

**FACT  
SHEET**

**ECONOMIC COSTS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT**

It is impossible to assess the economic toll of sexual violence. Victims pay for sexual violence out of their own pockets, and the public pays through provision of services to victims and their significant others. Public and private funds are spent on crisis services, medical treatment, and the criminal justice responses. Workdays are lost because of injury and illness. Businesses lose money through employee absences and sexual harassment suits. The cost for offenders' incarceration, probation, treatment and other offender services adds to the total cost of sexual assault.

*Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault, By the Numbers: Sexual Violence Statistics, 2007.*

- Results of women's health longitudinal studies conducted in Australia find that intimate partner violence is responsible for an estimated 9% of the total disease burden for women under the age of 45. The greatest percentage of that burden (60%) is associated with mental health problems; suicide, risky levels of smoking and alcohol consumption are also significant contributors. Intimate partner violence is the leading cause of death, disability and illness for women aged 15-44.

*Victorian Health Promotion Foundation. The Health Costs of Violence: Measuring the Burden of Disease Caused by Intimate Partner Violence in Australia, Carlton South, Victoria: Australia: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation. 2004.*

- 47% of sexually assaulted boys reported engaging in delinquent acts compared to 16.6% of boys who had not been sexually assaulted. Sexually assaulted girls were five times more likely to engage in delinquent acts than girls who had not been sexually assaulted.

*Kilpatrick, D.G., Saunders, B.E. et al., Youth Victimization: Prevalence and Implications. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, 2003.*

- Each year, victims of intimate partner rape lose an estimated 1.1 million days of activity. Mean daily earnings lost by intimate partner rape victims is \$69.
- Fourteen percent of rape and sexual assault victims lost time from work as a result of their victimization; 28% of them lost 6-10 days.

*Centers for Disease Control. Cost of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States, 2003.*

*Bureau of Justice Statistics. National Crime Victimization Survey, Tables 87, 89, 2002.*

- The total cost of sexual assault to victims was \$18 million in 2002.
- Researchers, using results from the Violence Against Michigan Women survey and other national survey data, projected the tangible and intangible losses (i.e. lost productivity, community service costs, property damage, etc.) associated with sexual violence. They estimated that the total cost of sexual violence (rape/sexual assault and

*Bureau of Justice Statistics. National Crime Victimization Survey. Table 82, 2002.*

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## ACQUAINTANCE RAPE

sexual offense homicide) in 1996 in Michigan would have been nearly \$6.7 billion dollars. For sexual assault, the Michigan per incident cost would have been \$108,447 (nationally the per incident cost would have been \$94,466). If the total sexual violence cost were distributed to Michigan residents via a “rape tax,” the cost to each citizen would have been nearly \$700 per capita.

*Post, L.A., Mezey, N.J., Maxwell, C., & Wibert, W.N. “The Rape Tax: Tangible and Intangible Costs of Sexual Violence,” Journal of Interpersonal Violence, Vol. 17, No. 7, 773-782. 2002.*

There are many indirect costs to victims and society incurred by sexual assault or childhood sexual abuse include addiction, alcoholism, and disease:

- In a study at an outpatient methadone maintenance clinic in the South Bronx of New York, early sexual abuse—especially incest—emerged as one of the most formative experiences in the lives of women addicted to such drugs as crack, cocaine, and heroin.
- Researchers in Rhode Island found that men who had experienced childhood sexual abuse were twice as likely to be HIV positive as men who did not, independent of a history of intravenous drug use or prostitution.
- Among women, victims of childhood sexual assault were twice as likely to be heavy consumers of alcohol and nearly three times as likely to become pregnant before the age of 18.

*Populations Information Program, Population Reports: Ending Violence Against Women, Center for Communications Programs, Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and Center for Healthcare Gender Equity, 15, 2000.*

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