



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

2012-2014



PREPARED BY
TENNESSEE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
CJIS SUPPORT CENTER



Bill Haslam
Governor

TENNESSEE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

901 R.S. Gass Boulevard
Nashville, Tennessee 37216-2639
(615) 744-4000
Facsimile (615) 744-4500
TDD (615) 744-4001



Mark Gwyn
Director

June 8, 2015

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Each year the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation releases annual reports on crimes reported by law enforcement agencies to the Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System (TIBRS) program in six different reports. The TIBRS data contains a wide range of incident level information including victim and offender demographics. In addition to the usual annual reports, the Criminal Justice Information Services Support Center focuses on a data subset of domestic violence victims of crime for the last three years of reported data.

The issue of domestic violence is, by no means, a novel problem in American society. The persistence of domestic violence and the large number of related incidents reported to law enforcement necessitates continued awareness about this issue. In an effort to gain more insight into the problem of domestic violence within the state of Tennessee, the current study analyzes crime data collected from the Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System, hereafter referred to as TIBRS. Utilizing this TIBRS crime data, offenses flagged as domestic violence for the years of 2012 - 2014 are included in the report.

I would like to thank all participating law enforcement agencies for their hard work and contributions to making this report a thorough and accurate picture of crime in Tennessee. It is only with their support that the state continues to maintain such a successful program.

Sincerely,

Mark Gwyn
Director



Quick Facts

- ❖ Of the domestic violence offenses reported to TIBRS from 2012 to 2014, 236,141 victims were reported as having a known gender (male or female)
- ❖ Simple Assault was, by far, the most frequently reported offense accounting for 68.4% of all domestic violence offenses
- ❖ Females were three times more likely to be victimized than males and accounted for 71.8% of all domestic violence victims, males accounted for the other 28.2%
- ❖ 99.0% of domestic violence victims identified their race as either White (57.0%) or Black or African-American (42.0%)
- ❖ A total of 23,495 juveniles were reported during the study period accounting for approximately ten percent of domestic violence victims each year from 2012 to 2014
- ❖ From 2012 to 2014, victims were six times more likely to be abused by a Spouse than an Ex-Spouse in domestic offenses
- ❖ Boyfriend/Girlfriend relationships were the most frequently reported accounting for 45.2% of all domestic violence offenses during this time frame
- ❖ Domestic violence resulted in 270 Murder victims during the three year study period
- ❖ Within Homosexual relationships, the largest group of domestic violence victims were African-American females at 41.9%
- ❖ Juveniles accounted for 58.9% of victims reporting a victim to offender relationship as Child or Stepchild
- ❖ 48% of domestic violence incidents were Cleared by Arrest



Introduction

The issue of domestic violence is, by no means, a novel problem in the American society. However, the persistence of domestic violence and the large number of related incidents reported to law enforcement necessitates continued awareness about this issue. In an effort to gain more insight into the problem of domestic violence within the state of Tennessee, the current study analyzes crime data collected from the Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System (TIBRS). Utilizing this TIBRS crime data, offenses flagged as domestic related from 2012 to 2014 were examined.

Overall Findings

Upon initially examining the TIBRS data submitted for domestic violence offenses, several parameters for the study were established. The data included in this study met the following criteria: Crimes Against Persons offense(s); offense(s) flagged by the law enforcement agency as being domestically related; and victim gender cannot be reported as Unknown. A count of domestic violence victims reported from 2012 through 2014 in the state of Tennessee totaled 236,329. Of those, 236,141 reported a known gender and will serve as the total population for the study. It should be noted that individuals who reported domestic abuse in more than one incident during the study period will be duplicated accordingly in this study's victim count. The majority of these victims were female (71.8%) outnumbering the male victims by almost 3 to 1. Analysis of race breakdown revealed that White victims were consistently the race majority for all offenses of the years 2012 to 2014 accounting for as much as seventy percent of victims for the following offenses: Incest (89.3%), Sexual Assault with an Object (72.6%), and Murder (68.7%). In addition to gender and race, victim age was also analyzed. A total of 23,495 juveniles, or individuals under age 18, were reported as victims during the study period accounting for approximately ten percent of all victims.

Though the overall numbers reveal a decrease in total reported offenses each year from 2012 to 2014 involving domestic violence, this trend should be cautiously interpreted. Over the three year period, domestic violence decreased by a total of 7.4%. In 2013, domestic related offenses decreased by 5.3% to 77,821 from the previous year's total (82,188). The year 2014 revealed the smallest year to year decrease during this study period reporting 2.2% fewer offenses than 2013. Three of the four TIBRS Assault Offenses combined account for ninety-six percent of all domestic violence reported during the time period. These findings will be further examined later in the study.



Domestic Violence Offenses

Crimes identified as domestically related in TIBRS must always have the victim type of Individual. Crimes Against Society and Crimes Against Property cannot be flagged as domestic violence in TIBRS. There are 16 offenses considered to be Crimes Against Persons. Of the 16 offenses, 12 were included in the study with the four omitted offenses being Negligent Manslaughter, Justifiable Homicide, Commercial Sex Acts, and Involuntary Servitude. The remaining Crimes Against Persons offenses reported to TIBRS between the years of 2012 and 2014 as domestic violence were analyzed.

