

ELDERLY CRIME VICTIMS

Reported Crime Incidents Against Elderly Victims in the City of Chicago

In 2000, there was an estimated 35 million people ages 65 years and older in the United States, accounting for almost 13 percent of the total population. In 2011, the “baby boom” generation will begin to turn 65, and by 2030, it is projected that one in five people will be 65 years or older. Because the elderly population is steadily rising and they represent a potentially vulnerable population, it is important to look at the crime victimization data pertaining to the elderly.

This report provides an overview of characteristics of elderly victims and crimes perpetrated against them in 2005 in the City of Chicago. The publication is based on a subset of victim data from reported crime incidents in which the victim’s age was known. The data include all non-murder incidents in which the victim was identified as being elderly. For this report elderly victims were defined as persons 60 years and older, and was based on the definition of elderly persons outlined in the Illinois Criminal Code of 1961 (720 ILCS 5/).

Throughout this report, the elderly victim data were broken down into four separate age categories: victims ages 60 years to 69 years (n=14,640); 70 years to 79 years (n=6,920); 80 years to 89 years (n=2,633); and 90 years and older (n=352). Population figures used to calculate rates per 100 persons were provided by the Chicago Department of Planning and Development and were based on population figures supplied by the U.S. Census Bureau (see Bousfield, 2004). Victimization rates were calculated using 2003 population figures (the most recent population data available at the time of analysis).

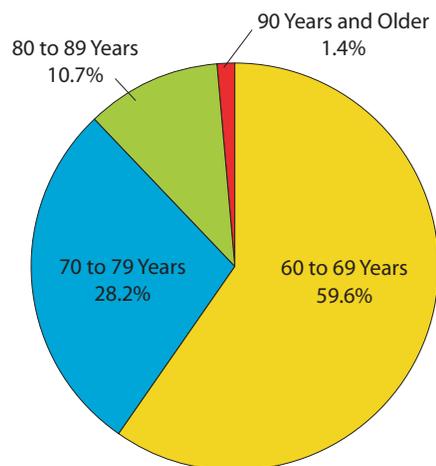
Elderly Crime Victims

- In 2005, elderly victims made up 7.1 percent of all reported victims (24,545 of 347,850 reported victims).
- There was only one victim per incident in the majority of reported elderly victims (91.5%). Thus, very few elderly victims were victimized in groups.
- The elderly victimization rate was 6.3 persons per 100 persons aged 60 years and older in 2005. In comparison, the victimization rates for other non-elderly victim age groups were: 3.9 for 16 years and younger; 18.0 for 17 years to 29 years; and 15.0 for 30 years to 59 years.

Elderly Victim Characteristics

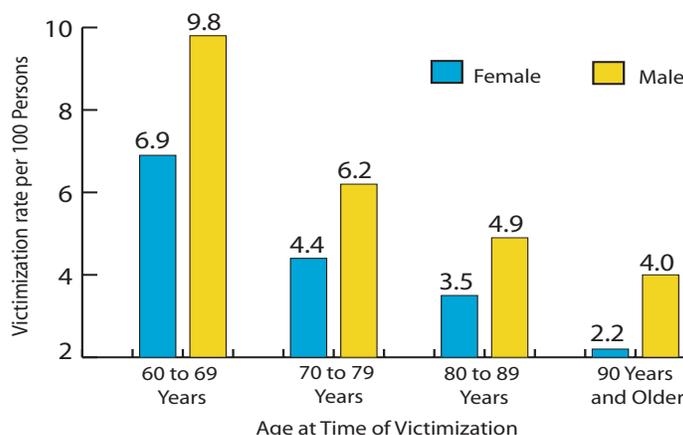
- The majority of elderly victims were between 60 years to 79 years (Figure 1).

