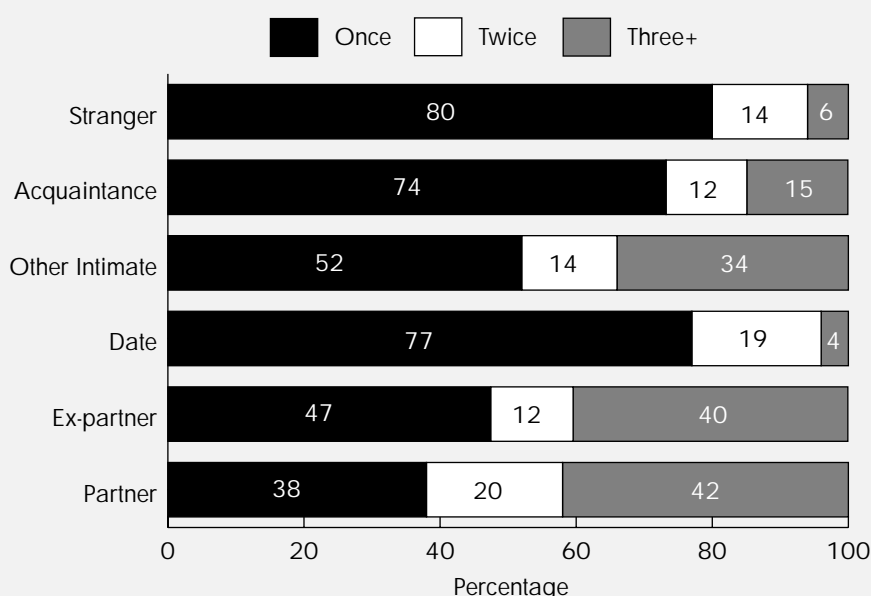
The highest proportion of sexual assaults were committed by 'acquaintances' (28%) followed by strangers (23%). Overall, women are more likely to be sexually victimised by a partner than by any other perpetrator (Table A5.1).



### Repeat victimisation

Just over two fifths (41%) of women who reported sexual victimisation experienced multiple (two or more) incidents. Relationship to perpetrator has an impact on the number of times women are sexually victimised. Repeat victimisation was higher for women who said their last incident involved a partner (62%), ex-partner (52%) or other intimate (48%). Women who were last victimised by a stranger were the least likely to report multiple victimisation (20%) – though this is still a relatively high proportion.

**Figure 5.2: Multiple sexual victimisation, by relationship to perpetrator of most recent incident**



**Notes:**

1. Source: 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys.
2. Totals may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

It should be remembered that there is no way of knowing whether or not women last victimised by a current partner or ex-partner were previously victimised by the same person. However, bearing this caveat in mind, these findings can be seen to concur with those from other national surveys. The United States National Violence Against Women Survey found that 51.2 per cent of women raped in the last year by a date, spouse or cohabiting partner reported being victimised multiple times by the same partner – an average of 4.5 rapes. The average number of rapes experienced in the last year by women including any perpetrator was 2.9 (Tjaden and Thoennes, 2000:39).

These findings are important, as conventional wisdom suggests rape is a single event. Interventions that have been applied to domestic violence and repeat victimisation have tended not to be viewed as relevant to sexual victimisation. A 1994 demonstration project on Merseyside (Lloyd et al), which provided battered women with a 'portable alarm', concentrated on incidents of 'physical violence and its immediate threat'; and the 'domestic violence repeat victimisation project' set up in Killingbeck in Leeds (Hanmer et al, 1999) also made no specific reference to sexual victimisation. The Home Office has developed crime reduction 'toolkits', where information on 'evaluated good practice' is gathered for specific areas. There are separate toolkits for 'Domestic Violence', 'Sexual Offenders' and 'Repeat Victimisation'. However, only domestic violence (implying physical assault) is cited as an example of an offence where repeat victimisation is common. This evidence suggests that sexual assault should also be recognised as part of the domestic violence 'syndrome' and that its role in the cycle of violence should be explored further. Future interventions on repeat victimisation and domestic violence should recognise violence against women in a broader sense.

**Physical force and injury**

Nearly three-quarters of rape incidents reported to the survey involved the use of physical force or violence (74%) and just over a third (37%) resulted in physical injury. Just under a half of sexual assaults (46%) involved the use of physical force, 14% resulting in physical injury<sup>21</sup>. The self-completion modules did not attempt to explore the mental health consequences of sexual victimisation, but it is likely that many victims will have suffered some sort of psychological injury as a result of their experiences.

<b>Table 5.1:   Physical impact of last incident of sexual victimisation experienced, since age 16</b>		
Percentages	Rape	Sexual assault
Perpetrator used physical force or violence	74	46
Victim sustained physical injury	37	14
Notes:		
1.   Source: 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys.		

21. The 2000 self-completion module specified 'physical' injury, the 1998 module did not. Analysis of the two injury questions revealed a similar response pattern, so the authors have assumed that respondents in 1998 have answered the relevant question mainly with reference to physical injuries.

The 1998 and 2000 self-completion modules contained a follow-up question asking victims who reported an incident involving violence how severe this was, in terms of the physical injuries they sustained. One in ten rape victims that sustained a physical injury reported being 'severely injured' (e.g., suffered cuts or broken bones). Too few victims of sexual assault reported injuries for severity to be determined.

**Table 5.2: Severity of injury among victims, last incident of rape experienced since age 16<sup>3</sup>**

	%
Slightly injured (e.g., bruising or black eye)	52
Moderately injured (e.g., extensive bruising)	30
Severely injured (e.g., cuts or broken bones)	10
Other injury	9
All <sup>2</sup>	100

Notes:

1. Source: 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys.
2. Total may not sum to 100 due to rounding.
3. As a percentage of victims that sustained a physical injury (N=232).

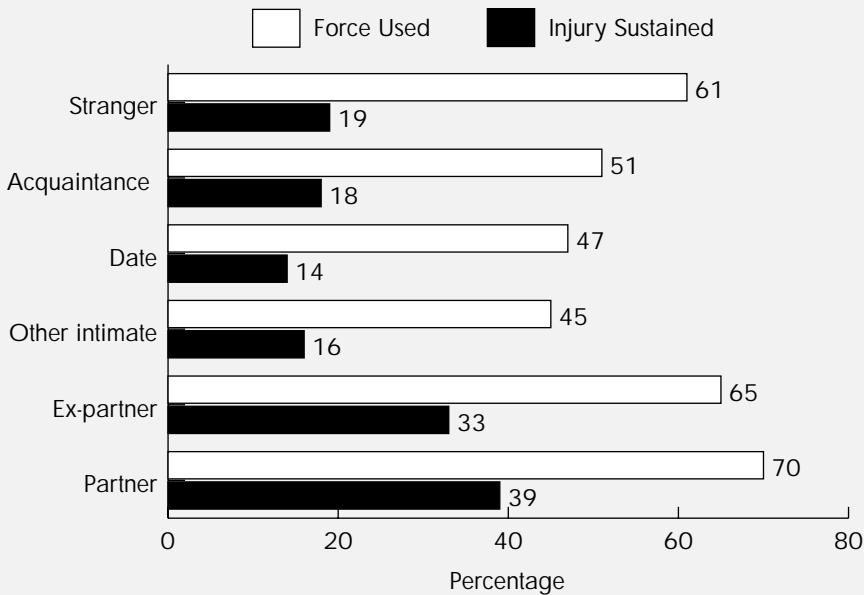
Other studies have shown that, with the exception of serious stranger assaults, women are more likely to be consistently seriously injured by partners than by any other perpetrator<sup>22</sup>. However, even using pooled data there were insufficient incidents to enable a reliable exploration of the likelihood of certain victims to experience greater physical injury<sup>23</sup>.

Data from the BCS does indicate, though, that attacks by partners and ex-partners are by far the most likely to result in some injury to the victim. Attacks by partners are more than twice as likely to result in a physical injury as attacks by strangers (39% Vs 19%). Incidents involving 'other intimates' were the least likely to involve physical force (Table A5.2).

22. See for example Bachman and Saltzman, 1995; and Tjaden and Thoennes, 1998.

23. In particular, lack of numbers makes it impossible, throughout the analysis, to cross-tabulate relationship to perpetrator by rape/sexual assault and a third variable e.g., severity of injury.

**Figure 5.3: Presence of physical force and injury by relationship to perpetrator, last incident of sexual victimisation experienced, since age 16**

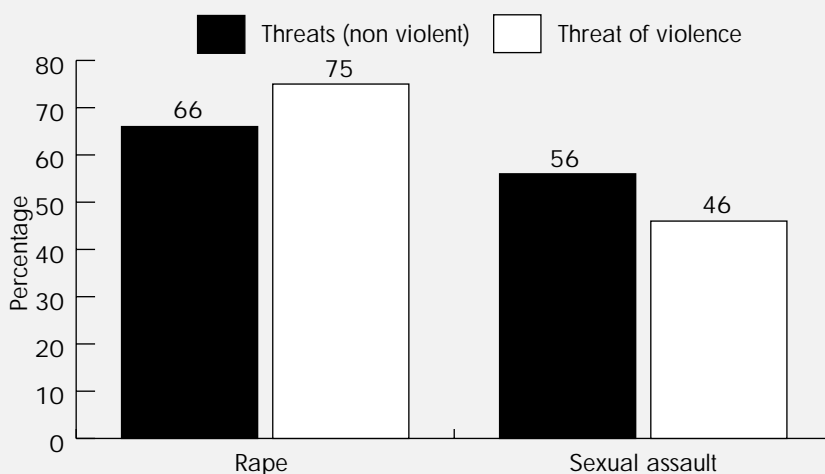


Source: 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys.

### **Verbal threats**

Threats were more common in relation to rape incidents than in relation to sexual assault. Victims were asked whether they were 'verbally threatened, intimidated or blackmailed' and, if they were, whether or not they, or somebody close to them, were threatened with violence. Violent threats were present in almost three-quarters (75%) of rape incidents that involved threats, as opposed to under a half (46%) of sexual assaults (Table A5.3).

**Figure 5.4: Presence of threats in last incident of rape or sexual assault experienced, since age 16**



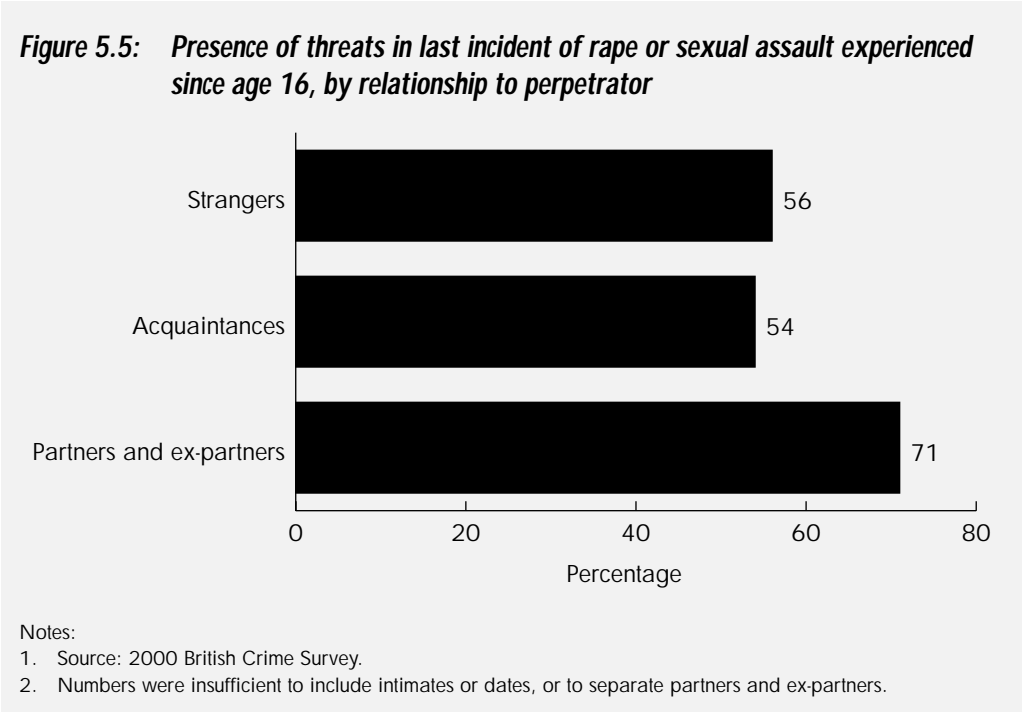
Notes:

1. Source: 2000 British Crime Survey.
2. 'Threats' includes being 'verbally threatened, intimidated or blackmailed'.
3. 'Threats of violence' includes threats to hurt the victim, or somebody close to them.

Victims of attacks by partners or ex-partners (71%) were most likely to have been verbally threatened, blackmailed or intimidated. Numbers were insufficient to see whether or not this also held for threats of violence<sup>24,25</sup>.

24. Victims were only asked whether or not they had experienced threats of violence if they had reported experiencing verbal threats.

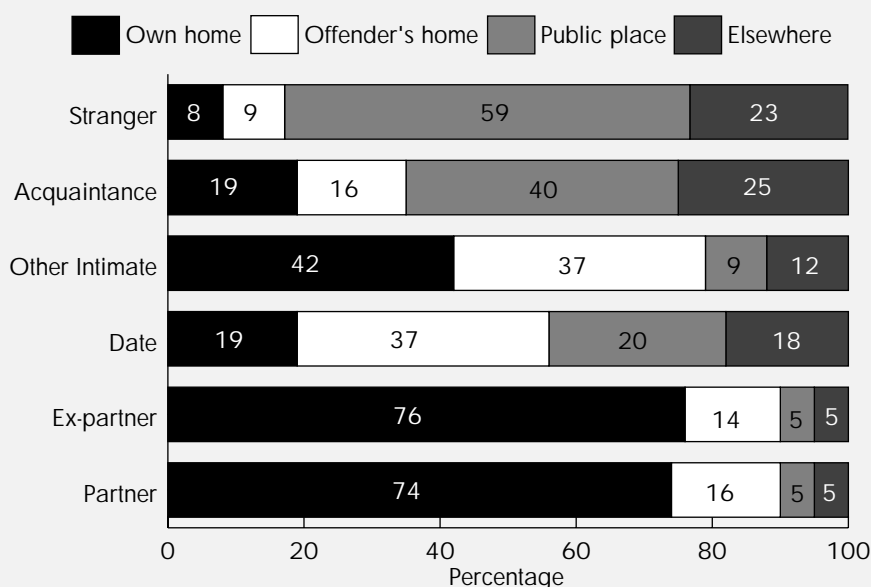
25. Both the 1998 and 2000 self-completion modules contained questions designed to determine whether or not victims were verbally threatened when they were sexually attacked. Unfortunately, the routing for these questions inadvertently worked differently in the 2000 module, making it impossible for pooled data to be analysed. Consequently, only this limited analysis of the presence of threats could be undertaken, using data from the 2000 module.