Results revealed that Simple Assault accounted for the greatest majority of all domestic offenses at 68.4%. Aggravated Assault and Intimidation were the second and third most frequently reported offenses accounting for 14.2% and 13.2% respectively. These three assault offenses accounted for 95.8% of all domestic violence offenses reported during the study period. During the three year time frame, all of the TIBRS assault offenses showed a decrease in occurrences. Intimidation had the greatest decrease at 11.1% followed by Simple Assault at 6.9%.

Homicides determined to be the result of domestic violence decreased by 12.6% with 83 homicides reported in 2014 as compared to 95 in 2012. All four TIBRS Forcible Sex Offenses demonstrated a decrease from 2012 to 2014: Forcible Rape (10.8%), Forcible Sodomy (25.0%), Sexual Assault with an Object (1.9%), and Forcible Fondling (20.7%). Non-forcible Sex Offenses also decreased. Incest demonstrated the greatest percentage decrease of all offenses at 69.5% followed by Statutory Rape at 31.5%.

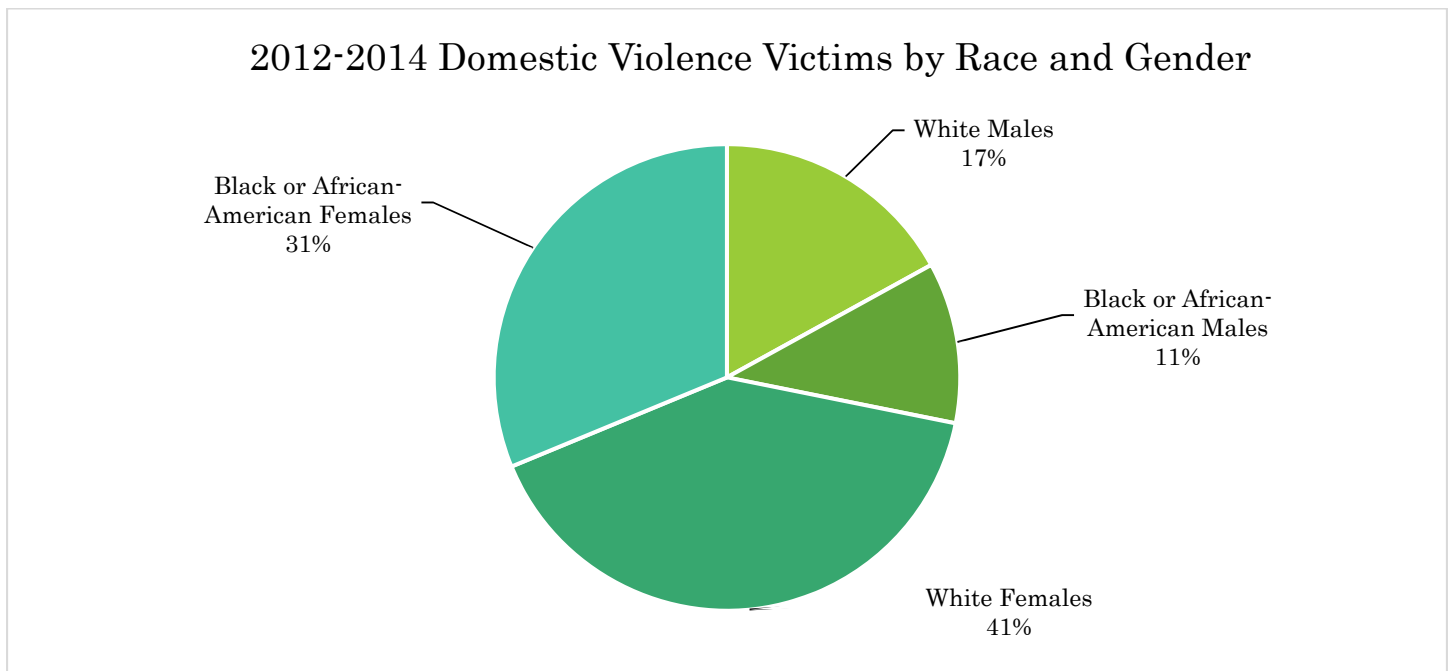
Domestic Violence Offenses by Gender 2012-2014

OFFENSE	Female		Male		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Murder	154	57.0%	116	43.0%	270	0.1%
Kidnapping/Abduction	1,669	72.4%	637	27.6%	2,306	1.0%
Forcible Rape	1,632	98.6%	24	1.4%	1,656	0.7%
Forcible Sodomy	259	48.3%	277	51.7%	536	0.2%
Sexual Assault with an Object	298	89.0%	37	11.0%	335	0.1%
Forcible Fondling	1,625	83.2%	327	16.8%	1,952	0.8%
Incest	95	83.3%	19	16.7%	114	0.0%
Statutory Rape	547	95.6%	25	4.4%	572	0.2%
Aggravated Assault	21,276	63.5%	12,231	36.5%	33,507	14.2%
Simple Assault	116,234	72.0%	45,176	28.0%	161,410	68.4%
Intimidation	23,816	76.6%	7,269	23.4%	31,085	13.2%
Stalking	2,038	85.0%	360	15.0%	2,398	1.0%
TOTAL	169,643	71.8%	66,498	28.2%	236,141	100.0%



