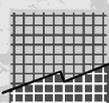


Quantitative research findings on

RAPE
in South Africa



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RAPE
in South Africa

Statistics South Africa
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Executive summary

Incidence and prevalence of rape

This study provides an overview of available literature on the prevalence and incidence of rape in South Africa, the response of the criminal justice system to such crimes and the characteristics of those who commit rape.

There are indeed various studies of rape in South Africa from which rape statistics may be extracted, but none of these studies were specifically designed to measure the prevalence and/or incidence of this crime. These studies, although approached from different perspectives and using diverse methods, come up with roughly similar patterns or trends as summarised below.

Prevalence refers to how many cases there are, altogether, at a given point in time, for example, how many people there are in any country on the day of a population census. Incidence, on the other hand, refers to the number of cases over a specified time period, for example, the number of children per 100 000 of the population that were born in a given year.

Internationally, all crimes including rape are reported as incidence statistics for a given year. Within that year, they are reported as a proportion of 100 000 of the total population. In this report, Stats SA continues to follow this reporting method, rather than any other. It takes population size into account, and the resulting incidence of rape can be compared to the incidence of other crimes in South Africa, for example car theft, or to the similarly reported incidence of rape in other countries.

It is inappropriate to report rape or any other crime in a country simply over a time period, for example 'two women are raped every minute', without taking population size into account. Using this method, China or even the United States with their large populations would have many more rapes per minute than countries with smaller populations such as South Africa.

The best source of national incidence data is the *Victims of crime survey*, conducted nationally among a probability sample of 4 000 respondents aged 16 years or more by Stats SA for the Department of Safety and Security in 1998. According to the proportion of women in this study who said they were raped during 1997, Stats SA calculated that 55 000 South African women were rape victims in 1997. This figure translates into 134 women raped per 100 000 of the total population in 1997. (Since some women were raped more than once, the actual incidence was 143 per 100 000 of the population.) It also means that approximately 0,4% of women aged 16 years or more were raped in 1997.

This finding is of a similar magnitude to that found in the *Violence against women* study conducted in three provinces (Mpumalanga, Eastern Cape and Northern Province) in 1998, by the Medical Research Council, among a probability sample of 1 300 women aged 15 to 49 years.

The *Victims of crime survey* found that 68 women per 100 000 of the population said that they had reported the rape incident to the police (approximately half of those who said they had been raped).

South African police statistics on the incidence of rape reported to the police, as calculated for Interpol, which include attempted rape and rape of children, were 120 cases per 100 000 of the population in 1996. Approximately 40% of reported rape cases are rape of children under the age of 18 years. When the police statistics are adjusted accordingly, they yield approximately 72 rapes or attempted rapes of women over the age of 18 years per 100 000 of the total population in 1996. This is similar to the 68 women per 100 000 of the population who said that they had reported the rape incident to the police in the *Victims of crime survey*.

Profile of the victims and victim–offender relationships

Trends across surveys tend to be similar regarding the profile of the victims of rape and their relationship with the offenders, but the actual proportions tend to differ from study to study. We report here mainly from the *Victims of crime survey*, as this is the most comprehensive survey covering these issues.

- Victims of rape tend to be younger women, aged from 16 to 25 years (2,7% of all women in this age category said they had been raped in the five years prior to the interview of March 1998, compared with 1,8% of all women aged between 26 and 45 years during this time period), although rape occurs in all age groups.
- Rape among women was more likely to be perpetrated by men known to them. Thus among women who said they were raped during the five years prior to the interview of March 1998, 34,6% were raped by relatives or men who were intimate with the victims. The proportion who said that they were raped by a stranger was 24,4%, but this percentage tends to increase with the age of the woman.
- Among those rapes reported to the police a higher proportion (55,3%) were said to have been committed by strangers, according to the *Rape surveillance project* of the University of South Africa (Unisa).
- The *Victims of crime survey* found that 88,1% of rapes were carried out by a single perpetrator. In most cases, women were raped with the threat of physical injury, and often with the use of knives (68,0%) or at gun point (16,5%). Almost half of all rapes (47,3%) occurred inside the homes of victims.
- Findings from the rape dockets analysis show that, of those cases reported to the police, rapes occurred more frequently than the average on Saturdays (23,7% of all reported cases), particularly between 19h00 and 01h00.

Outcome of reporting rape to the police

- Several studies confirm the *Victims of crime survey* finding that approximately half of all respondents who experienced rape reported the incident to the police.
- Police statistics show that 47,6% of the rape cases reported to the police were referred to court after investigation. But, of the cases referred to court, 45,6% were withdrawn in court, and a further 4,5% settled out of court.

- Of the 22 121 reported cases that went to court, only a fifth (19,8%) resulted in the conviction of the accused.
- Data obtained from the Department of Correctional Services show that among prisoners jailed for sexual offences, 9,2% were under the age of 20, 31,6% were aged between 20 and 25 years, and 59,2% were older than 25 years of age.

International comparison

- The South African police statistics mentioned earlier (120 cases per 100 000 reported to the police, including attempted rape and rape of children) are higher than the reported rates in neighbouring African countries, for example, Botswana (68) and Swaziland (59) per 100 000 of the population in 1996. They are, in fact, the highest among Interpolmembers.

Reliability and validity of rape statistics

- The data used for this summary were drawn from several sources, based on studies using considerably different methods of data collection and with very different objectives, and not specifically focused on the incidence of rape.
- Scientifically sound techniques of data collection and analysis were not used in some cases. In several cases, the studies were based on small sample sizes.
- Even in those more general surveys with relatively large numbers, the actual number of rape victims tended to be too small for conclusive findings. For example, the actual number of female respondents in the sample of 4 000 adults for the *Victims of crime survey* who said they had been raped in 1997 was rather small.
- It is recommended that a scientifically designed study of sufficiently large sample size focusing only on rape be carried out throughout the country.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Background

This study provides an overview of available literature on the prevalence and incidence of rape in South Africa, the response of the criminal justice system to such crimes and the characteristics of those who commit rape.

Prevalence refers to how many cases there are, altogether, at a given point in time, for example, how many people there are in any country on the day of a population census. Incidence, on the other hand, refers to the number of cases over a specified time period, for example, the number of children that were born per 100 000 of the population in a given year.

This review focuses on quantitative rather than qualitative research. The latter type of research covers many important aspects of rape and its consequences, for example the experience of the victim, the extent of trauma, extent of confiding in others or seeking counselling etc. But these research findings are not easily quantifiable, therefore they are excluded from this review, which focuses on rape statistics.

Defining and distinguishing the crime of rape

In this section, we distinguish between rape and other forms of violence against women. Rape has been defined in various ways including legal, psychological, sociological and subjective definitions. It is therefore necessary to define the term rape, as it is used in this document. All definitions are taken from *Sexual offences: The substantive law* (South African Law Commission, 1999).

Firstly we look at gender-based violence, which the United Nations defines as:

Any act ... that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.

Different categories of this crime include: abuse, sexual assault and rape. Abuse can take various forms including economic, emotional, physical or sexual.

Sexual abuse is considered to be any unwanted physical invasion of an individual's body that is sexual in nature. This abuse ranges from touching and kissing, through to forced oral sex, forced sexual penetration or rape and being forced to perform prostitution and bestial acts.

Sexual assault, in legal terms is defined as the unlawful and intentional application of force to another person, or making the person believe that such force will immediately be applied, with the intent to commit the sexual act.

Rape, according to South African law, 'consists in a man having unlawful, intentional sexual

intercourse with a woman without her consent. Sexual intercourse presupposes penetration of the female sexual organ by the male's penis'. (South African Law Commission, 1999, p.69). At present, in existing legislation, the offence is gender specific in that it can only be committed by a man, and the victim can only be a woman. A discussion is underway regarding how this definition should be changed so as to fully cover sexual crimes and rape against men.

In this paper, rape is defined in accordance with South Africa law. However, it focuses on the subjective experiences of female victims. The victims' statements regarding having been raped are taken as the main criteria in identifying this offence.

Difficulties in collecting rape statistics

Rape is a traumatic experience and a sensitive issue, and may be under-reported to fieldworkers during a survey no matter how carefully designed the survey is. This risk can be minimised by giving sensitivity training to fieldworkers by qualified people, for example counsellors. But it remains difficult to ascertain the extent of under-reporting in a particular survey. The validity of results in any survey can, however, be tested against other surveys with similar research designs.

Another problem concerns the interpretation of what is seen as rape by the victim. Extensive qualitative research suggests that women often do not describe forced intercourse as rape when a current or previous intimate partner (boyfriend or husband) is the perpetrator.

The extent of under-reporting of this crime remains difficult to determine throughout the world. But there is nothing to suggest that it is higher in South Africa than in other countries.

