

# THE STRUCTURE OF FAMILY VIOLENCE: AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED INCIDENTS

*This report was prepared using actual data supplied by law enforcement agencies to the Uniform Crime Reporting Program under its new National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). Its purpose is to demonstrate a potential utility of the NIBRS data, and its content should not be viewed as a reliable indicator of the family violence experience. The current volume of data in the NIBRS is too small to produce any reliable national statements on this topic. This report, however, is an example of the national analysis that will be possible as the database grows.*

## BACKGROUND

Violent crimes reported to law enforcement in the United States during 1995 approached 1.8 million offenses. During 1995, aggravated assault accounted for 61 percent of the violent crimes reported. Robbery comprised 32 percent; forcible rape, 5 percent; and murder, 1 percent. While these statistics provide some information on the composition of violence in the United States, many details regarding the incidents in which these crimes occur remain elusive. In particular, excepting murder offenses, the involvement of family members, friends, and acquaintances is not delineated for these crimes. When crimes involve family members as victims and offenders, they are generally considered incidents involving family violence.

An empirical examination of family violence is particularly relevant due to recent crime legislation regarding stalking, intimidation, and violence against women. This study focuses on such family violence incidents as reported to the National Incident-Based Reporting System. The aim is to explore the details of these incidents including but not limited to victim and offender profiles, the degree of injury suffered, weapon involvement, and the influence of substance abuse.

The focus on family violence in this study represents a departure from recent efforts to examine such crimes. Previously, much of the information known about crime was derived from one of two

sources: the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) or the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). While each of these has contributed to an understanding of the crime that occurs throughout the country, the analysis of family violence incidents has suffered from both methodological and reporting difficulties associated with such crimes. This study, in contrast, relies upon the revised Uniform Crime Reports known as the NIBRS. This data collection program represents an enhancement to the traditional summary UCR statistics by including attributes of the incident beyond the most serious offense. Emphasis on incident characteristics permits analysis of victim, offender, and offense interactions in the same time and place. While the data from this system are still in their infancy in terms of nationally representative information, the data submitted during 1995 provide a base to use in beginning exploration of topical studies. This prototype family violence report represents the first step in the development of procedures and methodology by which to analyze and publish the NIBRS information.

## SCOPE

The definition of family violence often varies in terms of the types of offenses included and the relationships that are considered to be family. In this study, family violence is defined as a crime against a person or a robbery where the relationship of the victim to the offender is identified as within family. More specifically, the offenses included here are murder and nonnegligent homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, simple assault, intimidation, and other offenses including forcible sodomy, sexual assault with an object, forcible fondling, and kidnaping/abduction. These offenses are selected and analyzed to determine the relationship of the victim to the offender. A family violence incident is distinguished by the presence of a target offense, as noted above, and the existence of at least one relationship between the victim and offender that is within family. Within family is defined as including the following relationships: spouse, common-law spouse, parent, sibling, child, grandparent, grandchild, in-law, stepparent, stepchild, stepbrother

or stepsister, or other family member. This definition of family violence does not include boyfriend, girlfriend, ex-spouse, ex-boyfriend, or ex-girlfriend. Therefore, a family violence incident is distinguished by the relationship of a violent offense victim to at least one of the offenders in that incident.

These incidents are then analyzed to determine the structure of family violence. The analysis is organized into two sections: 1) an overall analysis of family violence incidents and 2) offense-specific subsections including analyses of incidents involving murder, rape, aggravated assault, simple assault, intimidation, and all other family violence offenses including forcible sodomy, sexual assault with an object, forcible fondling, and kidnaping/abduction.

**DATA**

Criminal incidents that became known to law enforcement during 1995 through submission to the FBI's NIBRS are the source of data for this study. During 1995, nine states submitted a total of 836,846 Group A incident reports to the FBI.<sup>1</sup>

The NIBRS data collection contains information on each incident and arrest within 22 crime categories. For each offense known to police within these categories, incident, victim, property, offender, and arrestee information is reported. A full description of the NIBRS is contained in four volumes published by the UCR Program. Again, since the NIBRS is an incident-level reporting program rather than a summarized offense-level data collection system, there are provisions for multiple attributes within given incidents. For example, an incident may contain multiple victims, multiple offenders, multiple offenses, and there may be multiple attributes of a given incident (i.e., weapons, substance abuse, property loss, etc.). In the NIBRS, the attributes of up to 99 offenders, 999 victims, 10 offenses, and 99 arrestees may be reported for a single incident. While incidents infrequently involve such multiple attributes, the NIBRS provides for a complete description of such characteristics in these instances. The multiplicity of both individuals and attributes within a single incident S))))))))))))))))))

1. Group A incident reports relate to offenses within 22 crime categories that are deemed appropriate indicators of the dimensions and trends in crime. The criteria for designation of a Group A offense are: 1) the seriousness of the offense; 2) the frequency or volume of its occurrence; 3) how widespread the offense occurs in the U.S.; and 4) whether the offense will come to the attention to law enforcement. Other factors influencing the definition of offenses included in Group A the NIBRS incident reports are further outlined in the NIBRS edition of the *Uniform Crime Reporting Handbook*.

presents significant challenges to efficient analyses. However, care in management of both the data and the structural relationships among the variables provides an avenue for meaningful analyses to be conducted.

According to the data submitted, these 836,846 incidents contained information on 889,573 victims, 925,812 offenses, and 936,828 offenders. The information pertaining to these aspects of the incidents reported serve as the basis for the statistical information presented herein. The results, however, may not be generalized to criminality across the country due to the limited reporting of the NIBRS data to date. Nonetheless, this work is undertaken to illustrate the potential applications of the NIBRS data to understanding family violence and to suggest some of the crime-analytic uses of such data. Before focusing on family violence, some general information relative to the overall violence picture from the NIBRS is reported.