Domestic Violence Victims

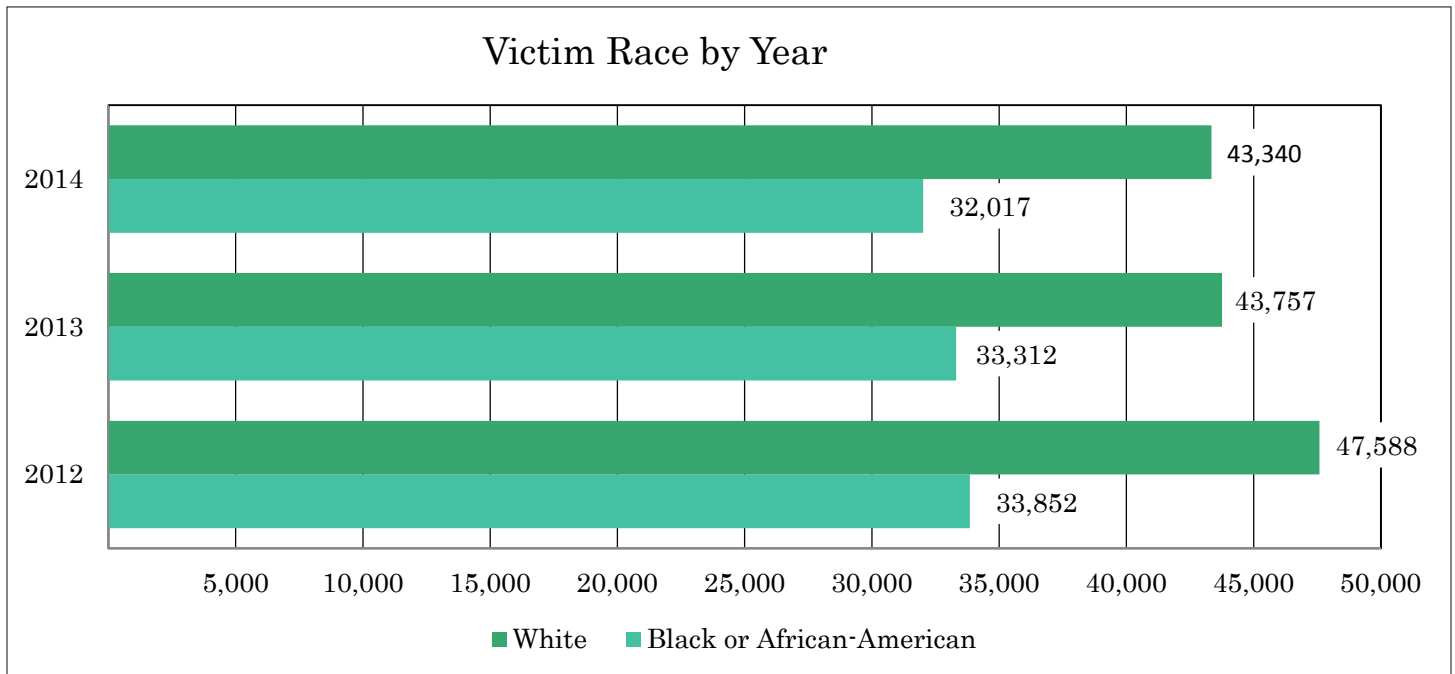
Domestic violence may often be perceived as violence against women. There are numerous agencies nationally and locally that advocate specifically for battered and abused women. The current analyses of domestic offenses in the state of Tennessee supports this notion that domestic violence is most often committed towards female victims. Data collected from TIBRS revealed that women were consistently the primary victims of domestic violence offenses each year from 2012 through 2014 with the exception of one offense, Forcible Sodomy. Male victims accounted for 28.2% of all domestic violence victims. As such, females in Tennessee are almost three times more likely than males to become victims of domestic abuse.



Secondary analysis of the TIBRS data element Race found that of the 236,141 domestic abuse victims with a known gender reported during the study period, those identified as having a Race other than White or Black or African-American accounted for one percent. As a result, White and Black or African-American victims will be specifically highlighted in this study. Though not omitted from the total victim count, due to the very low representation, other victim races (i.e. Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Native American/Alaskan Native, and Unknown) will not be detailed through graphs in the current study. Black or African-American males were the least likely to be victimized. The overall number of White and Black or African-American victims decreased each year showing an 8.9% and 5.4% decrease across the entire time period respectively.



Domestic Violence Victims continued



Please note: Adding only given figures for Black or African-American and White victims will not give an accurate total.

