

Department of Defense

Report on Child Abuse and Neglect and Domestic Abuse in the Military for Fiscal Year 2021



September 2022

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List of Acronyms & Abbreviations

CCR – Coordinated Community Response
CI – Confidence Interval
DAF – Department of the Air Force
DAVA – Domestic Abuse Victim Advocate
DMDC – Defense Manpower Data Center
DoD – Department of Defense
DoDEA – Department of Defense Education Activity
DoDI – Department of Defense Instruction
DoDM – Department of Defense Manual
FAIS – Family Advocacy Intervention Specialist
FAP – Family Advocacy Program
FY – Fiscal Year
GAO – Government Accountability Office
IDC – Incident Determination Committee
ISD – Incident Status Determination
KSU – Kansas State University
NDAA – National Defense Authorization Act
NPSP – New Parent Support Program
NYU – New York University
OSD – Office of the Secretary of Defense
Q – Quarter
QA – Quality Assurance
VA – Veterans Affairs

Executive Summary

For more than 40 years, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) Family Advocacy Program (FAP) has worked to prevent and respond to child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse in military families. This report provides the child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse incident data from the FAP Central Registry for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021, as required by Section 574 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 2017 (Public Law 114-328), as amended by Section 549 of the NDAA for FY 2022 (Public Law 117-81). In addition to meeting the Congressional requirement, this report provides critical information to inform ongoing prevention and response efforts. Using aggregated FAP Central Registry data submitted from each Military Service (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force)¹, this report offers a Department of Defense (DoD)-wide description of the child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse incidents reported to FAP that either met or did not meet criteria for the DoD definition of abuse in FY 2021.

Background & Methods

The FAP Central Registry is designed to capture reliable and consistent information on child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse incidents reported to FAP from each of the Military Services. Each Military Service maintains comprehensive clinical case management systems, which include required data elements extracted and submitted quarterly to the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC). Per DoD policy, DMDC operates the DoD FAP Central Registry and provides the OSD FAP with aggregated data on which this report is based.²

Data contained in this report reflect child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse incidents reported to FAP that either met criteria or did not meet criteria in FY 2021. The data do not represent estimates of all child abuse and neglect or domestic abuse that occurred in military families in the past fiscal year.

FY 2021 in Context of a Persisting Global Pandemic

The end of FY 2021 marked 18 months since the emergence of a global pandemic that impacted all aspects of human life. At the time of publication, there have been more than 6 million known COVID-19 deaths globally, including more than 1 million deaths in the United States. Stay-at-home orders and the initial closure of schools, followed by a shift to virtual instruction, heightened vulnerability for those already living in volatile or unstable circumstances. U.S. civilian data and research highlight impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse reports, as well as the severity of such reports.³ Despite these

¹ U.S. Space Force, the newest branch of the Armed Forces, was established December 20, 2019. As a newly established military Service in FY 2020, Space Force data are not available for FY 2021.

² The implementing policy issuance for this registry is Department of Defense Manual (DoDM) 6400.01, Volume 2, “Family Advocacy Program (FAP): Child Abuse and Domestic Abuse Incident Reporting System,” August 11, 2016.

³ Baron, E. J., Goldstein, E. G., & Wallace, C. T. (2020). Suffering in silence: How COVID-19 school closures inhibit the reporting of child maltreatment. *Journal of Public Economics*, 190, 1-23. National Domestic Violence Hotline. (2020). *COVID-19 Special Report*. Available from: <https://www.thehotline.org/wp-content/uploads/media/2020/09/The-Hotline-COVID-19-60-Day-Report.pdf>

challenges, FAP maintained continuity of all services in response to reports of child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse by adapting service delivery, community outreach, and the way in which the Incident Determination Committee (IDC) convenes, during the early stages of the pandemic. FAP continues to monitor impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on FAP data.

Key Findings

Overall

- Following a downward trend over the past several years, there was an uptick in the rates of child abuse and neglect reports, met criteria incidents, and unique victims per 1,000 military children in FY 2021. Despite this uptick, rates of child abuse and neglect reports and unique victims per 1,000 military children experienced statistically significant decreases when compared to their respective 10-year averages.⁴ The met criteria rate for child abuse and neglect did not vary significantly when compared to the 10-year average.
- For child sexual abuse incidents, despite a notable increase in FY 2021, the number of met criteria incidents and the rate of met criteria incidents per 1,000 military children did not vary significantly when compared to their respective 10-year averages. Child sexual abuse has been decreasing in DoD and civilian data steadily over the past decade.⁵
- In FY 2021, there was a statistically significant decrease in the number of reports and the number of met criteria incidents of domestic abuse when compared to their respective 10-year averages.
- In FY 2021, the rates of spouse abuse reports, met criteria incidents, and victims per 1,000 military married couples all experienced statistically significant decreases when compared to their respective 10-year averages.
- There was a statistically significant increase in the number of reports, number of met criteria incidents, and number of unique victims of intimate partner abuse in FY 2021 when compared to their respective 10-year averages.
- The proportion of adult sexual abuse incidents as a subset of domestic abuse (5.14 percent) increased in FY 2021 when compared to the 10-year average.

Child Abuse & Neglect

- In FY 2021, there were 11,737 reports of suspected child abuse and neglect to FAP. The FY 2021 rate of reported child abuse and neglect per 1,000 children was 13.2, which is a 10.0 percent increase when compared to the FY 2020 report rate (12.0). Despite the increase, the rate of reported incidents experienced a statistically significant decrease when compared to the 10-year average.
- There were 5,732 incidents of child abuse and neglect that met criteria in FY 2021. The FY 2021 rate of incidents that met criteria per 1,000 children was 6.4, which is an 8.5 percent increase when compared to the FY 2020 rate (5.9). Despite this increase, the rate did not vary significantly when compared to the 10-year average.

⁴ All analyses in this report tested for significance at the $p < .05$ level, resulting in a Confidence Interval (CI) of 95 percent. Any value outside of this CI is indicative of a statistically significant increase or decrease not likely to have occurred by chance.

⁵ Military REACH Research and Outreach (2019). *Trends in the Rates of Child Sexual Abuse over the Past Twenty Years in the United States*.