Available sources of data

The analysis in this paper is based on the following sources:

National and provincial studies

- The *Victims of crime survey* by Statistics South Africa, 1998
- *Violence against women in three South African provinces* by the Medical Research Council, 1999
- The *South African demographic and health survey 1998*, by the Medical Research Council and the Department of Health

Statistics from registers and other recorded sources

- *Crime information analysis centre (CIAC)* of the South African Police Services: *Quarterly crime report 3/98*, by the South African Police Services
- Data obtained from the Department of Correctional Services

- Data obtained from the South African Police Services
- Data obtained from the International Criminal Police Organisation

Localised or small-scale surveys

- *Change and continuity: a survey of Soweto in the late 1990s* by the Department of Sociology of the University of the Witwatersrand
- *Violence against women in metropolitan South Africa, July 1997 to February 1998* by the Institute for Security Studies
- *Crime in Pretoria/Johannesburg/Durban/Cape Town: Results of a city victim survey, July 1997 to February 1998* by the Institute for Security Studies
- *Prevention of sexual violence: a social audit of the role of the police in the South Metropolitan Local Authority, 1998* by the Southern Metropolitan Local Council
- *Rape surveillance through district surgeon offices in Johannesburg, 1996-1998* by the Health and Psychology Unit of the University of South Africa
- *Domestic violence against women: a close look at intimate partner violence, 1998*, by the Medical Research Council
- *The Durban metropolitan pilot study*, by the Medical Research Council, undertaken in 1996
- *Rape Crisis Statistics Report 1998*, by Rape Crisis Cape Town.

These surveys and studies are discussed below in relation to their methodologies, results, strengths and limitations as they relate to the aim of this review of measuring the extent of rape in South Africa.

Structure of the rest of the report

In Chapter 2, the most important findings from national and provincial survey findings are discussed, while in Chapter 3, the focus is on statistics and research from the Departments of Safety and Security, Justice and Correctional Services. Chapter 4 examines smaller scale surveys or local studies, and ways in which they are inter-related and support the findings of the earlier, national or provincial studies.

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Chapter 2

National and provincial surveys

In this chapter, the three largest surveys in the country asking victims about rape are examined. These are: The *Victims of crime survey* of 1998 conducted by Statistics South Africa, *Violence against women in three South African provinces* by the Medical Research Council, 1998, and *The South African demographic and health survey of 1998* by the Medical Research Council and the Department of Health.

All three surveys are based on national or provincial probability sampling. However, no one survey focuses only on rape, and none were specifically designed to measure the extent of rape in the country.

The victims of crime survey of 1998

This survey is the most comprehensible of all surveys on the crime of rape that is presently available. We therefore discuss it in some detail below.

Methodology

The *Victims of crime survey* is the first nationwide household-based survey of the experience in South Africa of being a victim of crime. It was conducted by Statistics South Africa. The survey was commissioned by the Secretariat for Safety and Security and was jointly funded by the and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with technical assistance from the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (Unicri) and researchers and consultants from Statistics Sweden. The fieldwork for the survey was conducted in March 1998.

The information was obtained by means of face-to-face interviews among members of households. The sample consisted of 4 000 people aged 16 years and above. It was drawn in three stages: firstly a probability sample of 800 enumerator areas (EAs) was drawn from the sampling frame of 86 000 EAs, as demarcated for the 1996 population census. This sample was stratified explicitly by the 42 police districts of the country. Secondly, within each of the 800 EAs, five households were selected for interviewing, using systematic sampling. Lastly, one respondent aged 16 years or more was selected to be interviewed in each of the five households in each sampled EA. This person was chosen using a table of random numbers.

The 1996 population census formed the basis for weighting the data. Two different sets of weights were used: household and individual weights. Rape was regarded as an individual crime; thus the weighting procedure for households is not relevant here. Crimes committed against individuals were weighted to the population of individuals aged 16 years or more. Factors used to calculate individual weights were as follows: population group, age, gender and estimated population growth since the census.

The aim of the survey was to provide statistics on crime from the point of view of the victim including both those crimes which were not reported to law enforcement agencies and those

which were reported. For the purpose of this paper, we have focused on answers given to the questions asked on sexual abuse generally, and on the subjective assessment of whether or not the crime was perceived to be rape by the victim.

Results

Overall findings regarding rape among women

Table 1 indicates that 2,1% of women aged 16 years or more across population groups (N=337 000) reported that they had been sexually abused at least once between the beginning of 1993 and March 1998.

Further breakdown indicates that:

- 2,7% of coloured, 2,7% of Indian, 2,2% of African and 0,9% of white women aged 16 years or more reported sexual abuse during this time period.
- Among those who had been sexually abused, 82,3% (N=277 000) described the event as rape.
- One in five (19,9%) of respondents who had been raped during the five years prior to the interview said that the event took place some time during 1997. This translates to 134 women per 100 000 of the population in 1997. If we take into account the number of women who said they had been raped more than once during 1997, the number of incidents becomes 143 per 100 000 of the population in 1997.
- More than half, i.e. 56,2% of this number, had reported this incident to the police. This figure translates to 68 per 100 000 of the population (excluding children under the age of 16 years).
- The table further shows that 65,4% of all women in the study who were raped (N=181 000) said that this event took place between 1993 and 1996.
- Another 3,4% of the raped respondents said that the event took place in 1998, before the March interview.
- Among women who had been raped, 8,9% said that they were raped on more than one occasion.
- Relatively few (2,4%) respondents did not specify when the incident took place.

Table 1: Number and percentage of women sexually abused or raped by population group (all figures are weighted to the population)

	African		Coloured		Indian		White		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Women sexually abused in the past five years										
Yes	265 584	2,2	41 672	2,7	13 515	2,7	15 799	0,9	336 570	2,1
No	11 978 352	97,8	1 497 693	97,3	485 345	97,3	1 812 663	99,1	*15 819 278	97,9
Unspecified	4 920	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	4 920	0,0
Total	12 248 856	100,0	1 539 365	100,0	498 860	100,0	1 828 462	100,0	16 155 848	100,0
Among sexually abused women, those raped in the past five years										
Yes	218 253	82,2	36 203	86,9	6 758	50,0	15 799	100,0	277 012	82,3
No	47 331	17,8	5 469	13,1	6 758	50,0	0	0,0	59 558	17,7
Total	265 584	100,0	41 672	100,0	13 516	100,0	15 799	100,0	336 570	100,0
Among those raped, year of rape										
1993–1996	148 465	68,0	26 029	71,9	6 758	100,0	0	0,0	181 252	65,4
1997	49 637	22,7	5 410	14,9	0	0,0	0	0,0	55 047	19,9
**1998	9 492	4,3	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	9 492	3,4
More than once	4 101	1,9	4 764	13,2	0	0,0	15 799	100,0	24 664	8,9
Unspecified	6 557	3,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	6 557	2,4
Total	218 252	100,0	36 203	100,0	6 758	100,0	15 799	100,0	277 012	100,0

* Including unspecified population group

** January to March

Source: Statistics South Africa (1998), *Victims of crime survey*

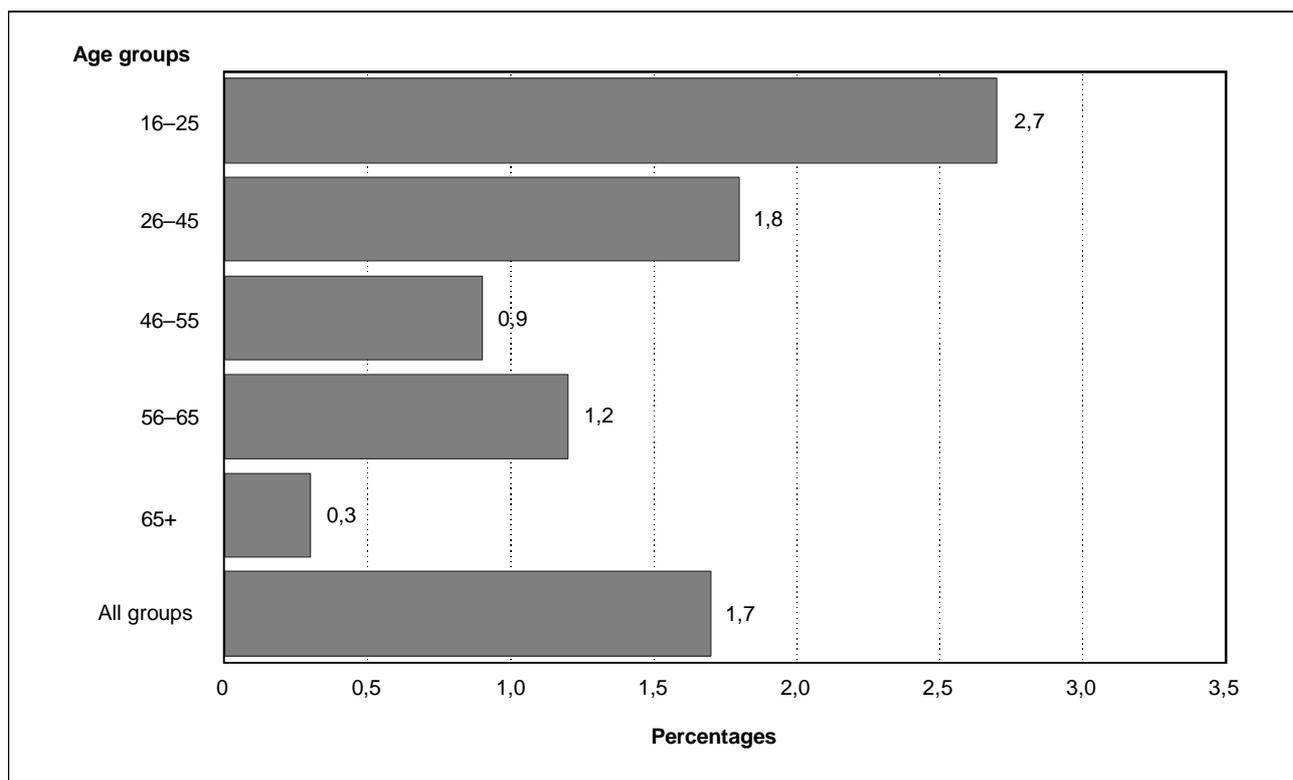
The relationship between women age and risk of being raped

Although the exact age at the time of rape was not recorded, Figure 1 shows that rape victims were more likely to be young women aged between 16 and 25 years at the time of the interview.

