

# Chapter 1.

## Background and Methods

Few estimates are available to describe the prevalence of violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women and men. In addition, these estimates are often based on local rather than national samples (e.g., Yuan et al., 2006; Wood and Magen, 2009). The few available national estimates are often based on very small samples. These small samples do not always accurately represent the American Indian and Alaska Native population in the United States (Crossland et al., 2013).

This report examines the prevalence of violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women and men, using a nationally representative sample larger than those used previously. This sample includes 2,473 women and 1,505 men in the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) who identified themselves as American Indian or Alaska Native. More specifically, the purpose of this report is to describe the lifetime and annual prevalence of violence experienced by American Indian and Alaska Native women and men, including the prevalence of sexual violence, physical violence by intimate partners, stalking, and psychological aggression by intimate partners. These results show the number of American Indian and Alaska Native women and men who have experienced violence in their lifetime and in the past year.

Estimates of sexual violence are provided in chapter 2. Estimates of physical violence by intimate partners, stalking, and psychological aggression by intimate partners are provided in chapters 3, 4, and 5, respectively. A summary and brief overview of the impact of violence is then provided in the concluding chapter. Additional details on methods and analyses are available in a separate technical report (Rosay, 2015).

### National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey

The NISVS was launched in 2010 by the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) with the support of the National Institute of Justice and the Department of Defense. The goals of the NISVS were to collect detailed information about sexual violence, physical violence by an intimate partner, stalking, and psychological aggression by an intimate partner.

Data for the 2010 general population sample were collected through a random-digit-dialing survey of women and men in the United States. The survey used a dual-frame design that included both landline telephone numbers and cell phone numbers and was conducted in English and in Spanish. A second phase of data collection was used to reduce nonresponses. A total of 16,507 interviews were completed and 1,542 were partially completed. The overall weighted response rate was 25.8 percent.

In 2010, the NISVS was also administered to an oversample of respondents who identified themselves as American Indian or Alaska Native. Data for this oversample were collected through a random-digit-dialing survey of women and men in the United States who lived in private residences in telephone exchange areas where at least half of the residents identified themselves as American Indian or Alaska Native. The sample included the landline telephone numbers in these 234 geographical areas throughout the U.S. (within and outside Indian Country) that have a high density of American Indian and Alaska Native residents. Cell phone numbers were not

included in this sample. Respondents were then selected if they identified themselves as American Indian or Alaska Native. A second phase of data collection was used to reduce nonresponses. A total of 2,809 interviews were completed and 522 were partially completed. The overall weighted response rate was 27.9 percent. Additional details are available in Rosay's (2015) technical report (see chapter 4).

Comprehensive protocols were implemented to ensure the safety and confidentiality of the respondents. The NISVS was introduced as a survey on health and injuries and used a graduated informed consent process (see Sullivan and Cain, 2004). After ensuring that the respondents were safe, they were informed about the sensitive questions on victimizations. If they consented to participate, they were then asked detailed, behaviorally specific questions about their lifetime and past-year victimization experiences. These questions avoided legal terms (e.g., assault) and instead asked about the specific behaviors of the perpetrators (e.g., punched, kicked, and slapped). By asking about what the perpetrators did, these questions also avoided attributing blame to the respondents. Surveys were administered by RTI International, using interviewers who were specifically trained to ask sensitive questions and to address respondents' distress.

## American Indian and Alaska Native Sample

The analysis in this report is based on a combined sample that includes all respondents in the American Indian and Alaska Native oversample as well as the respondents in the general population sample who identified themselves as American Indian or Alaska Native. By combining these two samples, we increased the sample size and diversity. The combined sample includes American Indians and Alaska Natives who only have cell phones and includes American Indians and Alaska Natives who live in geographical areas with low densities of American Indians and Alaska Natives. Some of these areas (e.g., Oklahoma, Texas, New York, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, and Michigan) have low densities but large numbers of American Indians and Alaska Natives. The combined sample is larger and more representative of the American Indian and Alaska

Native population than the original American Indian and Alaska Native oversample.

Although respondents in the combined American Indian and Alaska Native sample were not limited to American Indian and Alaska Native people who were enrolled in federally recognized tribes or living in tribal communities, most women (83 percent) and most men (79 percent) were affiliated or enrolled with a tribe or village. More than half of the women and more than half of the men (60 percent for both) had lived within reservation boundaries or in an Alaska Native village, and more than half of the women and more than half of the men (54 percent for both) had done so in the past year.

