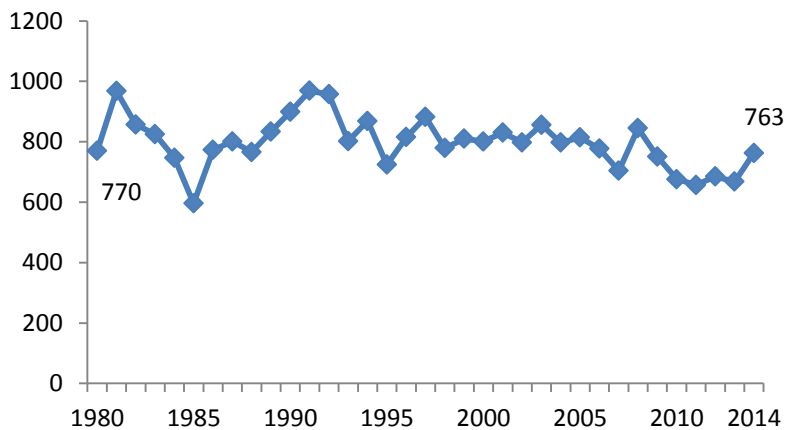


### RAPE: TRENDS, OUTREACH, AND CHANGING DEFINITIONS

As reported in SANDAG's most recent Annual Crime Report,<sup>1</sup> reported rapes were up 14 percent in 2014 from 2013, despite a 5 percent drop in overall violent crime. However, when looking historically at the number of rapes reported to law enforcement (Figure 1), it is important to note that while the other violent crimes were down considerably from 1980 to 2014 (drops of 59% for homicides and 51% for robberies), there has been a greater number of slight fluctuations in the number of reported rapes, but only a 1 percent decrease from 1980 to 2014.

**Figure 1**  
**NUMBER OF RAPES REPORTED TO LAW ENFORCEMENT IN THE SAN DIEGO REGION**



Similar to domestic violence, an increase in the number of rapes may reflect a greater inclination by survivors to report the crime and not necessarily an increase in the number of actual offenses. For example, according to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS),<sup>2</sup> 46 percent of violent crime overall in 2013 was reported to law enforcement, while only 35 percent of rapes/sexual assaults were reported (compared to 50% and 29%, respectively in 2004). Since 2001, April has been designated as Sexual Assault Awareness Month,<sup>3</sup> and as such, it is timely to more closely examine the characteristics of rape survivors, what we know about the incidents, and highlight national resources available to survivors of rape and sexual assault.

What do we know about survivors of rape, both locally and nationally?

- In 2014, 78 percent of rapes reported to San Diego County law enforcement were categorized as completed and 22 percent as attempted. In 1988, the most historical year available, these percentages were 71 and 29, respectively.
- In 2013 (the most recent statistics available regionally), females between 18 and 24 represented 34 percent (and the largest proportion) of rape survivors, but only 12 percent of the population.

<sup>1</sup>Burke, C. (2015, April). *Thirty-Five Years of Crime in the San Diego Region: 1980 Through 2014*. San Diego, CA: San Diego Association of Governments.

<sup>2</sup>Truman, J. L. & Langon, L. (2014, September). *Criminal Victimization, 2013 (NCJ 247648)*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

<sup>3</sup>For more information about Sexual Assault Awareness Month, visit <http://nsvrc.org/saam/> and <http://www.cdc.gov/features/sexualviolence/index.html>.

---

RESEARCH FINDINGS FROM THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESEARCH DIVISION

---

- According to the NCVS,<sup>4</sup> the rate of rape and sexual assault among females between the ages of 18 and 24<sup>5</sup> was higher for nonstudents (7.6 per 1,000) than for students (6.1 per 1,000). The offender was known to the survivor in about 80 percent of rapes and sexual assaults, regardless of whether the survivor was in college or not.
- Nonstudent rape survivors between the ages of 18 and 24 who were surveyed through the NCVS were more likely to report the rape to law enforcement (32%), compared to those who were students (20%). About one-quarter of students (26%) and nonstudents (23%) who did not report to law enforcement believed the incident was a personal matter and one in five each (20%) stated they didn't report out of a fear of reprisal.
- Between 1995 and 2013, 47 percent of rape survivors who were enrolled in college and 40 percent of survivors who were nonstudents, perceived that the offender was drinking or using other drugs.
- Between 1994 and 2013, fewer than one in five student (16%) and nonstudent (18%) survivors of rape and sexual assault received assistance from a service agency.

The data presented here dispel some of the myths that persist about rape and sexual assault, chief among them that the offender is typically a stranger, when in fact the offender is someone the survivor knows in the majority of incidents. This personal dynamic may be one reason many survivors choose not to report. Survivors of rape and sexual assault can report the crime to law enforcement by calling 911. They can also find help from the many service agencies staffed by trained personnel who maintain strict client confidentiality. In San Diego County, survivors of rape or sexual assault can call the Center for Community Solutions 24-hour hotline at 1-888-385-4657. RAINN (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network), a national non-profit organization, also hosts an "on-line" hotline that survivors and their family/friends can use to get help and find more information.

As we begin to prepare mid-year 2015 crime statistics, it is important to note that significant changes to what constitutes a rape will have an impact on numbers and rates as we move forward. Specifically, prior to January 1, 2013, rape was defined as "the carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will" according to FBI Uniform Crime Reporting standards. The new definition, which has been considerably broadened to include the victimization of females and males, now states that rape is the "penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sexual organ of another person, without the consent of the victim". San Diego County law enforcement agencies began using the new definition in January 2015. As a result, 88 sex offenses that were previously Part II crime statistics now will be included in Part I crime statistics under the rape category, which is expected to have an impact on both the number of rapes reported in 2015, as well as violent crime overall.

---

<sup>4</sup> Sinozich, S. & Langton, L. (2014, December). *Rape and Sexual Assault Victimization Among College-Age Females, 1995-2013 (NCJ 248471)*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

<sup>5</sup> Sexual assault is an umbrella term that encompasses all unwanted sexual behaviors, including rape.