Among women aged between 16 and 25 years, 2,7% said that they had been raped in the five years prior to the interview. Among those aged 65 years or more, however, only 0,3% were raped during this time.

These percentages should be treated with extreme caution, since the sample size in each age category is small. Nevertheless, they do indicate a trend.

Figure 1: Percentage of respondents in the *Victims of crime survey* who said they were raped in the five years prior to the study, by age at the time of the interview (all figures are weighted)



Source: Statistics South Africa (1998), *Victims of crime survey*

Circumstances in which the rape took place

Table 2 shows that:

- Relatives of victims or intimates committed 34,6% of all rapes; casual acquaintances 17,3% and others known to the victim, 8,9%, while 24,4% of all victims didn't know their attackers and 13,4% knew them by sight only.
- Sixty-four per cent of rapes occurred either at home or near home, while 16,7% occurred in open spaces or alleys.
- As many as 88,1% of rapes were committed by lone offenders, and 11,9% of the rapes were committed by more than one person.

Use of a weapon

- Table 3 indicates that more than half of lone-offender attacks (56,1%) involved the use of a weapon.
- Rapes involving multiple offenders had an even greater percentage of weapons used in the attack. Among rapes with two or more offenders, 87,2% used a weapon.
- Among offenders that used weapons, 68,0% used knives or sharp objects to threaten their victims, 16,5% used guns and 5,9% used other objects.

Table 2: Circumstances of rape in the *Victims of crime survey* (all figures are weighted)

	N		
Relationship of offender to victim			
Acquaintance of the victim	47 900		17,3
Relative or intimate	95 894		34,6
Other known person	24 605		8,9
Refused to say	3 969		1,4
Did not know the offender	67 595		24,4
Known by sight only	37 050		13,4
Total	*277 013		100,0
Place of incident			
Own residence	131 039		47,3
Near own residence	46 318		16,7
Public place	15 069		5,4
Open space/Alley	46 397		16,7
School/College/University	5 410		2,0
Car/Taxi/Train	22 828		8,2
Other	9 952		3,6
Total	*277 013		100,0
Number of offenders			
One	244 112		88,1
Two	17 504		6,3
Three or more	15 396		5,6
Total	277 012		100,0

*Due to rounding as a result of weighting to the population, totals may differ slightly from each other.
Source: Statistics South Africa (1998), *Victims of crime survey*

Table 3: Whether or not a weapon was used in the rape episode (all figures are weighted)

	Use of weapon					
	Yes		No		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Number of offenders						
One	136 853	56,1	107 259	43,9	244 112	100,0
Two or more	28 690	87,2	4 210	12,8	32 900	100,0
Total	*165 543	59,8	111 469	40,2	277 012	100,0
Type of weapon, in those rapes where a weapon was used						
Gun	27 325	16,5				
Knife or other sharp object	112 565	68,0				
Other	9 762	5,9				
Unspecified	15 892	9,6				
Total	*165 544	100,0				

* Due to rounding as a result of weighting to the population, totals may differ slightly from each other.
Source: Statistics South Africa (1998), *Victims of crime survey 1998*

Reporting rape to the police

Table 4 shows that:

- More than half (56,2%) of the rape victims said they had reported the offence to a law enforcement agency.
- The most common main reasons for not reporting the crime to the police were that the victims feared reprisals (33,3%), or that the victims felt that the police would not be able to solve the crime (9,6%), or else embarrassment (9,2%).
- Among victims in the survey who reported the crime to the police, 52,0% said that the perpetrators were arrested, while 35,1% said that the offenders were not arrested. The remaining 12,9% did not answer the question.

Crime statistics obtained from the police indicate that the incidence of reported rape is similar to these survey findings. For example, according to police statistics, taking only women 18 years and above, the incidence of reported rape was 73 per 100 000 of the total population during 1996. The figures of reported rape obtained from the *Victims of crime survey* for 1997 give a similar proportion if children are excluded from the reported statistics, and the denominator remains the total population.

Table 4: The rate of reporting rape to the police and reasons for not reporting (all figures are weighted)

	N	%
Reporting to the police		
Yes	155 697	56,2
No	121 315	43,8
Total	277 012	100,0
Main reasons for not reporting		
Fear of reprisals	40 364	33,3
Fear of being blamed	5 524	4,6
Embarrassment	11 138	9,2
Belief that the police would fail to solve the crime	11 600	9,6
Thought that the police would not take the incident seriously	4 407	3,6
Could not identify the perpetrator	7 594	6,3
Other	25 526	21,0
Unspecified	15 163	12,5
Total	121 316	100,0
Whether the perpetrators were arrested, among those who reported the crime		
Yes	80 885	52,0
No	54 707	35,1
Unspecified	20 105	12,9
Total	155 697	100,0

Source: Statistics South Africa (1998). *Victims of crime survey 1998*

Strengths and limitations of the study in relation to rape

This survey has the following strengths:

- It is national in coverage, based on probability sampling.
- It is a household survey with face-to-face interviews.
- It has clearly defined terms.

This survey has the following limitations:

- The sample size may be too small for generalising about a rare event.
- It is a general survey on crime.
- Only people aged 16 years and above were interviewed, so that the extent of the crime of rape among children aged 15 years or less remains unknown.

Violence against women in three provinces (1998)

Although it covers only three provinces and the sample size is relatively small, the survey: *Violence against women in three provinces*, conducted by the Medical Research Council in 1998, gives some (but not complete) support to the findings of the *Victims of crime survey*. The table on which this section is based is given in Appendix A (Table A1).

We discuss the methodology in detail below to indicate some of its strengths and weaknesses in relation to the collection of rape statistics, and then focus on the results.

Methodology

The survey was conducted in 1998 in the Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and the Northern Province by the Medical Research Council (MRC) and was sponsored by the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology. The survey was done among randomly selected women aged between 18 and 49 from 2 232 sampled households. The final number interviewed was 1 300 women out of the 1 447 households with an eligible woman.

The sampling frame in each province consisted of the EAs demarcated for the 1996 census. Each province was stratified into urban and rural areas. EAs were sampled with probability proportional to the number of households (PPS). Fourteen urban households and 28 rural households were selected from the 2 strata respectively. The PPS technique together with stratification ensured that the sample was approximately self-weighting within each province.

The aim of the study was to describe the prevalence of physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse of women, and to identify health problems encountered by abused women and the health services which they used.

Results

Overall findings regarding rape among women

Based on a question regarding experiences of being forced or persuaded to have sex against her will by threatening, holding her down or hurting her in some way, the survey found the following:

- Approximately 1% of the women who were interviewed stated that they had been raped in 1997. This proportion is higher than that found countrywide in the *Victims of crime survey* (0,4%).
- A small proportion of 0,7% of women interviewed in Eastern Cape, as against 1,1% of women interviewed in Northern Province and 2,0% of women interviewed in Mpumalanga, said that they were raped in 1997.
- Overall, of women that reported being raped sometime in their lifetime, 23,5% said that they were raped in 1997.

Strengths and limitations of the study in relation to rape

This survey has the following strengths:

- It is based on probability sampling.
- It is based on face-to-face interviews.
- It is a survey that specifically focuses on violence against women.

This survey has the following limitations:

- It is based on only three provinces due to logistical and financial constraints.
- Only women aged 18 to 49 years were interviewed.
- The sample of women actually raped was very small for decisive conclusions to be drawn.

The South African demographic and health survey of 1998

The South African demographic and health survey of 1998 (SADHS) confirms some but not all of the findings of both the surveys reviewed above, i.e. the *Victims of crime survey*, and *Violence against women in three South African provinces*.

Methodology

The South African demographic and health survey (SADHS) was conducted by the Medical Research Council and the Department of Health in 1998. The survey was funded by the Department of Health with technical as well as financial assistance from Macro International and USAID. Three questionnaires were administered, i.e. a household questionnaire which was mainly used as a screening instrument, a questionnaire for all adults, and another for all women aged between 15 and 49 years in the sampled households. In this report, we focus mainly on the last-mentioned questionnaire, i.e. the one for women.

The sampling for the 1998 SADHS was done in two stages. In the first stage, enumerator areas (EAs) were selected on the basis of the principle of probability proportional to size according to the number of households residing in the EA, using the preliminary results of the 1996 population census. The second stage consisted of the division of the EAs into urban and non-urban strata. Thus, SADHS is also a national survey.

A total of 12 860 households were selected for the sample. In these households, 12 327 women were identified as being eligible to answer the questionnaire applying to women aged 15 to 49 years. But only 11 735 women were actually interviewed. The data have been weighted to the 1996 population census. At this stage, only preliminary results of the survey have been released. These data in the preliminary report are unweighted.

The survey covered many issues, including information on fertility, childhood mortality rates, maternal and child health. One section of the questionnaire was devoted to questions on violence against women, including rape.

The questions on rape were phrased to measure its prevalence rather than its incidence. Women were asked whether they had ever been raped, rather than whether or not they had been raped during a specific time period.

Results

The table showing the main findings is included here in the text as Table 5, but the other tables from the SADHS report are given in Appendix A (Tables A2 and A3), in order to make this review easier to follow and less repetitive.

