

# MENTAL HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF CRIME

Crime victims have a much higher lifetime incidence of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) than people who have not been victimized (25 percent versus 9.4 percent).<sup>1</sup>

Almost 27 percent of women and 12 percent of men who were molested developed PTSD later in life.<sup>2</sup>

Women who experienced a homicide of a family member or close friend had higher levels of PTSD than non-homicide survivors; 22 percent experienced lifetime PTSD, and 8.9 percent currently had PTSD.<sup>3</sup>

Of crime victims diagnosed with PTSD, 37 percent also suffer from depression.<sup>4</sup>

The most comprehensive comorbidity study to date showed that lifetime prevalence of other psychological disorders in male and female crime victims with PTSD was 88.3 and 79 percent, respectively. The most common comorbid disorders were depression, substance abuse, and phobia.<sup>5</sup>

The estimated risk of developing posttraumatic stress disorder is 49 percent for survivors of rape, 32 percent for survivors of severe beating or physical assault, 24 percent for survivors of other sexual assault, 15 percent for survivors of a shooting or stabbing, and 7 percent for those who witness a murder or an assault.<sup>6</sup>

Major depressive disorder affects an estimated one-third of all rape victims, often for an extended period of time. One-third of women who are raped contemplate suicide and 17 percent attempt suicide.<sup>7</sup>

Inner city homicide survivors experience elevated levels of clinical distress compared to the general population of inner cities.<sup>8</sup>

Intimate partner victimization against American women ages 18 and older results in more than 18.5 million mental healthcare visits each year.<sup>9</sup>

Physical and mental health effects of stalking are not gender-related. Both male and female victims experience impaired health, depression, and injury, and are more likely to engage in substance abuse than their non-stalked peers.<sup>10</sup>

About one-third (30 percent) of female stalking victims and one-fifth (20 percent) of male stalking victims sought psychological counseling as a result of their stalking victimization.<sup>11</sup>

In 2004, 8 percent of medical expense payments made through victim compensation funds were for mental health counseling for crime victims.<sup>12</sup>

Roughly one-third of mental healthcare bills for rape, physical assault, and stalking victims were paid for out-of-pocket.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dean G. Kilpatrick and Ron Acierno, "Mental Health Needs of Crime Victims: Epidemiology and Outcomes," *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 16 (2003): 126.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>6</sup> Sidran Foundation, "Post-traumatic Stress Disorder Fact Sheet," (Towson, MD: Sidran Foundation, 2004), 3-4, <http://www.tema.ca/lib/PTSD%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf> (accessed September 27, 2006).

<sup>7</sup> National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, "Sexual Assault against Females," (Washington, DC: Department of Veterans Affairs, 2004), [http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/facts/specific/fs\\_female\\_sex\\_assault.html](http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/facts/specific/fs_female_sex_assault.html) (accessed September 28, 2006).

<sup>8</sup> M. Thompson et al., "Comparative Distress Levels of Inner-City Family Members of Homicide Victims," *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 11 (1998): 223-42.

<sup>9</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States," (Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Ser-

vices, 2003), 18, [http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/pub-res/ipv\\_cost/IPVBook-Final-Feb18.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/pub-res/ipv_cost/IPVBook-Final-Feb18.pdf) (accessed September 28, 2006).

<sup>10</sup> Keith E. Davis, Ann L. Coker, and Maureen Sanderson, "Physical and Mental Health Effects of Being Stalked for Men and Women," *Violence and Victims* 17 (2002): 429-43.

<sup>11</sup> Patricia Tjaden and Nancy Thoennes, "Stalking in America: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey," (Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice, 1998), 2, <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/169592.pdf> (accessed September 28, 2006).

<sup>12</sup> National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards, "FY 2004: Compensation to Victims Continues to Increase," (Alexandria, VA: NACVCB, 2005), <http://www.nacvcb.org> (accessed September 19, 2006).

<sup>13</sup> National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, "Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States," 39.