

CJ in Brief



San Diego Violent Crime Victims and Suspects in 2015

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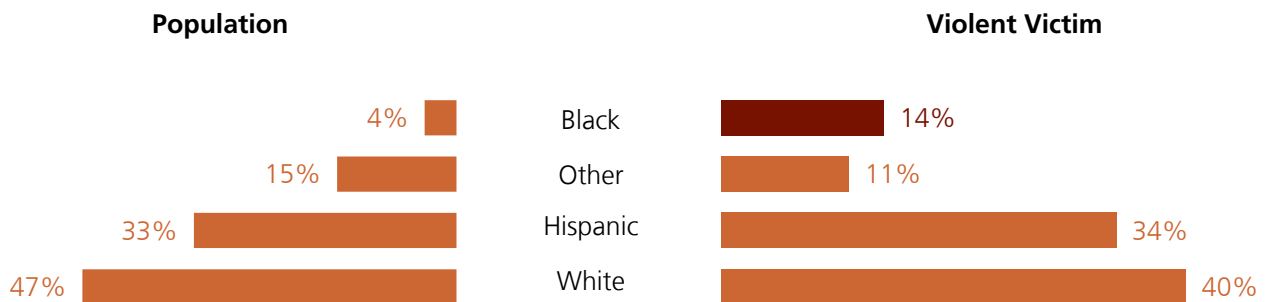


Introduction An examination of crime in a community is incomplete without information about the involved victims and suspects. This SANDAG CJ In Brief, which is part of the SANDAG crime reports, is intended to provide a broad picture of the victims affected by violent crime in the San Diego County Region. Victim and suspect characteristics are analyzed by crime type and viewed within the context of which subgroups of the region’s population were more at risk of victimization. This CJ In Brief describes the characteristics of victims who reported being a victim of a Part I violent crime (homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) in 2015. The exclusion of property crimes in this analysis is because there is an inconsistency in who the victim is when reporting property crime, and therefore the data are not as reliable. Suspect data also are presented, but unlike victims, the suspect data include 2015 arrests for crimes committed in previous years. Data were compiled from violent crime and arrest data from local law enforcement agencies.

2015 VIOLENT CRIME VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS

Race The racial/ethnic characteristics of violent crime victims differed somewhat compared to their representation in San Diego County. Blacks were around three times more likely to be a victim of violent crime compared to their proportion in the population; and conversely, Whites and individuals of Other races were underrepresented as violent crime victims compared to their representation in the population.

Race/Ethnicity Population Compared to Violent Crime Victims’ Race/Ethnicity



Race & Violent Crime Type When examined by type of crime, individuals who identified as White were underrepresented in all crime categories except rape. To a lesser extent, this also was true of victims of Other races, who were underrepresented in three of the four categories (robbery being the exception), and Hispanics, who were underrepresented among homicide and rape victims, but slightly overrepresented among robbery victims. Blacks were overrepresented in all four crime categories, comprising 3 to 5 times the proportion of victims compared to their population representation.

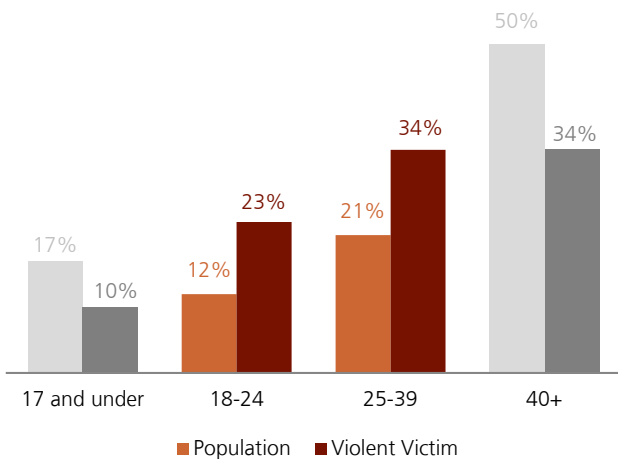
| | POPULATION | HOMICIDE | RAPE | ROBBERY | AGGRAVATED ASSAULT |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------------|
| White | 47% | 39% | 52% | 36% | 40% |
| Hispanic | 33% | 27% | 29% | 37% | 34% |
| Other | 15% | 13% | 9% | 15% | 10% |
| Black | 4% | 20% | 10% | 11% | 16% |

CHANGE IN DEFINITION OF RAPE

In 2015 California law enforcement began using the new FBI mandated definition of rape. The broader definition of rape includes male victims, sodomy, penetration with any body part or objects, and no longer requires force.