Prevalence of rape

Table 5 shows that nationally 4,0% of women aged 15 to 49 years reported having been raped at some stage during their life.

- Women under the age of 35 were more likely to report that they had been raped at some stage during their lifetime than women in other age groups.
- Among white women interviewed in the survey, 7,3% reported being raped. This was the largest percentage within each population group, followed by coloureds (6,0%).
- When calculated as a proportion of the total number of women who had reported being raped (N=471), African women represented the largest proportion (66,7%), followed by coloured women (19,5%), then white (11,4%) and Indian women (2,1%).

As far as provincial breakdowns are concerned Mpumalanga reported the highest percentage of women ever raped, and North West the lowest. This finding should be treated with caution since the reported numbers of women who had ever been raped are very small in certain provinces.

Table 5: Number and percentage of women aged 15 to 49 years ever raped, by population group and age

	African		Coloured		Indian		White		Total		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Women ever raped											
Yes	314	3,5	92	6,0	10	2,5	55	7,3	471	4,0	
No	8 669	96,4	1 437	93,7	383	97,5	691	91,5	11 180	95,3	
Unspecified	10	0,1	4	0,3	0	0,0	9	1,2	23	0,2	
Total	8 993	100,0	1 533	100,0	393	100,0	755	100,0	*11 735	100,0	
Age of respondent in years by whether or not they had ever been raped											
15-19	Yes	85	4,5	20	7,2	2	3,2	6	5,2	113	4,8
	No	1 823	95,4	256	92,8	61	96,8	110	94,8	2 250	94,8
	Unspecified	2	0,1	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	2	0,1
	Total	1 910	100,0	276	100,0	63	100,0	116	100,0	*2 373	100,0
20-24	Yes	71	4,2	18	7,6	1	1,6	6	8,1	96	4,6
	No	1 631	95,7	218	91,6	60	98,4	67	90,5	1 985	95,2
	Unspecified	2	0,1	2	0,8	0	0,0	1	1,4	5	0,2
	Total	1 704	100,0	238	100,0	61	100,0	74	100,0	*2 086	100,0
25-29	Yes	44	3,2	18	6,7	2	4,1	11	10,7	75	4,1
	No	1 334	96,7	251	93,0	47	95,9	91	88,3	1 732	95,6
	Unspecified	2	0,1	1	0,4	0	0,0	1	1,0	4	0,2
	Total	1 380	100,0	270	100,0	49	100,0	103	100,0	*1 811	100,0
30-34	Yes	39	3,2	14	6,6	2	3,2	17	14,3	72	4,5
	No	1 171	96,7	197	93,4	61	96,8	101	84,9	1 574	97,4
	Unspecified	1	0,1	0	0,0	0	0,0	1	0,8	5	0,3
	Total	1 211	100,0	211	100,0	63	100,0	119	100,0	*1 616	100,0
35-39	Yes	37	3,1	7	3,1	0	0,0	4	3,2	49	3,0
	No	1 171	96,9	220	96,5	57	100,0	117	94,4	1 574	96,7
	Unspecified	1	0,1	1	0,4	0	0,0	3	2,4	5	0,3
	Total	1 209	100,0	228	100,0	57	100,0	124	100,0	*1 628	100,0
40-44	Yes	19	2,1	10	5,9	1	1,9	9	7,9	39	3,1
	No	891	97,8	160	94,1	52	98,1	103	90,4	1 212	96,6
	Unspecified	1	0,1	0	0,0	0	0,0	2	1,8	4	0,3
	Total	911	100,0	170	100,0	53	100,0	114	100,0	*1 255	100,0
45-49	Yes	19	2,8	5	3,6	2	4,3	2	1,9	28	2,9
	No	648	97,0	135	96,4	45	95,7	102	97,1	936	96,9
	Unspecified	1	0,1	0	0,0	0	0,0	1	1,0	2	0,2
	Total	668	100,0	140	100,0	47	100,0	105	100,0	966	100,0
Grand Total	8 993		1 533		393		755		*11 735		

* Numbers do not necessarily add to the totals because of missing values.

Source: Medical Research Council and Department of Health (1999), *South Africa demographic and health survey 1998: preliminary report*

Circumstances surrounding the event

Regarding circumstances surrounding the event, the following points are noteworthy.

- A rather large proportion of respondents (65,6%) did not specify their relationship with the offender.
- Among those that specified this relationship (N=162), 19,8% said that the perpetrators were strangers or recent acquaintances, while 37,7% said that they were their schoolteachers or principals. Close to three in ten who answered the question (29,6%) said that the perpetrator was a relative or someone close to them.
- These findings are not directly comparable with the *Victims of crime survey* since the categories differ from each other. Nevertheless, they indicate that the person committing the rape is likely to be well known to the victim.

A large percentage of those who indicated that they had been raped at some stage during their lifetime (73,8%) did not specify whether or not the crime had been reported to the police.

- Among those who did answer the question, 64,1% said that they had reported the incident to the police, and 35,9% that they had not reported it.
- This proportion is higher than the 56,2% who said that they had reported the event to the police in the *Victims of crime survey*. But the large proportion of unspecified cases (73,8%) may indicate that these findings should be treated cautiously. Nevertheless, there is some, albeit tentative, support that more than half of rape cases are reported to the police.

Strengths and limitations of the study in relation to rape

This survey has the following strengths:

- It is a nationwide survey, based on probability sampling.
- It employed face-to-face interviews.

This survey has the following limitations in relation to measuring rape incidence:

- The questions that were asked were not designed to calculate the incidence of rape over a specific time period or the rate of reporting to the police. Instead, they were designed to measure rape prevalence since women were reporting whether or not they had ever been raped, even as a child.
- By focusing only on women aged between 15 and 49 years, it also does not take into account rape among younger children or older women.

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Chapter 3

Statistics from registers and other records

Data from the South African Police Services (SAPS), and the Departments of Correctional Services (DCS) and Justice, as integrated by the Crime Information Analysis Centre (CIAC) of the South African Police Services, will be used in this chapter. These statistics add to our understanding of how reported cases of rape are dealt with by the departments concerned. We examine the proportion of cases reported, the court actions taken and the extent of convictions. The chapter also examines the differences in the number of reported cases per 100 000 of the population in a given year in various countries.

Crime information analysis centre of the South African Police Services

The statistics presented below reflect three different sets of data:

- the number of cases reported to the police,
- the number of cases dealt with and finalised by the police, and
- the number of cases finalised in court.

The police records and the court cases reported here are not necessarily the same. For example, a case that is reported to the police during 1998 may only be solved during 1999 and finalised in court during 2000. Also it should be noted that there is a significant backlog of cases in the justice system, with some rape cases taking as long as two years to be finalised in court.

Rape cases reported to the police

Table 6 indicates that among cases of rape and attempted rape reported to the police in 1998, 59,7% involved women victims aged 18 years or more, while the remaining 40,3% involved female children aged 17 years or younger. This gives a volume of reported rape for 1998 of 70 women aged 18 and above per 100 000 of the population.

Children are excluded for comparative reasons. We do not have incidence statistics on child rape from any survey against which to compare the extent of reported child rape in police statistics. This does not imply that child rape is not an extremely serious offence that demands the attention of the authorities.

Comparisons with the *Victims of crime survey* for 1997 and police statistics for 1998 show that there is a similarity between the two data sets. The *Victims of crime survey* showed a reporting rate of 68 per 100 000 population among women 16 years and above. Police statistics show a reporting rate of 70 per 100 000 population among women aged 18 years and above. (This includes attempted rape, but the definitions across the studies do not necessarily coincide.)

Table 6: Cases of rape or attempted rape reported to the South African Police Services in 1998

Age of victim at time of rape in years	N	%	Volume of reported rape per 100 000 of the population, 1998
0 – 17	19 836	40,3	47,1
18+	29 444	59,7	69,9
Total	49 280	100,0	

Outcome of 1998 investigations among cases referred to the police

Table 7 shows that in 1998 the police had handled 46 476 recorded rape cases.

- A large proportion of reported cases of rape were referred to court after investigation (47,6%).
- Close to one in five cases (18,2%) were withdrawn before they reached court. This usually happens in those cases where the victim is actually known to the offender.
- Among cases that were referred to court, only a fifth (19,8%) resulted in conviction of the accused person.
- A large percentage of cases are withdrawn after being referred to court (45,6%).
- Approximately half the cases where the trial was completed (4 382 of 8 701 cases) resulted in a conviction.

Table 7: Outcome of 1998 investigations of cases of rape or attempted rape reported to the South African Police Services

	N	
Outcome of police investigations		
Cases referred to court	22 121	47,6
Cases withdrawn before reaching court	8 456	18,2
Unsolved cases	15 037	32,4
Unfounded cases	862	1,9
Total	46 476	100,0
Outcome of court cases		
Guilty	4 382	19,8
Not guilty	4 319	19,5
Withdrawn during court proceedings	10 103	45,6
Cases settled out of court	998	4,5
Other	2 319	10,5
Total	22 121	100,0

Crimes reported in 1998

Table 8 indicates the extent of rape reporting in relation to the reporting of other cases. Among all reported cases of crime in 1998, rape (including attempted rape) accounted for 4,4% of cases.