- The FY 2021 unique child victim rate per 1,000 military children was 4.5, which is a 4.7 percent increase when compared to the FY 2020 rate (4.3). Despite this increase, the unique child victim rate experienced a statistically significant decrease when compared to the 10-year average.
- Neglect accounted for the largest proportion of child abuse and neglect met criteria incidents in FY 2021 (56.12 percent), physical abuse (25.33 percent) accounted for the next largest proportion, followed by emotional abuse (14.01 percent) and sexual abuse (4.54 percent).
- Civilian data compiled by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services indicate that the U.S. civilian substantiation (met criteria) rate for reported cases of child abuse and neglect was 17.6 percent in FY 2020.⁶ The military met criteria rate for reported incidents was 48.8 percent in FY 2021. Although both of these rates have fluctuated individually, the military met criteria rate has been well above the civilian substantiation rate consistently over the past decade.⁷
- The DoD unique child victim rate for FY 2021 was 4.5 victims per 1,000 military children (a 4.7 percent increase from the FY 2020 rate of 4.3), and the civilian child victim rate for FY 2020 was 8.4 per 1,000 children.⁸ Considering that the military confirms child maltreatment at a higher rate than the civilian sector, yet the military child victimization is substantially lower than civilian rate, the overall rate of child maltreatment in the military is lower than in the civilian sector.
- In FY 2021, 48 percent of victims in met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents were female and 52 percent were male; however, the sex of victims varied by maltreatment type. More than one-half (58.8 percent) of victims in met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents were age 5 or younger.
- In reports that met the DoD criteria for abuse, the abuser may have been a Service member,⁹ a civilian family member, or (in child abuse or neglect incidents) a caregiver outside the family. In more than 86 percent of the met criteria child abuse or neglect incidents, the abuser was a Service member parent or civilian parent.
- There was a statistically significant difference in the distribution of caregiver statuses in met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents in FY 2021 when compared to the distribution in FY 2020. The most notable difference was the increase in the proportion of extra-familial caregivers involved in child abuse and neglect incidents (10.2 percent in FY 2021 vs. 3.9 percent in FY 2020).
- Pay grades E4-E6 had the highest percentage of active duty¹⁰ parent abusers in met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents (66 percent); however, these pay grades had the second highest rate of active duty parent abusers at 4.8 per 1,000 active duty parents when compared to the military population. Pay grades E1-E3 had the highest rate at 13.7 per 1,000 active duty parents in the military population.

⁶ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (2022). Child Maltreatment 2020. Available from: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research/child-maltreatment>

⁷ *Child Maltreatment 2003 through 2020* reports, inclusive.

⁸ *Child Maltreatment 2020*.

⁹ Service members include active duty members as well as Reserve and National Guard members who are in an active status.

¹⁰ For the purposes of this report, active duty refers to Regular Component members, exclusively.

- In FY 2021, 53 percent of the met criteria child abuse and neglect abusers were male, and 47 percent were female. There is tremendous variation in the sex of abusers by maltreatment type. However, the overall ratio of male to female met criteria abusers has been relatively consistent since FY 2005.
- The majority of abusers in met criteria incidents of child abuse and neglect in FY 2021 were age 34 or younger, with 46.3 percent of abusers ages 25-34 and 25.2 percent of abusers ages 18-24.
- There were eight child abuse-related fatalities, involving nine abusers, presented to the Incident Determination Committee (IDC) and entered into the Central Registry in FY 2021. Overall, child fatality victims were young in age, with 75.0 percent of victims under age 5 and 50.0 percent of victims 1-year-old or younger. Among the abusers in these child fatality incidents, six were male and three were female. Five met criteria abusers were Service members and four were civilians.

Child Sexual Abuse

- For the fourth time in this annual report series, FAP examined child sexual abuse as a subset of child abuse. These incidents are also reported in an appendix to the *FY 2021 Department of Defense (DoD) Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military*. In FY 2021, there were 247 unique victims of child sexual abuse. These victims experienced a total of 260 met criteria incidents of child sexual abuse, indicating that one or more victims experienced more than one incident of sexual abuse.
- Child sexual abuse incidents accounted for 4.54 percent of all met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents. The rate of child sexual abuse incidents per 1,000 military children (0.291) slightly increased from FY 2020 to FY 2021; however, the rate did not vary significantly when compared to the 10-year average.
- In FY 2021, 89.1 percent of victims in met criteria child sexual abuse incidents were female, and 10.9 percent of victims were male. Nearly two-thirds (62.3 percent) of victims were ages 11-17.

Domestic Abuse

- In FY 2021, there were 14,299 reports of domestic abuse, of which 7,957 incidents met criteria. Those met criteria domestic abuse incidents involved 6,306 unique victims. The number of reports and the number of met criteria incidents represent statistically significant decreases when compared to their respective 10-year averages.
- In FY 2021, physical abuse accounted for 71.35 percent of domestic abuse met criteria incidents, emotional abuse accounted for a little less than one quarter (23.46 percent), and fewer incidents involved sexual abuse (5.14 percent), and neglect (0.05 percent).
- In 69 percent of met criteria domestic abuse incidents the victim was female and the abuser was male. In 27 percent of incidents, the victim was male and the abuser was female. Three percent of incidents involved a female victim and abuser, and one percent of incidents involved a male victim and abuser.

- When examining unique victims by sex, 69 percent were female and 31 percent were male. When examining unique victims by military status, 53 percent were Service members and 47 percent were civilians. The majority of domestic abuse victims were age 34 or younger (84 percent).

Spouse Abuse

- The spouse abuse data in this report represent only those incidents involving individuals married at the time of abuse. Either the victim or the abuser must have been a Service member.
- In FY 2021, there were 12,104 reports of spouse abuse to FAP. The FY 2021 rate of spouse abuse reports per 1,000 married military couples was 19.5, a 4.4 percent decrease when compared to the FY 2020 report rate (20.4). This decrease was statistically significant when compared to the 10-year average.
- There were 6,629 incidents of spouse abuse that met criteria in FY 2021. The FY 2021 rate of met criteria spouse abuse incidents per 1,000 military couples was 10.7, which is a 0.5 percent increase when compared to the FY 2020 rate (10.6). Despite this slight uptick, the FY 2021 rate represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the 10-year average.
- The FY 2021 spouse abuse victim rate per 1,000 military couples was 8.5, which is a 1.2 percent decrease when compared to the FY 2020 rate (8.6). This decrease was statistically significant when compared to the 10-year average.
- In FY 2021, 51 percent of victims in met criteria spouse abuse incidents were Service members and 49 percent were civilian spouses. Seventy percent of victims in met criteria spouse abuse incidents were female, and 30 percent of victims were male.
- In FY 2021, 61 percent of all abusers in met criteria spouse abuse incidents were Service members, and 68 percent were male.
- Pay grades E4-E6 had the highest percentage of active duty abusers in met criteria incidents (64 percent); however, these pay grades had the second highest spouse abuse rate per 1,000 married active duty members at 6.4. Pay grades E1-E3 had the highest rate per 1,000 married active duty members at 14.7.
- Five spouse abuse fatalities were presented to the IDC and entered into the Central Registry in FY 2021.

