

Introduction

Residents ranked having people free from abuse and neglect as the second most important funding priority (of ten). This chapter highlights information from the household needs assessment survey and secondary sources concerning abuse and neglect. Four specific aspects of abuse and neglect are explored: child abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, and senior abuse. First, results of the household needs assessment survey are present followed by selected findings from secondary sources. Finally, some conclusions are presented.

Household Needs Assessment Survey Results

Child Abuse

- When asked about child abuse and neglect in their community almost half (46.8%) of the survey respondents indicated that child abuse and neglect does happen in their community.
- The regions with the majority of survey respondents indicating that abuse and neglect happens in their community are the Morongo Basin region (56.5%) and Central San Bernardino County region (53.1%). Almost half (47.5%) of the respondents in the High Desert area thought that child abuse happen frequently in their community. Slightly over one-third of the respondents from the East Valley (35.9%) and Eastern Los Angeles/Western San Bernardino County (36.2%) regions thought that child abuse occurred too often.
- 56.8% of Black respondents, 56.3% of Asian respondents, 47.7% of White respondents, and 43.7% of Hispanic respondents felt that abuse and neglect was a problem.
- Concerns about child abuse were similar across income categories.

Domestic Violence

- 46.8% of respondents agreed that domestic violence is a major problem.
- Over half of the respondents in the Central San Bernardino County (56.1%), High Desert (53.2%), and Morongo Basin (51.6%) study areas thought that domestic violence is a major problem. 43.5% of respondents in the Eastern Los Angeles/Western San Bernardino County survey region and 30.9% of respondents in the East Valley region also thought that domestic violence is a major problem.
- Concern that domestic violence is a major problem was stated more often from those in the lower income groups.

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- Black respondents (65.3%) most often identified domestic violence as a major problem followed by Hispanic (53.1%), Asian (45.5%) and White (38.3%) respondents.
- Males (45.6%) were almost as likely as females (47.6%) to feel that domestic violence is a major problem.

Sexual Assault

- 40.4% of respondents agreed that sexual abuse and date rape are major problems.
- Almost half (49%) of the residents in the Central San Bernardino County survey region thought that sexual abuse and date rape are major problems. Percentages of persons indicating that sexual assault is a major problem include 40.4% in the Eastern Los Angeles/Western San Bernardino region, 34.7% in the High Desert, 31.2% in the Morongo Basin, and 28.6% in the East Valley.
- Over half of Asian (53.8%) and Black (53.5%) respondents indicated that sexual assault is a major problem.
- 43.3% of females and 35.6% of males indicated that rape and sexual abuse are major problems.
- Feelings that sexual assault is a major problem are more prevalent among those with lower incomes.

Senior Abuse

- Almost one-fourth (24.1%) of the survey respondents indicated feeling that senior abuse and neglect are major problems.
- Feelings that senior abuse is a major problem were most common in the Central San Bernardino County (35.8%) and the Morongo Basin (33.7%) survey regions. The region with the fewest persons indicating that elder abuse is a problem is the East Valley region (16.7%).
- Asian respondents (56.4%) were the most likely to indicate that senior abuse is a problem followed by Blacks (37.5%), Hispanics (32.1%), and Whites (14.0%).
- Concern over senior abuse is higher among those in the lower income groups.

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Indicators

Child Abuse

- In 2002 there were 26,836 Child Protective Services (CPS) referrals in San Bernardino County. Of those, 4,585 (or 17.09%) were substantiated. Cities with the highest number of substantiated referrals were: the city of San Bernardino (1,233), Fontana (343), Ontario (270), Rialto (248), Barstow (243), Victorville (199), Hesperia (184), Highland (168), Apple Valley (164), and Colton (142). (S.B. Co., HSS)
- According to the Child Welfare Research Center, there were 567,297 children ages 0-17 in San Bernardino County in 2002. Of these children, 40,011 were the subject of child maltreatment referrals, and 5,934 of the children had substantiated referrals.
- The rate of substantiated referrals in San Bernardino County in 2002 was 10.5 per 1,000 children. This was below the statewide rate of 12.1 per 1,000 children. (CSSR, UCB, 2003)
- Of the children with substantiations in 2002, those reporting “other” as their race experienced the highest rate of child maltreatment (22.2 incidences per 1,000 children). The substantiated child maltreatment rates for other races were: Black, 19.5; Native American, 16.5; White, 11.9; Hispanic, 7.5; and Asian, 3.1. (CSSR, ECB, 2003)
- Placing children in out-of-home care is an indicator of severe family dysfunction. Foster care can provide a safe temporary home for children who cannot remain safely in their own home. From 1998-2000, the average rate of children ages 0-17 in foster care in San Bernardino County was 9.1 per 1,000 children, which ranked the county 36th out of 58 California counties. During this time frame, the statewide rate was 10.9 per 1,000 children. (Children Now, 2002)
- The San Bernardino County Human Service System reported 3,937 foster children in out-of-home placement in the county in July 2003. An additional 1,362 children were placed outside of San Bernardino County. There are a total of 1,102 licensed foster homes, small family homes, and foster family agencies in San Bernardino County. (S. B. County, HSS, 2003)
- In 2002 there were 1,855 first entries to foster care in San Bernardino County. Of these, 75.4% were removed from their homes because of neglect, 17.2% due to physical abuse, 4.9% for sexual abuse, and 2.9% for “other” reasons. (CSSR, UCB, 2003)