Table 8: Number and percentage of various categories of crimes reported in 1998

Reported crime in broad categories	N	%
Illegal strikes	64	0,0
Intercourse with a girl under the prescribed age and/or a female 'imbecile'	474	0,0
Public violence	1 093	0,1
Cruelty towards and ill-treatment of children (excluding sexual offences, assault and murder)	2 083	0,2
Abduction	3 090	0,3
Kidnapping	4 196	0,4
Indecent assault	4 851	0,4
Culpable homicide	13 140	1,2
Murder	24 875	2,2
Attempted murder	29 418	2,6
Crimen injuria	40 202	3,6
Rape (including attempts)	49 280	4,4
Other robbery	62 111	5,6
Robbery with aggravating circumstances	88 319	7,9
Burglary: business premises (including attempts)	94 102	8,4
Common assault	199 313	17,8
Assault with the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm	234 056	20,9
Burglary: residential premises (including attempts)	266 817	23,9
Total	1 117 484	100,0

Conviction rates for a range of crimes compared with conviction rates for rape

Table 9 shows that rape ranks last on the list of crimes in terms of conviction rates (50,4%) among those *reported cases resulting in a prosecution after investigation*. The highest conviction rates are obtained for drunken-driving, drug-related crimes, common assaults and housebreaking.

- Only one out of 11 (8,9%) of all reported rape cases (those that are prosecuted and those that are not) end up in the conviction of the perpetrator whereas half (53,3%) of cases from drunken-driving and drug-related cases result in conviction.
- We have already seen, however, that a considerable percentage of cases are withdrawn before they reach court or during court proceedings.

Table 9: Conviction rates of rapes or attempted rapes reported in 1998

Cases resulting in a conviction as a proportion of cases that were prosecuted in 1998	*%	Cases resulting in a conviction as a proportion of reported cases in 1998	*%
Drunken driving	93,3	Drug-related	53,3
Drug-related	90,7	Drunken driving	53,3
Common assault	81,2	Murder	15,7
Housebreaking	80,5	Assault	12,6
Car theft	75,1	Common assault	9,7
Assault	72,0	Rape	8,9
Car-hijacking	67,2	Housebreaking	5,2
Murder	63,9	Robbery	2,6
Robbery	63,0	Car theft	2,3
Rape	50,4	Car-hijacking	1,9

* The percentages stand on their own.

Risk factors associated with rape

We now report on a study in Gauteng conducted by examining police dockets. This study confirms some of the trends reported in the surveys described in Chapter 2.

Background to the study

In its third quarterly crime report of 1998, the CIAC of the South African Police Services highlighted certain risk factors associated with the act of rape and the profiles of both victims and perpetrators.

The centre undertook an in-depth docket study pertaining to rape (a docket is the record of a police investigation). Information was collected using a form containing questions to be answered from the contents of these dockets.

A 10% sample of all rape cases reported to the SAPS in Gauteng during 1996 was randomly drawn. However, only 44% of these sampled records could be processed, due to certain practical problems. For example, dockets still being investigated could not be made available for research and dockets were poorly completed. A total of 538 dockets, involving 549 victims and 757 suspects, were analysed. The vast majority, i.e. 87,0% of victims in this study, were African, while 5,3% were coloured, 0,5% Indian and 6,8% white.

Dockets dealing with attempted rape were excluded from the study.

Results

Table 10 shows that women aged between 19 and 24 years were the most vulnerable age group, at the highest risk of being raped. This confirms the earlier findings of Chapter 2, for example those of the *Victims of crime survey*, that young women are more likely to be victims of rape.

- The table also shows that majority of offenders (57,1%) were unknown to their victims. This finding is in line with the earlier one cited in Chapter 2 that women are more likely to report rape that has been committed by strangers, rather than when it has been committed by someone whom the victim knows. Nevertheless, attacks committed by people known to their victims account for 38,9% of all these reported rapes.
- The analysis showed that the largest proportion of reported rapes happened at the offender's residence (30,9%), followed by open spaces (27,0%) and the residence of the victim (14,5%).

Table 10: Data from docket study conducted by the Crime Information Analysis Centre

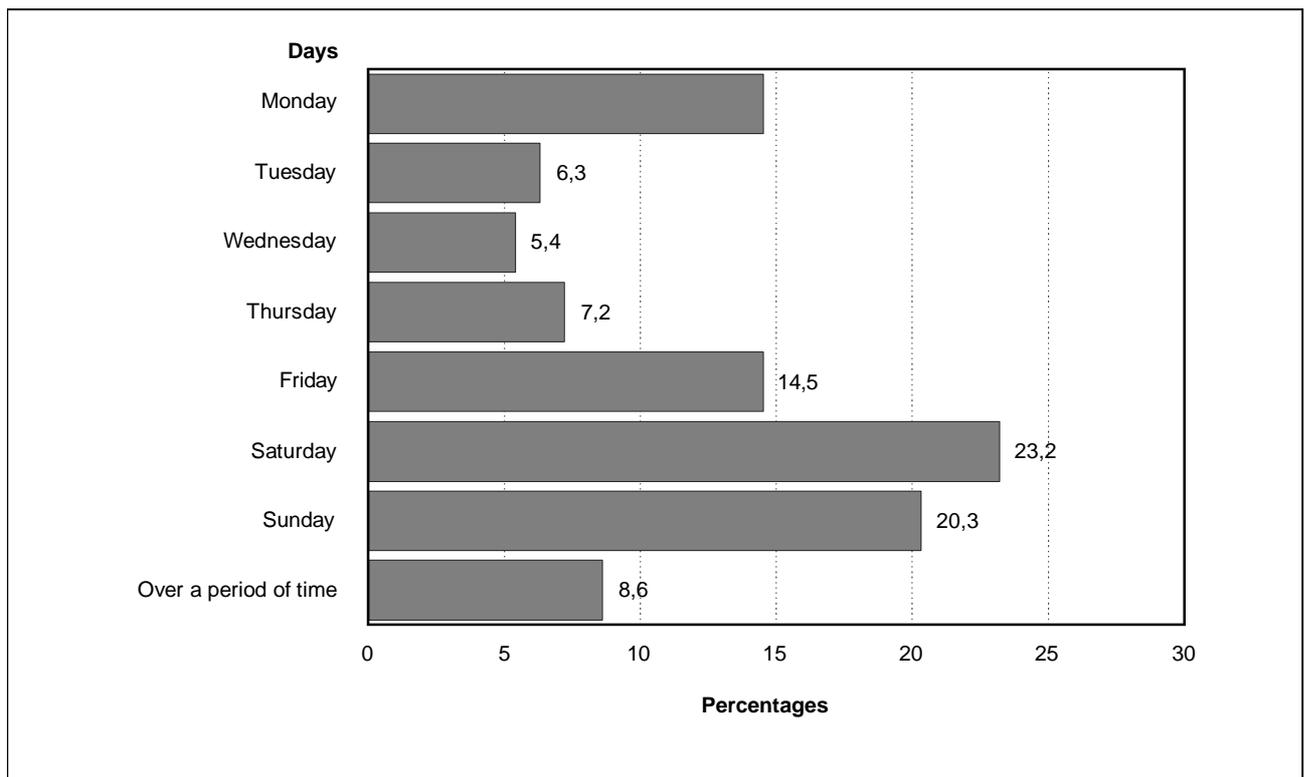
Age at time of rape in years	N	%	Place of occurrence	N	%
Under 11	54	9,8	Victim's residence	80	14,5
12 – 14	49	8,9	Rapist's residence	170	30,9
15 – 18	103	18,8	Friend/ Family member's home	34	6,2
19 – 24	148	27,0	Place of entertainment	5	0,9
25 – 30	72	13,1	Street	23	4,2
31 – 40	76	13,8	Open space	149	27,0
41 – 50	31	5,6	Parking/ Taxi rank/ Bus stop	4	0,7
51+	8	1,5	Other	57	10,3
Unspecified	8	1,5	Unspecified	29	5,3
Total	549	100,0	Total	*551	100,0
Race of victim	*N	%	Relationship to offender	N	%
African	478	87,0	Stranger	435	57,1
Coloured	29	5,3	Acquaintance	177	23,2
Indian	3	0,5	Relative or intimate	61	8,0
White	37	6,8	Family friend/ Neighbour	59	7,7
Unspecified	2	0,4	Unspecified	23	3,0
			Other	7	0,9
Total	549	100,0	Total	*762	100,0

*Some totals exceed the number of victims and suspects since more than one victim or suspect could have been involved in cases.

Source: Crime Information Analysis Centre (CIAC) of the South African Police Services, *Quarterly crime report 3/98*

Figure 2 indicates that the bulk of rape cases occurred over weekends, with the highest proportion of cases occurring on Saturdays (23,2%), followed by Sundays (20,3%). The smallest proportions of cases were reported on Tuesdays (6,3%) and Wednesdays (5,4%).

Figure 2: The day of week when the rape occurred



Source: Crime Information Analysis Centre (CIAC) of the South African Police Services, *Quarterly crime report 3/98*

Strengths and limitations of this analysis in relation to other rape statistics

The study has the following strength:

- It analyses the level of reported rape, and the profile of the victims and perpetrators from a source based on police records. These confirm the trends found in surveys and other data sources.

The study has the following limitations:

- It only deals with reported rapes, and hence cannot be used for generalisation to all rapes.
- The quality and completeness of a large number of police dockets were inadequate.

Sentences being served by sexual offenders

The data discussed in this section were furnished by the Department of Correctional Services. However, it was not possible to get data from this department for prisoners convicted specifically of rape.