**OVERALL VIOLENCE**

Of all the violent incidents reported to the NIBRS in 1995, 88 percent involved only a single victim. Of all individual victims reported to have been associated with a criminal incident, 37 percent, or 214,464, were reported to have suffered a violent offense. As shown in Table 1, 56 percent of violent offenses were simple assault, 21 percent aggravated assault, 12 percent intimidation, 4 percent robbery, and 2 percent rape. Four percent were other offenses.

**Table 1. Number of Violent Offenses and Percent Distribution, 1995**

Offense	Number	Percent
Murder	458	0.21
Forcible Rape	3,924	1.81
Robbery	9082	4.19
Aggravated Assault	46,391	21.40
Simple Assault	121,774	56.17
Intimidation	26,154	12.06
Other Offenses	9,023	4.16
Total	216,806	100.00

Focusing on the relationships of the violent crime victims to their offenders reveals family relationships accounted for 23 percent. Specifically, 11 percent were spouses; 2 percent, common-law spouses; 2 percent, parents; 2 percent, siblings; 2 percent, children; and the remainder, otherwise related. (See Table 2.)

Among relationships identified in overall violence, 48 percent involved acquaintances of the victims; 15 percent strangers; and 5 percent persons involved in mutual violence where victims could not be distinguished from offenders, such as in bar fights or family fights where husband and wife are both charged. Relationships were unknown for 8 percent. (See Table 2.)

**Table 2. Number of Victim to Offender Relationships and Percent Distribution, All Violent Crimes, 1995**

Relationship	Number	Percent
Spouse	27,068	10.64
Common-law spouse	6,058	2.38
Parent	4,944	1.94
Sibling	5,709	2.25
Child	5,631	2.21
Grandparent	265	.10
Grandchild	341	.13
In-law	2,120	.83
Stepparent	878	.35
Stepchild	1,485	.58
Stepsibling	302	.12
Other family member	4,530	1.78
Offender*	12,949	5.09
Otherwise known	122,691	48.25
Stranger	39,006	15.34
Unknown	20,308	7.99
Total	254,285	100.00

\* Cases where a participant in the incident is a victim and offender, such as bar fights or family disputes where both husband and wife are charged with assault.

**Table 3. Number of Victims and Percent Distribution, by Age, Sex, and Race, All Violent Crimes, 1995**

	Number	Percent
Age:		
0-11	12,389	5.78
12-17	33,049	15.41
18 and over	165,223	77.04
Unknown	3,803	1.77
Total	214,464	100.00
Sex:		
Male	91,098	42.48
Female	123,052	57.38
Unknown	314	0.15
Total	214,464	100.00
Race:		
White	149,895	69.89
Nonwhite	61,230	28.55
Unknown	3,339	1.56
Total	214,464	100.00

The distribution of victims of general violent crime by age, race, and sex may also be important. In terms of age, 77 percent of the violent crime victims were reported to be age 18 and over, 15 percent to be

juveniles aged 12-17, and 6 percent to be children under the age of 12. Males accounted for 42 percent of the victims, and females, 57 percent. Whites were victimized more frequently than nonwhites (70 percent compared to 29 percent). (See Table 3.)

Again, caution should be used in interpreting these findings since some of this information may reflect more the demographic composition of the jurisdictions reporting the NIBRS information than an accurate picture of the demographic composition of victims of violence.

In terms of injuries suffered, 49 percent of the victims of violent crime reported no injuries associated with the incident. Yet, 43 percent reported some minor injuries, and 8 percent suffered major injuries. (See Table 4.) Major injury includes but is not limited to the following: apparent broken bones, possible internal injury, severe laceration, loss of teeth, and unconsciousness.

**Table 4. Number of Victims and Percent Distribution, All Violent Crimes, 1995**

Injury	Number	Percent
Major	14,563	7.72
Minor	81,347	43.12
None	92,763	49.17
Total	188,673	100.00

Note: Murder and intimidation are not included in this table.

To summarize, 24 percent of the offenses in the NIBRS database for 1995 involve a violent crime. Based on victims where injury was provided, 51 percent sustained an injury as a result of the incident. The age, sex, and race data show that victims of violence in the NIBRS jurisdictions are predominately adults, white, and female. Twenty-three percent of all the violent crime victims recorded have family relationships to the offenders.

While this information provides an overall description of the victims of violence and is useful for describing the general demographics of victims of violence, an examination of the structure of particular crimes that contribute to this overall picture may also be insightful. An analysis of particular types of crimes and comparisons and contrasts to this general picture of violence may suggest some facets of these crimes that are amenable to prevention efforts by law enforcement and the community. Further, law enforcement practice and policy may profit from a

closer examination of the structure of particular crimes in terms of the victims, the typical offender, and the situational characteristics such as weapon use, injuries sustained, and substance abuse that may be involved in such crimes. With this in mind, a more in-depth analysis of the family violence incidents in the NIBRS data for 1995 was undertaken.

## FAMILY VIOLENCE

Of the 214,464 victims of violent offenses, 57,985, or about 27 percent, were reported to have been related to one or more of their offenders. Incidents that involved this type of victimization (involving a violent offense perpetrated toward an individual by a relative) comprise the universe of incidents that were available for analysis. That is, a family violence incident must include a victim that can be identified as being related to one or more of the offenders involved in the incident.

