

Rape, sexual assault likely underestimated by crime survey

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(HealthDay)—Rape and sexual assault are likely underestimated on the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) and a new survey should be developed for more accurate estimation of incidence, according to a report published by the National Academy of Sciences.

Candace Kruttschnitt, Ph.D., from the University of Toronto, and colleagues discuss concerns about potential underestimation of rape and [sexual assault](#) by the NCVS.

The researchers note that errors were involved in the NCVS, including sampling, frame and processing, response, specification, and measurement errors. Four major barriers for quality measurement were identified on the NCVS: a sample design that is inefficient for measuring low incidence events; the context of crime that defines the [survey](#); a lack of privacy for survey respondents; and the use of words

with ambiguous meanings in key measures. The use of ambiguous terms could be addressed within the structure and operations of the current NCVS survey, while the other barriers would require modifications to the NCVS. The authors recommend that an independent survey be developed for measuring rape and sexual assault.

"To more accurately measure when and how these victimizations occur, we recommend a separate survey that is focused on these specific crimes within a public health context and targets those most at risk for sexual violence," said William Kalsbeek, Ph.D., who also co-chaired the panel and is a professor of biostatistics at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill.

More information: [More Information](#)

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