Figure 1
Elderly Crime Victims by Age Group, 2005



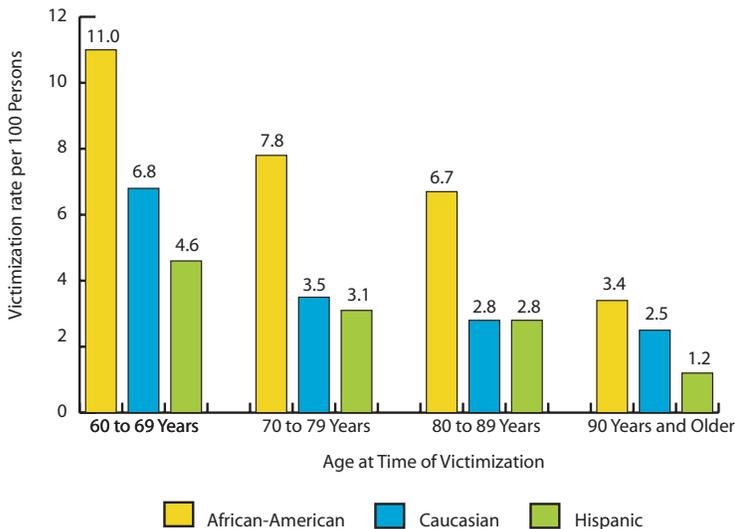
- Females accounted for 49.4 percent of all elderly victims, while males accounted for 50.4 percent.
- The victimization rates for males were higher than the rates for females across the elderly age groups examined (Figure 2).
- Victimization rates for both sexes decreased as age increased (Figure 2).

Figure 2
Elderly Victimization Rate by Sex and Age Group, 2005



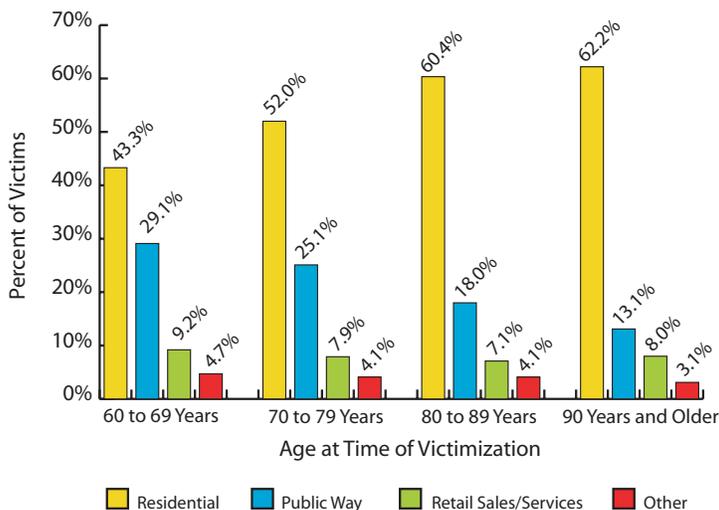
- African-Americans accounted for 56.5 percent of all elderly victims, while Caucasians accounted for 31.9 percent, and Hispanics accounted for 7.5 percent of all elderly victims.
- Elderly African-Americans were victimized at a higher rate than their Caucasian and Hispanic counterparts (Figure 3).
- The victimization rate for the racial and ethnic groups illustrated in Figure 3 decreased as age increased.

Figure 3
Elderly Victimization Rate by Race and Age Group, 2005



- Figure 4 shows the percentage of each age group by location of victimization. The figure reflects the top four locations where the elderly were victimized (87.5%). The highest portion of victimization happened on residential properties (47.9%), followed by the public way (26.6%), retail sales/services (8.6%), and other location (4.4%). Other location includes abandoned buildings and other unspecified locations.
- Figure 4 shows that the older the elderly victim, the more likely the incident occurred in a residential location.