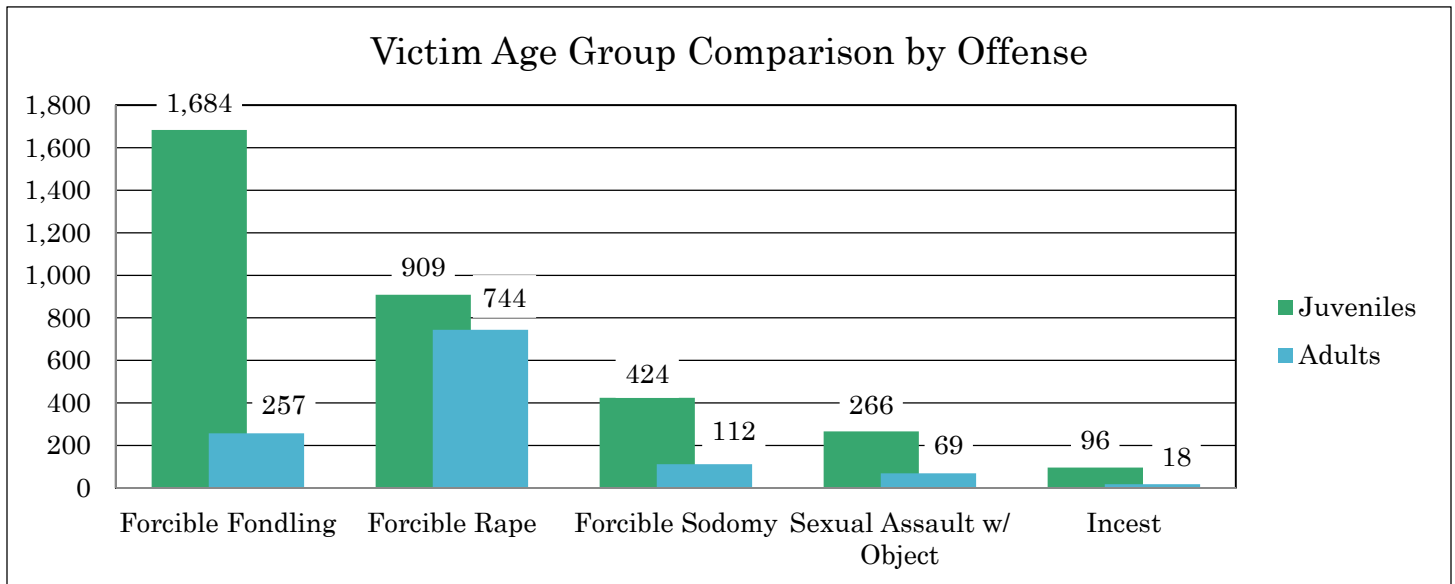
Though White victims (57.0%) were victimized at a higher rate overall than Black or African-American victims (42.0%), there were several offenses that showed even greater disparity between these two racial groups in terms of victimization. Of the Incest victims, 89.3% reported their race as White; 72.6% of Sexual Assault with an Object offenses had White victims; and a total of 68.7% of Murder offenses flagged as domestically related identified the victim race as White. Kidnapping/Abduction presents the highest percentage of Black or African-American victims accounting for 43.8% victims of that particular offense. Black or African-American victims accounted for 42.4% of all Aggravated Assaults and 42.6% of all Simple Assaults.

Juvenile Domestic Violence Victims

Of the domestic violence victims, juveniles accounted for approximately ten percent of victims each year of the study with 8,335 (10.1%) in 2012, 7,628 (9.8%) in 2013, and 7,532 (9.9%) in 2014. Female juveniles make up 59.0% of reported juvenile victims. The most frequently reported sex offense for female victims was Forcible Fondling for each year. The four TIBRS Assault offenses combine to account for the vast majority (79.0%) of crimes against juvenile victims just as was found to be true for the entire study population.



Juvenile Domestic Violence Victims continued



The chart above depicts five offenses in which juveniles are victimized at a higher rate than adults. Juveniles were more than six times more likely to be victims of Forcible Fondling in a domestic assault than adults. Juveniles accounted for 55.0% of all reported Forcible Rapes during the study period and 79.1% of all Forcible Sodomy offenses.

Domestic Violence Victim to Offender Relationships

Though domestic violence victims and offenders can have various interpersonal relationships, the intimate relationship is most often the center of attention when addressing domestic abuse. Intimate relationships may present as formal relationships such as marriage or less formal relationships such as dating.

TIBRS Domestic Violence Victim to Offender Relationships	
Within Family	
Spouse	Grandchild
Common-Law Spouse	In-Law
Parent	Stepparent
Sibling	Stepchild
Child	Stepsibling
Grandparent	Other Family Member
Outside Family	
Boyfriend/Girlfriend	Ex-Spouse
Child of Boyfriend/Girlfriend	Homosexual

To examine just such relationships, one particular TIBRS data element was used. TIBRS collects information concerning the particular relationship between the victim and offender. This element, Victim to Offender relationship, was used. More specifically, the intimate Victim to Offender relationships of Spouse, Ex-Spouse, and Boyfriend/Girlfriend were analyzed.



Domestic Violence Victim to Offender Relationships continued

Spouse/Ex-Spouse

The Spouse and Ex-Spouse relationships were examined together for comparison purposes. Results revealed that the number of domestic abuse victims reporting Spouse as the Victim to Offender relationship greatly outnumbered Ex-Spouse relationships each year by approximately 6 to 1. Over the three year period, a total of 37,404 domestic violence victims reported their relationship to the offender as Spouse; and 6,035 victims reported their Victim to Offender relationship as Ex-Spouse. Black or African-American males were the least likely to be reported victims of domestic violence abuse by a Spouse (6.5%) or Ex-Spouse (5.8%). Black or African-American females were victimized at a higher rate than their male counterparts accounting for 18.8% of victims reporting Spouse Victim to Offender relationship and 18.4% of victims with Ex-Spouse relationship. The data reveals that White males were victimized more often by an Ex-Spouse than Black or African-American females during the three year period accounting for 19.0% of reported victims in this category. White male victims reported a Spouse relationship in domestic violence offenses 18.4%. Of all the victims reporting Spouse and Ex-Spouse relationships with their domestic abuse offenders, White females account for 54.8% when concerning a Spouse Victim to Offender relationships and 55.8% of the Ex-Spouse Victim to Offender relationships.

