



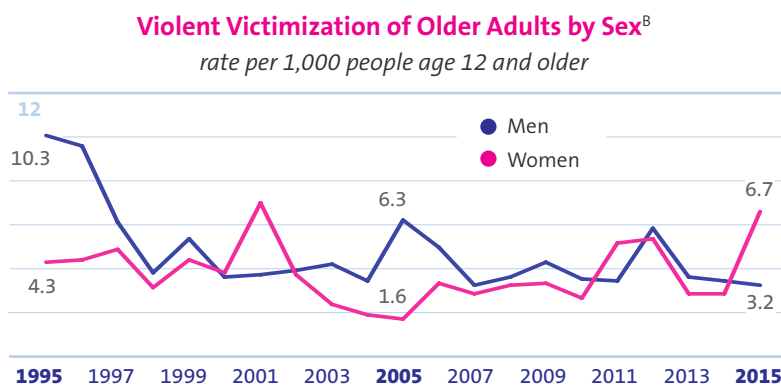
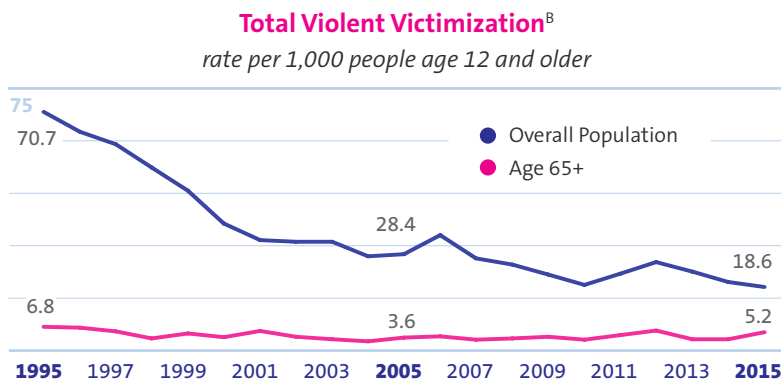
# Crimes Against Older Adults

Victimization of older adults is an important subset of crime. People age 65 and older experience the same crimes as the rest of the population, including financial victimization, neglect, and physical, sexual, or emotional abuse. However, older adults may be less likely to recover from their victimization, and are often sought out because of their age and decreased likelihood of reporting.

Researchers estimate that approximately 10% of older adults over age 60 experienced some form of elder abuse in the past year.<sup>A</sup> But studies have also shown that **crimes against older adults are highly underestimated**. People with degenerative diseases or cognitive disabilities—including dementia, Alzheimer’s, and Parkinson’s—who are living in institutional settings such as nursing homes, are often not included in surveys. Additionally, while studies demonstrate that older adults are most commonly maltreated by family members or acquaintances,<sup>A</sup> roughly half of **violent victimizations** are perpetrated by strangers.<sup>B</sup> Maltreatment is not always a criminal offense, but the intimate nature of many of these victimizations means that older victims are less likely to report offenses committed by someone they know.

## CRIME TRENDS

Compared to the estimated rate of total violent victimization for the overall U.S. population age 12 and older, **older adults are less likely to experience violent victimization**. However, **the impact of these victimizations may be significant**, depending on the vulnerabilities of the victim—including the state of their health, access to financial resources, and isolation. From 1995 to 2015, the rate of total violent victimization against people age 65 and older **decreased** from 6.8 violent victimizations per 1,000 individuals to 5.2.<sup>B</sup>



## DID YOU KNOW?

Older adults with **dementia** are at increased risk of physical and psychological **abuse by a caretaker**.<sup>C</sup>

Injuries to older adults from violent crime account for more than **\$5.3 billion** annually in **direct medical care**.<sup>D</sup>

Elder abuse **triples** the risk of **premature death** and causes unnecessary illness, injury, and suffering.<sup>E</sup>

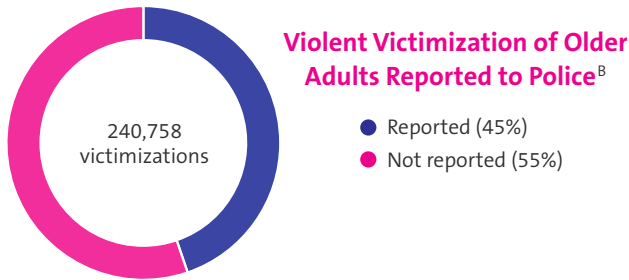
Only **1 in 24 cases** of elder abuse **is reported** to adult protective services or law enforcement.<sup>F</sup>

In 2014, **5.8%** of people age 65 and older had experienced **identity theft** in the past year.<sup>G</sup>

In 2015, nearly 7 of every 1,000 violent victimizations were committed against women age 65 and older. Approximately 3 of every 1,000 violent victimizations were experienced by men age 65 and older.<sup>B</sup>