The distribution of types of offenses against family violence victims are shown in Table 5. The majority, 94 percent, suffered assault offenses (i.e., either intimidation, simple assault, or aggravated assault). This percentage is about 5 points higher than the frequency of assault offenses in overall crimes of violence.

**Table 5. Number of Offenses and Percent Distribution, Family Violence, 1995**

Offense	Number	Percent
Murder	102	0.17
Forcible Rape	646	1.10
Robbery	110	0.19
Aggravated Assault	11,032	18.85
Simple Assault	39,717	67.85
Intimidation	4,184	7.15
Other Offenses	2,747	4.69
Total	58,538	100.00

Considering the relevance of the relationship between the victim and the offender, Table 6 also shows that of all relatives involved in family violence, a spouse/common-law spouse is the most frequent at 46 percent.

In terms of demographics, the victims of family violence vary from those of overall crimes of violence. The victims of family violence are slightly older (83 percent over the age of 18) and overwhelmingly female (73 percent). The race of victims does not appear to differ from that of victims

of overall crimes of violence. In the jurisdictions under study, the victim race information shows that 71 percent of family violence victims are white. (See Tables 3 and 7.)

**Table 6. Number of Victim to Offender Relationships and Percent Distribution, Family Violence, 1995**

Relationship	Number	Percent
Spouse	27,068	37.45
Common-law spouse	6,058	8.38
Parent	4,944	6.84
Sibling	5,709	7.90
Child	5,631	7.79
Grandparent	265	0.37
Grandchild	341	0.47
In-law	2,120	2.93
Stepparent	878	1.21
Stepchild	1,485	2.05
Stepsibling	302	0.42
Other family member	4,530	6.27
Offender*	12,949	17.92
Total	72,280	100.00

\* Cases where a participant in the incident is a victim and offender, such as bar fights or family disputes where both husband and wife are charged with assault.

**Table 7. Number of Victims and Percent Distribution, by Age, Sex, and Race, Family Violence, 1995**

	Number	Percent
Age:		
0-11	3,910	6.74
12-17	5,557	9.58
18 and over	48,023	82.82
Unknown	495	0.85
Total	57,985	100.00
Sex:		
Male	15,402	26.56
Female	42,553	73.39
Unknown	30	0.05
Total	57,985	100.00
Race:		
White	41,110	70.90
Nonwhite	16,304	28.12
Unknown	571	0.98
Total	57,985	100.00

The degree of injury varies somewhat from that suffered by victims of overall crimes of violence as well. Victims of family violence suffered some injury in 54 percent of the cases. (See Table 8.) This statistic compares with 51 percent in overall crimes of violence. There was a slight difference in the frequency of major injuries being sustained with 2 percent more in overall violent crimes and a 5 percent difference in minor injuries for family violence versus overall violent crime. Victims of family violence only slightly more frequently suffer any injury than do victims of overall crimes of violence. However, generalizations from this information on victim injury

could be limited by either the strict definitions of minor and major injury used in the NIBRS or by the likelihood that such injuries go unreported at the time of the incident.

**Table 8. Number of Victims and Percent Distribution, Family Violence, 1995**

Injury	Number	Percent
Major	3,045	5.65
Minor	25,857	47.99
None	24,983	46.36
Total	53,885	100.00

While the general picture of family violence is useful to contrast with that presented by overall crimes of violence, more fine-grained analyses of particular offenses may yield information about the structure of specific types of family situations that involve such crimes. Such analyses are presented below.

## MURDER

Murder accounts for only about one-fifth of one percent (.21 percent) of all violent offenses. Considering family violence, murder occurs at about the same general frequency as overall violence occurs, 0.17 percent. However, there are some differences in the composition of these crimes relative to demographics, substance abuse, weapon use, and offender characteristics.

In the jurisdictions studied, children aged 0-11, females, and whites accounted for larger proportions of family murder victims than of all victims of murder. Conversely, adults, males, and nonwhites

accounted for a lesser proportion of family-related murders. (See Table 9.)

**Table 9. Percent Distribution of Victims by Age, Sex, and Race, Murder, 1995**

	Overall	Family
Age:		
0-11	5.46	12.75
12-17	4.80	0.98
18 and over	88.43	82.35
Unknown	1.31	3.92
Sex:		
Male	68.12	48.04
Female	31.88	51.96
Unknown	0.00	0.00
Race:		
White	52.62	58.82
Nonwhite	46.07	40.20
Unknown	1.31	0.98

**Table 10. Percent Distribution of Offenses where Offenders were Suspected of Substance Use, Murder, 1995**

Suspected Use	Overall	Family
Alcohol	13.32	15.69
Drugs	2.18	3.92
Multiple	1.75	1.96
None	82.75	78.43

**Table 11. Percent Distribution of Weapons Used, Murder, 1995**

Weapon	Overall	Family
Firearm	56.33	53.92
Knife	14.85	14.71
Blunt Object	5.24	3.92
Personal Weapons	9.17	15.69
Other	5.46	3.92
Multiple	5.90	5.88
None/unknown	3.06	1.96

**Table 12. Number and Percent Distribution of Confrontations by Victim and Offender Age, Murder, 1995**

Victim Age*	Offender Age*			Total
	0-11	12-17	18 and over	
<b>All murder:</b>				
0-11	0 (0.00%)	1 (1.23%)	25 (96.15%)	26 (100.00%)
12-17	0 (0.00%)	12 (35.29%)	22 (64.71%)	34 (100.00%)
18 and over	1 (0.18%)	68 (12.57%)	472 (87.25%)	541 (100.00%)
Total	1 (0.17%)	81 (13.48%)	519 (86.36%)	601 (100.00%)
<b>Family murder:</b>				
0-11	0 (0%)	1 (6.25%)	15 (93.75%)	16 (100.00%)
12-17	0 (0%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (100.00%)	1 (100.00%)
18 and over	0 (0%)	4 (4.26%)	90 (95.74%)	94 (100.00%)
Total	0 (0%)	5 (4.50%)	106 (95.50%)	111 (100.00%)

\* Does not include unknown ages.