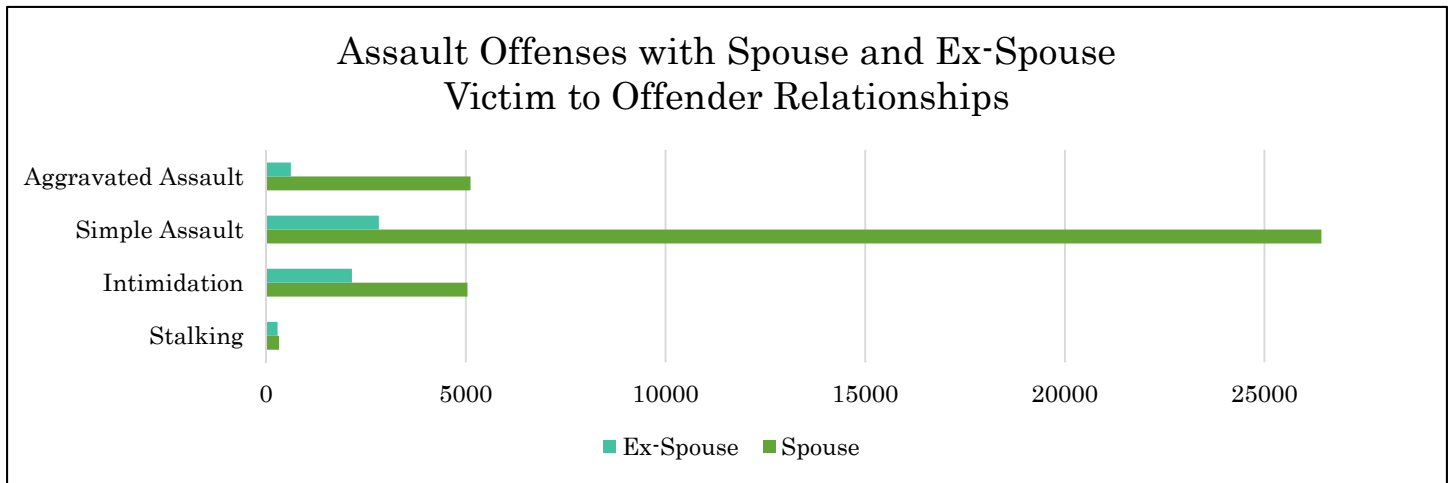
Spouse/Ex-Spouse Relationship by Gender and Race

Victim to Offender Relationship	2014		2013		2012	
	Total	% of Total	Total	% of Total	Total	% of Total
Spouse	11,728		12,339		13,337	
Male	3,015	25.7%	3,147	25.5%	3,271	24.5%
Black or African-American	801	6.8%	838	6.8%	809	6.1%
White	2,177	18.6%	2,264	18.3%	2,426	18.2%
Female	8,713	74.3%	9,192	74.5%	10,066	75.5%
Black or African-American	2,198	18.7%	2,351	19.1%	2,470	18.5%
White	6,369	54.3%	6,693	54.2%	7,446	55.8%
Ex-Spouse	1,912		1,939		2,184	
Male	456	23.8%	511	26.3%	548	25.1%
Black or African-American	112	5.9%	119	6.1%	119	5.4%
White	341	17.8%	384	19.8%	420	19.2%
Female	1,456	76.2%	1,428	73.6%	1,636	74.9%
Black or African-American	371	19.4%	366	18.9%	372	17.0%
White	1,068	55.9%	1,049	54.1%	1,253	57.3%

Please note: Totals include Races of all victims reported as having a known gender. Adding only given figures for Black or African-American and White victims will not give an accurate total. Totals in bold are accurate totals for all victims reporting the given relationship and gender.