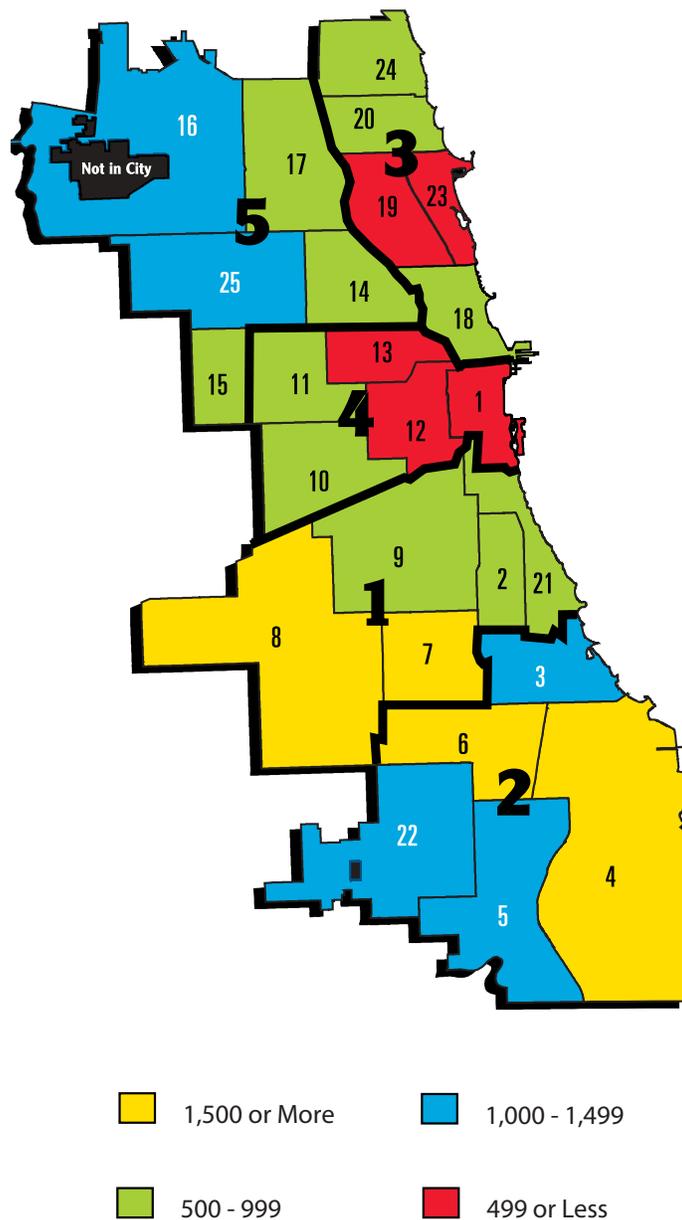
Figure 4
Percent of Elderly Victims by Top Four Locations and Age Group, 2005



Characteristics of Crime Against the Elderly

- In 2005, over half (56.7%) of elderly victimization occurred in nine police districts. These districts include, from highest to lowest, 06, 04, 08, 07, 22, 05, 03, 25, and 16. Each of these nine districts had over 1,000 elderly victimizations in 2005 (Map 1).
- The Chicago Police Department Area 2 accounted for the most elderly victims (33.1%), followed by Area 1 (23.8%), Area 5 (18.6%), Area 4 (12.4%), and Area 3 (12.2%).

Map 1
Number of Elderly Victims by District



Tables 1 to 4 break down the top 10 offenses against elderly victims by each age group. The majority of offenses were property related crimes, while the rest were crimes against persons.

Top 10 Offenses for Each Elderly Age Group, 2005

Table 1
Victims Ages 60 years to 69 years

Offense Type	Total Amount	Percent of Victims
Criminal Damage to Property	1,851	12.6%
Theft of \$300 and Under	1,396	9.5%
Criminal Damage to Vehicle	1,310	8.9%
Burglary / Forcible Entry	1,135	7.8%
Motor Vehicle Theft / Automobile	965	6.6%
Theft From Building	903	6.2%
Theft Over \$300	639	4.4%
Simple Assault	637	4.4%
Simple Battery	610	4.2%
Simple Domestic Battery	494	3.4%
*n=14,640		