Turning to substance abuse, family murder appears to involve only slightly more substance abuse on the part of the offender (22 percent versus 17 percent) than in the general case. No substance abuse was reported to be involved in 78 percent of the family murders and 83 percent of all murders. (See Table 10.)

Firearms were reported to be involved in over 50 percent of the cases of both family and all murders. Comparing family cases to the overall picture of murder shows that personal weapons (hands, fists, feet, etc.) are more prevalently involved in family murders (16 percent versus 9 percent). Other weapon types (blunt objects, knives, etc.) are about equally represented in both the family cases and the overall murder picture. (See Table 11.)

Finally, focusing on the age of offenders and their victims shows that, proportionally, individuals aged 12-17 less frequently kill adults in family situations than they do in overall murder incidents (80 percent versus 84 percent). When adults are the offenders in either family or general murder, they most often murder other adults (85 percent, family and 91 percent, overall). (See Table 12.)

**FORCIBLE RAPE**

Rape accounts for only about 2 percent of all violent offenses. Considering family violence, rape occurs with less frequency than overall violence at 1 percent. (See Tables 1 and 5.) However, there are some differences in the composition of rape relative to demographics, substance abuse, weapon use, and offender characteristics.

**Table 13. Percent Distribution of Victims by Age, Sex, and Race, Forcible Rape, 1995**

	Overall	Family
Age:		
0-11	10.65	30.96
12-17	35.37	35.45
18 and over	52.62	32.51
Unknown	1.35	1.08
Sex:		
Male	1.04	1.08
Female	98.96	98.92
Unknown	0.00	0.00
Race:		
White	72.20	73.99
Nonwhite	25.87	24.77
Unknown	1.94	1.24

In particular, children under 12 are nearly three times more often victims of family rape compared to all victims of rape (31 percent versus 11 percent). There are no gender differences between victims of family rape as compared to the gender composition of all victims of rape. White individuals show similar results in both family and overall rape in the jurisdictions studied. (See Table 13.)

Turning to substance abuse, family rape appears to involve less substance abuse on the part of the offender than it does in the overall case (12 percent versus 17 percent). At the same time, it is important to note that no substance abuse was reported to be involved in 88 percent of the family rapes and 83 percent of all rapes. (See Table 14.)

**Table 14. Percent Distribution of Offenses where Offenders were Suspected of Substance Use, Forcible Rape, 1995**

Suspected Use	Overall	Family
Alcohol	14.40	9.44
Drugs	1.07	0.93
Multiple	2.01	1.55
None	82.52	88.08

Personal weapons (hands, fists, feet, etc.) are the weapons most frequently used in all forcible rapes (overall or family-related). Firearms are infrequently involved in either family or overall rape. Other weapons such as knives, blunt objects, etc., are also only occasionally involved in these offenses. No weapons were used in 24 percent of the family rapes and in 21 percent of all rapes. (See Table 15.)

**Table 15. Percent Distribution of Weapons Used, Forcible Rape, 1995**

Weapon	Overall	Family
Firearm	1.58	0.31
Knife	2.85	1.08
Blunt Object	0.38	0.31
Personal Weapons	69.16	70.12
Other	2.42	2.32
Multiple	2.45	2.32
None	21.15	23.53

Focusing on the age of offenders and their victims shows that children under the age of 12 almost always victimize other children of the same age. Juveniles aged 12-17 also tend to victimize individuals within the same age group in overall rape (66 percent), but in family cases, their victims are disproportionately children aged 11 or younger (65 percent). When adults are the victims in overall or family rape, they most

often are raped by other adults (97 percent in each instance). However, when examining victim age regardless of offender age, the percentage of rape

victims who are children under 12 is about three times higher in the family setting than in all rape offenses (31 percent versus 11 percent). (See Table 16.)

**Table 16. Number and Percent Distribution of Confrontations by Victim and Offender Age, Forcible Rape, 1995**

Victim Age*	Offender Age*			Total
	0-11	12-17	18 and over	
<b>All forcible rape:</b>				
0-11	46 (10.43%) (92.00%)	162 (36.73%) (24.66%)	233 (52.83%) (7.15%)	441 (100.00%) (11.11%)
12-17	4 (0.26%) (8.00%)	435 (28.47%) (66.21%)	1,089 (71.27%) (33.39%)	1,528 (100.00%) (38.51%)
18 and over	0 (0%) (0.00%)	60 (3.00%) (9.13%)	1,939 (97.00%) (59.46%)	1,999 (100.00%) (50.38%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>50 (1.25%) (100.00%)</b>	<b>657 (16.56%) (100.00%)</b>	<b>3,261 (82.18%) (100.00%)</b>	<b>3,968 (100.00%) (100.00%)</b>
<b>Family forcible rape:</b>				
0-11	18 (8.33%) (100.00%)	66 (30.56%) (65.35%)	132 (61.11%) (23.28%)	216 (100.00%) (31.49%)
12-17	0 (0%) (0%)	28 (11.20%) (27.72%)	222 (88.80%) (39.15%)	250 (100.00%) (36.44%)
18 and over	0 (0%) (0%)	7 (3.18%) (6.93%)	213 (96.82%) (37.57%)	220 (100.00%) (32.07%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>18 (2.62%) (100.00%)</b>	<b>101 (14.72%) (100.00%)</b>	<b>567 (82.65%) (100.00%)</b>	<b>686 (100.00%) (100.00%)</b>

\* Does not include unknown ages.