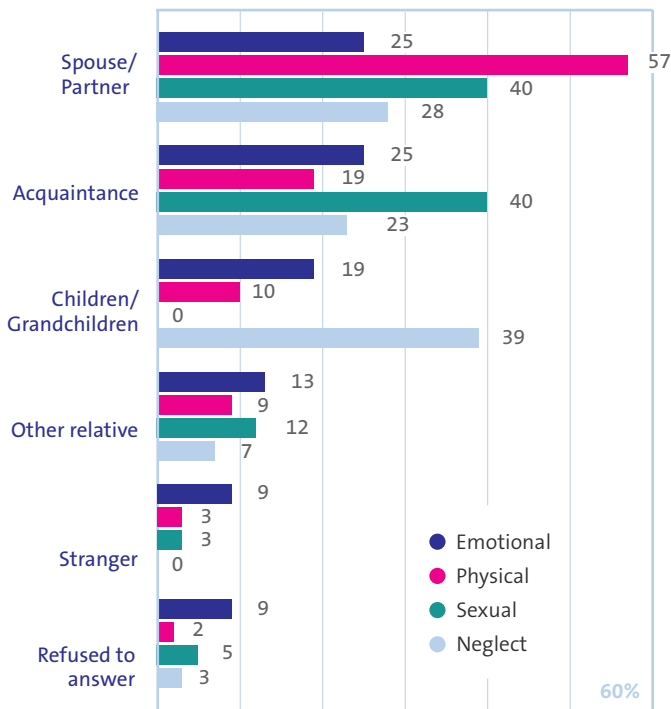
# CURRENT DATA ON THE VICTIMIZATION AND ABUSE OF OLDER ADULTS

In 2015, **45% of violent victimizations** committed against persons age 65 and older were **reported to the police**.<sup>B</sup>

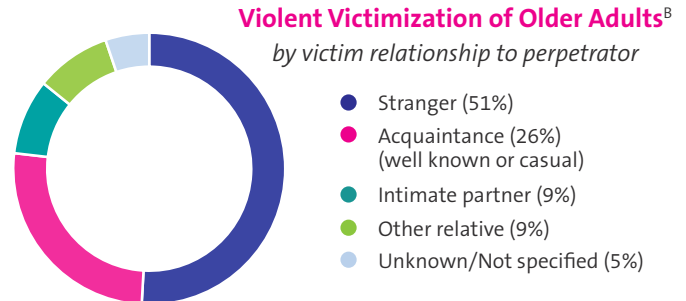


A 2009 study found that the vast majority of **elder maltreatment is committed by someone familiar to the victim**. Emotional and sexual maltreatment are most frequently committed by either a partner/spouse or acquaintance; neglect by a child or grandchild; and physical maltreatment by a partner/spouse or acquaintance.<sup>A</sup>

**Perpetrator of Most Recent Maltreatment<sup>A</sup>**  
by type of maltreatment

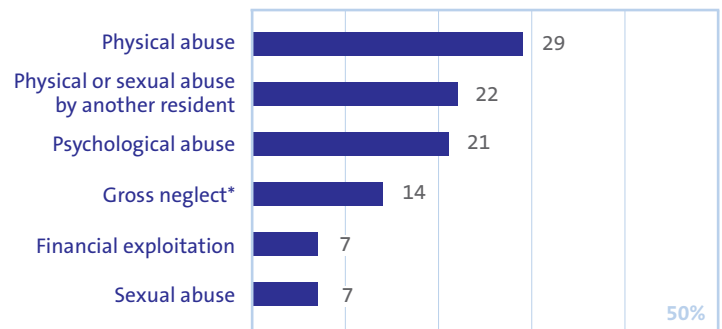


In 2015, **51% of violent crime victimizations** against people 65 and older involved victims who **did not know** their perpetrator; 26% were committed by a well-known or casual acquaintance; and 18% were committed by a relative or intimate partner.<sup>B</sup>



Residents of **nursing homes** are also vulnerable to abuse, neglect, or exploitation by nursing home staff and fellow residents. A study of nursing home facilities found that more than **50% of staff** admitted to engaging in physical violence, mental abuse, or neglect of older patients. Furthermore, nearly **1/4** of the 190,592 complaints filed against nursing homes in 2012 constituted **resident-on-resident** physical or sexual abuse.<sup>H</sup>

**Types of Complaints Against Nursing Homes<sup>H</sup>**



*\*\*“Gross neglect” is a caregiver’s intentional failure to provide a person with a service necessary to maintain the health or safety of the person.<sup>I</sup>*

## SOURCES

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- E X. Dong et al., “Elder Self-Neglect and Abuse and Mortality Risk in a Community-Dwelling Population,” *JAMA* vol. 302, 5(2009): 517-26

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H National Center on Elder Abuse, <https://ncea.acl.gov/whatwedo/research/statistics.html#08>; *Abuse of Residents in Long-Term Care Facility, 2013*, <https://ncea.acl.gov/resources/docs/Abuse-LongTermCare-Facilities-2012.pdf>

I The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, “Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Complaint Codes,” [http://ltcumbudsman.org/uploads/files/support/Complaint\\_Code2019.pdf](http://ltcumbudsman.org/uploads/files/support/Complaint_Code2019.pdf) Accessed 10/25/2017