Table 11 indicates the following:

- Altogether, in 1998, there were 11 569 prisoners serving sentences for sexual offences.
- Among the prisoners confined for sexual offences, 9,2% were under the age of 20 years, 31,6% were between 20 to 25 years and 59,2% were above 25 years.
- Gauteng accounted for the largest percentage of prisoners in custody for sexual offences (20,6%), followed by Western Cape (17,3%).

Table 11: Sentenced prisoners convicted of sexual offences by age and province, 1998

Age of prisoner	N	%	Province	N	%
			Gauteng	2 383	20,6
			Western Cape	2 000	17,3
			North West	1 651	14,3
			KwaZulu-Natal	1 584	13,7
			Eastern Cape	1 351	11,7
			Free State	1 052	9,1
Under 20	1 067	9,2	Mpumalanga	800	6,9
20 – 25	3 652	31,6	Northern Cape	444	3,8
Over 25	6 850	59,2	Northern Province	304	2,6
Total	11 569	100,0	Total	11 569	100,0

Source: Department of Correctional Services

International comparison

In order to obtain international comparisons of the incidence of rape cases per 100 000 of the population, we refer to the 1996 International Criminal Police Organisation (ICPO) Interpol report. The report indicates the extent of reported rape in 120 countries that are Interpol members. It should be remembered that the definition of crimes may differ from country to country, as well as the methodology used to collect data, and hence Interpol cautions against the use of these figures for the purposes of comparisons. Nevertheless, to study patterns of rape across the world, we have selected three groups of countries as examples of the extent of reported rape in the world. These groups are developed countries, countries with a similar economic profile to South Africa and neighbouring African countries.

- Table 12 shows that South Africa had the highest number of reported rape cases (119,5 per hundred thousand people) of all selected countries in 1996. All figures include attempted rape as well as rape of children. (This reader should however bear in mind that absolute comparisons are not possible for the reason given above, and South Africa may not necessarily have the highest number of reported rapes.)
- If we include only women 18 years and older the volume of reported rape in South Africa in 1996 was 73 per 100 000 of the population. The figures obtained from the *Victims of crime survey* in 1998 give a similar proportion if children are excluded.

Table 12: Rape statistics from selected countries

Country	Cases of rape reported to the police	Volume of reported rape per 100 000 population
South Africa	50 481	119,5
Gabon	1 744	105,1
Botswana	1 101	68,5
Swaziland	573	59,4
Namibia	830	50,5
United States	95 769	36,1
New Zealand	1287	35,0
Zimbabwe	2 792	23,3
Argentina	7 150	21,7
Sweden	1 608	18,2
Venezuela	3 460	16,2
France	7 191	12,4
Norway	514	11,7
Chile	1 571	10,8
Bulgaria	767	9,1
England and Wales	4 594	8,8
Korea	1 811	4,0
Colombia	1 259	3,2
Spain	1 139	2,9
Uganda	247	1,2

Source: International Criminal Police Organisation ICPO-Interpol (1996), *International Crime Statistics*

Integration

The data discussed so far indicate that there is indeed a relatively high rate of rape in South Africa. For example, 134 women per 100 000 of the population were raped in 1997. More than half of these rape cases were reported to the police. Rapes committed by strangers are more likely to be reported to the police than those in which the victim knows the perpetrator. Many cases are withdrawn either before they reach court, or even after they are brought to court, particularly those cases where the victim knows the offender.

Rape victims tend to be young, often below the age of 25 years. Rape is more likely to occur over the weekend, particularly Saturdays. It is most likely to occur either in the perpetrator's or the victim's residence.

Chapter 4

Localised or small scale surveys

A summary of a series of smaller or local quantitative surveys concerning rape that have been conducted in South Africa in recent years is given in this chapter. For the tables on which this chapter is based, the reader is referred to Appendix B.

These studies support at least some of the findings of the *Victims of crime survey*, in trends, if not in actual proportions. We point out the similarities and differences, and where possible the reasons for the differences, and the lessons to be learned from these surveys in relation to collecting rape statistics.

Change and continuity: A survey of Soweto in the late 1990s

In January 1997, the Department of Sociology of the University of Witwatersrand conducted a wide-ranging survey among residents of Soweto.

The main purpose of this study was to give an insight into the socio-economic conditions and demographic aspects of life in Soweto. Questions were asked on housing conditions, health, education and crime, including rape.

- This study found rather low rape rates, perhaps because the question was addressed to household heads, most of whom were female.
- According to the study, female respondents were at least five times more likely than male respondents to admit to, and report, the rape of a member of their household in the last five years.
- Overall, rape was the single form of crime or violence that worried respondents the most.

The lesson to be learned from this survey in relation to rape research is that respondent bias is an important factor to take into account when undertaking household surveys. It is difficult to obtain accurate rape statistics through proxy respondents.

Violence against women in metropolitan South Africa

This was a rather small city survey done by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) during July and August 1998. The study focused specifically on abused women attending intervention agencies in the cities of Durban, Cape Town and Johannesburg. Altogether, 269 abused women were selected from all identifiable helping agencies in these cities.

The study aimed to inform people concerned with violence against women about intervention strategies, rather than to report on the actual incidence of violence against women or rape. It focused on the impact of violence against women, as well as their experiences with service providers. Nevertheless it gives some indication of trends regarding rape prevalence. More importantly, it also gives an indication of where the crime took place, by whom and at what age it was committed, supporting some of the findings of the *Victims of crime survey*.

- The study revealed that 70,6% of women participating in the survey experienced sexual abuse and 57,2% reported having been raped during their lifetime. These high figures in comparison to other surveys are due to the fact that this survey focused *specifically* on women who had been abused and were attending helping agencies.
- Nearly 7 out of 10 sexually abused victims were less than 30 years old when the first abuse occurred.
- The vast majority (81,3%) of women in the survey knew their abusers. Only one in eight (12,4%) abusers were strangers to their victims.
- The survey also shows that victims of sexual abuse were mostly victimised in their homes (40,1%). The abuser's home was the second most frequently used venue for the offence.

City victim surveys

A series of four separate surveys was conducted by the Institute of Security Studies (ISS) in Pretoria, Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town, from July 1997 to February 1998. These surveys were initiated to gain an understanding of the patterns of crime and violence in different communities within each of the metropolitan areas. A similar questionnaire was administered in all four cities. The survey took the form of a street survey, based on quota sampling.

Respondents were asked whether they, or in the case of certain crimes, members of their household, had been a victim of crime over the five year period prior to the interview. The survey allowed for eight categories of serious crimes, among which sexual incidents such as rape were included.

We present the findings of the Pretoria and Johannesburg surveys here as examples of the type of information that may in general be obtained from this methodology. These surveys confirm some of the trends found in the *Victims of crime survey*.

The Pretoria survey

In the *Pretoria survey*, a sample of 2 547 people were interviewed between April and May 1998, among which 904 were women.

- The number of respondents who reported sexual assault in the survey was small (N=34), since only 3,8% of women who were interviewed reported that they were victims of sexual assault in the five years prior to the survey. Just over half of these victims of sexual assault described the incident as rape.
- In this survey, 13 victims knew their assailants by name, 8 by sight only and 9 didn't know their attackers. Of those who knew their attackers, nearly half of them knew their attackers intimately.

- The largest number of attacks took place inside the victim's or the perpetrator's homes (N=12), or in places of entertainment (N=9).
- Among those who gave the exact day of occurrence, 12 victims said the offence was committed over the weekend, and 10 said it had occurred during weekdays. The most likely time was between six in the evening and midnight.
- Actual weapons were used in relatively few cases. In most cases, the offender(s) used physical strength.
- More than half the victims in this study reported the offence to the police.
- Among respondents that did not report the matter to the police, reasons given were fear of reprisals, embarrassment and the belief that the police would not do anything about such crimes.

The Johannesburg survey

Major findings from the *Johannesburg survey* are summarised as follows:

- Close to 57% of rape victims knew their offenders by name, while 20% knew their offenders by sight. Approximately 23% of survivors were victimised by complete strangers.
- Close to 32% of rapes were committed inside the victim's homes and about 40% near their homes.
- Among women in the survey who said they had been raped, 52% said they reported the crime to the police, substantiating in principle the findings of the *Victims of crime* survey reported on earlier.

These surveys support the overall findings that rape offenders are usually known to the victim, that they are likely to take place in the victims' homes and that more than half of rape cases are actually reported to the police.

The role of the police in the prevention of sexual violence

This study was undertaken in the Johannesburg Southern Metropolitan Local Council (SMLC) in 1998 in a specific attempt to find community-based solutions to problems related to sexual violence in the area. It was implemented by means of the co-ordinated efforts of NGOs, one of which was the Agency for Community Information Empowerment and Transparency (CIET), and government agencies.

The survey sources varied from households to individuals in the street, to service providers covering the area, and youths at the nearest school. Seven kinds of questionnaires were used. In the study, 3 971 women, 2 060 men, 1 471 youth, 91 police officers, 9 magistrates and prosecutors, and 88 service workers were interviewed. The survey was designed to give indicative rather than definitive findings.

- Of the rape victims identified in the survey, 24,0% had been raped more than once in the year prior to the survey.