Finally, the injuries suffered by these rape victims were reported and analyzed. These violent offenses, however, were frequently reported as having involved no or only minor injuries. These data show no substantial difference between family rapes and overall rapes in major injuries being sustained. (See Table 17.)

**Table 17. Number of Victims and Percent Distribution, Forcible Rape, 1995**

Injury	Overall	Family
Major	4.10	4.02
Minor	24.06	21.05
None	71.82	74.92

## AGGRAVATED ASSAULT

Aggravated assault accounts for about 21 percent of all violent offenses. Considering family violence, aggravated assault comprises 19 percent of all offenses.

Children under 12 comprise 5 percent of victims of family aggravated assault and overall aggravated assault. Females, however, make up a considerably greater portion of family aggravated assault victims than they do overall aggravated assault victims (62 percent versus 43 percent). Conversely, males represent a greater portion of overall aggravated assault victims than they do as victims of similar

offenses in family settings (57 percent versus 38 percent). (See Table 18.) The racial patterns for aggravated assault do not appear to differ significantly between family offenses and overall offenses.

**Table 18. Percent Distribution of Victims by Age, Sex, and Race, Aggravated Assault, 1995**

	Overall	Family
<b>Age:</b>		
0-11	4.68	5.30
12-17	14.14	9.01
18 and over	79.66	85.07
Unknown	1.53	0.62
<b>Sex:</b>		
Male	56.53	37.67
Female	43.35	62.29
Unknown	0.13	0.04
<b>Race:</b>		
White	61.78	59.42
Nonwhite	37.65	39.69
Unknown	1.50	0.89

Turning to substance abuse, family aggravated assault involves more suspected substance abuse on the part of the offender (27 percent versus 20 percent) than it does in the overall case. At the same time, it is important to note that no substance abuse was reported in 73 percent of the family incidents and 80 percent of overall aggravated assault. (See Table 19.)

**Table 19. Percent Distribution of Offenses where Offender was Suspected of Substance Use, Aggravated Assault, 1995**

Suspected Use	Overall	Family
Alcohol	18.48	24.97
Drugs	0.82	0.99
Multiple	1.09	1.35
None	79.60	72.70

Firearms, while not the predominant weapons used in this offense, still are involved in 18 percent of all aggravated assaults, as compared to only 11 percent of the family cases. Personal weapons (hands, fists, feet, etc.) are used with the same frequency, whether family or overall aggravated assault. Likewise, knives, blunt objects, and other types of weapons also are

used with equal frequency in either case. Because of the nature of aggravated assault, no or unknown weapon involvement was rarely reported in either instance. (See Table 20.)

**Table 20. Percent Distribution of Weapons Used, Aggravated Assault, 1995**

Weapon	Overall	Family
Firearm	17.66	10.71
Knife	16.19	18.53
Blunt Object	16.92	17.37
Personal Weapons	23.00	24.42
Other	10.15	8.38
Multiple	12.16	17.01
None/unknown	3.91	3.56

**Table 21. Number and Percent Distribution of Confrontations of Victim and Offender Age, Aggravated Assault, 1995**

Victim Age*	Offender Age*			Total
	0-11	12-17	18 and over	
<b>All Aggravated Assault:</b>				
0-11	596 (23.99%) (67.57%)	747 (30.07%) (7.48%)	1,141 (45.93%) (2.58%)	2,484 (100.00%) (4.51%)
12-17	165 (1.88%) (18.71%)	4,793 (54.48%) (47.96%)	3,839 (43.64%) (8.69%)	8,797 (100.00%) (15.97%)
18 and over	121 (0.28%) (13.72%)	4,453 (10.17%) (44.56%)	39,213 (89.55%) (88.73%)	43,787 (100.00%) (79.51%)
Total	882 (1.60%) (100.00%)	9,993 (18.15%) (100.00%)	44,193 (80.25%) (100.00%)	55,068 (100.00%) (100.00%)
<b>Family Aggravated Assault:</b>				
0-11	23 (3.41%) (29.87%)	68 (10.09%) (4.85%)	583 (86.50%) (5.06%)	674 (100.00%) (5.19%)
12-17	15 (1.19%) (19.48%)	420 (33.31%) (29.96%)	826 (65.50%) (7.17%)	1,261 (100.00%) (9.70%)
18 and over	39 (0.35%) (50.65%)	914 (8.26%) (65.19%)	10,107 (91.38%) (87.76%)	11,060 (100.00%) (85.11%)
Total	77 (0.59%) (100.00%)	1,402 (10.79%) (100.00%)	11,516 (88.62%) (100.00%)	12,995 (100.00%) (100.00%)

\* Does not include unknown ages.

Focusing on the age of offenders and their victims shows that children under the age of 12 most frequently victimize other children of the same age in overall aggravated assault, but tend to victimize older persons in family violence situations. Juveniles aged 12-17 proportionally victimize individuals within their own age group (48 percent) and adults (45 percent) in overall aggravated assault, but in family cases juveniles disproportionately victimize adults (65 percent). When adults are the offenders, however, the predominant victims in both the family and overall aggravated assaults are adults. (See Table 21.)

The analysis of injuries incurred by aggravated assault victims shows that frequently no injury or only minor injuries were sustained. The occurrence of major injury is slightly higher for overall aggravated assault victims than for family aggravated assault victims. (See Table 22.)

