

# Some Statistics on Sexual Assault and Rape

**A note on statistics:** My first college statistics professor told me that “**87% of statistics are made up on the spot.**” I didn’t make these up, but they are to be taken with at least a grain of salt. In general, statistics about rape and sexual assault are not very useful. There is so much stigma and secrecy surrounding rape, that most statistics are probably just wrong. Nevertheless, some people like to be able to cite numbers. So, here are some.

## Who gets raped?

### Gender

An estimated **7%** of men and **22%** of women have been raped in their lifetime<sup>1</sup>.

Statistics on trans people are sparse; one study found that **55%** of FtMs and **68%** of MtFs have been forced to have sex in their lifetime<sup>2</sup>.

### Children

Children and adolescents are more likely to be sexually assaulted than adults: approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  of girls and **1/7** of boys is sexually assaulted before age 18<sup>3</sup>. Intersex children are significantly more likely than non-intersex children to be sexually abused<sup>4</sup>.

### Race

“American Indian and Alaskan Native women are more likely (**34%**) to *report* being raped than African American women (**19%**), White women (**18%**) or Hispanic women (**15%**)<sup>5</sup>,” or Asian/Pacific Islander women (**8%**)<sup>6</sup>. (Emphasis added.)

### Students

About **25%** of women college students are sexually assaulted<sup>6</sup>. Alcohol is often a factor.

### Sexual Orientation

Gay men and lesbians are more likely to be raped than heterosexuals (about **12%** for men and **31%** for women); in addition they are more likely to be raped as a stranger, often as part of a physical assault motivated by homophobia<sup>7</sup>.

## Who perpetrates rape?

Between **75%-90%** of perpetrators are known to their victims. Many are partners or dates.

Almost all perpetrators of reported rape are non-trans men; it is thought that most are heterosexual<sup>7</sup>.

About **80%-90%** of rapes against women are committed by someone of the same racial background as the victim (except where the victim is Native American)<sup>6</sup>.

## What percentage of rapes are reported to the police?

Depending on who you ask, anywhere from **19%** (National Violence Against Women Survey) to **54%** (Department of Justice)<sup>5</sup>. The actual proportion is probably **much lower**, because of factors like

- Definitions of rape vary even more widely than these percentages.
- People at highest risk of rape, and least likely to report it, such as sex workers, prisoners, and people who don’t speak English, are unlikely to be counted in national surveys.
- In the above surveys, the first (NVAWS) does not count male survivors of rape, and neither count transgender survivors.

Among college students, the proportion may be closer to **5%** (Warshaw 1994)<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.janedoe.org/know/website.ma.sa.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Clements, et al., 1998

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.hcs.harvard.edu/response/statistics.html>

<sup>4</sup> [www.survivorproject.org](http://www.survivorproject.org)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/svfacts.htm>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www2.ucsc.edu/rape-prevention/statistics.html>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.morris.umn.edu/services/ViolencePrevention/Lgbt%20sexual%20assault%20pamphlet.pdf>