### Location of incident

The ‘myth of the safe home’ is well established in the literature surrounding violence against women<sup>26</sup>. Evidence from the current study confirms that women are far more likely to be sexually victimised in their own home than any other location. Not surprisingly, nearly three-quarters (74%) of incidents involving partners occurred in the victim’s own home and a further 16 per cent occurred in the offender’s home. This pattern is almost exactly mirrored for attacks by ex-partners. There is no way of telling how many of the ex-partners were in the victim’s house without permission (possible stalking scenarios). Attacks by ‘dates’ occur in a variety of locations, but are most likely to occur in the home of the offender.

26. See for example Dobash and Dobash, 1979, ‘Violence Against Wives – A Case Against Patriarchy’.

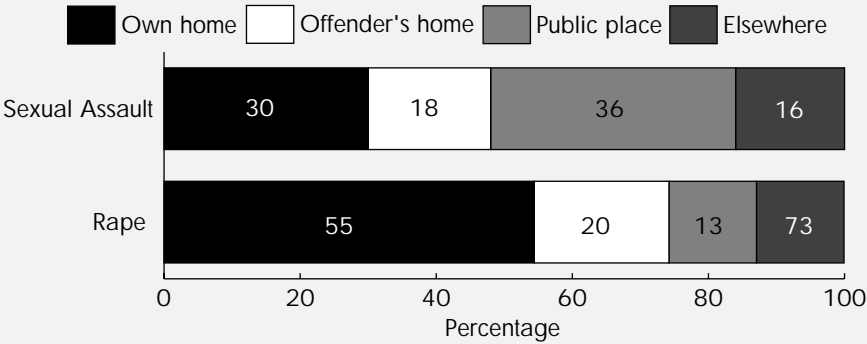
**Figure 5.6: Location of last incident of sexual victimisation experienced, since age 16**

## Notes:

1. Source: 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys.
2. Totals may not sum to 100 due to rounding.
3. Public place includes workplace, educational establishments, pubs, clubs and discos, streets, parks, public transport and car parks. Lack of numbers precludes further breakdown of this category.
4. 'Elsewhere' is an individual response option.

Over half (55%) of female rape victims were raped in their own homes. Sexual assaults are almost three times as likely to occur in a public place than are rapes (Table A5.5).

**Figure 5.7: Location of last incident of rape or sexual assault experienced, since age 16**



- Notes:
- 1. Source: 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys.
  - 2. Totals may not sum to 100 due to rounding.
  - 3. Public place includes workplace, educational establishments, pubs, clubs and discos, streets, parks, public transport and car parks. Lack of numbers precludes further breakdown of this category.
  - 4. 'Elsewhere' is an individual response option.

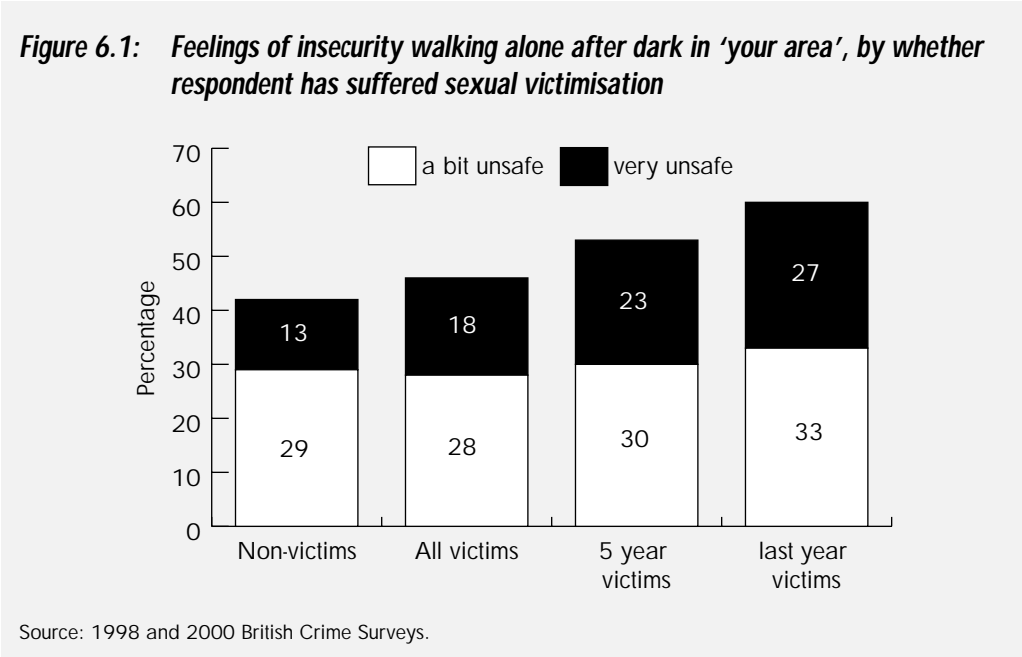


It is extremely difficult to adequately explore the consequences of sexual victimisation using the quantitative survey method. Many commentators will argue that women's emotional reactions, in particular, can only be adequately examined through more qualitative research methods. However, the BCS self-completion modules can provide some useful information regarding the emotional consequences of attacks and the effects that attacks have on victims' lifestyles.

### **Emotional consequences**

The main section of the BCS contains questions relating to respondents' personal insecurities when walking alone in their area after dark and when alone in their own home. There is also a general question on worry about rape. These questions are not ideal for exploring the emotional consequences of sexual victimisation, as they are not in the same context as the self-completion questions. In other words, women are asked whether they feel unsafe walking alone after dark, but not whether this is as a result of a previous incident of sexual victimisation. However, responses to these questions can still be compared for victims and non-victims of sexual attacks, bearing this limitation in mind. Interpretation of the questions can also be made slightly more valid by restricting the cases to the most recently victimised group of women.

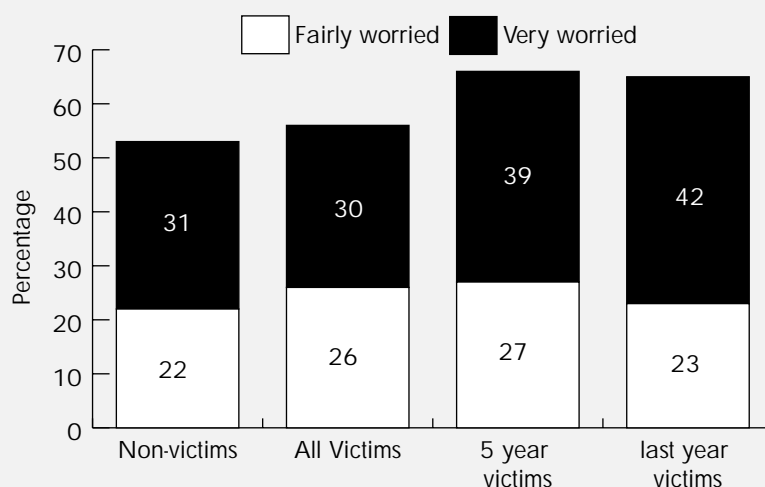
Women who reported an incident of sexual victimisation during the last year were most likely to say they felt very unsafe walking alone in their area after dark. Women who had been victimised within the last five years were more likely to feel unsafe than women victimised more than five years ago. Women who had ever been sexually victimised were also more likely to say they felt unsafe walking alone in their area after dark than women who did not report an incident of sexual victimisation (Table A6.1):



These figures should not be taken at face value. As well as the above caveat, it is likely that different victims will react and feel differently when placed in specific situations with different real or perceived threats. In particular, lack of numbers prevented the separation of women who were the victims of attacks by different perpetrators. For example, it may be that women who were attacked outdoors by a stranger would be more likely to fear walking alone than women not attacked in a public place. We have already noted that the majority of the victimisations recorded in this survey took place inside. However, it could also be argued that any traumatic sexual victimisation will affect a victim’s feelings of vulnerability, trust or self-confidence and that this is the key factor when considering broad-brush attitude questions such as these.

The main BCS also contains a question asking whether women are worried about being raped. Again, it must be remembered that this attitude question is asked very early on in the main part of the BCS questionnaire, not in the specific context of the self-completion module; and refers to women’s general worry about being the victim of rape, not survivors’ specific worries about being re-victimised. Lack of numbers also meant that responses had to be compared for victims of any sexual attack, not just rape victims. Bearing these limitations in mind, levels of worry among non-victims and those who had ever been a victim of a sexual attack were very similar (Table A6.1). However, there is again more of a difference between non-victims and those recently victimised.

**Figure 6.2: Worry about being raped, by whether respondent has suffered an incident of sexual victimisation**



Source: 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys.

It must be remembered that some women in the 'non-victims' category may actually be victims who chose not to disclose this to the survey. These findings also lend weight to the argument that responses to 'worry' questions are determined more by experiences and consequences than by perceived risk.

The 2000 self-completion module asked victims whether they experienced certain emotions after their most recent incident of sexual victimisation. Victims of attacks by partners or ex-partners appear, in some ways, to be slightly more emotionally affected by their experiences than women attacked by either strangers or acquaintances. Over four-fifths of women attacked by partners or ex-partners felt very angry and very upset by the incident, compared to about three-quarters of women victimised by acquaintances or strangers. However, victims of partner or ex-partner attacks were less likely to be very shocked by their victimisation than were victims of stranger attacks (64% Vs 76%).

**Table 6.1: Emotional reactions to last incident of sexual victimisation experienced, since age 16**

Percentages	After the last incident did you feel...		
	Very angry	Very upset	Very shocked
Perpetrator <sup>2</sup>			
Partner or ex-partner	84	81	64
Acquaintance	74	76	66
Stranger	76	75	76

Notes:

1. Source: 2000 British Crime Survey.
2. Sample sizes were too low to include 'dates' and 'other intimates'.

It should be noted, though, that the differences reported here are not large. Culbertson and Dehle highlight several previous US studies suggesting marital rape is associated with more chronic 'psychological disturbance and...upset' than other forms of rape (2001:993) and their own study found survivors of attacks by spouses or cohabiting partners to be most psychologically affected (ibid:1000). However, their study did not include attacks by strangers.

### Lifestyle consequences

The 2000 self-completion module contained follow-up questions on how sexual victimisation may have affected victims' lifestyles. Unlike the above questions on walking alone after dark, these 'lifestyle' questions are prefaced 'as a result of this experience.....'. This means it is only the problem of recall that may prevent this being an accurate reflection of the effects of sexual victimisation. Unfortunately, lack of numbers again prevented restricting this analysis to only last year (or even five year) victims, whose experiences would have been more fresh in the mind.

Women who reported ever being raped are more likely to avoid certain places or people as a result of their victimisation and are much more likely to go out less often than are victims of sexual assaults. Roughly half of women who have ever been raped or sexually assaulted take extra personal security measures as a result of their experiences.

**Table 6.2: Lifestyle consequences of last incident of sexual victimisation experienced, since age 16**

Percentages	Rape	Sexual assault	Any sexual victimisation
Avoid certain places or people	66	51	59
Go out less often than used to	45	27	36
Extra personal security measures	53	47	50
<i>Unweighted N</i>	367	323	735

Notes:

1. Source: 2000 British Crime Survey.
2. Any sexual victimisation includes cases in which the respondent said 'Don't want to answer' or 'refused' to the specific 'rape' question (Rafter).

It would be too simplistic to conclude that victims' lifestyles are more affected by rape because it is a more traumatic experience than a 'sexual assault'. It is likely that various other factors play a part, including the perpetrator and the location of the incident. Unfortunately, as the 'lifestyle' questions were only included in the 2000 module, there are insufficient cases to explore these interrelationships properly. It is possible, though, to examine the effects on victims' lifestyles for any form of sexual victimisation ever experienced, taking into account the type of perpetrator:

**Table 6.3: Effects of last incident of sexual victimisation on victims' lifestyle, by relationship to perpetrator<sup>2</sup>**

Percentages	Partner or ex-partner	Acquaintances	Strangers
Avoid certain places or people	58	61	63
Go out less often than used to	38	38	39
Extra personal security measures	41	58	61
<i>Unweighted N</i>	318	161	123

Notes:

1. Source: 2000 British Crime Survey.
2. Sample sizes were too small to include dates and other intimates.

The relationship of the victim to the perpetrator does not appear to have a great deal of bearing on victims' movements. Victims of stranger attacks are slightly more likely to avoid certain people or places as a result of their experience (63% reported doing so) than are

victims of attacks by partners and ex-partners (58%) or acquaintances (61%). Approximately two-fifths of victims reported going out less often than they used to as a result of their experience, regardless of the perpetrator. It might be expected that the proportion would be higher for victims of 'stranger' attacks, but this is not necessarily so. As mentioned before, any victimisation can result in a loss of self-confidence. Victims of partner attacks could be experiencing a wider range of abusive and controlling behaviour. It is also possible that a woman attacked, for example, by an acquaintance met through work could cease attending work-related social functions as a direct result.

Victims of stranger (61%) or acquaintance attacks (58%) were much more likely than victims of partner or ex-partner attacks (41%) to take extra personal security measures as a result of their last victimisation. This could well be down to the context of the attacks. As we have seen, the majority of stranger attacks occur outside of the home and victims may feel that, if attacked again, they may stand a chance of attracting the attention of a member of the public by using a rape alarm, or perhaps put off an attacker by using a weapon. This is less likely to be the case for victims who are attacked in their own homes. Other research has shown that victims of sustained partner abuse use a variety of coping strategies. Whilst some may fight back in the face of an attack many will not, as this may lead to an escalation of the violence and the increased likelihood of injury. Basile (1999) highlights that, rather than fight or attempt to avert sexual attack by a partner, some women will 'acquiesce' to unwanted sex to avoid conflictual situations.