**Table 22. Numbers of Victims and Percent Distribution, Aggravated Assault, 1995**

Injury	Overall	Family
Major	23.47	20.48
Minor	34.22	39.00
None	42.31	40.53

## SIMPLE ASSAULT

Simple assault accounts for 56 percent of all violent offenses. Considering family violence, simple assault accounts for 68 percent. In both overall and family simple assault, 4 percent of children under 12 are victimized. Considering their percentage of the totals, individuals aged 12-17 are less often victims of family simple assaults than they are victims of overall simple assaults (16 percent versus 9 percent). Also, adults account for 78 percent of the victims in overall assaults and 87 percent in family assaults. Females



more frequently experience family simple assault than overall simple assault (76 percent versus 61 percent). Considering family or all cases when reviewing the race of the victim, the patterns are similar. Seventy-one to seventy-three percent of the victims were identified as white in the jurisdictions studied. (See Table 23.)

**Table 23. Percent of Victims by Age, Sex, and Race, Simple Assault, 1995**

	Overall	Family
Age:		
0-11	4.37	3.54
12-17	15.86	8.90
18 and over	78.17	86.68
Unknown	1.60	0.88
Sex:		
Male	39.08	24.24
Female	60.79	75.71
Unknown	0.13	0.05
Race:		
White	71.33	73.32
Nonwhite	27.46	25.84
Unknown	1.22	0.83

Turning to substance abuse, family simple assault involves more suspected substance abuse on the part of the offender (25 percent versus 20 percent) than in the general case. No substance abuse was reported in

75 percent of the family simple assaults and 80 percent of all simple assaults. (See Table 24.)

**Table 24. Percent Distribution of Offenses where Offender was Suspected of Substance Use, Simple Assault, 1995**

Suspected Use	Overall	Family
Alcohol	18.76	23.32
Drugs	0.56	0.78
Multiple	0.65	0.77
None	80.04	75.13

As for aggravated assault, children under the age of 12 most frequently victimize other children of the same age in overall simple assaults. Data for family simple assaults, however, show that children under age 12 victimize other children of the same age group 45 percent of the time and adults 42 percent. Data for juveniles aged 12-17 reveal a similar picture; in all simple assaults other juveniles are the most frequent victims at 59 percent. In contrast, family assaults are shown to be more frequently focused on adults, 69 percent. When adults are the offenders in overall assaults, however, the predominant victims are adults, 89 percent. This finding is the same for cases of family simple assaults. (See Table 25.)

**Table 25. Number and Percent Distribution of Confrontations of Victim and Offender Age, Simple Assault, 1995**

Victim Age*	Offender Age*			Total
	0-11	12-17	18 and over	
<b>All Simple Assault:</b>				
0-11	1,629 (26.79%) (69.38%)	1,805 (29.69%) (7.52%)	2,646 (43.52%) (2.35%)	6,080 (100.00%) (4.38%)
12-17	370 (1.51%) (15.76%)	14,084 (57.61%) (58.70%)	9,993 (40.88%) (8.89%)	24,447 (100.00%) (17.61%)
18 and over	349 (0.32%) (14.86%)	8,103 (7.48%) (33.77%)	99,807 (92.19%) (88.76%)	108,259 (100.00%) (78.00%)
Total	2,348 (1.69%) (100.00%)	23,992 (17.29%) (100.00%)	112,446 (81.02%) (100.00%)	138,786 (100.00%) (100.00%)
<b>Family Simple Assault:</b>				
0-11	72 (4.51%) (45.00%)	205 (12.83%) (5.32%)	1,321 (82.67%) (3.19%)	1,598 (100.00%) (3.52%)
12-17	21 (0.50%) (13.13%)	974 (23.37%) (25.25%)	3,172 (76.12%) (7.65%)	4,167 (100.00%) (9.17%)
18 and over	67 (0.17%) (41.88%)	2,678 (6.75%) (69.43%)	36,947 (93.08%) (89.16%)	39,692 (100.00%) (87.32%)
Total	160 (0.35%) (100.00%)	3,857 (8.48%) (100.00%)	41,440 (91.16%) (100.00%)	45,457 (100.00%) (100.00%)

\* Does not include unknown ages.

## INTIMIDATION

Intimidation accounts for about 12 percent of all violent crimes and 7 percent of family violence offenses. Young persons are infrequent victims of intimidation for both overall and family-related

offenses. Children under 12 account for about 2 percent of the victims in either case, while juveniles aged 12-17 represent about 10 percent in overall intimidation and 4 percent in the family case. Adults are the predominant victims, 85 percent for overall intimidation and 93 percent in the family offenses.

Females comprise a larger portion of family intimidation victims at 77 percent versus 65 percent for all offenses. Also, white individuals are more often victims of overall intimidation than are nonwhites (78 percent versus 20 percent). (See Table 26.)

**Table 26. Percent Distribution of Victims by Age, Sex, and Race, Intimidation, 1995**

	Overall	Family
Age:		
0-11	1.72	1.82
12-17	9.97	3.92
18 and over	85.13	93.28
Unknown	3.18	0.98
Sex:		
Male	35.15	22.59
Female	64.59	77.37
Unknown	0.26	0.05
Race:		
White	77.65	70.20
Nonwhite	19.51	28.11
Unknown	2.84	1.70

Family intimidation involves more suspected substance abuse on the part of the offender than it does in the overall case (18 percent versus 8 percent). As was the case with the other assault offense categories,

no substance abuse was reported in most instances. Eighty-two percent of the family intimidations and 92 percent of overall intimidation involved no suspected substance abuse. Alcohol use was, however, much more prevalent in family offenses than it was in overall offenses, 15 percent versus 7 percent. (See Table 27.)