Age and Violent Crime Type Crime victimization also varied by age, adults 18 to 39 years old comprising a larger proportion of victims than their proportion in the population. This overrepresentation held true across all crime categories for these two age groups. Children and teens, while underrepresented in general among violent crime victims, were overrepresented among rape victims.

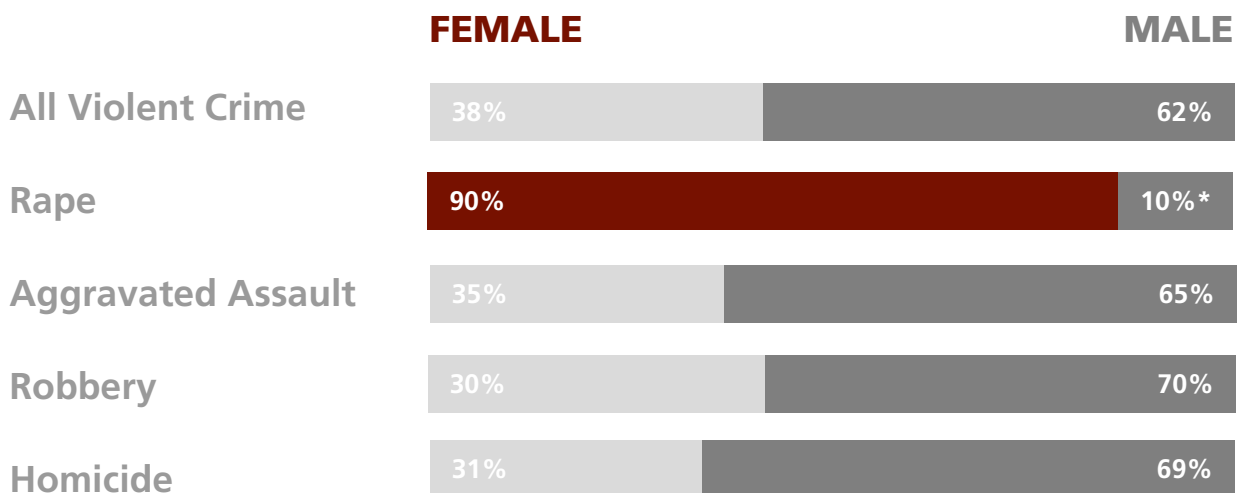
Violent Crime Victims by Age



Crime Categories by Victim Age

| | POPULATION | HOMICIDE | RAPE | ROBBERY | AGGRAVATED ASSAULT |
|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------------|
| 17 and under | 17% | 6% | 24% | 8% | 9% |
| 18-24 | 12% | 20% | 28% | 27% | 20% |
| 25-39 | 21% | 26% | 30% | 34% | 34% |
| 40+ | 50% | 48% | 18% | 31% | 37% |

Gender While females and males are each half of the population they vary greatly in the type of violence they experience. With the exception of rape, females only comprise around one-third of the other three violent crime types.



* Per the new FBI definition of rape, 2015 was the first year males could be categorized as rape victims.

UNDERREPORTING OF CRIMES

Source: National Crime Victim Survey (NCVS), 2015

The NCVS is an annual report using a national representative sample of households on crime victimization. The survey provides a broader picture of crime victimization because it collects data on actual crimes versus reported. In 2015 NCVS noted the following underreporting of crimes.