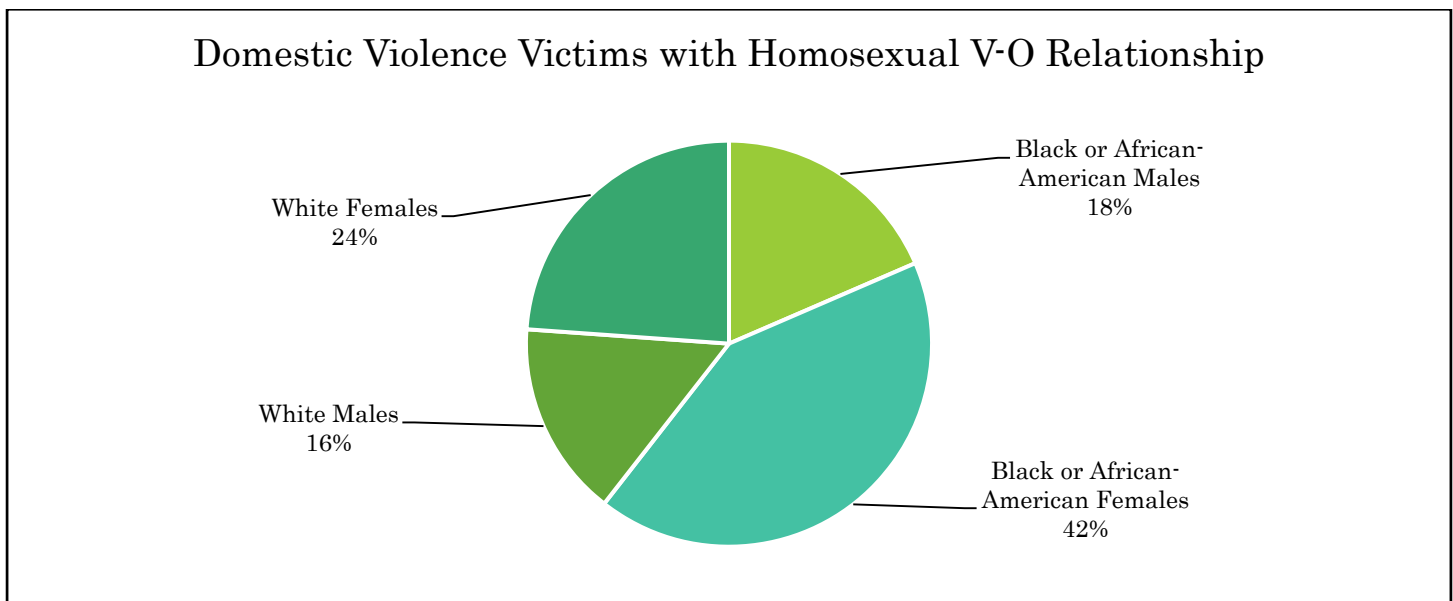


Domestic Violence Victim to Offender Relationships continued



Homosexual Relationship

A total of 4,194 Homosexual Victim to Offender relationships were documented as domestic violence from 2012 through 2014. This particular TIBRS code specifies the victim and offender as being individuals of the same sex that are involved in an intimate relationship. Given this definition, the gender data element being reported for victims will inherently be mirrored for the respective offenders. Examination of the domestic violence offenses reported reveal that 71.9% of the reported offenses were Simple Assault. Aggravated Assault was the second most frequently reported offense at 596 (14.2%). Females were most likely to be victims and offenders (65.9%) of domestic violence between same-sex couples. When cross examining race and gender, Black or African-American females accounted for the largest percentage of perpetrators at 41.9%. White and Black or African-American males showed very little difference in the number of Homosexual Victim to Offender relationships at 15.6% and 18.5% respectively.