**Table 27. Percent Distribution of Offenses where Offender was Suspected of Substance Use, Intimidation, 1995**

Suspected Use	Overall	Family
Alcohol	7.07	15.35
Drugs	0.54	1.20
Multiple	0.58	1.51
None	91.81	81.95

Weapons involvement is not applicable to these incidents.

As seen for the other assault offenses, young children under age 12 generally victimize other children of the same age in overall intimidations. The number of cases reported in this age category for family intimidation, however, is too small to state any substantive findings.

**Table 28. Number and Percent Distribution of Confrontations by Victim and Offender Age, Intimidation, 1995**

Victim Age*	Offender Age*			Total
	0-11	12-17	18 and over	
<b>All Intimidation:</b>				
0-11	87 (19.29%) (47.54%)	137 (30.38%) (3.99%)	227 (50.33%) (1.15%)	451 (100.00%) (1.94%)
12-17	36 (1.22%) (19.67%)	1,579 (53.67%) (46.02%)	1,327 (45.11%) (6.74%)	2,942 (100.00%) (12.62%)
18 and over	60 (0.30%) (32.79%)	1,715 (8.61%) (49.99%)	18,139 (91.09%) (92.11%)	19,914 (100.00%) (85.44%)
Total	183 (0.79%) (100.00%)	3,431 (14.72%) (100.00%)	19,693 (84.49%) (100.00%)	23,307 (100.00%) (100.00%)
<b>Family Intimidation:</b>				
0-11	2 (2.38%) (18.18%)	11 (13.10%) (3.27%)	71 (84.52%) (1.76%)	84 (100.00%) (1.92%)
12-17	0 (0%) (0%)	28 (15.14%) (8.33%)	157 (84.86%) (3.90%)	185 (100.00%) (4.23%)
18 and over	9 (0.22%) (81.82%)	297 (7.24%) (88.39%)	3,799 (92.55%) (94.34%)	4,105 (100.00%) (93.85%)
Total	11 (0.25%) (100.00%)	336 (7.68%) (100.00%)	4,027 (92.07%) (100.00%)	4,374 (100.00%) (100.00%)

\* Does not include unknown ages.

Juveniles aged 12-17, on the other hand, show a different pattern, with other juveniles being victimized about 46 percent of the time and adults about 50 percent of the time in overall intimidation offenses. Looking at family intimidations among juvenile offenders, adults are the predominant victims at 88 percent. Adults offenders overwhelmingly victimize

other adults at about 92-94 percent for both family and general intimidations. (See Table 28.)

## OTHER OFFENSES

Other offenses include forcible sodomy, sexual assault with an object, forcible fondling, and kidnapping/abduction. These offenses account for about

4 percent of all violent offenses and 5 percent of those related to family. Children under 12 comprise about 44 percent of the victims of these offenses when looking at data for overall offenses. However, in family situations these children represent 62 percent of all victims. Juveniles aged 12-17 comprise 29 percent in overall offenses and 26 percent in family occurrences. Females are frequently victims of these offenses, comprising 75 percent of the victims of both family and overall offenses. Also, white individuals are the predominant victims of these offenses in both overall and family offenses, 82 and 90 percent respectively. Nonwhites are less often (7 percent versus 15 percent) victims of family-related offenses than they are victims of overall other offenses. (See Table 29.)

**Table 29. Percent Distribution of Victims by Age, Sex, and Race, Other Offenses, 1995**

	Overall	Family
Age:		
0-11	44.34	62.25
12-17	28.78	26.03
18 and over	25.22	10.67
Unknown	1.65	1.06
Sex:		
Male	24.44	24.61
Female	75.40	75.25
Unknown	0.17	0.15
Race:		
White	82.05	89.84
Nonwhite	15.21	7.13
Unknown	2.75	3.03

Family offenses of this type involve less suspected substance abuse on the part of the offender than in the overall case (6 percent versus 8 percent). It is important to note, however, that no substance abuse

**Table 32. Number and Percent Distribution of Confrontations by Victim and Offender Age, Other Offenses, 1995**

Victim Age*	Offender Age*			Total
	0-11	12-17	18 and over	
<b>All Other Offenses:</b>				
0-11	508 (12.76%) (96.95%)	1,001 (25.14%) (54.46%)	2,473 (62.10%) (36.21%)	3,982 (100.00%) (43.32%)
12-17	9 (0.32%) (1.72%)	733 (25.74%) (39.88%)	2,106 (73.95%) (30.83%)	2,848 (100.00%) (30.98%)
18 and over	7 (0.30%) (1.34%)	104 (4.40%) (5.66%)	2,251 (95.30%) (32.96%)	2,362 (100.00%) (25.70%)
Total	524 (5.70%) (100.00%)	1,838 (20.00%) (100.00%)	6,830 (74.30%) (100.00%)	9,192 (100.00%) (100.00%)
<b>Family Other Offenses:</b>				
0-11	125 (6.85%) (99.21%)	423 (23.17%) (79.51%)	1,278 (69.99%) (57.72%)	1,826 (100.00%) (63.58%)
12-17	0 (0%) (0%)	95 (12.91%) (17.86%)	641 (87.09%) (28.95%)	736 (100.00%) (25.63%)
18 and over	1 (0.32%) (0.79%)	14 (4.52%) (2.63%)	295 (95.16%) (13.32%)	310 (100.00%) (10.79%)
Total	126 (4.39%) (100.00%)	532 (18.52%) (100.00%)	2,214 (77.09%) (100.00%)	2,872 (100.00%) (100.00%)

\*Does not include unknown ages.

was reported in 94 percent of the family offenses and 92 percent of all other offenses. (See Table 30.)