Only around half of violent crime is reported to police (55%)

Rape/sexual assault is the most underreported (32%)

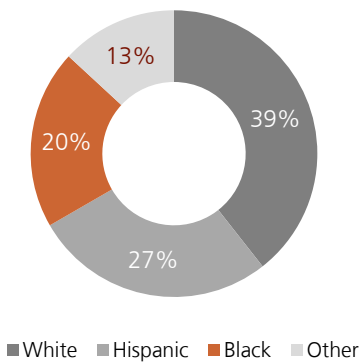
Nearly two-thirds (62%) of victims of robbery or aggravated assault reported the crime

2015 HOMICIDE VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS

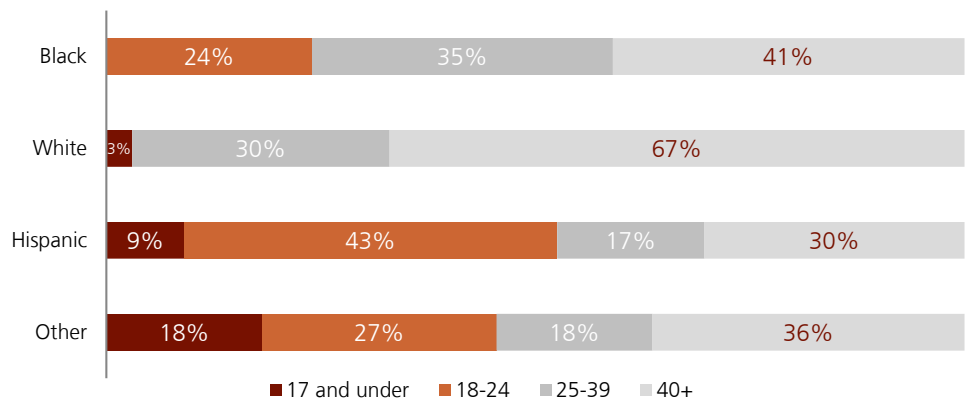
Given the seriousness and devastating impact of homicide, additional analysis is provided on the characteristics of homicide victims. In 2015, there were 84 reported homicides in San Diego County, 69 (or 82%) of which had a known motive. As with victims of other violent crimes, homicide data show little fluctuation over the years in the characteristics and motives behind the homicides. Adults under 40 years old are most at risk, assailants usually know their victims, and arguments are the most common precipitating motive behind a homicide.

Race and Age Similar to all violent crime, a victim's race/ethnicity and age often differed from their overall proportion in the general population. Specifically, 20 percent of homicide victims were Black, even though Blacks are only 4 percent of the population, and most of these Black victims were young adults (59%) and all were males (not shown). White homicide victims, on the other hand, were slightly underrepresented (39% compared to 46% of population), were mostly older (67% were 40 years old or above), and had the highest proportion of females than other race/ethnicities (45%). Hispanics had the largest proportion of children and young adults who were homicide victims (9% 17 and under and 43% 18 to 24 years old).

Homicide Victims by Race/Ethnicity



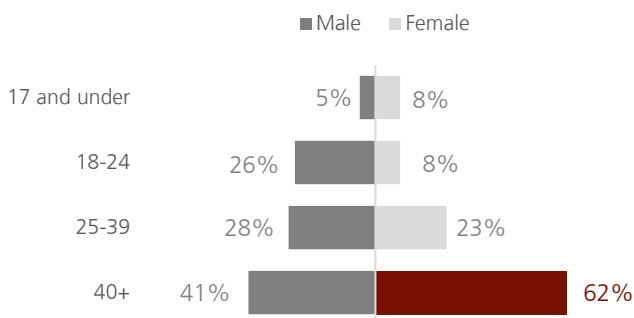
Homicide Victims by Age and Race/Ethnicity



TOTAL = 84

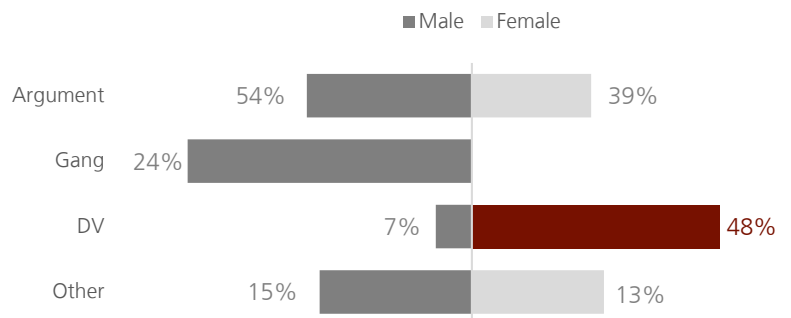
Gender Consistent with victims of all violent crimes, males were overrepresented as homicide victims (69% compared to 50% of population) and females underrepresented (31%). Female homicide victims were more likely to be older and a victim of a domestic violence motivated homicide. White homicide victims had the largest proportion of female victims (45%), followed by victims of Other races/ethnicity (36%), and Hispanics (30%).