- Nearly one half of rapes in the South happened inside the home or in a neighbour's house. Other important places of rape incidents were identified as streets, shops, taxis and open fields, which supports the findings of other studies.
- Close to 60% of rapists were known to their victims. They were family members (27,0%) or relatives, friends or acquaintances (33,0%). Only 39% of rapists were strangers to their victims.
- Seven in ten rape victims (69,0%) reported the incident to the police, supporting the previous findings of a reporting rate of more than half the victims.

Rape surveillance through district surgeon offices in Johannesburg, 1996-1998

This project was an initiative undertaken by the University of South Africa's (UNISA) Health Psychology Unit to measure the extent of confirmed rape in clinics. Data was collected from victims of rape at the Hillbrow Medico-Legal Clinic from January 1996 to December 1998, the medico-legal clinic in Lenasia Hospital from February 1996 to December 1998 and the medico-legal clinic at the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital from January 1996 to July 1997.

Data was captured using a surveillance questionnaire that was completed alongside the mandatory J88 form whenever a rape victim appeared for treatment at any of the three centres mentioned above. Staff members were reluctant to complete the questionnaire. As a result, the Hillbrow clinic could track only 34% of all cases seen at the clinic, Lenasia hospital, 25% and Baragwanath, 3%. These findings are thus merely indicative, since coverage was very incomplete.

- Among reported cases, young women aged 15 to 25 experienced the highest victimisation rate.
- Victims attending the clinics were more likely to be raped by strangers (55,3%) than by people known to them.
- Most rape incidents where victims came to the medico-legal centres took place in open spaces or alleys. Close to 43% of total rapes occurred within a home, of which 29,1% took place at the rapist's home. Other places include hotel rooms, public toilets and transport terminals.
- The majority of rape incidents involved a single offender (73,0%). Lone offenders were more likely to be known to their victims. Of rapes involving more than one perpetrator, in the majority of cases perpetrators were strangers to their victims.
- In more than half of the cases, the offender had a weapon, the most common being a knife, followed by a firearm. Other weapons included rocks and chains.
- Most rapes occurred over the weekend. Moreover, most rapes occurred after dark or after working hours. Rape rates attained their peak between 18h00 and 22h00.

Domestic violence against women: a close look at intimate partner violence

This study was conducted among 412 women at the Mitchells Plain Community Health Centre in Cape Town, a public service centre providing mainly primary health care. The aim of the study was to determine the extent and profiles of intimate partner violence among women attending the health centre. Data were collected from December 1997 to February 1998. Information was obtained from every fifth woman aged 15 years and older who attended the health centre for any reason.

The data collection process had two steps where two questionnaires were administered: a screening questionnaire, to identify women that had suffered abuse in either the recent past or in the distant past, and then a further and more detailed questionnaire administered to those women who had reported abuse.

- Women who experienced some sort of sexual abuse were more likely to be abused by their relatives or their intimate partners.
- Relatively few abused women reported the matter to the police. This supports earlier findings that sexual abuse committed by partners or relatives is less likely to be reported to the police than when these crimes are committed by strangers.

Durban metropolitan study

This was a pilot study which surveyed one state facility (Addington Hospital) and one private facility (Entabeni Hospital) in order to obtain a trauma profile within the Durban metropolitan area.

Data were obtained from the trauma units of the two hospitals for four weeks in December 1995 and four weeks in August 1996. At Entabeni hospital, all patients with physical trauma during these two months were included in the study, which gave a total of 524 cases. Because of the high volume of patients attending the trauma unit at Addington hospital every day, the week had to be divided into four six-hour periods. The Addington sample size was 961 cases.

- Close to 4% of all assault-related injuries were due to rape.
- The average age of victims was 15 years, with an age range of 4 to 61 years.

Rape Crisis Cape Town statistics for 1998

Data obtained from the victim support organisation Rape Crisis Cape Town will be used here as an example of information obtained from clients seeking help from this type of centre in the non-governmental sector.

- Young victims between the ages of 18 and 25 years formed the highest proportion of victims attending the clinic, and a large proportion were less than 18 years of age.

- More than 56% of victims who came for counselling knew their attackers. Almost 30% of the rapists were strangers.
- Nearly two-thirds of victims reported that a single offender raped them.
- Among the women that went for counselling, more than half (52,2%) said they had reported the crime to the police.

Common findings across the studies

- From these surveys one can conclude the following:
- Rape is more likely to occur among younger women under the age of 25 or 30 years.
- The perpetrator is more likely to be someone who is known to the victim.
- The incident is more likely to take place in the home of the victim or the perpetrator.
- A single perpetrator is likely to commit most rapes. Where there are multiple perpetrators, they are more likely to be strangers.
- Rapes occurring in public places are more likely to be committed by strangers.
- Those who are already in abusive relationships are more likely to be raped than those who are not.
- Rapes tend to occur over weekends. They are also more likely to occur in the evenings, after 18h00.
- In the majority of rape cases, a weapon such as a knife is likely to be used.
- More than half of the victims across these studies reported the incident to the police.
- The victim is more likely to report a rape committed by a stranger to the police than one committed by someone who is known to her.

Cautions

When looking at figures from certain small-scale studies, for example those conducted among women attending medico-legal clinics or counselling centres, it is not possible to generalise from such statistics to the entire population. These studies do not deal with a representative sample of the population as a whole. It is also not possible to generalise from localised studies, for example those in a particular part of the country, to the entire population, since different parts of the country may have varying profiles. Only indicative trends can be isolated in small-scale or local studies, rather than generalisable findings.

We need to bear in mind the aims of each such study, the kind of information that can be obtained from it in relation to its aims, and the way in which each sample was drawn.

Appendix A: Major surveys

Table A1: Data from *Violence against women in three South African provinces*

	Eastern Cape		Mpumalanga		Northern Province		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Women who were raped in 1997								
Yes	3	0,7	9	2,0	5	1,1	17	1,3
No	400	99,3	444	98,0	454	98,9	1 298	98,7
Total	403	100,0	453	100,0	459	100,0	1 315	100,0
Women who were ever raped								
Yes	18	4,5	31	6,8	23	5,0	72	5,5
No	385	95,5	422	93,2	436	95,0	1 243	94,5
Total	403	100,0	453	100,0	459	100,0	1 315	100,0
Women who ever had an attempted rape								
Yes	9	2,2	20	4,4	7	1,5	36	2,7
No	394	97,8	433	95,6	468	98,5	1 295	97,3
Total	403	100,0	453	100,0	475	100,0	1 331	100,0
Women raped in 1997 who reported it to the police								
Yes	1	33,3	2	22,2	1	20,0	4	23,5
No	2	66,7	7	77,8	4	80,0	13	76,5
Total	3	100,0	9	100,0	5	100,0	17	100,0
Women who experienced attempted rape in 1997								
Yes	1	16,7	4	40,0	5	27,8	10	29,4
No	5	83,3	6	60,0	13	72,2	24	70,6
Total	6	100,0	10	100,0	18	100,0	34	100,0

Source: Medical Research Council (1999), *Violence against women in three South African provinces*

Table A2: Data from the South African demographic and health survey: number and percentage of women aged 15 to 49 years who were ever raped, by population group and province

Province	African		Coloured		Indian		White		Total		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Gauteng	Yes	49	6,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	19	10,5	68	6,5
	No	767	93,7	32	100,0	21	100,0	160	88,4	980	93,1
	Missing	3	0,4	0	0,0	0	0,0	2	1,1	5	0,5
	Total	819	100,0	32	100,0	21	100,0	181	100,0	1 053	100,0
Western Cape	Yes	12	5,4	44	7,5	0	0,0	4	4,1	60	6,6
	No	211	94,6	536	91,8	5	100,0	94	95,9	846	93,0
	Missing	0	0,0	4	0,7	0	0,0	0	0,0	4	0,4
	Total	223	100,0	584	100,0	5	100,0	98	100,0	910	100,0
North West	Yes	18	2,1	2	6,9	1	12,5	1	2,6	22	2,4
	No	833	97,9	27	93,1	7	87,5	37	97,4	904	97,6
	Missing	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0
	Total	851	100,0	29	100,0	8	100,0	38	100,0	926	100,0
KwaZulu-Natal	Yes	44	3,2	5	17,2	8	2,5	8	8,8	65	3,6
	No	1325	96,7	24	82,8	314	97,5	79	86,8	1742	96,1
	Missing	1	0,1	0	0,0	0	0,0	4	4,4	5	0,3
	Total	1 370	100,0	29	100,0	322	100,0	91	100,0	1 812	100,0
Eastern Cape	Yes	61	2,5	8	3,8	0	0,0	6	5,5	75	2,7
	No	2349	97,5	205	96,2	11	100,0	102	93,6	2 667	97,2
	Missing	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	1	0,9	1	0,0
	Total	2 410	100,0	213	100,0	11	100,0	109	100,0	2 743	100,0
Free State	Yes	18	2,2	1	3,7	0	0,0	5	5,1	24	2,6
	No	788	97,5	26	96,3	2	100,0	94	94,9	910	97,2
	Missing	2	0,2	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	2	0,2
	Total	808	100,0	27	100,0	2	100,0	99	100,0	936	100,0
Mpumalanga	Yes	73	6,7	0	0,0	1	14,3	6	28,6	80	7,1
	No	1020	93,2	4	100,0	6	85,7	15	71,4	1 045	92,8
	Missing	1	0,1	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	1	0,1
	Total	1 094	100,0	4	100,0	7	100,0	21	100,0	1 126	100,0
Northern Cape	Yes	2	0,7	32	5,2	0	0,0	6	5,1	40	3,9
	No	303	99,3	583	94,8	0	0,0	110	93,2	996	96,0
	Missing	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	2	1,7	2	0,2
	Total	305	100,0	615	100,0	0	0,0	118	100,0	1 038	100,0
Northern Province	Yes	37	3,3	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	37	3,3
	No	1073	96,4	0	0,0	17	100,0	0	0,0	1 090	96,5
	Missing	3	0,3	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	3	0,3
	Total	1 113	100,0	0	0,0	17	100,0	0	0,0	1 130	100,0
Grand total		8 993		1 533		393		755		*11 735	