Table 2
Victims Ages 70 years to 79 years

Offense Type	Total Amount	Percent of Victims
Criminal Damage to Property	1,129	16.3%
Burglary / Forcible Entry	593	8.6%
Theft of \$300 and Under	544	7.9%
Criminal Damage to Vehicle	538	7.8%
Theft From Building	486	7.0%
Motor Vehicle Theft / Automobile	469	6.8%
Simple Assault	249	3.6%
Theft Over \$300	226	3.3%
Burglary / Unlawful Entry	183	2.6%
Simple Domestic Battery	177	2.6%
*n=6,920		

Table 3
Victims Ages 80 years to 89 years

Offense Type	Total Amount	Percent of Victims
Criminal Damage to Property	469	17.8%
Theft From Building	222	8.4%
Burglary / Forcible Entry	194	7.4%
Theft of \$300 and Under	171	6.5%
Motor Vehicle Theft / Automobile	144	5.5%
Criminal Damage to Vehicle	121	4.6%
Burglary / Unlawful Entry	103	3.9%
Deceptive Practice / Fraud / ConGame	83	3.2%
Robbery / Strongarm - No Weapon	78	3.0%
Harassment by Telephone	70	2.7%
*n=2,633		

Table 4
Victims Ages 90 years and older

Offense Type	Total Amount	Percent of Victims
Criminal Damage to Property	54	15.3%
Theft From Building	39	11.1%
Theft of \$300 and Under	25	7.1%
Burglary / Forcible Entry	20	5.7%
Motor Vehicle Theft / Automobile	15	4.3%
Burglary / Unlawful Entry	14	4.0%
Theft Over \$300	13	3.7%
Simple Battery	12	3.4%
Harassment by Telephone	12	3.4%
Criminal Trespass to Residence	11	3.1%
*n=352		

Financial Exploitation of an Elderly or Disabled Person is defined as when an offender uses a position of trust to obtain control over property through deception or intimidation.

- In 2005, there were 98 incidents of Financial Exploitation of an Elderly or Disabled Person. Of these, 40.8 percent involved victims 80 years to 89 years, followed by victims 70 years to 79 years (29.6%), 60 years to 69 years (18.4%), and 90 years and older (11.2%).

The Elder Abuse and Neglect Act:

- The Elder Abuse and Neglect Act provides extensive protection to all reporters, whether voluntary or mandatory. Anyone who makes an elder abuse report in good faith is exempt from civil and criminal liability as well as any professional disciplinary action. These same protections are provided to any person who provides information, records, or services related to a report.

Why Elderly Persons are Vulnerable to Fraud:

- Many have financial resources.
- Their life-style provides a friendly environment for the con artist.

Common Con Games

- **City Inspector** » An “inspector” says he needs to check plumbing, wiring, furnace, trees, or other items. He finds a “serious” problem that requires disconnecting services, but offers to have friend do the repair work immediately. To prevent shoddy work and unnecessary costs, call the city department the “inspector” claims to represent. Use your phone book to get the number rather than his business card.

- **Lottery scams** » A person offers to sell a winning lottery ticket or a “law firm” says someone has left you a winning lottery ticket, but you must send money so a computer can verify your identity. The “winning” ticket may be counterfeit or not exist.

- **Pigeon drop** » Beware of swindlers who claim they have found a large sum of money and offer to share it with you. They ask you to put up some “good faith” money before you get in on the deal. That is the last you will see of your money. You are left with nothing but phony instructions on how to collect your share of the “found” cash.

- **Obituary scam** » A C.O.D. box arrives for a product “your recently deceased spouse ordered.” Tell the person you will not accept the product. Most often the messenger is an imposter.

- **“900”** number prefix scams » Even though 900 numbers are legitimate, the call may cost more than advertised. You may be put on hold to add to the bill, and many products are worthless.

- **Deceptive lending practices** » Avoid lenders who promise guaranteed, low-interest loans and next-day approval if you pay them some money today. Never sign away the title to a property without clearing the mortgage. Avoid balloon payments. Have at least two other trusted people read a contract before you sign it. If you are unsure or have questions call the Fair Housing Contact Service at (330) 376-6191.

**For more information,
please contact Sergeant Jeff Hoffmann,
Senior Services Section, at 312-745-5141.**