Intimate Partner Abuse

- In FY 2006, an additional category, “intimate partner” was added to capture incidents involving: 1) a former spouse; 2) a person with whom the victim shares a child in common; or 3) a current or former intimate partner with whom the victim shares or has shared a common domicile.¹¹ In such cases, the victim or the abuser may have been a Service member or a civilian.

¹¹ The intimate partner definition cited was in place during FY 2021, the period covered by this report. A more expansive definition now appears in DoDI 6400.06, “DoD Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Abuse Involving DoD Military and Certain Affiliated Personnel,” December 15, 2021, as amended.

- In FY 2021, there were 2,195 reports of intimate partner abuse, of which 1,328 incidents met criteria.¹² The met criteria incidents involved 1,048 unique victims. There were statistically significant increases in the number of reports of intimate partner abuse, the number of met criteria intimate partner abuse incidents, and the number of unique victims of intimate partner abuse, when compared to their respective 10-year averages. A rate per 1,000 of intimate partner abuse incidents and/or victims cannot be established, as data on unmarried individuals involved in intimate partner relationships as defined by the DoD are not available.
- There were no intimate partner abuse fatalities presented to the IDC in FY 2021.

Adult Sexual Abuse

- In FY 2021, there were 390 unique victims of adult sexual abuse, including both spouses and unmarried intimate partners. These incidents are also reported in the *FY 2021 DoD Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military* and are referred to as Domestic Abuse-Related Sexual Assault. In the domestic violence field, sexual abuse remains contextually distinct from sexual assault, as it occurs within a marriage or intimate partner relationship typically as part of a larger pattern of behavior resulting in emotional or psychological abuse, economic control, and/or interference with personal liberty.
- In FY 2021, there were a total of 409 met criteria incidents of adult sexual abuse, indicating that one or more victims experienced more than one incident of sexual abuse. The number of adult sexual abuse incidents in FY 2021 represents a statistically significant increase when compared to the 10-year average.
- Adult sexual abuse incidents accounted for 5.14 percent of all met criteria domestic abuse incidents. The proportion of adult sexual abuse incidents as a subset of domestic abuse represents a statistically significant increase when compared to the 10-year average.
- In FY 2021, 95.9 percent of unique victims in met criteria sexual abuse incidents were female and 4.1 percent were male. Among these unique victims, 57.7 percent were family members, 33.3 percent were Service members, and the remaining 9.0 percent were non-beneficiaries, DoD civilians, contractors, or retired Service members.
- Examining the intersection of sex and status of unique victims of adult sexual abuse, 57.2 percent of victims were female family members and 29.7 percent were female Service members.

DoD & Military Service Program Initiatives

OSD FAP has several efforts underway to enhance the capability of Military Service-level and installation FAPs to execute prevention activities, develop policies, and sustain programs for both child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse. In FY 2021, OSD FAP finalized a critical policy update that expands the definition of intimate partner to include those in dating relationships,¹³ which brings it into alignment with the civilian domestic violence field. The

¹² In FY 2006, an additional category, “intimate partner” was added to capture incidents involving: 1) a former spouse; 2) a person with whom the victim shares a child in common; or 3) a current or former intimate partner with whom the victim shares or has shared a common domicile. In such cases, the victim or the abuser may have been a Service member or a civilian.

¹³ DoDI 6400.06, “DoD Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Abuse Involving DoD Military and Certain Affiliated Personnel,” December 15, 2021, as amended.

same policy update helps maximize victim care and support from agencies who compromise the Coordinated Community Response (CCR) and promotes victim choice in where to receive services.

In an effort to fulfill a legislative requirement,¹⁴ DoD contracted with RAND National Defense Research Institute to research the risk of domestic abuse at different points of the military career life-cycle; best practices for reaching those at highest risk for domestic abuse; strategies to prevent domestic abuse by training and educating the breadth of the CCR; the military justice system response; and the impacts of domestic abuse on military housing, children's education, and the physical and mental health of military members and families. Phase 1 data collection for this multi-phase project is complete, and the final report is in-progress. In addition to these DoD initiatives, the Military Services are engaged in a variety of efforts to enhance and measure the effectiveness of FAP.

Program & Policy Implications

DoD is committed to keeping families safe and healthy, and is taking every measure to prevent child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse in our military communities. One incident of child abuse or neglect, or domestic abuse is too many, and programs like FAP implement evidence-based prevention and treatment programs with the goal of ensuring the safety and well-being of all Service members and military families.

Despite upticks in the rates of reported child abuse and neglect, met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents, and unique victims per 1,000 military children in FY 2021, the rates either decreased or did not vary significantly when compared to their respective 10-year averages. Following a three-year decline in the rate of child sexual abuse per 1,000 military children, this rate increased in FY 2021 for the second consecutive year; however, that increase was not statistically significant.

¹⁴ Section 549C of the FY 2021 NDAA (Public Law 116-283).

For the third consecutive year, findings for domestic abuse are mixed. Continuing the downward trend over the last decade, the number of domestic abuse reports and the number of met criteria domestic abuse incidents decreased in FY 2021. That decline was driven by decreases in spouse abuse. The rates for spouse abuse reports, met criteria incidents, and unique victims per 1,000 married military couples decreased while the number of reports, number of met criteria incidents, and number of unique victims of intimate partner abuse increased. The proportion of met criteria adult sexual abuse incidents increased in FY 2021, for the third consecutive year, representative of an overall trend noted over the past decade.

The Department remains committed to continual monitoring and assessment of changes in incident numbers and rates, where available, to inform current and future policy and program efforts. The Department continues to address the results of its analyses through deliberate action and implementation of evidence-informed programs and prevention strategies, as well as additional research efforts.

1. INTRODUCTION

For more than 40 years, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) Family Advocacy Program (FAP) has worked to prevent and respond to child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse in military families. Family maltreatment is incompatible with military values and ultimately impacts mission readiness. The Department is dedicated to addressing family violence to ensure the health and safety of military families.