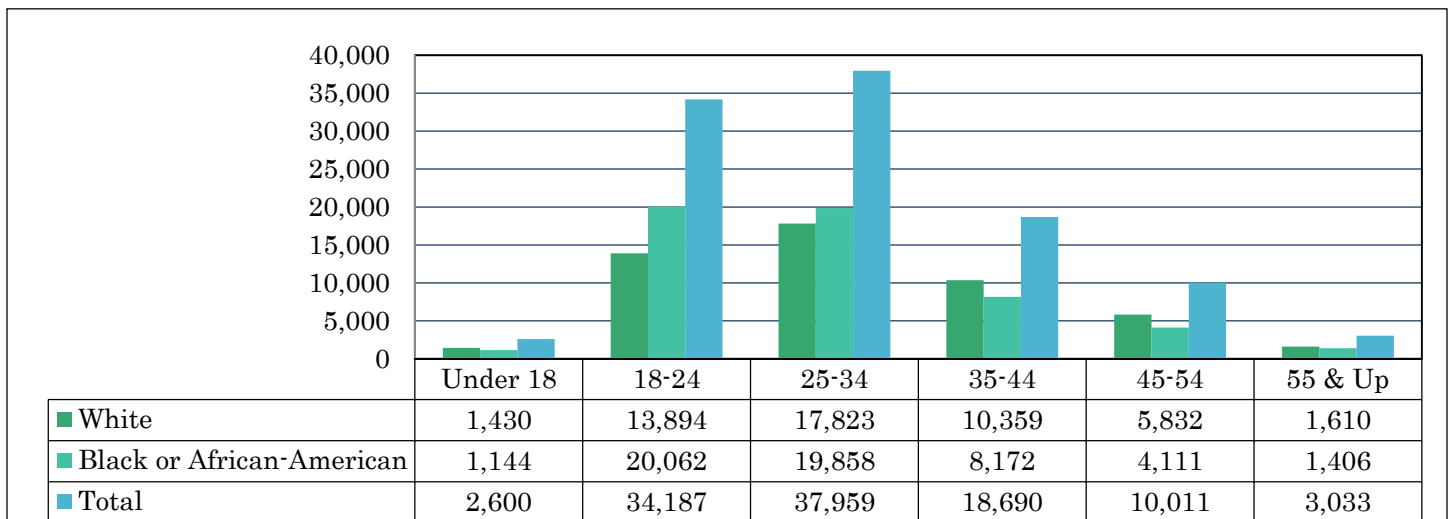


Domestic Violence Victim to Offender Relationships continued

Boyfriend/Girlfriend

The research literature often documents the relationship between domestic victims and their abusers as Boyfriend/Girlfriend. From 2012 to 2014, Tennessee law enforcement agencies reported 106,623 Boyfriend/Girlfriend Victim to Offender relationships flagged as domestic violence incidents. Specific demographic information of both victims and offenders was examined to better understand domestic abuse within Boyfriend/Girlfriend relationships. Of these victims, 47.9% identified their race as White and 51.4% were Black or African-American. Victims reporting their offender as a Boyfriend/Girlfriend were most frequently females. Of the 106,623 abuse victims reporting this relationship, 84,502 were females accounting for 79.3%. Black or African-American females (40.7%) continue to surpass White females (37.9%) in the frequency of reported violence at the hands of a Boyfriend. A breakdown of age groups showed age ranges 18 to 24 and 25 to 34 had the highest frequency of domestic abuse victims reporting Boyfriend/Girlfriend relationships to his/her abuser. There were 143 victims with an age of Unknown.

Domestic Violence Victims with Boyfriend/Girlfriend Victim to Offender Relationships



Please note: Totals include Races of all victims reported as having a known gender. Adding only given figures for Black or African-American and White victims will not give an accurate total

Child and Stepchild

The Victim to Offender relationship Child or Stepchild denotes the offender as being the parent or stepparent (mother or father) of the victim. In the state of Tennessee, a total of 19,126 such relationships were reported in domestic violence offenses. This particular TIBRS data element, when specifically addressing juvenile victims, can be considered a direct indication of child abuse.



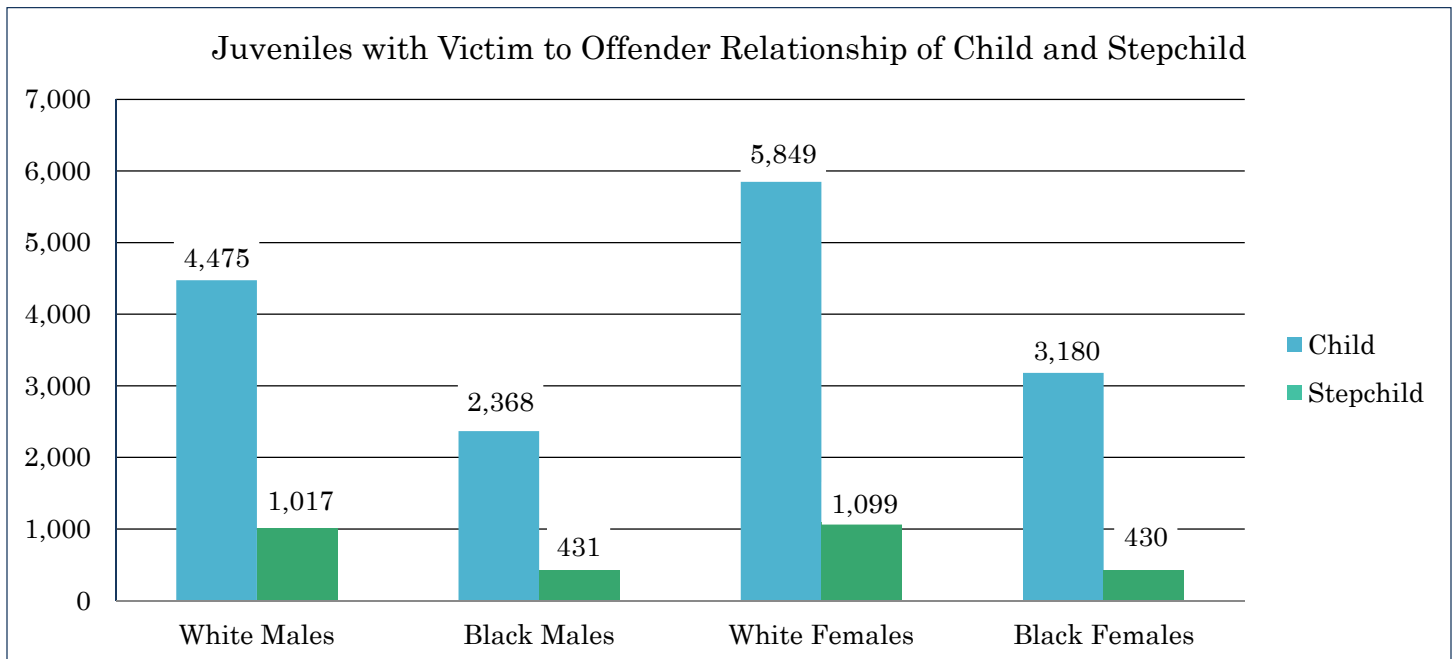
Domestic Violence Victim to Offender Relationships continued

Child and Stepchild continued

The majority of domestic violence incidents indicating a Child or Stepchild Victim to Offender relationship reported to TIBRS between 2012 and 2014 had victims under age 18. For TIBRS purposes these individuals are considered to be juveniles and any physical assaults perpetrated against them are inherently child abuse. Several local and state agencies such as the Department of Children's Services and Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee advocate strongly on behalf of juveniles that are abused and/or neglected and try to prevent future abuse.