Homicide Victims by Gender and Age



TOTAL = 84

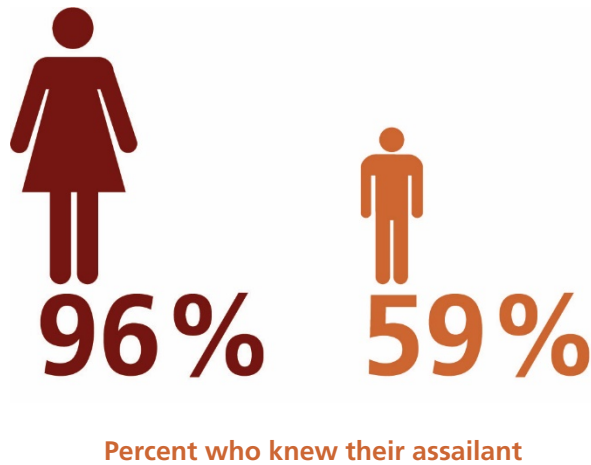
Homicide Victims by Gender and Motive



TOTAL = 69

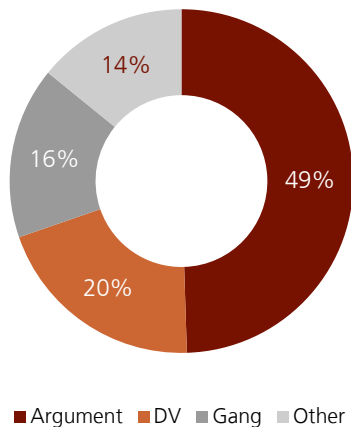
Where the relationship between homicide victim and suspect was known (64 cases), the majority of victims knew the suspect (72%), however this varied by gender. Specifically, almost all of the female homicide victims knew their assailant (96%) compared to 59 percent of male homicide victims.

Homicide Victims Relationship with Suspect

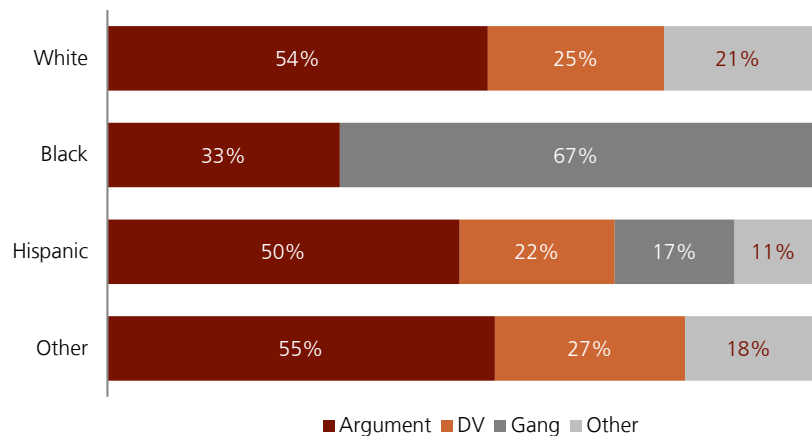


Motives Examination of the 69 homicides where the motive was known provides some insight into the variation in homicide victim characteristics. As in past years, an argument (49%) was the most frequently noted motive in 2015, followed by a domestic violence incident (20%), gang involvement (16%), and some other motive (child abuse, drugs, robbery, burglary) (14%). As with other violent crimes, the motives did vary by race/ethnicity. Specifically, for Black homicide victims where a motive was known, over two-thirds (67%) were attributed to gangs, whereas an argument was the most prevalent known motive in homicides involving a White, Hispanic, or Other homicide victim.