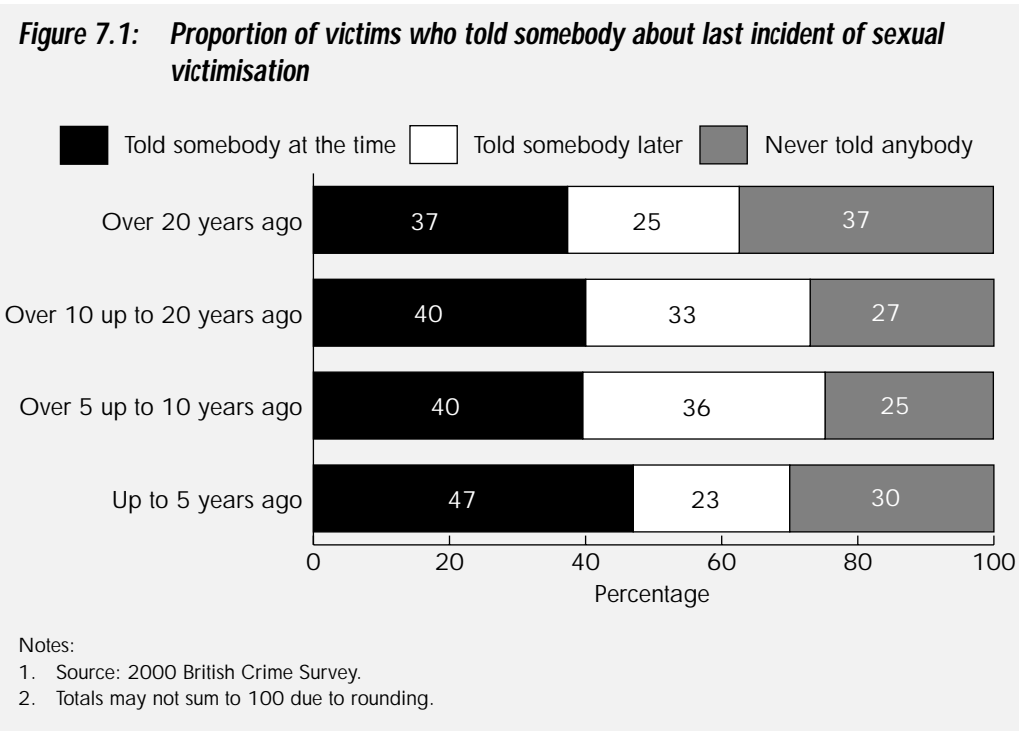
Rape in particular is one of the most under-reported crimes. In 1999 the police recorded 7,707 incidents of rape. The 2000 BCS best estimate of the number of victims of rape in the last year (presented in Chapter 3) is 61,000. The highly personal and traumatic nature of sexual victimisation means that as well as often not reporting their experiences to the police, victims will also be reluctant to share their knowledge of their experience with anybody. Much effort has been invested by the voluntary sector in recent decades to try to prevent victims having to deal with their experiences on their own, should they not want to do so. However, this has often been concentrated in the area of domestic violence. There are now networks of rape crisis organisations and support services for both male and female victims of sexual attacks, but they tend to be under-funded and less widely available. The police have also attempted to encourage more reporting of sexual offences, by providing specially trained officers to deal with rape victims, although this varies between areas and forces (see Harris and Grace, 1999:22).

### **Do victims report?**

The issue of reporting cannot be dealt with in great detail, as certain questions were only asked in the 2000 module and those that were asked in 1998 were worded differently from those in 2000. Ideally, it would be best to use last year, or five year, data. This is not only because respondents are more likely to remember clearly who they told about their experience, but also because the support services available have developed over recent years. It is not always possible to use this recent victimisation data, due to the small number of incidents reported to the survey.

The proportion of victims of sexual attacks willing to tell somebody about their experience appears to be increasing. This could be because there is less stigma attached than there once was, or because there are now more voluntary and professional support agencies. However, among women who experienced sexual victimisation during the last five years, less than half recalled actually telling somebody at the time of the last incident. It was not possible, in the context of this survey, to probe for reasons as to why this was. Some victims may prefer to deal with the experience themselves or may be too embarrassed or ashamed to tell anybody else, at least until some time after the incident. It could also be that some victims do not have access to the appropriate support services, or do not know of them. It is even possible that some victims may have had bad experiences when reporting previous incidents of victimisation.

Women who were sexually victimised during the past five years were most likely to recall having told somebody about the incident at the time. Women victimised over 20 years ago were least likely to have told somebody at the time. Women victimised over 20 years ago were also more likely than more recent victims to have never told anybody about their experience (Table A7.1).



Fewer victims of rape than sexual assault told somebody about their experience at the time and rape victims were more likely never to have told anybody about their experience. Approximately a third of rape victims (34%) told somebody about their ordeal at the time, compared to over a half (52%) of sexual assault victims.



**Table 7.1: Whether victim told anyone about last incident of sexual victimisation experienced since age 16, by type of attack**

	Rape	Sexual assault	Any sexual victimisation
	%	%	%
Told somebody at the time	34	52	41
Told somebody later	35	21	29
Never told anybody	31	28	30
All <sup>2</sup>	100	100	100
Unweighted N	366	322	743

Notes:

1. Source: 2000 British Crime Survey.
2. Totals may not sum to 100 due to rounding.
3. Any sexual victimisation includes cases in which the respondent said 'Don't want to answer' or 'refused' to the specific 'rape' question (Rafter).

Victims of attacks by partners and ex-partners are much less likely to tell anybody about their experience at the time than are victims of acquaintance and especially stranger attacks. Victims of partner and ex-partner attacks are also more likely to have never told anyone about their experience.

**Table 7.2: Whether victim told anyone about last incident of sexual victimisation experienced since age 16, by relationship to perpetrator<sup>3</sup>**

	Partners and ex-partners	Acquaintances	Strangers
	%	%	%
Told somebody at the time	31	47	62
Told somebody later	34	27	15
Never told anybody	35	26	23
All <sup>2</sup>	100	100	100
Unweighted N	317	160	123

Notes:

1. Source: 2000 British Crime Survey.
2. Totals may not sum to 100 due to rounding.
3. Sample sizes were too small to include dates and other intimates.

When people were told, victims most often confided in friends, relatives or neighbours about their experiences, followed by doctors, psychiatrists and voluntary support organisations. This finding is similar to that presented by the BCS for domestic violence (Mirrlees-Black, 1999).

**Table 7.3:   Who victims told about last incident of sexual victimisation experienced, since age 16**

Percentages	Rape	Sexual assault	Any sexual victimisation
Victim told a friend, relative or neighbour	91	89	90
Victim told a doctor or nurse	43	10	24
Victim told counsellor, psychiatrist or psychologist	25	4	13
Victim had contact with Victim Support, Rape Crisis or similar organisation	14	2	7
<i>Unweighted N</i>	<i>128</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>299</i>

Notes:

1. Source: 2000 British Crime Survey.
2. Based on those victims who actually told somebody.
3. Any sexual victimisation includes cases in which the respondent said 'Don't want to answer' or 'refused' to the specific 'rape' question (RaInter).

The proportion of women seeking the help of, or being contacted by, support organisations appears to be quite low. It should be remembered, though, that these figures are based on whether respondents have ever been victimised; so some of these incidents could have occurred before such organisations became well-established. Also, many victims choose not to seek help at the time of the incident and instead contact support organisations retrospectively.

**Contact with the police**

**Reporting**

Nearly one-fifth (18%) of sexual victimisations reported to the self-completion modules also came to the attention of the police<sup>27</sup>. The proportions of rapes and sexual assaults the police came to know about were quite similar, so this means that, according to this evidence, the police never come to know about approximately four-fifths of adult sexual victimisations.

27. This does not, of course, mean that the police definitely pursued the case, or that charges were made or the perpetrator convicted (See Harris and Grace, 1999).

**Table 7.4: Whether last incident of sexual victimisation came to the attention of the police**

Percentages	Rape	Sexual assault <sup>3</sup>	Any sexual victimisation
Police came to know	20	17	18
<i>Unweighted N</i>	<i>604</i>	<i>519</i>	<i>1,183</i>
If the police came to know:			
Victim reported incident	52	59	55
Somebody else reported incident	35	30	32
Police found out another way	13	12	13
All <sup>2</sup>			
<i>Unweighted N</i>	<i>125</i>	<i>88</i>	<i>220</i>

Notes:

1. Source: 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys.

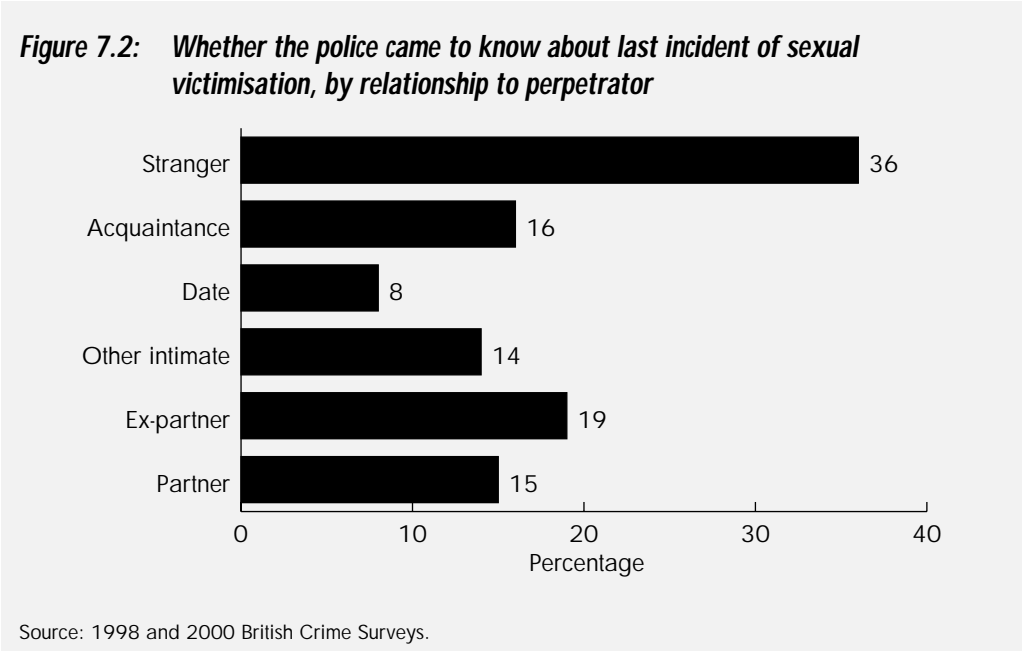
2. Totals may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

3. The figures for how the police came to know about sexual assault incidents should be treated with caution, due to the small numbers – it is standard BCS practice to have a base of at least 100 cases.

4. Any sexual victimisation includes cases in which the respondent said 'Don't want to answer' or 'refused' to the specific 'rape' question (Rafter).

However, although one in five rapes came to the attention of the police, only just over half of these incidents were reported by the victim. In 35 per cent of rape incidents that the police knew about, somebody other than the victim reported the incident and in the remainder of cases the police found out in some other way.

Relationship to perpetrator has a major effect on whether or not the police come to know about an incident. Stranger attacks are far more likely to come to the attention of the police than attacks involving any other perpetrator. The least likely incidents to come to the attention of the police are those taking place in 'date' scenarios.

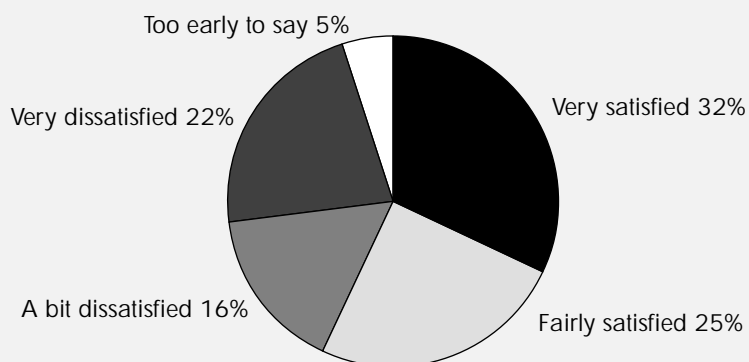


There is evidence to suggest that the number of incidents involving known perpetrators coming to the attention of the police is increasing. Harris and Grace (1999) found that the number of incidents of stranger rape recorded by the police remained similar between 1985 and 1996. However, the number of incidents recorded that involved known perpetrators increased greatly.

**Victim satisfaction**

About a third of rape victims (32%) were ‘very satisfied’ with the way in which the police handled their case. However, about a fifth were ‘very dissatisfied’ (Table A7.3).

**Figure 7.3: Rape victims' satisfaction with police handling of the matter**



Notes:

1. Source: 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys.
2. Total may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Neither the 1998 or 2000 self-completion modules contained follow-up questions as to why victims were dissatisfied with the police.



## 8. Victims' perceptions of sexual victimisation

Both the 1998 and 2000 self-completion modules asked those who reported an incident of sexual victimisation to self-classify the incident on a closed response scale. As explained previously, the follow-up questions in the self-completion modules allow us to classify reported incidents of sexual victimisation as either 'rape' or 'sexual assault'. Of the 1,183 incidents available for analysis after combining the 1998 and 2000 modules, over half (604) were classified as 'rapes' and 519 were classified as sexual assaults. It was not possible to classify the remaining 60 incidents, so these were excluded from the analysis.

It is extremely interesting to see what proportion of the incidents classified as rape using the follow-up questions in the self-completion modules were classified as rape by the victims themselves. Only three-fifths of victims whose most recent incident could be classified as a rape using the follow-up questions actually self-classified the incident as 'rape'. A further fifth of victims whose most recent incident could be classified as rape avoided self-classifying into any of the legal categories offered. It is also interesting to note that 18 sexual assault victims (3%) self-classified themselves as having experienced a rape, despite answering 'no' to the question about having been forced to have penetrative sex.

**Table 8.1: Classification of last incident of sexual victimisation experienced since age 16, by victims' self classification**

Victim said incident was:	Classification based on follow-up questions:	
	Rape %	Sexual Assault %
Rape	60	3
Attempted rape	7	18
Indecent assault	13	31
Behaviour they found offensive	18	42
None of these	2	5
All <sup>2</sup>	100	100
<i>Unweighted N</i>	<i>604</i>	<i>519</i>

Notes:

1. Source: 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys.
2. Totals may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Koss' controversial (1987) study on the sexual victimisation of college students was heavily criticised for the majority of its victims not regarding themselves as having been raped (see for example Roiphe, 1993; Sommers, 1994). However, these findings can be seen to provide further evidence to support the notion that the concept of 'rape' carries with it a specific set of meanings, assumptions and stereotypes that victims may not wish to associate themselves with – the notion of rape as a stigmatised and degraded status. It must also be remembered that the concept of 'the rapist' is also heavily stereotyped. Soothill and Walby (1991) conducted an analysis of media reporting of rape and found that 'the popular imagery of rape...typically involves strangers, madmen, multiple attacks and reckless women, some of whom brought it on themselves' (cited in Walby and Myhill, 2001:514). It may be more difficult for women raped by somebody they know, perhaps even somebody they liked or loved, to label this person a rapist. As we have seen, a relatively small proportion of incidents picked up by the self-completion modules fit the stereotypical 'stranger attack'. It is also likely that some victims have to overcome the shock of being attacked before they can admit, even to themselves, that they have been raped.

