

NISVS: An Overview of 2010 Findings on Victimization by Sexual Orientation



About NISVS

NISVS is an ongoing, nationally representative telephone survey that collects detailed information on IPV, SV, and stalking victimization of adult women and men ages 18 and older in the United States. The survey collects data on past-year and lifetime experiences of violence. CDC developed NISVS to better describe and monitor the magnitude of these forms of violence in the United States.



Little is known about the national prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV), sexual violence (SV), and stalking among lesbian, gay, and bisexual women and men in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Findings on Victimization by Sexual Orientation is the first of its kind to present comparisons of victimization by sexual orientation for women and men.

2010 Key Findings on Victimization by Sexual Orientation

The Sexual Orientation Report indicates that individuals who self-identify as lesbian, gay, and bisexual have an equal or higher prevalence of experiencing IPV, SV, and stalking as compared to self-identified heterosexuals. Bisexual women are disproportionately impacted. They experienced a significantly higher lifetime prevalence of rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner, and rape and SV (other than rape) by any perpetrator, when compared to both lesbian and heterosexual women.

Sexual minority respondents reported levels of intimate partner violence at rates equal to or higher than those of heterosexuals.

- Forty-four percent of lesbian women, 61% of bisexual women, and 35% of heterosexual women experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime.
- Twenty-six percent of gay men, 37% of bisexual men, and 29% of heterosexual men experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner at some point in their lifetime.
- Approximately 1 in 5 bisexual women (22%) and nearly 1 in 10 heterosexual women (9%) have been raped by an intimate partner in their lifetime.

Rates of some form of sexual violence were higher among lesbian women, gay men, and bisexual women and men compared to heterosexual women and men.

- Approximately 1 in 8 lesbian women (13%), nearly half of bisexual women (46%), and 1 in 6 heterosexual women (17%) have been raped in their lifetime. *This translates to an estimated 214,000 lesbian women, 1.5 million bisexual women, and 19 million heterosexual women.*
- Four in 10 gay men (40%), nearly half of bisexual men (47%), and 1 in 5 heterosexual men (21%) have experienced SV other than rape in their lifetime. *This translates into nearly 1.1 million gay men, 903,000 bisexual men, and 21.6 million heterosexual men.*



The majority of bisexual victims of rape experienced their first completed rape between the ages of 11 and 24.



Lifetime prevalence of rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner

Women		Men	
Lesbian	44%	Gay	26%
Bisexual	61%	Bisexual	37%
Heterosexual	35%	Heterosexual	29%

Among rape victims, bisexual women experienced rape earlier in life compared to heterosexual women.

- Of those women who have been raped, almost half of bisexual women (48%) and more than a quarter of heterosexual women (28%) experienced their first completed rape between the ages of 11 and 17 years.

The rate of stalking among bisexual women is more than double the rate among heterosexual women.

- One in 3 bisexual women (37%) and 1 in 6 heterosexual women (16%) have experienced stalking victimization at some point during their lifetime in which they felt very fearful or believed that they or someone close to them would be harmed or killed. *This translates into 1.2 million bisexual women and 16.8 million heterosexual women.*

A higher percentage of bisexual women reported being concerned for their safety or injured as a result of IPV than lesbian or heterosexual women.

- Approximately one-fifth of self-identified lesbian and heterosexual women (20% and 22%, respectively) and one-half of bisexual women (48%) reported they were concerned for their safety and/or reported at least one post-traumatic stress disorder symptom (20%, 46%, and 22%, respectively).
- Nearly 1 in 3 bisexual women (37%) and 1 in 7 heterosexual women (16%) were injured as a result of rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner.

Opportunities for Prevention and Action

The promotion of respectful, non violent relationships is key to preventing violence. Findings from the Sexual Orientation Report highlight the need for broad-based prevention efforts as well as services and support systems that address the specific needs of lesbian, gay, and bisexual women and men. It is important for all sectors of society, including individuals, families, and communities, to work together to end IPV, SV, and stalking. Opportunities for prevention and intervention include:

- Implementing prevention approaches that promote acceptance and recognition of healthy, respectful relationships regardless of sexual orientation.
- Including lesbian, gay, and bisexual persons in national, state, and local violence research.
- Referring victims and survivors to culturally appropriate accessible services.