Three year totals for the Child and Stepchild Victim to Offender relationship for domestic violence offenses show several trends in the data. Each year juveniles, on average, accounted for 58.9% of victims abused by one or more parent(s) or stepparent(s). More specifically, females under age 18 were most frequently reported as being victimized by their parents accounting for 31.2% of all Child or Stepchild Victim to Offender relationships at 5,962. Representing 63.7% of those victims were White Females under age 18. This demographic group was victimized at a higher rate than any other combination of race, sex, and age group when analyzing Child or Stepchild Victim to Offender relationships.

Victims identified as White were victimized by their parent(s) or stepparent(s) at approximately two times the rate of Black or African-American victims. Of the 6,409 juvenile victims with a Child or Stepchild Victim to Offender relationship identified as having a race of Black or African-American, 3,610 (56.3%) were female and 2,799 (43.7%) were male.



Domestic Violence Victim to Offender Relationships continued

Child of Boyfriend/Girlfriend

During the three-year study period, a total of 2,139 domestic violence offenses were committed against juveniles by the boyfriend or girlfriend of the child's parent. This particular relationship information is captured via the Child of Boyfriend/Girlfriend code in the TIBRS Victim to Offender data element. Seven juvenile victims of Murder/Non-negligent Homicide were reported as having a Child of Boyfriend/Girlfriend relationship with his/her offender. Additionally, 412 offenses classified as Aggravated Assault were documented accounting for 19.3% of victims. The majority of offenses, where the offender was determined to be the parent's boyfriend or girlfriend, were Simple Assaults at 59.6% of victims in this relationship category. Similar to the Child or Stepchild Victim to Offender relationship, juvenile victims with the race of White accounted for 36.7% of all juvenile victims in this Victim to Offender relationship category.

Clearance of Domestic Violence Offenses

TIBRS offenses can be cleared two ways, arrest or exceptional means, by law enforcement agencies. Per TIBRS, incidents are exceptionally cleared "when an element beyond law enforcement control prevents a physical arrest." (TIBRS Data Collection Manual, 12th ed., 2013, p. 9)

Clearing domestic violence incidents can be difficult when considering the compounding factors that contribute to the cooperation of victims and potential witnesses. Because of the very nature of domestic violence and the close interpersonal relationships that exist between the victim and offender, it can be challenging for law enforcement to complete an arrest. Cohabiting domestic

violence victims and offenders can present an obvious challenge in clearing an incident due to victims not cooperating in order to prevent subsequent abuse and turmoil within the household.

Cleared by Arrest was the most common clearance type at 48.0% followed by Not Cleared accounting for 40.2%. Exceptional Clearances made up 11.8% of clearances types, the vast majority of exceptional clearances, 84.1%, were documented as Victim Refused to Cooperate. As defined by TIBRS, Victim Refused to Cooperate can only clear an incident when the victim has actually stated or made it known to the agency that they refuse to cooperate or pursue prosecution of the offender. Death of the Offender, In Custody of Other Agency/Jurisdiction, and Juvenile/No Custody each accounted for less than one percent of all clearances during the study period.

Domestic Violence Exceptional Clearances 2012 - 2014	
Offense Type	Occurrence
Death of the Offender	125
Prosecution Declined	4,004
In Custody of Other Agency/Jurisdiction	11
Victim Refused to Cooperate	22,595
Juvenile/No Custody	130
Total	26,865



Summary

The problem of domestic violence has consistently plagued our society. Given the prevalence of domestic violence and its consequences to individuals as well as the local and state community, the current study assessed domestic abuse within the state of Tennessee. Findings of the study revealed that the number of incidents decreased during the study period from 2012 to 2014 with a 7.4% percent change. Overall, females were three times more likely to be reported as victims than males, and victim Race was most often documented as White (57.0%). This victim demographic information gives insight into what populations are most at-risk for domestic violence in the state.

The overwhelming majority of domestically related offenses reported during the study period were assaults. The four assault offenses combined to account for 96.8% of all domestic violence incidents in the state of Tennessee. Simple Assault was the most frequently reported offense at 68.4%.

Examination of Victim to Offender relationships revealed that Spouses are abused at a rate almost six times than that of Ex-Spouses. The data from the Boyfriend/Girlfriend Victim to Offender relationship element showed very little percentage difference between Black or African-American and White female victims: 47.9% and 51.4% respectively.

Another significant finding revealed that over half (58.9%) of the victims reporting Child or Stepchild Victim to Offender relationships were juveniles. Further analysis revealed that 65.0% of the victims in this category were White. It is vital to assess the prevalence of juveniles being abused at the hands of parents as this implicates child abuse within the community.

TIBRS data supports the fact that women and children generally have the highest potential for domestic abuse victimization. Local, state, and national agencies across several disciplines including law enforcement and social and child services avidly oppose domestic violence and advocate for its victims. These various institutions and coalitions battle domestic abuse by providing prevention training, intervention, shelter, and counseling for both victims and potential victims of domestic violence. Hopefully, the current assessment of domestic violence in Tennessee exposes the need for continued and increased efforts in the battle against domestic abuse within our community.

References

Tennessee Bureau of Investigation CJIS Support Center (2013). *TIBRS Data Collection: An instructional manual for the implementation of the Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System (12th ed.)*