This report provides the FY 2021 child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse incident data from the DoD FAP Central Registry, as required by Section 574 of the NDAA for FY 2017 (Public Law 114-328), as amended by Section 549 of the NDAA for FY 2022 (Public Law 117-81). In addition to meeting the congressional requirement, this report also provides critical aggregate information on the demographics of these incidents to further inform ongoing prevention and intervention efforts. Using aggregated FAP Central Registry data submitted from the Military Services (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force)¹⁵, this report offers a DoD-wide picture of the child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse incidents for which a determination was made to FAP in FY 2021 (October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021).

Subsequent report sections include a brief description of FAP, congressional reporting requirements for child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse incidents, and a review of the findings from an analysis of the FY 2021 FAP Central Registry data. The report concludes with an analysis of the effectiveness of FAP, as well as an overview of potential implications for current and future policy and program initiatives. Note that the use of the word “significant” throughout this report is not a reference or comment on the level of importance, but rather analytical and statistical thresholds.

2. BACKGROUND

FAP is a congressionally mandated DoD program designed to be the policy proponent for a key element of the DoD’s Coordinated Community Response (CCR) for preventing and responding to reports of child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse in military families. The Military Service FAPs, at every military installation where families are located, work closely with the other entities within the CCR,¹⁶ as well as with civilian social services agencies and civilian law enforcement, to provide comprehensive prevention and response to family maltreatment.

The FAP mission is to provide comprehensive prevention, advocacy, early identification, treatment of abusers, voluntary treatment for domestic abuse victims, and intensive home visitation for expecting and new parents. To execute this mission, the DoD funds more than 2,000 positions to deliver FAP services, include credentialed/licensed clinical providers, Domestic Abuse Victim Advocates (DAVAs), New Parent Support Home Visitors, and prevention staff. FAP staff are mandated reporters to state child welfare service agencies for all allegations of child abuse and neglect, and they are considered “covered professionals” under 34

¹⁵ U.S. Space Force, the newest branch of the Armed Forces, was established December 20, 2019. As a newly established military Service in FY 2020, Space Force data are not available for FY 2021.

¹⁶ The CCR is comprised of FAP, law enforcement, legal, military criminal investigative organizations, chaplains, command, child and youth programs, Department of Defense Education Activity schools, and medical.

U.S.C. § 20341. DoD policy¹⁷ also requires the Military Service FAPs to report incidents of child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse to OSD through the DoD FAP Central Registry.

Once a report of child abuse and neglect or domestic abuse is received by FAP, it is taken to the Incident Determination Committee (IDC) to determine whether the incident meets criteria for abuse, as defined by the DoD.¹⁸ The IDC uses a standardized research-based decision tree algorithm to determine which reports for suspected child abuse and neglect or domestic abuse meet the DoD definitions of abuse, thereby requiring entry into the Military Service FAP central registry of child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse incidents. The IDC is comprised of the deputy to the installation or garrison commander who serves as the chair, the senior enlisted noncommissioned officer advisor to the chair, a representative from the Service member's chain of command, a representative from the Staff Judge Advocate's office, a representative from military law enforcement, and the FAP manager or FAP supervisor of clinical services. In accordance with Section 549B of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry NDAA for FY 2021 (Public Law 116-283), voting membership of the IDC has been expanded to include medical personnel. Additional members, as appropriate, may participate and vote in accordance with policy. A case is presented to the IDC, followed by the members voting to determine whether the incident meets the criteria for an act or failure to act, and a resulting impact.¹⁹ The IDC is not a disciplinary proceeding in accordance with the Uniform Code of Military Justice; it is a process to determine whether an incident meets the threshold for more rigorous treatment, intervention, support, safety planning, and victim protection. In this report, data on incidents of child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse that met criteria are referred to as "met criteria incidents."

The DoD review of child abuse and domestic abuse-related fatalities is required by policy,²⁰ directing the Secretaries of the Military Departments to conduct a multidisciplinary, impartial review of each fatality known or suspected to have resulted from child or domestic abuse. Each Military Department has its own team and conducts its own internal review annually. In order to avoid interference with ongoing investigations and prosecutions, fatalities are reviewed by the Military Departments retrospectively, generally 2 years after their occurrence or in the first year that the disposition becomes closed. This delay ensures that the review can consider all available information. OSD FAP convenes an annual Fatality Review Summit to discuss the findings of the reviews held in the previous year at the Military Department level; essentially, the DoD Fatality Review Summit examines deaths 3 years after the occurrence. The purpose of the DoD Fatality Review Summit is to conduct deliberative examinations of any interventions provided to the deceased or their family, to formulate lessons learned from agency or system failures, to identify trends and patterns to assist in prevention efforts across the Department, and to develop policy for earlier and more effective intervention.

¹⁷ DoDM 6400.01, Volume 2, "Family Advocacy Program (FAP): Child Abuse and Domestic Abuse Incident Reporting System," August 11, 2016.

¹⁸ DoDM 6400.01, Volume 3, "Family Advocacy Program (FAP): Clinical Case Staff Meeting (CCSM) and Incident Determination Committee (IDC)," August 11, 2016, as amended.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ DoDI 6400.06, "Domestic Abuse Involving DoD Military and Certain Affiliated Personnel," August 21, 2007, as amended, was in place during the period covered by this report. Subsequently, this policy was reissued as DoDI 6400.06, "DoD Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Abuse Involving DoD Military and Certain Affiliated Personnel," December 15, 2021.

Central Registry

The FAP Central Registry is designed to capture reliable and consistent information on child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse incidents reported to FAP from each of the Military Services. Supporting policy is contained in DoDM 6400.01, Volume 2, “Family Advocacy Program: Child Abuse and Neglect and Domestic Abuse Incident Reporting System,” which directs Military Service FAPs to track incidents of child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse that meet criteria for abuse. Each Military Service maintains a comprehensive clinical case management system, which includes the required data elements extracted and submitted quarterly to DMDC. Per DoD policy, DMDC operates the DoD FAP Central Registry and provides OSD FAP with aggregate data, which are the basis of this report.²¹

The DoD FAP Central Registry contains information on: (1) reports of abuse that did not meet criteria for child abuse and neglect or domestic abuse, in which identifiable individual information is not tracked; and (2) information on reports of abuse that meet objective, standardized criteria and are linked to identifiable Service members, their family members, and the abuser. Specifically, the Military Services are required to submit information on 46 data elements on met criteria incidents, delineated in DoD Policy, which include:

- Sponsor Service, location, relevant dates, and case status;
- Demographic data on the military sponsor, victim, and abuser(s) including name, social security number, branch of Service, military status, sex, age, and relationship indicators;
- Type of abuse or maltreatment, level of severity, and, if applicable, resulting fatalities.

