

The Economic Burden of Rape

Sexual violence is a significant problem in the United States and prevention is a priority for CDC's Injury Center. Studying the economic impact of rape helps us better understand the burden of sexual violence.

According to the 2011 U.S. National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS), more than **23 million women** and nearly **2 million men** report experiencing rape at some point in their lives.

Study Highlights

OVERVIEW

A new CDC study, "[Lifetime Economic Burden of Rape among United States Adults](#)" estimates the lifetime cost of rape in the U.S. Previous estimates focused on rape-related criminal justice costs—such as cost per sexual assault incident. CDC's estimate includes more comprehensive information, including the cost per rape incident victims' long-term mental and physical health outcomes.

METHOD

Economists and behavioral scientists at CDC's Injury Center measured the lifetime cost burden for rape victims and society to estimate the U.S. total population lifetime cost of rape. Researchers combined data from previous studies with current administrative data and data from the 2011 NISVS.

To estimate the per-victim cost, researchers multiplied the increased probability of rape-related outcomes by their associated costs.

To estimate the cost of rape for all reported victims, researchers multiplied female and male per-victim lifetime cost estimates by the number of reported victims.

FINDINGS



BREAKDOWN OF COSTS

- Short- and long-term physical and mental health treatment
- Lost work productivity
- Criminal justice
- Property loss or damage

These costs don't include the cost to victims' friends and families or the costs of other forms of sexual violence.

Rape and Sexual Violence Can Be Prevented

Sexual violence is not inevitable. CDC's Injury Center is working with national organizations as well as state and local health agencies to develop, implement, and promote effective practices to prevent sexual violence.

CDC's Injury Center has resources to help prevent sexual violence and minimize its harms—both immediate and long-term. One of those resources is [STOP SV](#), which features successful programs, practices, and policies that have a positive effect on preventing sexual violence.

STOP SV presents 5 main strategies for communities to take action to reduce sexual violence:

- S** Promote **Social Norms** that Protect Against Violence
- T** **Teach** Skills to Prevent Sexual Abuse
- O** Provide **Opportunities** to Empower and Support Girls and Women
- P** Create **Protective** Environments
- SV** **Support Victims** and Survivors to Lessen Harms

Get STOP SV and other [resources](#) for preventing sexual violence and learn more about other effective injury and violence prevention strategies.

By raising awareness of the economic impact of rape we help communities evaluate effective approaches to address these problems.