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Domestic Violence

- According to California Penal Code Section § 273.5 (a), domestic violence is defined as the “willful infliction of corporal injury upon a spouse or cohabitant.” Public awareness, women’s resource centers and shelters, and new legislation have been underlying factors in the increase of domestic violence arrests in recent years. From 1988 to 1998, there was a 226.2% increase in arrests in San Bernardino County. (OAG, 1999)
- Nearly one-third of American women (31 percent) report being physically or sexually abused by a husband or boyfriend at some point in their lives, according to a 1998 Commonwealth Fund survey. (CPSDV, 2003)
- Statewide, there were 198,031 domestic violence-related calls for assistance in 2001. 8,490 of these calls were from San Bernardino County. Of the counties with a similar population, Sacramento County had 8,432 calls, Riverside County had 7,976 calls, Santa Clara County had 6,400 calls, and Alameda County had 5,743 calls. Neighboring Los Angeles County had 59,661 calls for assistance. (OAG, 2003)
- Of the 8,490 calls in San Bernardino County, 6,687 involved a “personal weapon” (hands, feet), 778 calls had no weapon involved or reported, 759 involved “another dangerous weapon,” 218 involved a knife or cutting instrument, and 48 involved a firearm. The location with the highest number of domestic violence-related calls for assistance in San Bernardino County was the city of San Bernardino (1,636). Other locations with a high incidence of calls include: Fontana (934), Ontario (746), Upland (458), Rialto (436), Redlands (395), Colton (316), Montclair (278), Chino (254), Victorville (250), and Apple Valley (235). A total of 1,275 calls came from the unincorporated areas of the county. In 2001, the city of Pomona had 1,514 domestic violence-related calls for assistance, the third highest number of all cities in Los Angeles County. (OAG, 2003)
- San Bernardino County (under the Department of Children’s Services) contracts with agencies dedicated to the prevention of domestic violence. According to the Children’s Network of San Bernardino County, “Presley Funds, SB1246, receives revenue from a surcharge placed on the cost of marriage licenses purchased within San Bernardino County. These funds are apportioned equally to the contracted domestic violence agencies as augmentation funds.” Collectively, the seven contracted agencies received 20,594 requests from individuals for outreach services, 6,223 requests from families for shelter, and served 2,692 shelter clients during the FY 2001-2002. (CNSBC, 2003)

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Sexual Assault

- In 2001 the rate of forcible rape in San Bernardino County was 29.2 per 1,000 persons. This rate is slightly higher than the statewide rate of 28.4. The rates in counties with similar population size were: Alameda County (33.5), Riverside County (27.8), Sacramento County (36.9), and Santa Clara County (27.9). Los Angeles County had a rate of 27.9 per 1,000 persons.
- In the study area, jurisdictions with the highest number of reported forcible rapes during 2001 were: the city of San Bernardino (89), unincorporated areas (80), Ontario (74), Pomona (54), Fontana (41), Rialto (35), and Upland (20).
- The U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics' 2002 National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) found that overall violent victimization rates in 2002 were the lowest recorded since the inception of the NVCS in 1973. The study also reports that in the past ten years, reporting crimes to the police increased, violent crimes against females are more likely to have been reported to the police than those against males, and the relative increase in reporting crime to the police was greater for rape-sexual assault than it was for robbery or simple assault. (U.S. Department of Justice, 2002).

Elder Abuse

- According to the National Center on Elder Abuse, elder abuse is a term referring to any knowing, intentional, or negligent act by a caregiver or any other person that causes harm or a serious risk of harm to a vulnerable adult, including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, exploitation, neglect, or abandonment. (NCEA, 2003)
- The 1998 National Elder Abuse Incidence Study found that for every reported incident of elder abuse, neglect or self neglect, approximately five go unreported. The low numbers reported may be due to the fact that in 90% of the cases, the perpetrator of abuse on an elderly person is a family member. In 2/3 of those incidents the family member was an adult child or spouse.
- According to reports from San Bernardino County Adult Protective Services (APS), senior self-abuse occurs more often than abuse by others. Of the various types of self-abuse, the most common form is lack of physical care, followed by inadequate medical care, and finally health and safety hazards. The prevalent form of abuse by others is financial exploitation, followed by psychological/mental abuse, and then general neglect.

Conclusions

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- Abuse and neglect can damage a child's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development.
- Child abuse happens most often in the form of neglect.
- Although half of survey respondents indicate that child abuse and neglect happen in their community, the rate of substantiated child abuse referrals in San Bernardino County is below the California rate.
- The supply of licensed foster homes in San Bernardino County does not meet the demand for foster care.
- Increased awareness of domestic violence and available resources, have raised both the number of domestic violence-related calls for assistance and the number of domestic violence arrest.
- Social isolation and mental impairment are factors that may make an older person more vulnerable to abuse.

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