The DoD FAP Central Registry **does not** include measures of accountability (command action), law enforcement data, or legal disposition. These processes are completely distinct from FAP intervention and services pursuant to multiple DoD policies separating functions across components. The Central Registry also **does not** include allegations of domestic abuse that were made via restricted report. Restricted reports do not move forward to the IDC. Instead, reports are handled on a case-by-case basis to provide risk and safety planning to the victim without the independent assessment of the decision tree algorithm, which determines whether an allegation meets DoD criteria for abuse or neglect.

Data from the DoD Central Registry are broadly used to assist in overall management of the OSD FAP to inform prevention and intervention initiatives and to determine budget and program funding. The Central Registry also supports the identification of research needs, preparation of reports to Congress, response to public or other governmental inquiries, and formulation of ad hoc reports relating to the volume and nature of family violence cases handled by the Military Services through outreach, prevention, and intervention efforts. DoD and Military Service FAP Central Registry data are used to conduct background checks on individuals seeking employment in DoD-sanctioned child and youth serving organizations that involve contact with minor children, in accordance with DoD policy.²²

²¹ DoDM 6400.01, Volume 2, August 11, 2016.

²² DoDI 1402.05, “Background Checks on Individuals in DoD Child Care Services Programs,” September 11, 2015, as amended.

Methods of Data Collection & Analysis

As noted, this report relies on Central Registry data extracted by each Military Service and submitted to DMDC for FY 2021 (October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021). DMDC performs initial quality assurance checks, aggregates these data, and provides OSD FAP with information on the incidence of child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse across the DoD.

DMDC has collected these aggregate FY FAP data for the last 22 years; however, the timeframe of data submission and analysis was adjusted substantially in 2017 to coordinate with the release of the *FY 2021 Department of Defense (DoD) Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military*. The Military Services submitted FY 2021 data by December 20, 2021, for inclusion in this report. All statistical analyses included in this report were performed after these data underwent a series of rigorous quality control checks to ensure uniformity and validity of aggregate data.

Previous fiscal year data on both child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse contained met criteria incidents that included multiple types of maltreatment in one entry (e.g., physical, sexual, emotional, neglect). Beginning in FY 2015, the process was standardized for each met criteria incident to represent only one type of maltreatment. Thus, more than one incident may be submitted to the Central Registry involving an individual victim. This treatment of incident data provides a more comprehensive picture of abuse incidents experienced by military families and aligns with the approach used by the Department of Health and Human Services for reporting civilian data in their annual report on child maltreatment.²³

Incidents of domestic abuse are reported both in the aggregate, and separately as spouse abuse and intimate partner abuse (see definitions in Section 4). Calculated rates of intimate partner abuse across the military are not reportable, as data to establish a denominator (number of Service members in an intimate partner relationship as defined by the DoD) are unavailable. Any notable increases or upward movement in key rates and findings command the attention of OSD FAP to ensure perceived increases in family violence are analyzed for significance and potential causes. This approach ensures that OSD FAP can reconcile any potential contributing factors from both a mathematical and programmatic lens.

Analyses in this report were tested using a Type I error rate of 5 percent (i.e., $\alpha = .05$), resulting in a Confidence Interval (CI) of 95 percent. This CI approach tells us whether the FY 2021 values are within the range of plausible values for the 10-year period, FY 2012-FY 2021. Any value outside of this CI is indicative of a statistically significant increase or decrease.

²³ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (2022). *Child Maltreatment 2020*. Available from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research/child-maltreatment>

FY 2021 in Context of a Persisting Global Pandemic

The end of FY 2021 marked 18 months since the emergence of a global pandemic that impacted all aspects of human life. At the time of publication, there have been more than 6 million known COVID-19 deaths globally, including more than 1 million deaths in the United States. Stay-at-home orders and the initial closure of schools heightened vulnerability for victims of abuse already living in volatile or unstable circumstances. Early in the pandemic, domestic violence hotline calls increased²⁴ while child maltreatment reports decreased, as mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect no longer had daily, in-person contact with children.²⁵

Although the military has unique risk and protective factors, it is a subset of the larger society, and thus experienced many of these same risks for increased family violence. Despite challenges that the persisting pandemic presents, FAP has maintained continuity of all services in response to reports of child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse by adapting service delivery, outreach to the community, and the way in which the IDC convenes. Many of the trends in family violence noted in the civilian community were evident in FY 2020 FAP data. Appendix A in this report leverages findings from the FY 2020 report to explore the prolonged impact of the pandemic on FAP data.

Key Findings

The data contained in this report only reflect child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse reported to FAP that either met or did not meet criteria in FY 2021. These data do not represent an estimate of the total amount of child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse that occurred in military families in the past fiscal year.

Findings from this report indicate that despite upticks in the FY 2021 rates of child abuse and neglect reports (13.2/1,000 children), met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents (6.4/1,000 children), and unique child victims (4.5/1,000 children), the rates either decreased or did not vary significantly when compared to their respective 10-year averages during the period FY 2012-FY 2021.

There were upticks in both the number of met criteria incidents (260) and the rate of met criteria incidents of child sexual abuse (0.291/1,000 children) in FY 2021. Following a three-year decline, these metrics increased in FY 2021 for the second consecutive year; however, those increases were not statistically significant.

The FY 2021 rates of reported spouse abuse incidents (19.5/1,000 married couples), met criteria spouse abuse incidents (10.7/1,000 married couples), and unique spouse abuse victims (8.5/1,000 married couples) decreased when compared to their respective 10-year averages during the period FY 2012-FY 2021.

²⁴ National Domestic Violence Hotline. (2020). *COVID-19 Special Report*. Available from: <https://www.thehotline.org/wp-content/uploads/media/2020/09/The-Hotline-COVID-19-60-Day-Report.pdf>

²⁵ Baron, E. J., Goldstein, E. G., & Wallace, C. T. (2020). Suffering in silence: How COVID-19 school closures inhibit the reporting of child maltreatment. *Journal of Public Economics*, 190, 1-23.