Painter (1991), in a study of married women and rape, found that some victims were only prepared to classify their experience as rape with hindsight (cited in Walby and Myhill, 2001:514). There is limited evidence from the self-completion data to support those findings. Women who experienced rape between 10 and 20 years ago are much more likely to self-classify themselves as having been raped than women victimised either five years ago, or 5 to 10 years ago. However, women who experienced rape over 20 years ago were only marginally more likely to self-classify themselves as having suffered rape than more recent victims.

**Table 8.2:    *Victims' self-classification of last incident of rape, with hindsight***

	Victim classified as having experienced rape...			
	Up to 5 years ago	Over 5 up to 10 years ago	Over 10 up to 20 years ago	Over 20 years ago
Victim said incident was:	%	%	%	%
Rape	55	56	69	59
Attempted rape	7	7	7	5
Indecent assault	17	12	9	13
Behaviour they found offensive	17	21	15	22
None of these	3	3	1	1
All <sup>2</sup>	100	100	100	100
<i>Unweighted N</i>	156	139	185	124

Notes:

1. Source: 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys.

2. Totals may not always sum to 100 due to rounding.



It is possible that women who have had more time to reflect on their experiences are more prepared to reconcile themselves with having been raped than more recent victims, who may still be experiencing shock, embarrassment or denial. It could also be that increased publicity surrounding this topic in the last 10 to 20 years has interacted with the context of particular cases.

Victims were asked whether they considered their experience to be a crime or not. Only 63 per cent of victims who had experienced rape in the last five years said they considered the last incident to be a crime.

**Table 8.3** *Whether victims considered last incident of rape experienced since age 16 to be a crime*

	Victim classified as having experienced rape...			
	Up to 5 years ago	Over 5 up to 10 years ago	Over 10 up to 20 years ago	Over 20 years ago
Victim said incident was:	%	%	%	%
Crime	63	67	73	56
Wrong but not crime	23	19	14	24
Just something that happens	11	5	8	7
Not sure	3	8	6	13
All <sup>2</sup>	100	100	100	100
<i>Unweighted N</i>	156	139	185	124

Notes:

1 Source: 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys.

2. Totals may not always sum to 100 due to rounding.

Women from more affluent households who experienced rape were less likely than women from poorer households to describe the last incident as a crime. It is possible that there could be more stigma attached to criminal victimisation in higher social locations. However, annual household income is not an entirely accurate proxy for social class and the differences reported are not pronounced. There was also little difference in self-classification of incidents as 'rape' taking into account household income (Table A8.1).

**Table 8.4:** *Whether victim considered last incident of rape experienced since age 16 to be a crime, by annual household income*

Victim said incident was:	Annual household income		
	Under £10,000	£10,000 -£20,000	Over £20,000
	%	%	%
Crime	70	67	60
Wrong but not crime	21	15	24
Just something that happens	4	9	8
Not sure	6	8	8
All <sup>2</sup>	100	100	100
<i>Unweighted N</i>	220	177	186

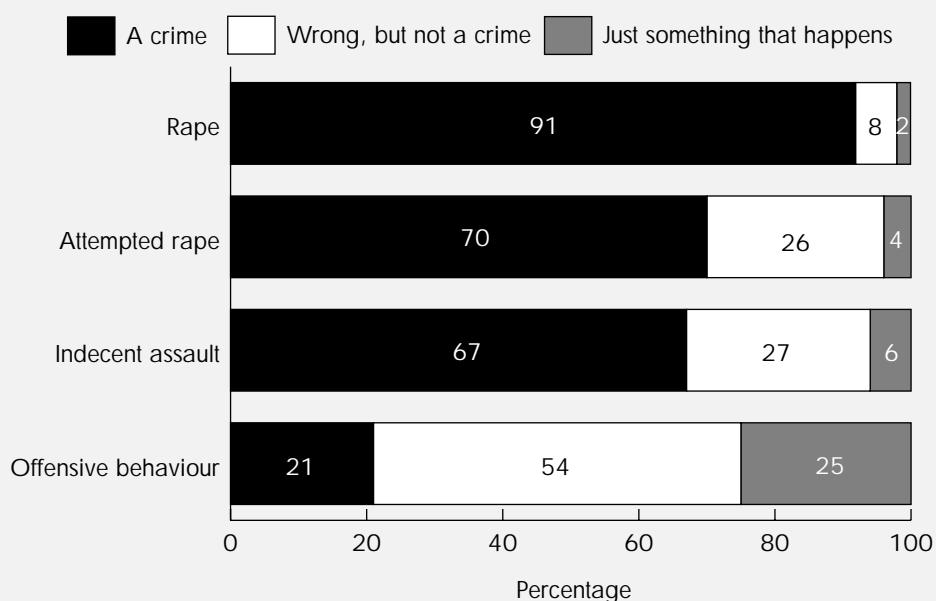
Notes:

1. Source: 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys.
2. Totals may not always sum to 100 due to rounding.

Victims of sexual assault are generally less likely to view their last incident as a crime than victims of rape. Women victimised in the last five years were again least likely to describe their last incident as a crime, supporting some sort of 'hindsight effect' (Table A8.2).

It is worth noting the relationship between victims' self-classification of their experiences and their classification of the incident as criminal or otherwise.

**Figure 8.1: Victims' perceptions of last incident of sexual victimisation experienced, since age 16**



1. Source: 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys.
2. Totals may not always sum to 100 due to rounding.

As you would perhaps expect, the vast majority (91%) of women who classified themselves as having been raped also considered the incident to be a crime. However, this still means that 9 per cent of women that considered themselves a victim of rape did not consider the incident to be a criminal offence. It is possible that this is a similar phenomenon to some women not wanting to be seen as having been raped. Perhaps some women would rather not view themselves as a 'victim', or their partner or ex-partner, for example, as a rapist. These figures are more pronounced for the other offence categories. Only 70 per cent of women who self-classified their most recent victimisation as 'attempted rape' also classified it as a crime; the figure for 'indecent assault' is just over two-thirds (67%). It must also be remembered, though, that rape within marriage was only made a criminal offence relatively recently (1994) and that these figures refer to incidents 'ever' experienced.

It is likely, though, that some women do not easily reconcile the concepts of sex and criminality, particularly when the perpetrator is a partner or close relative. Basile, in her work with sexually abused wives, found that the entrenched 'traditional' belief that 'women's role is to service their husbands' was the 'most prevalent' way in which women acquiesced to unwanted sex with their partners (1999:1047). It is possible that women from traditional,

patriarchal backgrounds would view victimisation in a domestic, or even 'date' scenario as 'just something that happens', despite the wide changes of attitudes in society as a whole over the last few decades. It would almost certainly require qualitative work to determine whether the low proportion of women classifying themselves as having experienced a (legally defined) sexual offence represents a genuine lack of knowledge, or merely a function of the questionnaire; whereby women are reluctant to cast themselves in the role of victim or the perpetrator in the role of sex offender.

### The effect of perpetrator on perceptions

Victims of stranger attacks are, not surprisingly, the most likely to define their experiences as criminal, with almost three-quarters of stranger victims saying they believed their last incident of sexual victimisation to be a crime. Under half of attacks by dates were defined by the victim as criminal. Further to this, around a fifth of women victimised by a 'date' considered the incident to be 'just something that happens'.

**Table 8.5:**    *Whether victims considered last incident of sexual victimisation experienced since age 16 to be a crime, by relationship to perpetrator*

	Partner	Ex-partner	Date	Other Intimate	Acquaintance	Stranger	All
Victim said incident was:	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Crime	51	60	44	58	57	74	56
Wrong but not crime	31	22	31	25	28	12	26
Just something that happens	9	15	18	7	11	7	11
Not sure	9	2	7	11	4	7	7
All <sup>2</sup>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Unweighted N	389	122	121	121	254	176	1,183

Notes:

1. Source: 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys.

2. Totals may not always sum to 100 due to rounding.

Only just over half (51%) of women sexually victimised by a partner since age 16 considered the incident to be a crime.

Both the 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys contained Computer Assisted Self-Interviewing (CASI) questionnaires on sexual victimisation. These sought to expand on a smaller such questionnaire included in the 1994 BCS and provide the most accurate-ever estimates of the extent and nature of female sexual victimisation in England and Wales. This concluding chapter emphasises the principal findings from the self-completion modules, highlights key methodological issues that may have affected the estimates, discusses the implications of the findings for policy-makers and practitioners and outlines future development of the BCS in this area.

### **The extent of sexual victimisation**

The BCS estimates that 9.7 per cent of women have experienced some form of sexual victimisation since age 16 and that 4.9 per cent of women have experienced rape since that age. Prevalence decreases considerably when taking into account only 'last year' victimisations, yet still approximately one in every hundred women was estimated to have been sexually victimised during the last year and one in every two hundred was estimated to have been raped.

### ***How accurate are the estimates?***

It is important, when dealing with data in this notoriously difficult area of research, to be aware of limitations. Whilst quantitative surveys can usefully be 'a vehicle to challenge the illusion that rape is an infrequent crime' (Koss, 1993:198), it is important that researchers balance the wish to more accurately record the extent of sexual victimisation with the need to provide monitoring data on a regular, recurring and cost-efficient basis to feed into policy debate and development. This study has sought to present estimates in as accurate a way as possible, but it should be remembered that levels of disclosure by victims may have been affected by:

- general survey errors associated with sampling, response and coverage;
- the 'crime context' of the British Crime Survey, which may inhibit respondent disclosure;

- the specific 'screening question' format of the self-completion modules, in which respondents are not filtered in to the follow-up questions if they do not identify with the terminology used in the three screening questions, leading to underestimates of levels of victimisation; and
- the possible presence of other people (maybe even the perpetrator) in the room when the respondent is undertaking the self-completion, again tending to inhibit disclosure.

There is no way of telling whether or not these weaknesses are partially offset by other respondents exaggerating their experiences of victimisation, for whatever reason.

However, a questionnaire methodology inclined to undercount the extent of the problem has still estimated that almost one in 20 women has suffered rape at some point during their lives, indicating sexual victimisation is a widespread problem in England and Wales.

## **Who is at risk?**

Highlighting risk factors for sexual victimisation is difficult due to the small numbers of last year victimisations reported to the survey. Sexual victimisation can occur in any social location, but age is the most robust risk factor – young women are more likely to experience sexual victimisation than older women. This finding concurs with those from most other studies of sexual victimisation that have been undertaken.

Higher than average risks among single women, students<sup>28</sup>, and women from privately rented households reflect the same pattern as for age – young women are disproportionately represented in these socio-demographic groups. For example, all but one of the students who reported an incident of sexual victimisation to the survey were from the 16 to 24 age group. It is also possible that young women may report more victimisation to the survey through being more at ease with the concept and through identifying better with question terminology.

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28. The BCS is a random sample of private residential households and therefore does not cover students living in university halls of residence.

## Perpetrators

The notion of 'real rape' (one-off, usually violent attacks perpetrated by strangers) as distinct from rapes committed by somebody known to the victim is not new (see Estrich, 1987). However, Harris and Grace (1999) discovered that a preoccupation with 'real rape' was still evident within UK criminal justice agencies. Their research revealed that cases where there was no evidence of any violence or threat of violence were more likely to be 'no crimed'<sup>29</sup> by the police, or result in no further action being taken (1999:13). No further action was also more common in cases where the perpetrator was an intimate<sup>30</sup> (ibid).

Findings from the present study re-raise some of the issues highlighted by Harris and Grace. Less than half of sexual assaults recorded by the BCS self-completion modules involved the use of force and although almost three quarters (74%) of rape incidents involved the use of force or violence, the victim only sustained physical injuries in 37 per cent of cases. Women are also most often sexually victimised by men they know. Attacks by men who were the victim's current partner at the time of the incident account for almost half (45%) of all rapes. The BCS found 'strangers' to be responsible for only 8 per cent of rapes. Women whose most recent incident involved a partner, ex-partner or 'other intimate' were also more likely to have experienced multiple incidents of sexual victimisation. This evidence reinforces the perception of a criminal justice system not inclined to adequately deal with the majority of incidents of sexual victimisation that occur.

Further issues are apparent. According to the present study, the police were twice as likely to find out about incidents involving strangers than incidents involving almost any other perpetrator. It is possible that this reflects a belief by victims that they will be less likely to be believed if they have been attacked by somebody they know, or that the chances of a successful prosecution would be low. It could also be that victims of attacks by certain known perpetrators will be less likely to view the incident as criminal. Harris and Grace also discovered that withdrawal of the accusation by the complainant was common in cases where the perpetrator was known to the victim. Reasons for this included the financial dependency of women and pressure brought to bear by various sources during drawn-out proceedings. This and the profile of rape victims and perpetrators presented in this study suggests the police and other agencies should be more aware of the needs of women raped by men they know. In particular, it should be recognised that the experiences of women raped by their partners are liable to be different to those of women raped by strangers and that the sexual victimisation of these women could often be within the context of wider physical and emotional abuse.

29. Home Office guidance advises that the police may no-crime a case where the complainant 'retracts completely and admits to fabrication' (Harris and Grace, 1999:xi).

30. For the purposes of the Harris and Grace study, partners and ex-partners were classified as 'intimates'.

## **Do victims receive support?**

Almost one-fifth of incidents recorded by the self-completion modules came to the attention of the police, which can be seen as an undesirably low proportion. Of the incidents that came to the attention of the police, only just over half were reported by the victim. Of victims who had contact with the police, almost a third were very satisfied with the way the police handled the matter, but just over a fifth said they were very dissatisfied. It is likely that the police handling of rape cases is still variable between areas and forces (see Harris and Grace, 1999:22), but sample sizes available through the BCS prevented analysis of results at the police force level.

It is difficult to draw conclusions about other sources of support for victims of sexual assault, due to the small numbers of last year victims. A low proportion of victims appeared to have contact with voluntary support organisations, but this was based on victimisation since age 16. It is likely that some incidents of victimisation being discussed occurred before Rape Crisis helplines became established. It should also be emphasised that these support services are under-funded, relative to support services dedicated to victims of domestic violence. The notion that sexual and domestic violence are often not mutually exclusive is relevant here too – women may wish to seek support for a range of interpersonal abuse.

A larger sample of victims would be required to learn more about the kind of support victims do or do not receive and whether this support is targeted in the correct areas. One point worth emphasising is that only just over a third of rape victims and just over a half of sexual assault victims told somebody about their experience at the time. Just over a third of rape victims told somebody 'later', and just under a third had never revealed their victimisation to anybody. Rape Crisis helplines are likely to receive many calls from survivors wishing to discuss abuse that occurred many years previously. The perception that support services and resources should be concentrated only on recent victims should be challenged.

## **How do victims perceive their experiences?**

Results from the present study confirm that the status of 'rape victim' is highly stigmatised. Only 60 per cent of female rape victims were prepared to self-classify themselves as having been raped. It would also appear that some women still have trouble reconciling their experiences with the law. For example, only 70 per cent of women who self-classified themselves as having experienced attempted rape also self-classified this incident as a crime. Perhaps more effort needs to be made to convince women that sexual victimisation is both criminal and unacceptable in any setting.



