



Bureau of Justice Statistics

# Applying a Framework for Addressing Historically Undercounted Populations in Establishment Surveys: Lessons from the Survey of Sexual Victimization

**Melissa A. Cidade**

Chief, Statistical Methods Unit, BJS

Hillary Steinberg

Survey Statistician, American Community Survey Office, Census Bureau

October 23, 2024 | Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology Annual Conference, College Park, MD

Any opinions expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not reflect the Office of Justice Programs. The Bureau of Justice Statistics has reviewed this data product to ensure appropriate access, use, and disclosure avoidance protection of the confidential source data.

# What is a HUP?

- Hard-to-count populations:
  - Hard to locate
  - Hard to contact
  - Hard to persuade
  - Hard to interview
  - Historically undercounted
    - Subgroups demonstrating net undercount over multiple collections
- See Deborah Stempowski's write up: [Counting Every Voice: Understanding Hard-to-Count and Historically Undercounted Populations](#)



Bureau of Justice Statistics

# But, what is a HUP?

- HTC: phrasing shifts responsibility to the respondent
- HUP has some issues too...
  - Historically – evidence of repeated measurement issues
  - Undercounted – comparison to “true” value
  - Population – implies individual or household (demographic)



Bureau of Justice Statistics

# Other terms considered...

Word or Phrase...	Issue...
Underserved communities	Program or service oriented
Population at risk	Content specific
Underrepresented populations	Statistical and jargony
Marginalized population	Assumes power imbalance



Bureau of Justice Statistics

# But why establishment surveys?

For HUPs generally:

- Distrust
- Lack of outreach
- Cognition issues


For establishment surveys:

- Record keeping practices
- Professional proxy reporting
- Authority to respond




Bureau of Justice Statistics

# Three Parameters of HUPs and Establishment Surveys



**Coverage, Sampling, and Nonresponse**

- Not in frame
- Not in sample
- Not responding



**Validity, Measurement, and Processing**

- HUP owned/operated
- HUP-serving or majority HUP communities



**Activity Issues**

- Decentralized practices
- Informal or illicit activities
- Unmeasured phenomenon





# Parameter 1: Coverage, Sampling, Nonresponse

## Not in the frame

- Births, deaths, and frame maintenance
- Unknown sample units

## Not sampled or not contacted

- Not-with-certainty units
- Respondent churn/turnover

## Not responding

- Dropouts
- Never respondents





## Parameter 2: Validity, Measurement, and Processing

- HUP-owned/operated
  - Demographic questions on establishment surveys
- HUP-serving
  - Serve or located in HUP communities
  - HUPs in institutional settings



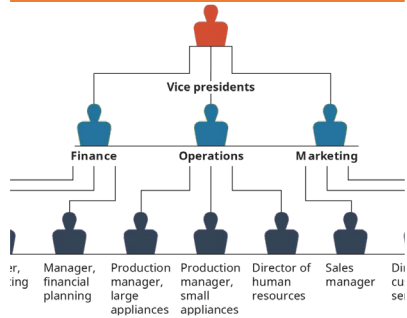
Bureau of Justice Statistics



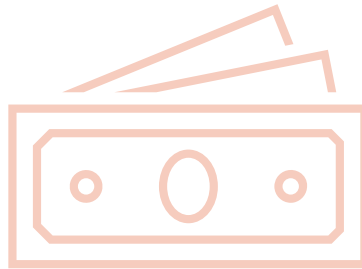


# Parameter 3: Activity Issues

## Decentralized Practices



## Illicit or Illegal Activities



## Unmeasured phenomenon



# Survey of Sexual Victimization (SSV)

- One of several surveys under Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003
- Survey of adult and juvenile facilities of varying types, including:
  - Federal and state prisons;
  - Privately operated federal and state prisons;
  - Public jails;
  - Privately operated jails;
  - Indian country jails; and
  - Other adult correctional facilities; and
  - Juvenile justice facilities
- More information on PREA collections:  
<https://bjs.ojp.gov/topics/corrections/prea>