On average, both female and male respondents in the combined American Indian and Alaska Native sample were 46 years old (*SDs* = 16.4 and 16.0, respectively; age range = 18 to 92 years for both female and male respondents). Half of the women (50 percent) and almost half of the men (43 percent) reported having more than a high school degree. Almost 3 in 4 of the women (74 percent) and men (69 percent) reported a total annual household income below \$35,000 before taxes.

## Analysis

All estimates presented in this report are weighted estimates. Weights were used to control for selection and nonresponses and were then post-stratified to population totals for the American Indian and Alaska Native population, alone or in combination (U.S. Census, 2010). Estimates include the percentages and numbers of women and men who have experienced violence. The estimated numbers of victims are based on the total population of women and men in the 2010 U.S. Census who identified themselves as American Indian or Alaska Native, alone or in combination with another race (*Ns* = 1,837,171 women and 1,732,184 men).

The estimates for American Indian and Alaska Native women and men were compared with estimates for women and men in the general population sample who identified themselves as non-Hispanic White only (*Ns* = 7,646 women and 6,050 men). The non-Hispanic

White-only group was selected to be consistent with the CDC analyses by Black et al. (2011) and Breiding et al. (2014). When differences across racial and ethnic groups were statistically significant at a probability level of .05 or less, a relative risk statistic was computed. In this case, the relative risk statistic is simply the American Indian and Alaska Native percentage divided by the non-Hispanic White-only percentage. It examines the difference in the risk or probability of being a victim — between people identifying themselves as American Indian or Alaska Native and those identifying themselves as non-Hispanic White only. When the relative risk is greater than 1.0, people identifying themselves as American Indian or Alaska Native are *more likely* to be victimized than those identifying as non-Hispanic White only. Conversely, when the relative risk is less than 1.0, people identifying themselves as American Indian or Alaska Native are *less likely* to be victimized than those identifying themselves as non-Hispanic White only. All estimates were computed

with SAS software, using procedures for the analysis of complex sample survey data. Confidence intervals for all estimates are available in the appendix. Additional details, including all syntax files, are available in Rosay's (2015) technical report (chapter 26).

In addition to providing lifetime and past-year victimization estimates, this report also provides estimates of interracial and intraracial victimizations. To minimize the amount of missing data, the analysis examines whether any of a respondent's victimizations were committed by an interracial perpetrator and whether any were committed by an intraracial perpetrator. It does not examine the number of victimizations committed by interracial and intraracial perpetrators. While there are often too many missing data to examine the precise number of interracial and intraracial victimizations, there are enough data to examine whether any of the victimizations were interracial and intraracial. Information

### Differences Between CDC and NIJ Samples and Analyses

The NIJ sample of American Indians and Alaska Natives included respondents in the general population sample and in the American Indian and Alaska Native oversample. They were selected if they identified themselves as American Indian or Alaska Native, alone or in combination with another race, regardless of ethnicity. The NIJ analysis were based on NISVS data that were extensively cleaned. All of NIJ's data cleaning is thoroughly documented in Rosay's (2015) technical report. The composites created by NIJ were different from those created by CDC.

The NIJ analysis included partially completed interviews. It was important to include partially completed interviews because unweighted completion rates were lower in the American Indian and Alaska Native oversample (84.3 percent) than in the general population sample (91.5 percent). In addition, completion may have been nonrandom. The NIJ analysis assumed that nonrespondents were victimized at the same (weighted) rate as the respondents.

Because of the differences between the CDC and NIJ samples and analyses, it is difficult to compare the estimates in this report with the estimates in CDC's summary reports (Black et al., 2011; Breiding et al., 2014).

about the race of the perpetrator is particularly important for American Indian and Alaska Native victims because it impacts the criminal jurisdiction. Until recently, Indian tribes had no authority to criminally prosecute non-Indian offenders, even for crimes committed in Indian Country.