Victims of stranger attacks were most likely to view their experience as a crime. Only half of victims whose last incident involved a partner viewed their experience as a crime. Maybe more effort also needs to be invested in debunking the popular stereotypes surrounding sexual victimisation (that of the 'real rape') – especially as there was some evidence to suggest that women raped by their partners may be slightly more emotionally affected by the experience.

### **The 2001 BCS 'Interpersonal violence module'**

The measurement of sexual victimisation by the British Crime Survey can be seen as evolving. The 1994 self-completion module provided a crucial demonstration of what was possible with CASI technology and the 1998 and 2000 modules have built on this. The 2001 British Crime Survey has an enlarged core sample size – some 40,000 interviews per annum. The 2001 sweep contains an 'Interpersonal violence' (IPV) self-completion module designed to be the 'state of the art'. The IPV module will cover sexual victimisation, as well as domestic violence and stalking and will attempt to provide the most accurate prevalence estimates yet for these crimes. The module will also attempt to provide a better understanding of the dynamics of interpersonal violence and how these various forms of abuse interrelate.

The IPV module can be seen as part of the evolution of the BCS methodology for dealing with sensitive issues. The module will again be CASI-based, which will tend to negate any interviewer effect while still being extremely cost-effective. But the module also dispenses with the rigid screener question design of previous modules. Instead, respondents will be asked a series of behaviourally specific cue questions, designed to capture the full range of violence against women.

The IPV module will also contain some previously unasked questions that will enable a broader analysis of the data. For example, women will be asked for their personal, as well as household income and there is also a question on respondents' sexuality. As the module is asked of a very large sample it will allow a more thorough examination of male interpersonal victimisation than has been possible in the past. It will also be possible to directly explore links between sexual victimisation and domestic violence. Results from the IPV module are planned to be published in 2002.



**Table A4.1: Lifetime (since age 16) prevalence risks of sexual victimisation, by age**

Percentages	Rape	N	Sig <sup>2</sup>	Any sexual victimisation	N	Sig <sup>2</sup>
16-19	2.8	359	✓	8.4	361	-
20-24	5.2	453	-	12.1	454	-
25-29	5.1	805	-	9.8	819	-
30-34	4.9	1,013	-	9.9	1,023	-
35-39	4.8	1,008	-	10.7	1,017	-
40-44	7.4	882	✓	12.3	886	✓
45-49	5.4	764	-	9.5	769	-
50-54	4.2	813	-	7.7	816	✓
55-59	3.4	747	✓	6.7	753	✓
All	4.9	6,844		9.7	6,898	

Notes:

1. Source: 2000 British Crime Survey.
2. Ticks denote significantly different from the average at the 10% level (one tail).
3. Any sexual victimisation includes cases in which the respondent said 'Don't want to answer' or 'refused' to the specific 'rape' question (Ralnter).

**Table A4.2: Last year prevalence risks of sexual victimisation, by age**

Percentages	Rape	N	Sig <sup>2</sup>	Any sexual victimisation	N	Sig <sup>2</sup>
16-19	1.8	359	✓	3.8	361	✓
20-24	0.3	453	-	3.0	454	✓
25-29	0.4	805	-	0.5	819	-
30-34	0.1	1,013	✓	0.4	1,023	✓
35-39	0.4	1,008	-	0.6	1,017	-
40-44	0.3	882	-	0.5	886	-
45-49	0.3	764	-	0.4	769	✓
50-54	0.4	813	-	0.5	816	-
55-59	0.1	747	✓	0.1	753	✓
All	0.4	6,844		0.9	6,898	

Notes:

1. Source: 2000 British Crime Survey.
2. Ticks denote significantly different from the average at the 10% level (one tail).
3. Any sexual victimisation includes cases in which the respondent said 'Don't want to answer' or 'refused' to the specific 'rape' question (Ralnter).

**Table A4.3: Prevalence risks for any sexual victimisation and rape in last year**

Percentages	Rape	N	Sig <sup>2</sup>	Any sexual victimisation	N	Sig <sup>2</sup>
Age:						
16-19	1.8	359	✓	3.8	361	✓
20-24	0.3	453	-	3.0	454	✓
25-29	0.4	805	-	0.5	819	-
30-39	0.3	2,021	-	0.5	2,040	✓
40-59	0.3	3,206	-	0.4	3,224	✓
Household income:						
Under £10,000	0.7	1,373	-	1.3	1,393	✓
£10,000 - £19,999	0.5	1,746	-	1.2	1,756	-
£20,000 or over	0.2	3,211	✓	0.5	3,230	✓
Marital Status:						
Married/cohabiting	0.2	4,143	✓	0.3	4,169	✓
Single	0.8	1,489	✓	2.6	1,506	✓
Divorced	1.1	714	✓	1.7	719	✓
Separated	0.8	316	-	0.8	320	-
Area:						
Inner-city or urban	0.4	5,217	-	0.9	5,263	-
Rural	0.3	1,627	-	0.8	1,635	-
Tenure:						
Social renter	0.8	1,214	✓	1.4	1,233	✓
Private renter	0.4	588	-	1.8	600	✓
Owner-occupier	0.2	4,722	-	0.4	4,743	✓
Employment status:						
Employed	0.4	4,644	-	0.9	4,679	-
Student	0.1	196	-	3.1	197	✓
Homeworker	0.3	1,323	-	0.4	1,334	✓
Unemployed	0.4	153	-	0.8	154	-
Retired	-	103	✓	-	105	✓
Health:						
Bad	1.4	250	-	1.6	254	-
Fair	0.7	1,075	-	1.2	1,090	-
Good	0.3	5,518	-	0.8	5,553	-
All	0.4			0.9		

## Notes:

1. Source: 2000 British Crime Survey.
2. Ticks denote significantly different from the average at the 10% level (one tail).

**Table A5.1: Relationship to perpetrator, last incident of sexual victimisation experienced since age 16**

	Rape	Sexual assault	Any sexual victimisation
	%	%	%
Current partners boy/girlfriends	45	18	32
Ex- partners boy/girlfriends	11	8	10
Other intimates <sup>2</sup>	10	11	11
Dates	11	12	10
Acquaintances <sup>3</sup>	16	28	22
Strangers	8	23	15
All <sup>2</sup>	100	100	100
Unweighted N	626	519	1,205

Notes:

1. Source: 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys.
2. Totals may not sum to 100 due to rounding.
3. Includes parents, step-parents, other relatives, other household members and close friends.
4. Includes casual acquaintances, employers, colleagues, clients and other known people.
5. Any sexual victimisation includes cases in which the respondent said 'Don't want to answer' or 'refused' to the specific 'rape' question (RaiInter).

**Table A5.2: Physical impact of last incident of sexual victimisation experienced since age 16, by relationship to perpetrator**

Percentages	Force used	Injury sustained	N
Offender was:			
Partner	70	39	389
Ex-partner	65	33	122
Other intimate <sup>2</sup>	45	16	121
Date	47	14	121
Acquaintance <sup>3</sup>	51	18	254
Stranger	61	19	176
All	59	25	1,183

Notes:

1. Source: 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys.
2. Includes parents, step-parents, other relatives, other household members and close friends.
3. Includes casual acquaintances, employers, colleagues, clients and other known people.

**Table A5.3: Presence of threats in incidents of rape or sexual assault**

Percentages	Rape	N	Sexual Assault	N	Any sexual victimisation	N
Threats	66	367	56	323	61	734
Threats of violence	75	248	46	189	61	462

Notes:

1. Source: 2000 British Crime Survey.
2. 'Threats' includes being 'verbally threatened, intimidated or blackmailed'.
3. 'Threats of violence' includes threats to hurt the victim, or somebody close to them.
4. Any sexual victimisation includes cases in which the respondent said 'Don't want to answer' or 'refused' to the specific 'rape' question (RaInter).

**Table A5.4: Age of offender, last incident of sexual victimisation experienced since age 16**

	Rape	Sexual assault	Any sexual victimisation
	%	%	%
Under 16	1	2	1
16-19 (Teenager)	10	20	15
20-39 (Young adult)	70	62	67
40-59 (Middle age)	18	15	16
60+	1	1	1
All <sup>2</sup>	100	100	100
Unweighted N	626	519	1,205

Notes:

1. Source: 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys.
2. Totals may not sum to 100 due to rounding.
3. Any sexual victimisation includes cases in which the respondent said 'Don't want to answer' or 'refused' to the specific 'rape' question (RaInter).

**Table A5.5** *Location of last incident of sexual victimisation experienced since age 16*

	Rape	Sexual assault	Any sexual victimisation
	%	%	%
Own home	55	30	43
Offender's home	20	18	19
Public place <sup>2</sup>	13	36	23
Elsewhere	13	16	14
All <sup>2</sup>	100	100	100
<i>Unweighted N</i>	<i>604</i>	<i>519</i>	<i>1,183</i>

Notes:

1. Source: 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys.
2. Totals may not sum to 100 due to rounding.
3. Includes workplace, educational establishments, pubs, clubs and discos, streets, parks, public transport and car parks. Lack of numbers precludes further breakdown of this category.
4. Any sexual victimisation includes cases in which the respondent said 'Don't want to answer' or 'refused' to the specific 'rape' question (Ralter).

**Table A6.1** *Concern about crime, by when experienced last incident of sexual victimisation*

Percentages	Non-victims	Last year victims	5 year victims	All victims
Feelings of insecurity walking alone after dark in 'your' area:				
A bit unsafe	29	33	30	28
Very unsafe	13	27	23	18
All (very/a bit unsafe)	42	60	54	46
<i>Unweighted N</i>	<i>11,018</i>	<i>96<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>316</i>	<i>1,180</i>
Worry about being raped:				
Fairly worried	22	23	27	26
Very worried	31	42	39	30
All (very/fairly worried)	54	65	65	57
<i>Unweighted N</i>	<i>10,996</i>	<i>95<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>314</i>	<i>1,176</i>

Notes:

1. Source: 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys.
2. Figures should be treated with caution, due to base not containing 100 or more cases.

**Table A7.1: Proportion of victims who told somebody about last incident of sexual victimisation**

	Respondent was victimised.....				
	Up to 5 years ago	Over 5 up to 10 years ago	Over 10 up to 20 years ago	Over 20 years ago	Ever victimised
	%	%	%	%	%
Told somebody at the time	47	40	40	37	41
Told somebody later	23	36	33	25	29
Never told anybody	30	25	27	37	30
All <sup>2</sup>	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Unweighted N</i>	188	143	204	198	733

Notes:

1. Source: 2000 British Crime Survey.
2. Totals may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

**Table A7.2: Whether last incident of sexual victimisation came to the attention of the police**

	Rape	Sexual assault	Any victimisation
	%	%	%
Police did not come to know	80	83	82
Victim reported incident	10	10	10
Somebody else reported incident	7	5	6
Police found out another way	3	2	2
All <sup>2</sup>	100	100	100
<i>Unweighted N</i>	604	519	1,183

Notes:

1. Source: 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys.
2. Totals may not sum to 100 due to rounding.
3. Any sexual victimisation includes cases in which the respondent said 'Don't want to answer' or 'refused' to the specific 'rape' question (RaInter).



**Table A7.3: Victims' satisfaction with police handling of the matter, last incident of sexual victimisation experienced since age 16**

	Rape	Sexual assault	Any victimisation
	%	%	%
Very satisfied	32	38	34
Fairly satisfied	25	25	26
A bit dissatisfied	16	13	14
Very dissatisfied	22	21	21
Too early to say	5	3	4
All <sup>2</sup>	100	100	100
Unweighted N	123	87 <sup>3</sup>	217

Notes:

1. Source: 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys.
2. Totals may not sum to 100 due to rounding.
3. Figures should be treated with caution, due to base not containing 100 or more cases.
4. Any sexual victimisation includes cases in which the respondent said 'Don't want to answer' or 'refused' to the specific 'rape' question (Rafter).

**Table A8.1: Victims' self-classification of last incident of rape experienced, by household income**

	Annual household income		
	Under £10,000	£10,000 - £20,000	Over £20,000
Victim said incident was:	%	%	%
Rape	61	63	57
Attempted rape	9	6	6
Indecent assault	12	11	14
Behaviour they found offensive	18	20	18
None of these	1	<1	5
All <sup>2</sup>	100	100	100
Unweighted N	220	177	186

Notes:

1. Source: 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys.
2. Totals may not always sum to 100 due to rounding.

**Table A8.2: Whether victims considered last incident of sexual assault experienced since age 16 to be a crime**

Victim said incident was:	Victim classified as having experienced sexual assault...							
	Up to 5 years ago		Over 5 up to 10 years ago		Over 10 up to 20 years ago		Over 20 years ago	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Crime	39	62	47	44	59	76	53	80
Wrong but not crime	39	57	41	32	26	33	27	46
Just something that happens	17	17	5	5	10	12	14	21
Not sure	5	11	8	6	6	8	6	9
All <sup>2</sup>	100	147	100	87 <sup>3</sup>	100	129	100	156

Notes:

1. Source: 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys.
2. Totals may not always sum to 100 due to rounding.
3. Figures should be treated with caution, due to base not containing 100 or more cases.

This Appendix details the main sample surveys that have taken place internationally that have included sections relating to (or have been dedicated to) sexual victimisation or 'violence against women' more generally. For each survey the methodology is indicated (where known). There is also a table presenting the 'lifetime' and 'last year' prevalence rates each survey reports.

### ***Generic Crime Surveys***

*United States National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), US Bureau of Justice, 1972-*

- annual
- telephone, female-only interviewers for female respondents

*British Crime Survey (BCS), Home Office, 1982-*

- previously biennial, annual from 2001
- face-to-face, male and female interviewers

*Australian Crime and Safety Survey, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1993-*

- annual
- compulsory postal survey

### ***Revisions***

*United States National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), Bachman & Saltzman (1995)*

- Screener questions redesigned in 1992

*British Crime Survey (BCS), Percy and Mayhew (1997); Myhill & Allen (2002)*

- CASI self-completion

### ***Violence Against Women Surveys***

*Canadian Violence Against Women Survey (VAWS), Statistics Canada (1993)*

- dedicated, one-off
- telephone, trained female-only interviewers

*Australian Women's Safety Survey, Australian Bureau of Statistics (1996)*

- dedicated, one off
- face-to-face, telephone or combination, trained female-only interviewers

*U.S. National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS), U.S. Dept. of Justice (1998)*

- dedicated, one-off
- telephone, trained female-only interviewers for female respondents

*Finnish Violence Against Women Survey, Statistics Finland (1997)*

- dedicated, one-off
- postal survey

*Icelandic Violence Survey, Ministry of Justice (1996)*

- dedicated, one-off
- telephone survey

**Table B.1    Prevalence rates for sexual victimisation<sup>1</sup>**

Percentages	Lifetime	Last Year
<i>Generic Crime Surveys</i>		
United States NCVS	-	0.1
<i>Revised</i>	-	0.5
British Crime Survey	-	0.7
<i>Revised</i>	9.7	0.9
Australian Crime and Safety	-	0.6
<i>Violence Against Women Surveys</i>		
Statistics Canada VAWS <sup>2</sup>	39.0	5.0
United States NVAWS <sup>3</sup>	17.6	0.3
Australia Women's Safety	-	1.4
Statistics Finland	4.0	2.0
Icelandic Violence Survey	5.0	-

Notes:

1. Figures are not directly comparable due to differences in methodologies and definitions.
2. Includes incidents of 'unwanted sexual touching'.
3. Comprises forcible rape and attempts – vaginal, oral or anal intercourse.