Bureau of Justice Statistics

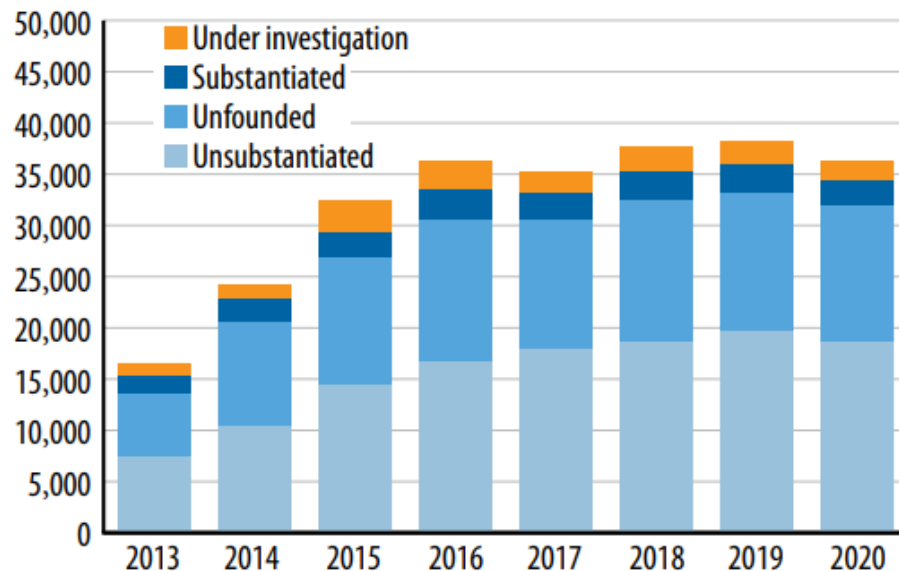
# 2020 SSV

- Correctional administrators reported 36,264 allegations of sexual victimization in 2020, a 5% decrease from 2019 (38,132)
- Of the 2,351 substantiated incidents of sexual victimization in 2020, a total of 1,724 were perpetrated by other inmates (73%) and 627 were perpetrated by staff (27%).
- Victims were provided counseling or mental health treatment in 52% of substantiated inmate-on-inmate sexual victimization incidents in prisons and 34% of those in jails

**FIGURE 2**

**Allegations of sexual victimization in adult correctional facilities, by outcome of investigation, 2013–2020**

Number of Allegations



Note: Data may have been revised from previously published statistics. See *Terms and definitions* for information on outcomes. See appendix table 4 for numbers and standard errors.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Survey of Sexual Victimization, 2013–2020.



Bureau of Justice Statistics

# Parameter 1: Coverage, Sampling, and Nonresponse

**APPENDIX TABLE 1**  
Summary of sampled facilities, by type and status, 2019 and 2020

Facility	2019				2020			
	Initial sample	Out of scope	Closed	Nonresponding	Initial sample	Out of scope	Closed	Nonresponding
<b>Private prisons</b>	155	1	7	14	155	3	13	7
<b>Certainty facilities</b>	75	0	4	0	72	2	7	0
Sampled facilities	80	1	3	14	83	1	6	7
<b>Public jails</b>	700	5	0	68	700	1	2	34
<b>Certainty facilities</b>	151	1	0	7	151	0	0	1
Largest in each state and District of Columbia	46	1	0	2	46	0	0	0
ADP of 1,000 or more	105	0	0	5	105	0	0	1
Sampled facilities	549	4	0	61	549	1	2	33
ADP of 0 to 91	209	1	0	28	209	0	2	8
ADP of 92 to 280	144	0	0	23	144	1	0	15
ADP of 281 to 999	196	3	0	10	196	0	0	10
<b>Privately operated jails</b>	15	1	1	1	15	1	0	0
<b>Certainty facilities</b>	4	0	0	0	4	0	0	0
Sampled facilities	11	1	1	1	11	1	0	0
<b>Tribal jails</b>	25	0	0	4	25	1	0	0
<b>Certainty facilities</b>	8	0	0	0	9	0	0	0
Sampled facilities	17	0	0	4	16	1	0	0

Note: ADP denotes average daily population.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Survey of Sexual Victimization, 2019 and 2020.



Bureau of Justice Statistics

# Parameter 2: Validity, Measurement, and Processing

- SSV Testing:
  - Early-stage scoping interviews
  - Moderated and unmoderated cognitive testing
- Key issues:
  - Mismatches in legal and operational definitions
  - Reporting records-based information by proxy
- Results available:  
[https://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAViewDocument?ref\\_nbr=202106-1121-003](https://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAViewDocument?ref_nbr=202106-1121-003)



Bureau of Justice Statistics

# Parameter 3: Activity Issues

- Acts as a count of reported incidences found in facilities' records
- Does not ask about:
  - Costs of sexual victimization
  - Impact of sexual victimization
  - Unreported incidences – though this is captured elsewhere



Bureau of Justice Statistics

# But what is a HUP (redux)?

*A HUP in an establishment survey are those units that:*

1. Are not included in our data (due to coverage, sampling, and nonresponse); *OR*
2. Represent institutions located within populations that are identified as HUPS demographically; *OR*
3. Are engaged in activities that we do not measure or that we inaccurately measure.



Bureau of Justice Statistics

# Next steps...

- Evaluation of frame coverage, sampling practices, and nonresponse bias
- Continued use of mixed methods investigations into specific cases of HUPs
- Exploration of community-based research methods for identification of HUPs



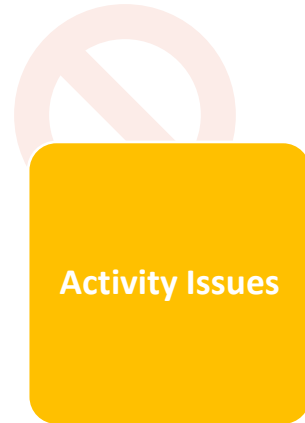
Bureau of Justice Statistics



# Thank you!

Melissa A. Cidade  
Chief Methodologist, BJS  
Melissa.Cidade@usdoj.gov

Hillary Steinberg  
Survey Statistician, ACSO  
hillary.steinberg@census.gov



Bureau of Justice Statistics