In each section, the new weighted estimates are compared to previous estimates from the National Crime Victimization Survey and the National Violence Against Women Survey. They are also compared to the previous CDC estimates from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (Black et al., 2011; Breiding et al., 2014). It is important to emphasize that it is difficult to compare estimates across these different surveys. In particular, some estimates provide information about prevalence (the number of victims), whereas others provide information about incidence (the number of incidents/victimizations). Comparisons are included only to provide some context for the new estimates.

### Strengths and Limitations

This report provides what are currently the most detailed estimates of violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women and men. The NISVS uses detailed, behaviorally specific questions to provide a comprehensive assessment of sexual violence, physical

violence by intimate partners, stalking, and psychological aggression by intimate partners. It also provides important information about interracial and intraracial victimizations. The estimates in this report are derived from a nationally representative sample that includes a large number of people who identified themselves as American Indian or Alaska Native (2,473 women and 1,505 men). The results in this report provide a voice to millions of American Indian and Alaska Native women and men who have experienced violence in their relationships, in their homes, and in their communities. Their voices will hopefully renew our commitment to end violence against all women and men.

Despite these strengths, the survey has important limitations. Not all forms of violence were included in the survey. It is not possible for a survey to measure all of the possible things that perpetrators do to victims. For example, there are no questions about online enticement. In addition, there is no information about human trafficking (see Farley et al., 2011).

There are also limitations to the survey methods. The survey was conducted only by phone, in English or Spanish, and was not available in indigenous languages. To be eligible to participate, women and men had to own a phone. This excluded women and men without phones

### National Crime Victimization Survey

The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) is a nationally representative survey conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Participants included almost 160,000 individuals age 12 or older in more than 90,000 households in 2014 (Truman and Langton, 2015). The survey measures the frequency of rape and other sexual assault, robbery, aggravated and simple assault, personal larceny, household burglary, motor vehicle theft, and other theft (Barnett-Ryan, Langton, and Planty, 2014). In 2006, a Supplemental Victimization Survey (SVS) was added to provide estimates of stalking. Given the small number of American Indians and Alaska Natives included in the NCVS sample, most researchers have pooled multiple years of data to create reliable victimization estimates (Greenfeld and Smith, 1999; Rennison, 2001; Perry, 2004; Bachman et al., 2008). These estimates show the average annual number of victimizations (or the average annual rate of victimizations). This is a measure of incidence (the total number of incidents/victimizations experienced by American Indian and Alaska Native people), not a measure of prevalence (the total number of American Indian and Alaska Native victims; see Lauritsen and Rezey, 2013).

(and women and men who were forbidden by perpetrators to answer the phone). The landline telephone samples excluded women and men who were not living in private residences, such as those who were homeless or living in shelters at the time of the survey.

All victimization estimates may be impacted by recall errors and by the continuing stigma associated with disclosing victimizations. The estimates derived from the NISVS data are no different. Some of these estimates have large margins of error (up to 18 percentage points). Confidence intervals for all estimates are provided in the appendix. Readers are encouraged to examine these confidence intervals to determine the precision of each estimate. Because margins of error are often large, differences across racial and ethnic groups often fail to reach statistical significance. In addition, comparisons should be interpreted cautiously because they assume that the quality of the victimization measures is equivalent across racial and ethnic groups (that is, the survey questions work equally well across racial and ethnic groups). These comparisons also assume that the survey's limitations are equivalent across racial and ethnic groups.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that the estimates in this report show the prevalence (not the incidence) of violence. In other words, the results show the number of American Indian and Alaska Native women and men who have experienced violence. They do not show how often or

### National Violence Against Women Survey

The National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS) was conducted in 1995 and 1996 to measure the prevalence of violence against women and men. This survey provides estimates on the incidence *and* prevalence of rape, physical assault, and stalking. It used behaviorally specific questions to measure victimization incidents. However, few American Indians and Alaska Natives were included in the sample (88 women and 105 men). Nonetheless, estimates for lifetime prevalence are generally available. These estimates show the total number of victims (not victimizations) in the American Indian and Alaska Native population. Whereas the NCVS provides past-year estimates for the American Indian and Alaska Native population, the NVAWS provides lifetime estimates.

how many times they have experienced violence. Because some people are victimized more than once, the incidence of violence (the number of incidents/victimizations) is greater than the prevalence of violence (the number of victims; see Lauritsen et al., 2012). This report focuses on the prevalence of violence, i.e., the number of victims.