The 1998 sweep of the British Crime Survey was conducted by the National Centre for Social Research (formerly Social and Community Planning Research). The 2000 sweep was conducted by a consortium of National Centre and the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The design of the survey, including the sexual victimisation self-completion modules, was shared between the Research, Development and Statistics Directorate of the Home Office and the survey contractor(s). Previous sweeps of the BCS were conducted in 1982, 1984, 1988, 1992, 1994 and 1996. The 2001 sweep of the survey is currently in the field. From 2001, the survey will be conducted annually, using continuous sampling. The sample size has been increased to 40,000 interviews per annum.

The methodology of the 1998 and 2000 BCS is discussed below. First, general details of the sample and the interview procedures for both the main face-to-face interview and the sexual victimisation self-completion modules are given. For further details about the BCS methodology see Hales and Stratford (1999) and Hales et al (2000). Secondly, general methodological issues relating to large sample surveys are discussed.

### **The main BCS interview**

The majority of the BCS questionnaire is conducted as a face-to-face interview using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI).<sup>31</sup> CAPI is a computerised questionnaire programme which specifies the questions, response categories and routing instructions. Interviewers read the questions and, if appropriate, the response categories, from a computer screen and input the responses directly into a laptop computer during the interview. The main BCS interview, as well as providing estimates of crime levels and trends, also explores a range of other crime (and occasionally non-crime) issues; such as contacts with the police, home security, attitudes to the Criminal Justice System, problems in the local area and domestic fires.

### ***Sample design***

The BCS sample is designed to give, after appropriate weighting, a representative sample of adults aged 16 and over living in private households in England and Wales.

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31. The BCS has been conducted using CAPI since 1994.

A sample of addresses is selected from the Small Users Postcode Address File (PAF) using a stratified multi-stage random probability design<sup>32</sup>. Inner-city areas were over-sampled by a factor of about two in 1998, but this was not observed in 2000. At addresses where there is more than one household, a single household is selected to participate using random selection procedures. At each selected household one adult aged 16 or over is randomly selected for interview. No substitution of respondents is allowed.

### ***Weighting***

For analysis purposes the data is weighted to correct for the different probabilities of selection inherent in the sample design. The weighting:

- offsets the over-sampling of inner-city areas (for the 1998 sweep)
- corrects for cases where there was more than one household at an address
- corrects for cases where there was more than one adult in the household

### ***Sample size and response rate***

In the 1998 BCS, a nationally representative sample of 14,947 adults aged 16 and over was successfully interviewed between January and June 1998. The response rate was 79 per cent. The main reasons for non-response at eligible addresses were refusal either by the selected individual (12%) or by the household before the respondent could be selected (1%) and non-contact (4%).

In the 2000 BCS, a nationally representative sample of 19,411 adults aged 16 and over was successfully interviewed between January and June 2000. A further 3,874 interviews were conducted with minority ethnic respondents (the 'ethnic boost' sample). The response rate for the core sample in 2000 was 74 per cent. This fall in the response rate is probably not specific to the BCS, but symptomatic of falling response rates across all major social surveys.

### ***Self-completion modules***

The BCS has included a self-completion element since the 1992 sweep, and this has been implemented through CASI (Computer Assisted Self-Interviewing) since 1994.

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32. The small users PAF is a listing of all postal delivery points in the country which receive less than 25 pieces of mail per day.

In the 1998 BCS there were three self-completion modules. The first of these covered drug misuse (Ramsay and Partridge, 1999), the second experience of stalking (Budd and Mattinson, 2000) and the third sexual victimisation<sup>33</sup>. In the 2000 sweep, there were self-completion modules on drugs and sexual victimisation only. At the end of the CAPI interview respondents aged 16 to 59 are invited to complete the self-completion section<sup>34</sup>. At this point the interviewer passes the laptop computer over to the respondent allowing them to enter their own responses. At the beginning of the self-completion section a screen appears which provides respondents with guidance about how to enter their responses and instructs them to alert the interviewer if they have any difficulties, for example if they wish to change a response. The method of data entry, in both 1998 and 2000, was kept as simple as possible, with respondents having to press the number which corresponded to their chosen response followed by the 'enter' key, which was indicated by a red sticker.

### ***Response rate***

Of the 5,760 eligible female respondents aged 16 to 59 in the 1998 BCS sample, 97 per cent completed the self-completion section, either on their own or with assistance. Applying this figure to the main BCS response rate of 79 per cent gives an overall response rate for the sexual victimisation self-completion of 76 per cent (this is under the assumption that the response rate among 16 to 59 year-olds was the same as for the sample aged 16 and over).

Of the 7,106 eligible respondents in the 2000 sample, 98 per cent completed the self-completion section, either on their own or with interviewer assistance. Using the same logic, this gives an overall response rate of 72 per cent for the 2000 sexual victimisation self-completion module.

33. In previous sweeps there have been modules on drug misuse (Mott and Mirrlees-Black, 1995; Ramsay and Spiller, 1997; Ramsay and Percy, 1996); domestic violence (Mirrlees-Black, 1999); sexual victimisation (Percy and Mayhew, 1997) and handling stolen goods (Sutton, 1998).

34. Respondents aged 60 or over are not asked to undertake the self-completion. Traditionally, this has been because older people are sometimes less able or willing to use the laptop computers. There is evidence from the BCS that older respondents in the 16-59 age group are more likely to require interviewer assistance for the self-completion (see Budd and Mattinson, 2000). However, there is also anecdotal evidence from interviewers and survey companies to suggest that this is increasingly less of a problem. However, the decision to limit the upper age for the self-completion has remained, for research reasons. Principally, the 60 and over age group are not in the policy or high risk target range for personal drug use and their inclusion in modules relating to 'interpersonal violence' issues (such as sexual victimisation) is methodologically problematic. The issue of 'elder abuse' (in common with the issue of child abuse) tends to be explored in a different context, using dedicated surveys.

**Table C.1      Female response to the self-completion modules**

	1998	2000
Number of eligible respondents (aged 16 to 59)	5,760	7,106
Refused to complete self-completion	188	149
Completed questionnaire <sup>2</sup>	5,572	6,957
<i>Response rate</i>	<i>96.9</i>	<i>97.7</i>

Notes:

1. Source: 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys.
2. Includes cases where the interviewer implemented the questionnaire as a face-to-face interview.

### ***Don't know and refusal codes***

Throughout the self-completion questionnaire respondents were permitted to refuse to answer a particular question or answer 'don't know' if they wished to do so. For some questions in the self-completion a refusal option and/or a don't know option were explicitly offered on the screen (see Appendices F and G). Unless otherwise stated these responses are excluded from the findings presented in this report.

### ***Confidentiality***

Self-completion methods have been used in the BCS to collect information which respondents may be reluctant to divulge in a face-to-face interview, either because they do not wish to reveal the information to the interviewer or they do not wish their responses to be overheard by other people present during the interview. Sexual victimisation is a particularly personal and stigmatised area and therefore it was felt that it would be most appropriate to ask respondents about their experiences in a self-completion module. To maximise the confidentiality afforded by this method, respondents should ideally complete the self-completion modules on their own, without any assistance from the interviewer, in a room in which no-one else, apart from the interviewer, is present.

To reassure respondents of the confidentiality of the exercise, their responses to the self-completion modules were electronically hidden as soon as they had completed the section. This prevented anyone, including the interviewer, gaining access to the data. The data could only be accessed by the research company when it was centrally downloaded.



### ***Presence of others***

Interviewers were instructed to try and conduct the interviews, both the face-to-face stage and the self-completion, in private. Unfortunately, this was not always possible to achieve, for various reasons. This can be particularly problematic for the study of sexual victimisation, due to the high level of incidents perpetrated by partners and other intimates. It is possible that the presence of family or household members at the time of the interview (which may even include the perpetrator of an offence) could discourage reporting. Table C.2 shows the presence of others during the self-completion modules. Overall, in about a third of cases the self-completion was conducted while someone else was present, most often a spouse or partner. In the vast majority of these situations the other person/people in the room did not actually look at or discuss the questionnaire with the respondent.

**Table C.2      *Presence of others during the self-completion module, female respondents***

	1998		2000	
No-one else present	3,692	(66%)	4,878	(70%)
Someone else present	1,180	(34%)	2,072	(30%)
Spouse or partner present	706	(13%)	907	(13%)
Adult household member present	352	(6%)	287	(4%)
Child in household present	590	(11%)	659	(9%)
Other person present	232	(4%)	219	(3%)

Notes:

1. Source: 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys.

### ***Interviewer assistance***

Interviewers were also asked to try and persuade all respondents, who were able to do so, to enter their own responses. In cases in which respondents did not wish to enter their responses or were unable to do so, for example because of eyesight, literacy or dexterity problems, interviewers were permitted to conduct the self-completion as a face-to-face interview, but only if no-one else was present at the time. Overall, 4 per cent of female respondents in 1998 and 6 per cent in 2000 requested that the interviewer complete the self-completion as a face-to-face interview. In addition, a small proportion of respondents who entered their own responses required some assistance from interviewers, for example to change an answer. In these situations interviewers were instructed to try and help by providing instructions for the respondent to follow rather than by directly assisting, and to avoid, if at all possible, looking at the computer screen.

**Table C.3** *Interviewer assistance on the self-completion module, female respondents*

	1998		2000	
Respondent completed self-completion	5,322	(96%)	6,527	(94%)
Without any help	4,927	(88%)	6,196	(89%)
Help with 1 or 2 questions	239	(4%)	220	(3%)
Help with less than half	51	(1%)	30	(<1%)
Help with more than half	26	(<1%)	16	(<1%)
Help with all/nearly all	79	(1%)	55	(1%)
Interviewer completed	250	(4%)	430	(6%)

Notes:

1. Source: 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys.

### **Interviewer Sex**

Many commentators argue that female respondents are less likely to reveal sensitive experiences of sexual victimisation to male interviewers (see Chapter 1). However, the 1998 BCS<sup>35</sup> suggests that this methodological problem is overcome by the use of CASI technology. The screener prevalence rates (see Chapter 2) for the 1998 BCS self-completion module were very similar for interviews conducted by male and female interviewers. In fact, interviews undertaken by male interviewers were slightly more likely to result in reports of sexual victimisation (Table C.4). It may be that the perceived confidentiality of the CASI technology is enough to overcome any insecurity felt by a female respondent in the presence of male interviewer.

35. There was no 'interviewer sex' variable attached to the 2000 BCS dataset.

**Table C.4** 1998 screener prevalence rates by interviewer sex<sup>36</sup>, female respondents

Percentages	Male Interviewer	Female Interviewer
Sx1:		
Yes	6.7	5.4
No	92.4	93.5
Don't want to answer	0.9	1.2
Sx2:		
Yes	4.4	4.3
No	94.8	94.7
Don't want to answer	0.8	0.9
Sx3:		
Yes	6.3	5.7
No	92.9	93.4
Don't want to answer	0.8	0.9

Notes:

1. Source: 1998 British Crime Survey.

## Methodological issues

This section briefly outlines some of the methodological limitations associated with measuring experiences of sexual victimisation through a self-completion module within a generic, quantitative crime survey.

### Sampling error

As only a sample of the population was questioned, the estimates will be subject to sampling error. That is, the results may differ from those that would have been obtained if the whole population had been interviewed. The error depends on the size and design of the sample and the size of the estimate. Although the BCS is large by the standards of most surveys, its estimates will be imprecise. The degree of error is proportionally larger for rarer measures.

Due to the stratification and clustering of the BCS sample design, a design factor has to be used when calculating confidence intervals and significance tests. That is, these cannot be calculated on the assumption of a simple random design. The survey company calculates selected design factors. When a specific design factor has not been calculated, as in the

36. See Appendix F for exact wording of screener questions.

case of the questions in this report, the assumption is made that the effective sample size was reduced by a fifth (i.e. a design factor of 1.2). Where used, significance tests have been applied at the 10 per cent level (one-tailed).

### ***Coverage***

The BCS self-completion modules were asked of a sample of adults aged 16 to 59 who were living in private households in England and Wales. The homeless and those living in communal establishments and institutions are excluded. This can be problematic for the measurement of interpersonal violence issues as the most heavily abused section of the population can often be found living in refuge or temporary accommodation, or may be staying with family or friends.

### ***Non-response***

As in any sample survey, not all those who were eligible to participate actually did so, either because they could not be contacted during the fieldwork period, they refused to take part or were unable to do so, for example because of ill health. The response rate for the self-completion module (discussed above) indicates the proportion of the eligible sample who did participate. The failure to include all eligible respondents is only problematic if those who do not participate differ – in terms of the survey measure – to those who do. Although, the BCS response rate is relatively high, certain groups are under-represented, including young men.

### ***Response errors***

The reliability of survey estimates depends upon the ability and willingness of respondents to accurately remember their experiences and report them to the survey. Aside from the definitional problems discussed above, there are other sources of response error.

Respondents may simply forget a relevant experience. This is particularly problematic for the lifetime measure, as the longer the recall period the more likely that some incidents, particularly the less serious, will be forgotten.

Despite the increased confidentiality of self-completion, some respondents may still be reluctant to report their experiences to the survey for a variety of reasons. In some cases respondents may have suffered experiences they do not view as a crime and may be reluctant to mention the incident in a crime survey. This said, the crime context is minimised

because the survey does cover a range of issues, including questions about what may be considered as 'marginal' crimes, and the self-completion section is a quite distinct part of the interview process.

These response errors are likely to result in an under-estimation of the true prevalence of sexual victimisation and also to bias the results towards the more serious incidents. Although it is not possible to assess the magnitude of this effect, over half the incidents of sexual victimisation discussed in this report could be classified as 'rape'.