*Numbers do not necessarily add to the totals because of missing values

Source: Medical Research Council and Department of Health (1999), *South Africa demographic and health survey 1998: preliminary report*

Table A3: Data from the South African demographic and health survey: relationship of offender to victim and rate of reporting to the police

	African		Coloured		Indian		White		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Relationship of offender to victim										
Boyfriend/ Husband	14	4,5	4	4,3	0	0,0	1	1,8	19	4,0
Brother	3	1,0	0	0,0	1	10,0	4	7,3	8	1,7
Family friend/ Lodger	2	0,6	3	3,3	1	10,0	7	12,7	13	2,8
Father	2	0,6	0	0,0	0	0,0	2	3,6	4	0,8
Landlord/ Farmer	0	0,0	1	1,1	0	0,0	0	0,0	1	0,2
Man/ Boy from neighbourhood	2	0,6	1	1,1	0	0,0	1	1,8	4	0,8
Other male relative	7	2,2	3	3,3	2	20,0	5	9,1	17	3,6
School teacher/ Principal	46	14,6	10	10,9	0	0,0	5	9,1	61	13,0
Stepfather/ Mother's boyfriend	2	0,6	1	1,1	0	0,0	0	0,0	3	0,6
Stranger/ Recent acquaintance	21	6,7	7	7,6	2	20,0	2	3,6	32	6,8
Unspecified	215	68,5	62	67,4	4	40,0	28	50,9	309	65,6
Total	314	100,0	92	100,0	10	100,0	55	100,0	471	100,0
Reporting to the police										
Police only	45	14,9	12	14,1	1	11,1	9	18,4	67	15,0
Police and other help	4	1,3	2	2,4	0	0,0	2	4,1	8	1,8
Not reported	33	10,9	4	4,7	0	0,0	5	10,2	42	9,4
Unspecified	221	72,9	67	78,8	8	88,9	33	67,3	329	73,8
Total	* 303	100,0	*85	100,0	*9	100,0	*49	100,0	*446	100,0

*Missing values were excluded

Source: Medical Research Council and Department of Health (1999), *South Africa demographic and health survey 1998: preliminary report*

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Appendix B: Minor surveys

Table B1: Data from *Change and continuity: a survey of Soweto in the late 1990s*

	Male	Female	Total
Reporting of rape by respondents during the interview			
No one raped	99,5	97,1	98,7
One member raped	0,5	2,7	1,2
Twomembers or more raped	0,1	0,2	0,1
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0
Type of crime that worried respondents most			
Murder	28,0	23,1	26,4
Rape	31,8	38,8	34,1
Hijacking or car theft	15,8	8,8	13,6
Burglary/ Robbery	12,8	15,0	13,5
Assault/ Taxi violence	5,8	5,8	5,8
Domestic violence	3,1	5,7	4,0
None/ Unsure	2,4	2,6	2,5
Other	0,3	0,2	0,2
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0

Source: Department of Sociology, University of the Witwatersrand (1999), *Change and continuity: a survey of Soweto in the late 1990s*

Table B2: Data from *Violence against women in metropolitan South Africa*

	N	%
Women ever sexually abused		
Yes	190	70,6
No	77	28,6
Prefer not to answer	2	0,7
Total	269	100,0
Women ever raped		
Yes	154	57,2
No	111	41,3
Prefer not to answer	4	1,5
Total	269	100,0
Year of sexual abuse among women who were sexually abused		
Before 1997	108	56,0
In 1997	27	14,0
In 1998	25	13,0
Over a period of time	20	10,4
Prefer not to answer	13	6,7
Total	*193	100,0
Age of victim at last incident		
Under 10	13	8,1
10-19	40	25,0
20-29	57	35,6
30-39	38	23,8
40-49	10	6,3
50-59	2	1,3
Total	**160	100,0
Place where sexual abuse occurred		
Victim's home	108	40,1
Abuser's home	65	24,2
Friend/Family of victim's home	5	1,9
Friend/Family of abuser's home	16	5,9
Public (outdoors)	48	17,8
Public (indoors)	27	10,0
Total	269	100,0
Perpetrator of sexual abuse		
Intimate or relative	114	59,1
Extended family	12	6,2
Colleague	10	5,2
Acquaintance	7	3,6
Stranger	24	12,4
Friend	14	7,3
Prefer not to answer	12	6,2
Total	***193	100,0

*Reflects the number of women who were able to recall and willing to report

Source: Institute for Security Studies (1999). *Violence against women in metropolitan South Africa: a study on impact and service delivery*

Table B3: Data from *Crime in Pretoria: results of a city victim survey*

		N	%			N	%
Women sexually assaulted	Yes	34	3,8				
	No	870	96,2				
	Total	904	100,0				
Description of the incident among sexually assaulted women				Weapon used			
				Physical strength/ No weapon used	24	70,6	
	Rape	19	55,9	Knife	5	14,7	
	Attempted rape	11	32,4	Gun	4	11,8	
	Offensive behaviour	4	11,8	Other	1	2,9	
	Total	34	100,0	Total	34	100,0	
Age at assault in years				Race of victims			
	18-25	8	23,5	African	23	67,6	
	26-40	15	44,1	Coloured	-	-	
	41-60	10	29,4	Indian	-	-	
	60+	1	2,9	White	11	32,3	
	Total	34	100,0	Total	34	100,0	
Place of incident				Year of assault			
	Residence	12	35,3				
	Place of entertainment	9	26,5	1993	5	14,7	
	Street	8	23,5	1994	10	29,4	
	Public transport facility	1	2,9	1995	1	2,9	
	Open space	1	2,9	1996	3	8,8	
	Other	1	2,9	1997	9	26,5	
	Unspecified	2	5,9	1998	6	17,6	
	Total	34	100,0	Total	34	100,0	

Source: Institute for Security Studies (1998), *Crime in Pretoria: results of a city victim survey*

Table B4: Data from *Rape Crisis statistical report 1998*

Age at rape in years	N	%	Rapist known to survivor	N	%
Under 18	66	26,5			
18 – 25	73	29,3			
26 – 35	67	26,9	Yes	140	56,2
35+	36	14,5	No	74	29,7
Not specified	7	2,8	Not specified	35	14,1
Total	249	100,0	Total	249	100,0
Number of rapists			Reporting to the police		
One	164	65,9	Yes	130	52,2
Multiple	58	23,3	No	82	32,9
Not specified	27	10,8	Not specified	37	14,9
Total	249	100,0	Total	249	100,0

Source: Rape Crisis Cape Town (undated), *Rape Crisis statistical report 1998*

Table B5: Data from Rape surveillance through district surgeon offices in Johannesburg, 1996-1998

Year of rape and place where it was reported	N	%	Race of victim	N	%
Hillbrow: Jan 96 – Dec 98	1 008	71,9	African	1 069	80,0
Lenasia: Feb 96 – Dec 98	268	19,1	Coloured	136	10,2
Baragwanath: Jan 96 – Jul 97	122	8,7	Indian	24	1,8
Place unspecified	3	0,2	White	108	8,1
Total	1 401	100,0	Total	*1 337	100,0

Relationship to offender	N	%	Age of victim in years	Offender known %	Offender unknown %	Total
Stranger	718	55,3				
Known by sight	285	21,9				
Relative or intimate	199	15,3	Under 12	57,4	42,6	100,0
Neighbour	40	3,1	13-19	53,8	46,2	100,0
Family acquaintance	19	1,5	20-30	38,4	61,6	100,0
Co-worker	11	0,8	31-40	36,0	64,0	100,0
Other	27	2,1	41-50	35,0	65,0	100,0
Total	1 299	100,0	51+	16,7	83,3	100,0

Place of incident	N	%	Number of perpetrators	N	%	Type of weapon used	**N	%
Victim's home	165	14,2				Knife	307	50,9
Rapist's home	337	29,1	One	943	73,0	Firearm	213	35,3
Open space or alley	417	36,0	Two	176	13,6	Blunt instrument	33	5,5
Car	45	3,9	Three	83	6,4	Bottle	26	4,3
Other	194	16,8	Four or more	90	7,0	Screwdriver	11	1,8
Total	*1 158	100,0	Total	*1 292	100,0	Total	**	**

Day of incident	N	%	Time of incident	N	%
Monday	171	12,8	06h00 – 12h00	195	16,1
Tuesday	128	9,6			
Wednesday	133	9,9	12h00 – 18h00	240	19,8
Thursday	128	9,6			
Friday	220	16,4	18h00 – 22h00	410	33,8
Saturday	318	23,7			
Sunday	242	18,1	22h00 – 06h00	369	30,4
Total	*1 340	100,0	Total	*1 214	100,0

* Totals exclude unspecified responses in all relevant categories

** Multiple responses

Source: UNISA, Institute for Social and Health Sciences (undated), *Rape surveillance through district surgeon offices in Johannesburg, 1996-1998: evaluation and prevention implications*

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