**Table 30. Percent Distribution of Offenders Suspected of Substance Use, Other Offenses, 1995**

Suspected Use	Overall	Family
Alcohol	6.88	4.37
Drugs	0.50	0.51
Multiple	0.73	0.66
None	91.88	94.46

Firearms, knives, and blunt objects are not significant factors in these offenses. The majority of weapon use reported in these offenses is personal weapons. This finding remains consistent when looking at family or overall cases. No weapon involvement was reported in 28 and 31 percent of the cases for both overall and family offenses, respectively. (See Table 31.)

**Table 31. Percent of Weapons Used, Other Offenses, 1995**

Weapon	Overall	Family
Firearm	3.31	1.09
Knife	1.82	0.62
Blunt Object	0.50	0.40
Personal Weapons	62.83	63.67
Other	2.53	2.37
Multiple	1.36	0.87
None/unknown	27.65	30.98

Data on the age of offenders and their victims show that individuals under the age of 12 almost exclusively victimize other children of the same age. This is evidenced in both family offenses, 99 percent of the cases, and general offenses, 97 percent of the cases.

Juveniles aged 12-17, however, less frequently victimize individuals within their same age group (40 percent) as compared with victims under the age of 12 (54 percent) in general other offenses. In family cases, 80 percent of these offenders in the 12-17 age group victimize children under 12 and only 18 percent victimize similar-aged individuals. In overall other offense incidents, adult offenders victimize children, juveniles, and adults with about the same frequency. However, within families, children under the age of 12 comprise 58 percent of the victims and juveniles 29 percent, with the remaining 13 percent being attributed to adult victims. (See Table 32.)

Most of these offenses, 97 percent, involved no or only minor injuries to victims. The occurrence of major injury was negligible (3 percent) in both family and overall other offenses. (See Table 33.)

**Table 33. Number of Victims and Percent Distribution, Other Offenses, 1995**

Injury	Overall	Family
Major	2.68	3.20
Minor	11.78	10.81
None	85.54	85.98

## CONCLUSION

This analysis was designed to demonstrate that the data compiled by the NIBRS can be used effectively for analyzing many aspects of violent crime. Yet, several limitations particular to the study of both the NIBRS data in general and that which relates to family violence remain. For instance, the NIBRS data collection does not permit an analysis of repeat calls to a given location. There are no geographic identifiers specific enough to support detailed geo-mapping of the data, and the generalizations from an

analysis of the presented data are currently limited only to the jurisdictions reporting. On this last point progress is being made, but data reflective of the national picture are not yet available.

Nonetheless, this study illustrates that the NIBRS data can currently be used to support topical crime studies and contribute to the knowledge about specific crime problems. As such, this study shows that 27 percent of all violence occurs in a family setting and the majority of these offenses are assaultive in nature involving offenses such as intimidation, simple assault, or aggravated assault. In the jurisdictions studied, whites, adults, and females were found to be the predominant victims of family violence, but within particular offenses, some variance with this general profile is evident. This seems to be particularly clear in sex offenses where children under 12 were found to comprise larger percentages of the victims associated with family violence. The analysis for weapon use, substance abuse, and injury is informative and may be useful for understanding the problems of family violence.

Caution should be used in extrapolating conclusions from these findings since the NIBRS is not yet national in scope. As a result, data quality issues with the NIBRS are still evolving and statistical compatibility with other crime information systems remains to be studied. Further, the reporting of some information such as substance abuse in family violence may be hampered by the reluctance of or lack of opportunity for victims to come forward at the time of the offense. Nonetheless, this analysis of family violence, with its comparisons and contrasts to the overall picture of violence, may suggest some facets of these crimes that are amenable to efforts by law enforcement and the community to investigate and prevent such incidents.

## **APPENDIX OFFENSE DEFINITION**

### **Murder and Nonnegligent Manslaughter:**

The willful (nonnegligent) killing of one human being by another.

### **Negligent Manslaughter:**

The killing of another person through negligence.

### **Forcible Rape:**

The carnal knowledge of a person, forcibly and/or against that person's will; or not forcibly or against the person's will where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.

### **Forcible Sodomy:**

Oral or anal sexual intercourse with another person, forcibly and/or against that person's will; or not forcible or against the person's will where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her youth or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.

### **Sexual Assault with an Object:**

To use an object or instrument to unlawfully penetrate, however slightly, the genital or anal opening of the body of another person, forcibly and/or against that person's will; or not forcibly or against the person's will where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her youth or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.

### **Forcible Fondling:**

The touching of the private body parts of another person for the purpose of sexual gratification, forcibly and/or against that person's will; or not forcibly or against the person's will where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her youth or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.

### **Aggravated Assault:**

An unlawful attack by one person upon another wherein the offender uses a weapon or displays it in a threatening manner, or the victim suffers obvious severe or aggravated bodily injury involving apparent broken bones, loss of teeth, possible internal injury, severe laceration, or loss of consciousness. This also includes assault with disease (as in cases when the offender is aware that he/she is infected with a deadly disease and deliberately attempts to inflict the disease by biting, spitting, etc.).

### **Simple Assault:**

An unlawful physical attack by one person upon another where neither the offender displays a weapon, nor the victim suffers obvious severe or aggravated bodily injury involving apparent broken bones, loss of teeth, possible internal injury, severe laceration, or loss of consciousness.

### **Intimidation:**

To unlawfully place another person in reasonable fear of bodily harm through the use of threatening words and/or other conduct, but without displaying a weapon or subjecting the victim to actual physical attack.

### **Kidnaping:**

The unlawful seizure, transportation, and/or detention of a person against his/her will, or of a minor without the consent of his/her custodial parent(s) or legal guardian.