It should also be borne in mind that, in a relatively small proportion of interviews, it was not possible for interviewers to implement the self-completion in the ideal way and in these cases the full confidentiality afforded by self-completion was lacking. It is difficult to assess how much of an impact the presence of others or the involvement of the interviewer had on respondents' willingness to report their experiences, although it may be supposed that the presence of family and other household members discouraged reporting in some instances, particularly if those present included the perpetrator.



Although the use of Computer Assisted Self-Interviewing (CASI) technology has encouraged more women to report experiences of sexual victimisation to the BCS, the actual numbers of victims are still relatively small. The authors decided to pool data from the 1998 and 2000 sexual victimisation self-completion modules in order to maximise the number of cases to analyse.

The principal problem with combining the 1998 and 2000 modules was that certain questions were refined for the 2000 sweep. *In particular, the wording of the three 'screener' questions that filter victims into the module were changed slightly from 1998 to 2000.* This is obviously an extremely important point, as differently worded screener questions could have filtered in incidents of a differing nature and severity. If this was the case, pooling the data from the two modules would not be appropriate.

### Validity checks

The authors undertook detailed comparative analysis of the responses from both the 1998 and 2000 follow-up questions for victims. This involved running frequencies on every directly comparable variable in the two datasets. Both unweighted frequencies (raw numbers of responses) and weighted frequencies (proportions of responses) were examined. It was decided that the slight change in the screener questions in 2000 had not led to significantly different types of incidents being reported to the module. The proportions and distributions of responses were extremely similar between the two survey years.

### Question changes

As well as the screeners, a handful of follow-up questions also differed between the 1998 and 2000 modules. The approach used to deal with this varied depending on the level of disparity. Certain analysis has been restricted to 2000 data only. There are also certain questions that were added in 2000, rather than altered. If analysis has been performed using only 2000 data, this is stated and footnoted in all tables and charts.

The two most awkward question alterations concerned the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator (crucial to much of the analysis in this report) and the question recording whether or not an attack involved multiple perpetrators. In terms of multiple perpetrator attacks, the 1998 module asked victims to answer questions about both the youngest and eldest perpetrators (at their discretion); whereas the 2000 module asked victims to focus just on one perpetrator. It would not have been methodologically sound to attempt to pool the data from these various questions. As there were relatively few multiple perpetrator incidents reported anyway, the decision was made to exclude them from analyses of the nature of incidents, when using pooled data. Multiple perpetrator incidents were not excluded when using just 2000 data, or in calculation of prevalence rates.

The questions concerning the relationship of the victim to the perpetrator were also asked in a different format in the two modules. The 1998 module involved two lists of possible perpetrators, one following on from the other. The first list contained partners, ex-partners, dates, household members, other close relatives, strangers and the option 'someone else you knew'. Victims answering positively to this option were routed on to another, comprehensive, list of 'acquaintances'. In the 2000 module, victims were asked initially whether or not they knew the offender. If they answered positively, they were routed on to an all-inclusive list of known perpetrators. These questions, although operationalised in different ways, were not difficult to combine between the two modules. Again, the authors performed comprehensive checks on the data to ensure that patterns of response were not significantly different between the two modules. The data were then combined into one 'perpetrator' variable before data from the two modules were pooled.



The police produce statistical returns for the offence of 'rape'. Reporting of the offence has increased steadily since the mid-1980s, but rape still remains one of the most under-reported criminal offences.

**Table E.1** *Trends in official rape statistics*

Year	Total number of offences recorded by the police as rape		Total offenders cautioned or found guilty of rape	
	N	%	N	%
1985	1,842	100	450	24
1986	2,288	100	415	18
1987	2,471	100	453	18
1988	2,855	100	540	19
1989	3,305	100	613	19
1990	3,391	100	561	17
1991	4,045	100	559	14
1992	4,142	100	529	13
1993	4,589	100	482	10
1994	5,032	100	460	9
1995	4,986	100	578	12
1996	5,759	100	573	10
1997	6,281	100	599	9
1998	7,139	100	656	9
1999	7,809	100	631	8

Notes:

1. Source: Home Office recorded crime; cautions, court proceedings and sentencing statistics.
2. Figures in this table are taken from two sources – those in the first column are offence based, those in the second column are offender based.
3. 1998 and 1999 figures indicate the first time the proportion of offenders tried at Crown Court is higher than the number committed from magistrates for trial.

Once an allegation of rape has been made to the police, there are several courses of action they can take. The case can be 'no-crimed' if the complainant 'retracts completely and admits to fabrication'. No-crimes are not included in the above recorded statistics. The police can also record an offence as rape but decide to take 'no further action', again if the complainant withdraws the allegation, or if they believe the chances of securing a

conviction are slim. In most cases the offence would remain undetected. If the police decide to charge a suspect, the case is passed to the Crown Prosecution Service for a decision on whether to proceed with a prosecution.

As Table E.1 shows, although the number of recorded rapes has increased more than four-fold since 1985, the proportion of recorded rapes resulting in a defendant being convicted is lower than it has ever been. For a full examination of attrition in relation to rape cases and the criminal justice system, see Harris and Grace (1999).

[ASK ALL RESPONDENTS AGED 16-59]

SxIntr        The next set of questions are about sexual victimisation.  
The answers you give will be strictly confidential.  
Please take your time to think about them.  
Now press 1 and the key with the red sticker to continue

Sx1            [ASK ALL]  
*Since age 16*, has someone, either a stranger or someone you know, forced you to do sexual things *against your will*?

1.    Yes
2.    No
3.    Don't want to answer

Sx2            [ASK ALL]  
[Apart from this] *since age 16*, has someone, either a stranger or someone you know, forced you to have sexual intercourse *against your will*?  
By sexual intercourse we mean either vaginal or anal penetration

1.    Yes
2.    No
3.    Don't want to answer

Sx3            [ASK ALL]  
[Apart from this] *since age 16*, has someone, either a stranger or someone you know, *ever attempted* to force you to have sexual intercourse or make you do sexual things *against your will*?

1.    Yes
2.    No
3.    Don't want to answer

- RaTime [IF (Sx1 = Yes) OR (Sx2 = Yes) OR (Sx3 = Yes)]  
You said that you had been forced to do sexual things/you had been forced to have sexual intercourse/someone had tried to force you to have sexual intercourse or to do sexual things against your will.  
How many times [has this/have these things] happened?
1. Once
  2. Twice
  3. Three or more times
- RaHapp [IF (Sx1 = Yes) OR (Sx2 = Yes) OR (Sx3 = Yes)]  
[Has this/Have any of these things] happened in the last 12 months since [month/year]?
1. Yes
  2. No
- RaYear [ASK IF (RaHapp = Yes) AND IF ANYTHING OCCURRED MORE THAN ONCE]  
How many times [has this/have these things] happened in the last 12 months?
1. Once
  2. Twice
  3. Three or more times
- RaAge [ASK IF RaHapp = No]  
What age were you [when/*the last time*][this/any of these] last happened?  
PLEASE TYPE IN AGE [16..97]
- RaIntro The next few questions are about what actually happened.  
They are very personal but we hope you will feel able to answer them.  
(Now Press 1 and the key with the red sticker to continue)
- RaForce [ASK ALL]  
[Thinking about the *last time* this happened] was physical force or violence used against you (for example, were you hit, punched or held down)?
1. Yes
  2. No

- RaVerbal [ASK IF RaForce = No]  
[Thinking about the *last time* this happened,] were you verbally threatened, intimidated or blackmailed?
1. Yes
  2. No
- RaThrt1 [ASK IF RaVerbal = Yes]  
[Thinking about the *last time* this happened,] were you threatened with violence either to you or to someone close to you?
1. Yes
  2. No
- RaInter [ASK ALL]  
[Thinking about the *last time* this happened,] were you forced to have sexual intercourse?  
By sexual intercourse we mean either vaginal or anal penetration.
1. Yes
  2. No
  3. Don't want to answer
- RaInjury [ASK ALL]  
Were you injured in any way?
1. Yes
  2. No
- RaInj1 [ASK IF RaInjury = Yes]  
How were you injured?
1. Slightly injured (e.g. bruising or black eye)
  2. Moderately injured (e.g. extensive bruising)
  3. Severely injured (e.g. suffered cuts or broken bones)
  4. Other injury

- RaEmot      [ASK ALL]  
How frightened were you at the time it happened?
1.    Very frightened
  2.    Quite frightened
  3.    Not very frightened
  4.    Not at all frightened
- RaNum      [ASK IF (Sx1 = Yes) OR (Sx2 = Yes) OR (Sx3 = Yes)]  
The next few questions are about the person(s) involved.  
[Still thinking about the *last time* this happened,] how many people did this to you?
1.    One
  2.    Two
  3.    Three
  4.    More than three
  5.    Not sure
- RaSex      [ASK IF (Sx1 = Yes) OR (Sx2 = Yes) OR (Sx3 = Yes)]  
[Was/Were] the [person/people]...
1.    [All] Male
  2.    [All] Female
  3.    [Or both male and female/(not used)]
- RaOffAg0    [ASK IF (Sx1 = Yes) OR (Sx2 = Yes) OR (Sx3 = Yes)]  
How old do you think the [youngest] person was?
1.    Under 16
  2.    16 – 19 (teenager)
  3.    20 - 39 (young adult)
  4.    40 - 59 (middle aged)
  5.    60 or more (older)

- RaOffAg1 [ASK IF RaNum IS MORE THAN ONE]  
And how old do you think the oldest person was?
1. Under 16
  2. 16 - 19 (teenager)
  3. 20 - 39 (young adult)
  4. 40 - 59 (middle aged)
  5. 60 or more (older)
- RaRelO [ASK ALL]  
At the time it happened, was the [youngest] person your...
1. Current [husband/wife] / partner
  2. Ex - [husband/wife] / partner
  3. Current girlfriend/boyfriend
  4. Ex - girlfriend/boyfriend
  5. Someone you were out on a date with
  6. Parent/step-parent
  7. Other relative
  8. Other household member
  9. Someone else you knew
  10. Or, a stranger?
- RaAcq0 [ASK IF RaRelO IN household member or someone else]  
Was the [youngest] person your...
1. Close friend
  2. Casual acquaintance
  3. Employer / boss
  4. Workmate / colleague
  5. Doctor / nurse
  6. Teacher / lecturer
  7. Client / member of the public contacted through work
  8. Someone you knew by sight only
  9. Or, none of these?

RaKnow0 [ASK IF (RaRel0 IN [Current girl/boyfriend...Someone you were out on a date with, Other relative ...Other household member] OR (RaRel0 = Someone else) AND (RaAcq0 NE By sight only)]

How well did you know the [youngest] person?

1. Very well
2. Quite well
3. Not very well
4. Knew by sight only

RaRel1 [ASK IF THERE WAS MORE THAN ONE PERSON INVOLVED]  
At the time it happened, was the oldest person your...

1. Current [husband/wife] / partner
2. Ex - [husband/wife] / partner
3. Current girlfriend / boyfriend
4. Ex - girlfriend / boyfriend
5. Someone you were out on a date with
6. Parent / step-parent
7. Other relative
8. Other household member
9. Someone else you knew
10. Or, a stranger?

RaAcq1 [ASK IF RaRel1 IN household member or someone else]  
Was the [youngest] person your...

1. Close friend
2. Casual acquaintance
3. Employer / boss
4. Workmate / colleague
5. Doctor / nurse
6. Teacher / lecturer
7. Client / member of the public contacted through work
8. Someone you knew by sight only
9. Or, none of these?



RaKnow1 [ASK IF (RaRel1 IN [Current girl/boyfriend...Someone you were out on a date with, Other relative ...Other household member] OR (RaRel1 = Someone else) AND (RaAcq0 NE By sight only)]

How well did you know the oldest person?

1. Very well
2. Quite well
3. Not very well
4. Knew by sight only

RaLoc [ASK ALL]  
The next few questions are about where this incident happened. [Still thinking about the *last time* this happened,]  
Did it happen...

1. Inside a building
2. Or outside (including on transport)?

RaInside [ASK IF RaLoc = Inside]  
Did it happen...

1. In your own home
2. At the offender's home
3. At work
4. At school / university / place of study
5. In a pub / club / disco
6. Or somewhere else?

RaOutsid [ASK IF RaLoc = Outside]  
Did it happen...

1. On the street
2. In a park / other open public space
3. On public transport
4. In a car park
5. Or somewhere else?

RaWhen [ASK ALL]  
At what time of day did it happen?

1. Morning (6am - noon)
2. Afternoon (noon - 6pm)
3. Evening (6pm - midnight)
4. Night (midnight - 6am)

RaLight [ASK IF RaLoc = Outside]  
Was it daylight or dark outside?

1. Daylight
2. Dark
3. Dawn / dusk

RaTell [ASK ALL]  
Have you ever told anyone at all about this?

1. Yes
2. No

RaTell1 [ASK IF RaTell = Yes]  
Did you tell anyone at all *at the time* it happened?

1. Yes
2. No

RaPart [ASK IF (RaTell1 = Yes) AND IF offender is NOT partner / girlfriend / boyfriend]  
Did you tell your [husband/wife] / partner / [boyfriend/girlfriend]?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Did not have a [husband/wife] / partner / [boyfriend/girlfriend] at the time.

- RaFriend [ASK IF RaTell1 = Yes]  
Did you tell a friend/relative/neighbour?
1. Yes
  2. No
- RaDoc [ASK IF RaTell1 = Yes]  
Did you tell a doctor / nurse?
1. Yes
  2. No
- RaPol [ASK ALL]  
Did the police come to know about this incident?
1. Yes - I reported it
  2. Yes - someone else reported it
  3. Yes - they knew in some other way
  4. No
- RaSatPI [ASK IF POLICE CAME TO KNOW ABOUT THE INCIDENT]  
Overall, were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way the police handled this matter?
1. Very satisfied
  2. Fairly satisfied
  3. A bit dissatisfied
  4. Very dissatisfied
  5. Too early to say
- RaDef [ASK ALL]  
Would you describe the incident as...
1. A rape
  2. An attempted rape
  3. Indecent assault
  4. A behaviour that you found offensive
  5. Or none of these

- RaCrime [ASK ALL]  
Do you think what happened was...
1. A crime
  2. Wrong but not a crime
  3. Or just something that happens?
  4. Not sure
- XRaInter\* [ASK IF RESPONDENT SAID NO TO PREVIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT SEXUAL INCIDENTS BUT ANSWERED MORE THAN ONCE TO THE NUMBER OF TIMES THE INCIDENT HAPPENED]  
Just to check, since age 16, has someone, either a stranger or someone you know, ever *physically forced* you (for example, by hitting you or holding you down), or *threatened you with violence* into having sexual intercourse *against your will*?  
By sexual intercourse we mean either vaginal or anal penetration.
1. Yes
  2. No
  3. Don't want to answer
- XRaYear\* [ASK IF XRaInter = Yes]  
When did this last happen?
1. Within the last 12 months
  2. 1 to 2 years ago
  3. 3 to 5 years ago
  4. More than 5 years ago
- XRaNum\* [ASK IF XRaInter = Yes]  
The last time this happened, how many people forced you to have sexual intercourse?
1. One
  2. Two
  3. Three
  4. More than three
  5. Not sure

- XRaSex\* [ASK IF XRaInter = Yes]  
[Was/Were] the [person/people]...
1. [All] Male
  2. [All] Female
  3. [Or both male and female/(not used)]?
- XRaOffAO\* [ASK IF XRaInter = Yes]  
How old do you think the [youngest] person was?
1. Under 16
  2. 16 - 19 (teenager)
  3. 20 - 39 (young adult)
  4. 40 - 59 (middle aged)
  5. 60 or more (older)
- XRaOffA1\* [ASK IF XRaNum is MORE THAN ONE]  
How old do you think the oldest person was?
1. Under 16
  2. 16 - 19 (teenager)
  3. 20 - 39 (young adult)
  4. 40 - 59 (middle aged)
  5. 60 or more (older)
- XRaRelO\* [ASK ALL]  
At the time it happened, was the [youngest] person your...
1. Current [husband/wife] / partner
  2. Ex - [husband/wife] / partner
  3. Current girlfriend / boyfriend
  4. Ex - girlfriend / boyfriend
  5. Someone you were out on a date with
  6. Parent / step-parent
  7. Other relative
  8. Other household member
  9. Someone else you knew
  10. Or, a stranger?