It is not possible to calculate rates per 1,000 for intimate partner abuse incidents or victims, as data on unmarried individuals involved in intimate partner relationships defined by the DoD are unavailable. In FY 2021, the number of met criteria intimate partner abuse incidents (1,328) and number of unique victims of intimate partner abuse (1,048) increased when compared to their respective 10-year averages.

Finally, in FY 2021 the proportion of domestic abuse incidents involving sexual abuse (5.14 percent) increased when compared to the 10-year average. This increase is part of an overall upward trend in adult sexual abuse incidents as a subset of domestic abuse that has occurred over the last decade.

The DoD is committed to understanding more about fluctuations in rates of child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse through additional, targeted data analysis; ongoing research efforts on military-specific risk factors for child maltreatment; ongoing research initiatives on domestic abuse; and the continued impacts of COVID-19 on family violence. These efforts are delineated further in the Program and Policy Implications section of this report.

3. CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT

This section discusses reports to FAP of child abuse and neglect in FY 2021, incidents that met criteria for child abuse and neglect, and the characteristics of children and associated abusers for cases that met criteria.

DoD policy defines child abuse and neglect as:

- **Child abuse:** “The physical or sexual abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect of a child by a parent, guardian, foster parent, or by a caregiver, whether the caregiver is intra-familial or extra-familial, under circumstances indicating the child’s welfare is harmed or threatened. Such acts by a sibling, other family member, or other person shall be deemed to be child abuse only when the individual is providing care under express or implied agreement with the parent, guardian, or foster parent.”²⁶
- **Child neglect:** “The negligent treatment of a child through acts or omissions by an individual responsible for the child’s welfare under circumstances indicating the child’s welfare is harmed or threatened.” Neglect includes abandonment, medical neglect, and/or non-organic failure to thrive.²⁷

Child abuse and neglect, per DoD policy, include four distinct maltreatment types: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect. Each of these maltreatment types is outlined in implementing guidance for use during the standardized incident determination process.²⁸

It is possible for one report of child abuse and neglect to involve more than one type of maltreatment (e.g., physical abuse and neglect). Each maltreatment is considered separately for determination of whether it meets criteria for child abuse or neglect. Consequently, more than one incident may be submitted to the Central Registry involving an individual victim. Beginning in FY 2015, OSD FAP began to treat each type of maltreatment reported as representing a distinct incident of child abuse and neglect to capture a more comprehensive picture of well-being for children in military families. This approach is consistent with how other Federal agencies report incidents of child abuse and neglect. Appendix B explores an alternative calculation method for reports of abuse.

There are three elements calculated for child abuse and neglect in this report: the number of reported incidents, the number of met criteria incidents, and the rate of child victimization. The first two elements may be impacted by external factors. For example, the number of reports can fluctuate based on impact of awareness campaigns, training, and efforts to reduce stigma in the community associated with contacting FAP. Process improvements attributed to the implementation of the IDC – counting each type of maltreatment as a distinct incident (described above) and identifying all individuals involved in a reported incident as a separate abuser – may impact the number of met criteria incidents. The child victimization rate measures the number of

²⁶ DoDM 6400.01, Volume 3, Glossary, August 11, 2016, as amended; and DoDI 6400.01, “Family Advocacy Program (FAP),” Glossary, May 1, 2019.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

unique children experiencing child abuse and neglect per 1,000 military children. This measure offers an alternative method to examine the rates of child abuse and neglect across years that is less impacted by external factors. In addition, the child victimization rate allows the Department to compare child abuse and neglect in the military against the civilian population.

3-1 CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT INCIDENTS

As shown below in Table 1, there were 11,737 reports to FAP of suspected child abuse and neglect in FY 2021. The FY 2021 rate of reported child abuse and neglect per 1,000 children was 13.2, which is higher than the rate in FY 2020 (12.0) (see Figure 1). This numerical difference of 1.2 represents a 10.0 percent increase in the rate of reported incidents; however, the FY 2021 rate of reported incidents represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the 10-year average.²⁹

**Table 1: Reports and Incidents of Child Abuse and Neglect
(FY 2012-FY 2021)**

Fiscal Year	Reported Incidents	Met Criteria Incidents	Child Population	Reports/1000	Met Criteria Incidents/1000
2012	15,656	7,003	1,140,024	13.7	6.1
2013	15,346	6,989	1,099,702	14.0	6.4
2014	16,526	7,676	1,050,889	15.7	7.3
2015	15,579	7,208	1,005,626	15.5	7.2
2016	13,916	6,998	969,058	14.4	7.2
2017	12,849	6,450	939,186	13.7	6.9
2018	12,850	6,010	921,193	13.9	6.5
2019	12,392	5,600	917,891	13.5	6.1
2020	10,857	5,369	905,577	12.0	5.9
2021	11,737	5,732	892,457	13.2	6.4

Note. This table shows the number of child abuse and neglect incidents reported to FAP and the number of child abuse and neglect incidents that met criteria for maltreatment. Incidents of maltreatment are reported separately by type of maltreatment (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect); one or more incidents may be submitted to the Central Registry involving an individual victim.

²⁹ The FY 2021 rate of reported child abuse and neglect per 1,000 children was 13.15, shown in the table above as 13.2. This rate represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the average rate of reported child abuse and neglect during the FY 2012-FY 2021 period (95 percent CI [13.18, 14.73]).

There were 5,732 incidents of child abuse and neglect that met criteria in FY 2021. The rate of met criteria incidents per 1,000 children in FY 2021 was 6.4, which is higher than the rate per 1,000 in FY 2020 (5.9). This numerical difference of 0.5 incidents per 1,000 children represents an 8.5 percent increase in the rate of incidents that met criteria. Although there is an increase in the rate of FY 2021 met criteria incidents, it is not statistically significant when compared to the 10-year average.³⁰

Child Abuse and Neglect Reports vs. Met Criteria Incidents Rates per 1,000 Children (FY 2012-FY 2021)

