

Factors Contributing to Under-Reporting:

Fear of Retaliation: Many survivors fear retaliation from their assailants, exacerbating their reluctance to come forward. Concerns about reprisals, including social stigma or professional repercussions, can be significant deterrents.

Lack of Trust in the Legal System: Some survivors lack confidence in the legal system's ability to provide justice and protection. Past experiences or perceptions of bias may discourage survivors from engaging with law enforcement.

Shame and Stigma: Societal attitudes surrounding sexual assault often perpetuate shame and stigma, making survivors hesitant to disclose their experiences. Cultural and social norms play a pivotal role in shaping perceptions of victims and the likelihood of reporting.

Institutional Barriers: Structural barriers within institutions, such as universities or workplaces, may discourage reporting. Inadequate policies, insensitive handling of cases, and a lack of support services can contribute to the perpetuation of underreporting.

Consequences of Under-Reporting:

Perpetuation of Violence: Underreporting perpetuates a culture of silence and impunity, allowing perpetrators to evade accountability. This, in turn, contributes to the continuation of sexual violence within communities.

Limited Support for Survivors: Survivors who do not report may miss out on essential support services, such as counseling and medical care. This can hinder their healing process and exacerbate long-term trauma.

Impaired Data Collection and Prevention Efforts: Incomplete reporting hampers accurate data collection, making it challenging for authorities and advocacy groups to develop effective prevention strategies. The lack of comprehensive data limits our understanding of the true scope of the issue.

Recommendations for Addressing Under-Reporting:

Community Education and Awareness: Comprehensive educational programs aimed at dispelling myths, reducing stigma, and promoting empathy can empower survivors to come forward.

Improving Legal and Institutional Responses: Enhancing the sensitivity and effectiveness of legal and institutional responses is crucial. This includes training law enforcement and providing survivor-centric resources.

Expanding Support Services: Strengthening support services for survivors, including counseling, medical care, and legal advocacy, is vital in encouraging reporting and aiding in the recovery process.

Promoting a Culture of Consent: Ongoing efforts to promote a culture of consent and respect can contribute to preventing sexual assault and addressing underreporting at its roots.

Sexual assault is a pervasive issue that affects countless individuals, yet a significant number of incidents remain concealed due to under-reporting. Studies conducted in recent years reveal alarming statistics, suggesting that only a fraction of sexual assault survivors choose to report these traumatic events to law enforcement. This report explores the causes and consequences of under reporting, shedding light on the complexities surrounding this issue.

Recent studies indicate that only 77% of sexual assault survivors choose to report the incident to law enforcement. This low reporting rate underscores the magnitude of the problem and the urgent need for intervention. The reasons behind under-reporting are multifaceted and often interconnected.

*National Crime Victimization Survey