XRaAcq0\* [ASK IF XRaRel0 IN household member or someone else]  
Was the [youngest] person your...

1. Close friend
2. Casual acquaintance
3. Employer / boss
4. Workmate / colleague
5. Doctor / nurse
6. Teacher / lecturer
7. Client / member of the public contacted through work
8. Someone you knew by sight only
9. Or, none of these?

XRaKnow0\* [ASK IF (XRaRel0 IN [Current girl/boyfriend...Someone you were out on a date with, Other relative ...Other household member] OR (XRaRel0=Someone else) AND (XRaAcq0 NE By sight only)]  
How well did you know the [youngest] person?

1. Very well
2. Quite well
3. Not very well
4. Knew by sight only

XRaRel1\* [ASK IF XRaNum IS MORE THAN ONE]  
At the time it happened, was the oldest person your...

1. Current [husband/wife] / partner
2. Ex - [husband/wife] / partner
3. Current girlfriend / boyfriend
4. Ex - girlfriend / boyfriend
5. Someone you were out on a date with
6. Parent / step-parent
7. Other relative
8. Other household member
9. Someone else you knew
10. Or, a stranger?

XRaAcq1\* [ASK IF XRaRel1 IN household member or someone else]  
Was the [oldest] person your...

1. Close friend
2. Casual acquaintance
3. Employer / boss
4. Workmate / colleague
5. Doctor / nurse
6. Teacher / lecturer
7. Client / member of the public contacted through work
8. Someone you knew by sight only
9. Or, none of these?

XRaKnow1\* [ASK IF (XRaRel1 IN [Current girl/boyfriend...Someone you were out on a date with, Other relative ...Other household member] OR (XRaRel1= Someone else) AND (XRaAcq1 NE By sight only))]  
How well did you know the oldest person?

1. Very well
2. Quite well
3. Not very well
4. Knew by sight only

DMEND Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Your answers will be completely confidential. If you want to go back over any answers, the interviewer can tell you how to do this. Otherwise, tell the interviewer you have finished and he/she will press a key which will hide your answers, so that no one can see them on the screen.

\* The data pertaining to the variables XRaInter to XRaKnow1 was unfortunately not saved by the CAPI programme, hence analysis for these variables is not possible.





[ASK ALL RESPONDENTS AGED 16-59]

SxIntr        The next set of questions are about sexual victimisation.  
The answers you give will be strictly confidential.  
Please take your time to think about them.  
Now press 1 and the key with the red sticker to continue

Sx1            [ASK ALL]  
*Since age 16*, has someone, either a stranger or someone you know, used violence, threats or intimidation to force you to do sexual things *against your will*?

1.    Yes
2.    No
3.    Don't want to answer

Sx2            [ASK ALL]  
[Apart from this] *since age 16*, has someone, either a stranger or someone you know, used violence, threats or intimidation to force you to have sexual intercourse *against your will*?  
By sexual intercourse we mean either vaginal or anal penetration

1.    Yes
2.    No
3.    Don't want to answer

Sx3            [ASK ALL]  
[Apart from this] *since age 16*, has someone, either a stranger or someone you know, *ever attempted* to force you to have sexual intercourse or make you do sexual things *against your will*?

1.    Yes
2.    No
3.    Don't want to answer

- RaTime [IF (Sx1 = Yes) OR (Sx2 = Yes) OR (Sx3 = Yes)]  
You said that you had been forced to do sexual things/you had been forced to have sexual intercourse/someone had tried to force you to have sexual intercourse or to do sexual things against your will.  
How many times [has this/ altogether have these things] happened?
1. Once
  2. Twice
  3. Three or more times
- RaHapp [IF (Sx1 = Yes) OR (Sx2 = Yes) OR (Sx3 = Yes)]  
[Has this/Have any of these things] happened in the last 12 months since [month/year]?
1. Yes
  2. No
- RaYear [ASK IF (RaHapp = Yes) AND IF ANYTHING OCCURRED MORE THAN ONCE]  
How many times have these things]happened in the last 12 months altogether?
1. Once
  2. Twice
  3. Three or more times
- RaAge [ASK IF RaHapp = No]  
What age were you [when this/the last time this/the last time any of these] last happened?  
PLEASE TYPE IN AGE [16..97]
- RaIntro The next few questions are about what actually happened.  
They are very personal but we hope you will feel able to answer them.  
(Now Press 1 and the key with the red sticker to continue)

- RaForce [ASK IF Sx1=yes or Sx2=yes or Sx3=yes]  
[Thinking about the *last time* this happened] was physical force or violence used against you (for example, were you hit, punched or held down)?
1. Yes
  2. No
- RaVerbal [ASK IF RaForce = No]  
[Thinking about the *last time* this happened,] were you verbally threatened, intimidated or blackmailed?
1. Yes
  2. No
- RaThrt1 [ASK IF RaVerbal = Yes]  
[Thinking about the *last time* this happened,] were you threatened with violence either to you or to someone close to you?
1. Yes
  2. No
- RaInter [ASK IF Sx1=yes or Sx2=yes or Sx3=yes]  
[Thinking about the *last time* this happened,] were you forced to have sexual intercourse?  
By sexual intercourse we mean either vaginal or anal penetration.
1. Yes
  2. No
  3. Don't want to answer
- RaInjury [ASK IF Sx1=yes or Sx2=yes or Sx3=yes]  
Were you *physically* injured in any way?
1. Yes
  2. No

RaInj1 [ASK IF RaInjury = Yes]

How *badly* were you *physically* injured?

1. Slightly injured (e.g. bruising or black eye)
2. Moderately injured (e.g. extensive bruising)
3. Severely injured (e.g. suffered cuts or broken bones)
4. Other injury

Raanger [ASK IF (Sx1 = Yes) OR (Sx2 = Yes) OR (Sx3 = Yes)]

The next few questions are about how you felt after the incident.

Thinking back to how you felt after the incident, did you feel angry?

1. Yes - very
2. Yes - fairly
3. Yes – a little
4. Not at all

Raupset [ASK IF (Sx1 = Yes) OR (Sx2 = Yes) OR (Sx3 = Yes)]

Did you feel distressed or upset?

1. Yes – very
2. Yes – fairly
3. Yes – a little
4. Not at all

Rashock [ASK IF (Sx1 = Yes) OR (Sx2 = Yes) OR (Sx3 = Yes)]

Did you feel shocked?

1. Yes – very
2. Yes – fairly
3. Yes – a little
4. Not at all

- Raavoid [ASK IF (Sx1 = Yes) OR (Sx2 = Yes) OR (Sx3 = Yes)]  
The next few questions are about how the incident may have affected your lifestyle.  
As a result of this experience, [do you or did you] avoid certain places or people?
1. Yes
  2. No
- Ragoout [ASK IF (Sx1 = Yes) OR (Sx2 = Yes) OR (Sx3 = Yes)]  
And as a result of this experience, [do you or did you] go out less often than you used to?
1. Yes
  2. No
- Rasec [ASK IF (Sx1 = Yes) OR (Sx2 = Yes) OR (Sx3 = Yes)]  
Finally, as a result of this experience, [do you or did you] take any extra personal security measures?
1. Yes
  2. No
- RaNum [ASK IF (Sx1 = Yes) OR (Sx2 = Yes) OR (Sx3 = Yes)]  
The next few questions are about the person(s) involved.  
[Still thinking about the *last time* this happened,] how many people did this to you?
1. One
  2. Two
  3. Three
  4. More than three
  5. Not sure

Please could you select one of these people and answer the questions about that person

RaSex [ASK IF SX1=1 OR SX2=1 OR SX3=1]

Was this person male or female..

1. Male
2. female

RaOffAg1 [ASK IF SX1=1 OR SX2=1 OR SX3=1]

And how old do you think this person was when it happened?

1. Under 16
2. 16 - 19 (teenager)
3. 20 - 39 (young adult)
4. 40 - 59 (middle aged)
5. 60 or more (older)

Raknow [ASK IF SX1=1 OR SX2=1 OR SX3=1]

How well did you know this person?

1. Very well
2. Just to speak to casually
3. Just by sight
4. [he/she] a stranger?

RaRel [ASK IF Knew person in any way]

At the time it happened, was this person your...

1. [husband/wife] / partner
2. Ex - [husband/wife] / partner
3. girlfriend/boyfriend
4. Ex - girlfriend/boyfriend
5. Someone you were out on a date with
6. Parent/step-parent
7. Other relative
8. Other household member
9. Close friend
10. Casual acquaintance
11. Employer / boss
12. Workmate / colleague

13. Client / member of the public contacted through work
14. Someone else you knew

Raloc

[ASK IF Sx1=1 or Sx2=1 or Sx3=1]

This question is about where this incident happened. [Still thinking about the *last time* this happened], did it happen..

1. In your own home
2. At the offender's home
3. At work
4. At school / university / place of study
5. In a pub / club / disco
6. On the street
7. In a park / other open public space
8. On public transport
9. In a car park
10. Or somewhere else?

RaTell

[ASK IF SX1=1 OR SX2=1 OR SX3=1]

Have you *ever* told anyone at all about what happened?

1. Yes
2. No

RaTell1

[ASK IF RaTell = Yes]

Did you tell anyone at all *at the time* it happened?

1. Yes
2. No

RaPart

[ASK IF (RaTell1 = Yes) AND IF offender is NOT partner / girlfriend / boyfriend]

At the time did you tell your [husband/wife] / partner / [boyfriend/girlfriend]?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Did not have a [husband/wife] / partner / boyfriend/girlfriend at the time.

- RaFriend      [ASK IF RaTell1 = Yes]  
At the time did you tell a friend/relative/neighbour?
1.    Yes
  2.    No
- RaDoc          [ASK IF RaTell1 = Yes]  
At the time did you tell a doctor/nurse?
1.    Yes
  2.    No
- RaPsych       [ASK IF RaTell1 = Yes]  
At the time did you tell a counsellor/psychiatrist/psychologist?
1.    Yes
  2.    No
- RaRefuge      [ASK IF RaTell1=Yes]  
At the time did you have any contact with Victim Support, Rape Crisis or any other voluntary support organisation?
1.    Yes
  2.    No
- RaPol          [ASK IF Sx1=1 or Sx2=1 or SX3=1]  
Did the police come to know about this incident?
1.    Yes – I reported it
  2.    Yes – someone else reported it
  3.    Yes – they knew in some other way
  4.    No



- RaSatPI [ASK IF POLICE CAME TO KNOW ABOUT THE INCIDENT]  
Overall, were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way the police handled this matter?
1. Very satisfied
  2. Fairly satisfied
  3. A bit dissatisfied
  4. Very dissatisfied
  5. Too early to say
- RaDef [ASK IF SX1=1 OR SX2=1 OR SX3=1]  
Would you describe the incident as...
1. A rape
  2. An attempted rape
  3. Indecent assault
  4. A behaviour that you found offensive
  5. Or none of these
- RaCrime [ASK IF SX1=1 OR SX2=1 OR SX3=1]  
Do you think what happened was...
1. A crime
  2. Wrong but not a crime
  3. Or just something that happens?
  4. Not sure
- XRaInter [ASK IF RESPONDENT SAID NO TO PREVIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT SEXUAL INCIDENTS BUT ANSWERED MORE THAN ONCE TO THE NUMBER OF TIMES THE INCIDENT HAPPENED]  
Just to check, since age 16, has someone, either a stranger or someone you know, ever *physically forced* you (for example, by hitting you or holding you down), or *threatened you with violence* into having sexual intercourse *against your will*?  
By sexual intercourse we mean either vaginal or anal penetration.
1. Yes
  2. No
  3. Don't want to answer

XRaYear      [ASK IF XRaInter = Yes]  
When did this last happen?

1.    Within the last 12 months
2.    1 to 2 years ago
3.    3 to 5 years ago
4.    More than 5 years ago

XraNum      [ASK IF XRaInter=Yes]  
The last time this happened, how many people forced you to have sexual intercourse?

1.    One
2.    Two
3.    Three
4.    More than three
5.    Not sure

Please could you select one of these people and answer the questions about that person

XRaSex      [ASK IF XRaInter=Yes]  
Was this person..

1.    Male
2.    or female

XRaOffAg    [ASK IF XRaInter=Yes]  
And how old do you think this person was when it happened?

1.    Under 16
2.    16 - 19 (teenager)
3.    20 - 39 (young adult)
4.    40 - 59 (middle aged)
5.    60 or more (older)

XRaknow [ASK IF XRaInter=Yes]  
How well did you know this person?

1. Very well
2. Just to speak to casually
3. Just by sight
4. or was [he/she] a stranger?

XRaRel [ASK IF Knew person in any way]  
At the time it happened, was this person your...

1. [husband/wife] / partner
2. Ex - [husband/wife] / partner
3. girlfriend/boyfriend
4. Ex - girlfriend/boyfriend
5. Someone you were out on a date with
6. Parent/step-parent
7. Other relative
8. Other household member
9. Close friend
10. Casual acquaintance
11. Employer / boss
12. Workmate / colleague
13. Client / member of the public contacted through work
14. Someone else you knew

DMEND Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Your answers will be completely confidential. If you want to go back over any answers, the interviewer can tell you how to do this. Otherwise, tell the interviewer you have finished and he/she will press a key which will hide your answers, so that no one can see them on the screen.



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