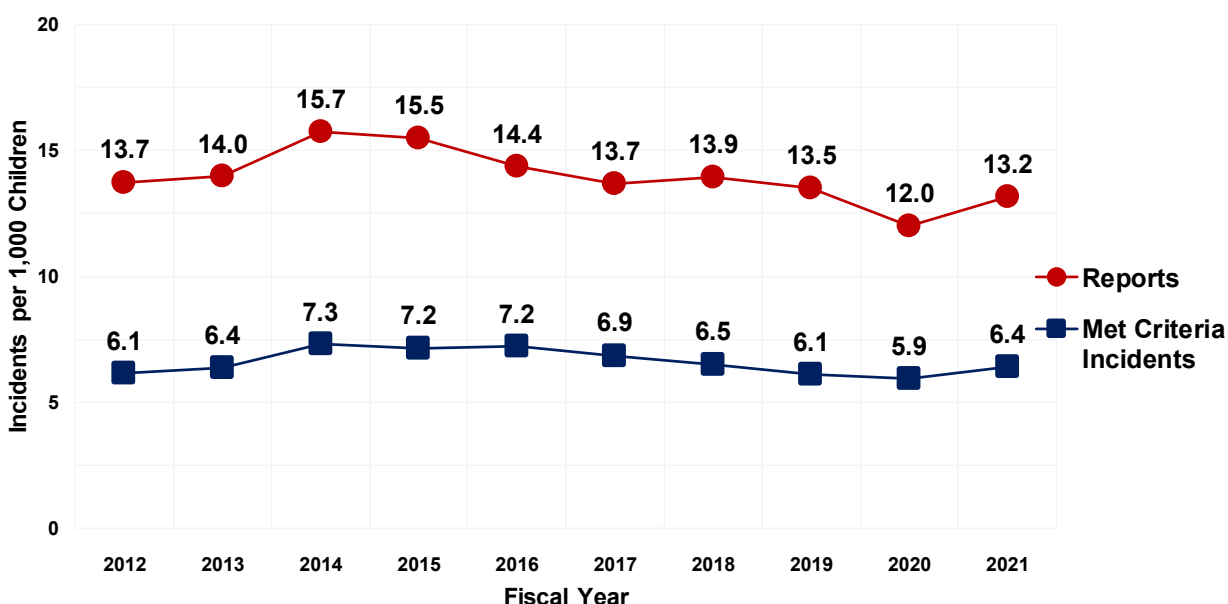


Figure 1. Rates of child abuse and neglect incidents reported to FAP per 1,000 children and child abuse and neglect incidents that met DoD criteria per 1,000 children over time.

³⁰ The FY 2021 rate of met criteria child abuse incidents per 1,000 children (6.4) did not vary significantly when compared to the average rate from FY 2012-FY 2021 (95 percent CI [6.24, 6.96]).

As shown in Figure 2, neglect accounted for the largest proportion of met criteria incidents in FY 2021 (56.12 percent). In FY 2021, physical abuse (25.33 percent) accounted for the next largest proportion of met criteria incidents, followed by emotional abuse (14.01 percent) and sexual abuse (4.54 percent). Within military families, the two most prevalent forms of child neglect are a lack of supervision appropriate to the age and functioning of the child and exposure to physical hazards, such as bathtubs, electrical outlets, and unsafe cribs.

Types of Maltreatment in Child Abuse and Neglect Met Criteria Incidents (FY 2021)

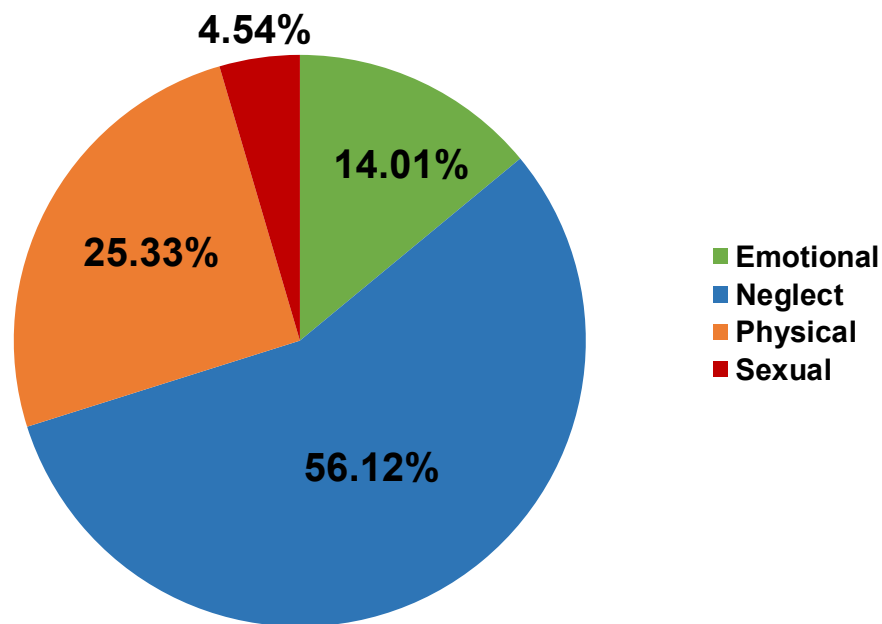


Figure 2. Percentage of the types of maltreatment in child abuse and neglect incidents that met DoD criteria in FY 2021.

The number of met criteria incidents of each type of child maltreatment is displayed in Figure 3. Throughout the 10-year period from FY 2012-FY 2021, neglect has been the predominant type of child maltreatment. In FY 2021, there was an uptick in the number of met criteria incidents of physical abuse while other types of child maltreatment remained relatively stable.

Child Abuse and Neglect Met Criteria Incidents by Maltreatment Type (FY 2012-FY 2021)

