

Crimes against women grossly underestimated, report says

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Photo: U.S. Department of Defense

Researchers look at gender-based violence in 24 countries.

(HealthDay)—Violence committed against women by men is vastly under-reported in many countries, a large new study finds.

Researchers analyzed data from more than 93,600 women in 24 countries who survived sexual or [physical violence](#), often called gender-based violence. Only 7 percent of the [survivors](#) reported the incidents to legal, medical or social support services, and only 37 percent informed family, friends or neighbors.

In 20 of the 24 countries, the majority of women told no one at all, according to the study published online Dec. 12 in the *American Journal of Epidemiology*.

Based on their findings, the researchers concluded that reports of gender-based violence to officials may underestimate the number of actual cases by 11 to 128 times.

"Our results confirm that the vast majority of women who have experienced [gender-based violence] remain uncounted," study leader Tia Palermo, assistant professor in [public health](#) and the department of preventive medicine at Stony Brook University School of Medicine in New York, said in a university news release.

"The research further indicates that not only are most survivors not receiving formal services, but they are not receiving informal support from friends and family members," she added.

Palermo said the findings show the need for the following: "one-stop" centers for survivors of gender-based violence; community- and nation-based programs to reduce the stigma of such violence; and increased local distribution of information on available services to gender-based [violence survivors](#), particularly in rural areas and to young [women](#).

More information: The World Health Organization has more about [violence against women](#).

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