Homicide Motives



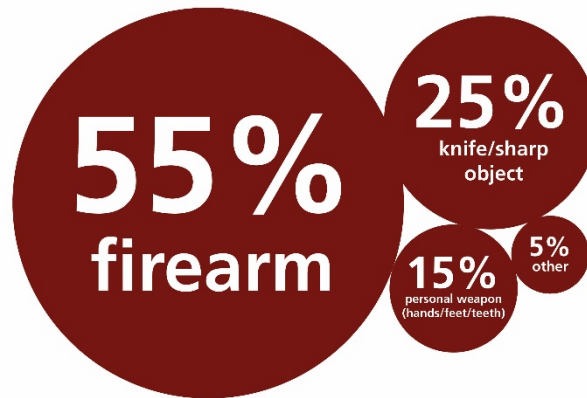
Homicide Motives by Race/Ethnicity



TOTAL = 69

Weapons Used The most common weapon used in a homicide in 2015 was a firearm (55%), followed by a knife/sharp object (25%), a personal weapon (hands, feet, teeth) (15%), and other means (5%).

Weapons used in 2015 Homicides



2015 SUSPECT CHARACTERISTICS

Unlike victim data, which is based on crime incident reports, suspect information is gathered from arrest data. Thus, the suspect information could be from a crime committed in a previous year. As with victims, suspect characteristics varied by crime type. Suspects were more likely to be younger and male than their representation in the population.

Adults under 40 years old were overrepresented as suspects in all crime categories (20% to 42%) compared to their proportion in the population (12% 18 to 24; and 21% 25 to 39 years old); whereas the opposite pattern was true for older adults, who were underrepresented in all crime categories.

Characteristics of Violent Crime Victims and Suspects Varied by Type of Crime

| | Population | HOMICIDE | | RAPE | | ROBBERY | | AGGRAVATED ASSAULT | |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------------|------------|
| | | Victims | Suspects | Victims | Suspects | Victims | Suspects | Victims | Suspects |
| White | 47% | 39% | 26% | 52% | 26% | 36% | 25% | 40% | 39% |
| Hispanic | 33% | 27% | 32% | 29% | 45% | 37% | 40% | 34% | 35% |
| Other | 15% | 13% | 8% | 9% | 7% | 15% | 5% | 10% | 8% |
| Black | 4% | 20% | 33% | 10% | 22% | 11% | 31% | 16% | 19% |
| < 17 | 17% | 6% | 2% | 24% | 5% | 8% | 12% | 9% | 7% |
| 18 to 24 | 12% | 20% | 24% | 28% | 22% | 27% | 36% | 20% | 21% |
| 25 to 39 | 21% | 26% | 49% | 30% | 44% | 34% | 38% | 34% | 42% |
| 40+ | 50% | 48% | 25% | 18% | 29% | 31% | 14% | 37% | 30% |
| Male | 50% | 69% | 82% | 10% | 98% | 70% | 85% | 65% | 73% |
| Female | 50% | 31% | 18% | 90% | 2% | 30% | 15% | 35% | 27% |

KEY POINTS

To better understand the larger impact of crime, it is important to provide data on victims as part of any crime series or discussion to understand who is at greatest risk for specific crimes. It also is important to keep in mind when reviewing the information that only around half of violent crimes are reported to the police, with rape/sexual assault having the smallest reporting rate. While crime rates have fluctuated over the years, there has been little change in the characteristics of both victims and suspects.

- ◆ Adults 39 years old or younger are more likely to be both a suspect and a victim of crime, drawing attention to how crime prevention efforts also could affect victimization of younger individuals.
- ◆ With the exception of rape (10%), males comprised the majority of all crime victims (65% - 70%).
- ◆ Rape is the only violent crime category that children (17 and under) are overrepresented in comparison to the population, drawing attention to their vulnerability.
- ◆ 2015 was the first year that rape included males, resulting in 10 percent of rape victims being male.
- ◆ Females were more likely to be killed by someone they knew (96%) compared to males (59%).
- ◆ Black victims continue to be overrepresented in all crime categories.