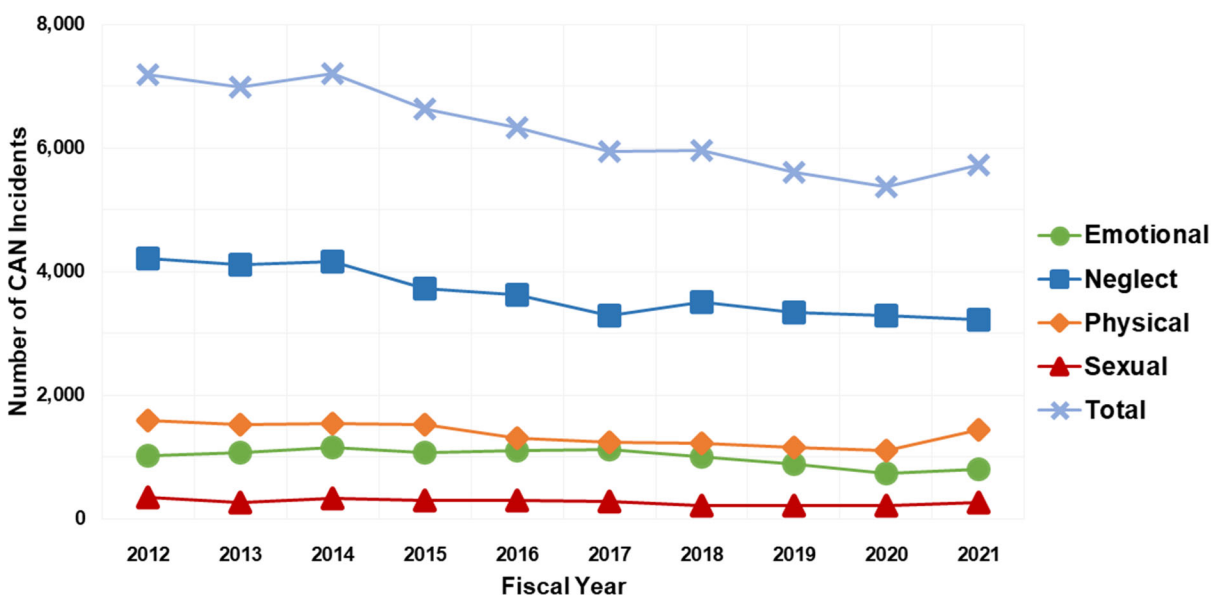


Figure 3. Number of incidents by type of child maltreatment over time.

3-2 VICTIM PROFILE

This section describes the characteristics of children who experienced met criteria incidents of child abuse and neglect and compares military child abuse and neglect data to the most recent civilian child abuse and neglect data.

As shown in Table 2, there were 3,974 unique victims of child abuse and neglect in FY 2021. The FY 2021 child abuse and neglect victim rate per 1,000 children was 4.5, which is higher than the rate of 4.3 per 1,000 in FY 2020 (see Figure 4). This numerical difference of 0.2 represents a 4.7 percent increase in the rate of child victims. Although the child victimization rate increased from FY 2020 to FY 2021, there is a statistically significant decrease in the rate when compared to the 10-year average.³¹

Table 2: Unique Victims of Child Abuse and Neglect (FY 2012-FY 2021)

Fiscal Year	Met Criteria Incidents	Unique Victims	Child Population	Met Criteria Incidents/1000	Rate of Victims/1000
2012	7,003	6,054	1,140,024	6.1	5.3
2013	6,989	5,773	1,099,702	6.4	5.2
2014	7,676	5,670	1,050,889	7.3	5.4
2015	7,208	5,123	1,005,626	7.2	5.1
2016	6,998	4,960	969,058	7.2	5.1
2017	6,450	4,667	939,186	6.9	5.0
2018	6,010	4,266	921,193	6.5	4.6
2019	5,600	4,150	917,891	6.1	4.5
2020	5,369	3,894	905,577	5.9	4.3
2021	5,732	3,974	892,457	6.4	4.5

Note. This table shows the number of child abuse and neglect incidents that met criteria for maltreatment and the number of unique child victims who experienced those incidents. Incidents of maltreatment are reported separately by type of maltreatment (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect); one or more incidents may be submitted to the Central Registry involving an individual victim.

³¹ The FY 2021 unique child abuse and neglect victim rate per 1,000 children (4.5) represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the average child victim rate during the FY 2012-FY 2021 period (95 percent CI [4.62, 5.19]).

Unique Child Victim Rate per 1,000 in Met Criteria Child Abuse and Neglect Incidents (FY 2012-FY 2021)

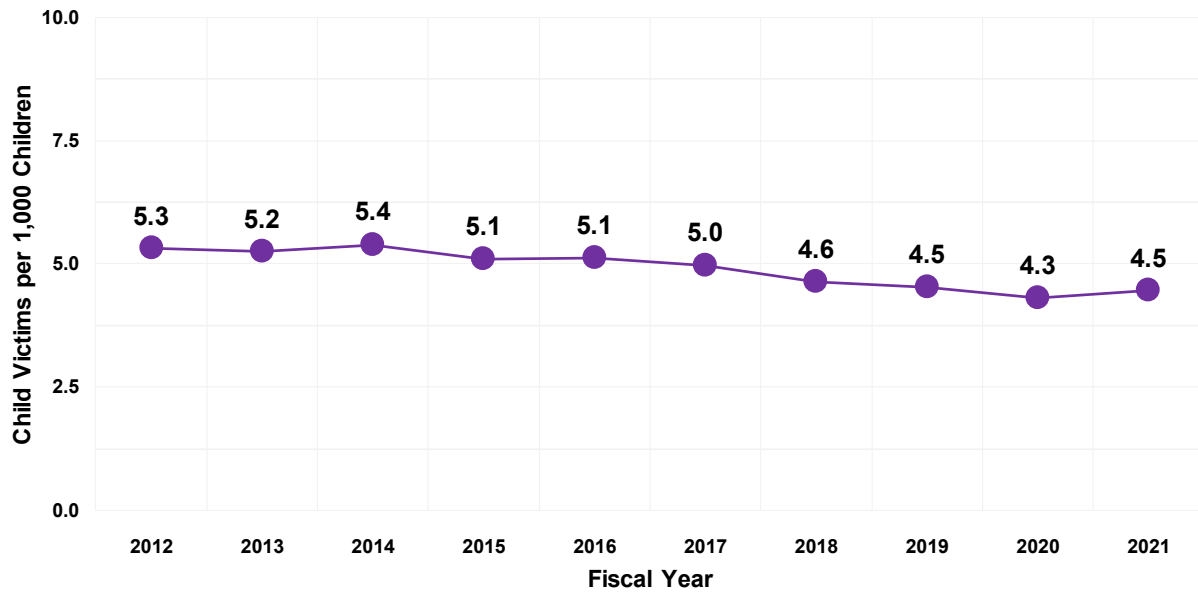


Figure 4. Rate of unique child abuse and neglect victims per 1,000 children over time.

Overall, 48 percent of victims in met criteria incidents of child abuse and neglect were female and 52 percent were male. Figure 5 depicts the sex of child abuse and neglect victims in met criteria incidents for each maltreatment type. In FY 2021, males were more likely to experience met criteria incidents of child abuse and neglect in three of the four maltreatment types. Specifically, males were more likely to experience emotional abuse (52 percent male vs. 48 percent female), neglect (52 percent male vs. 48 percent female), and physical abuse (59 percent male vs. 41 percent female) than females. In contrast, females were more likely to experience sexual abuse (89 percent female vs. 11 percent male) than males.

Sex of Victims in Met Criteria Child Abuse and Neglect Incidents by Maltreatment Type (FY 2021)

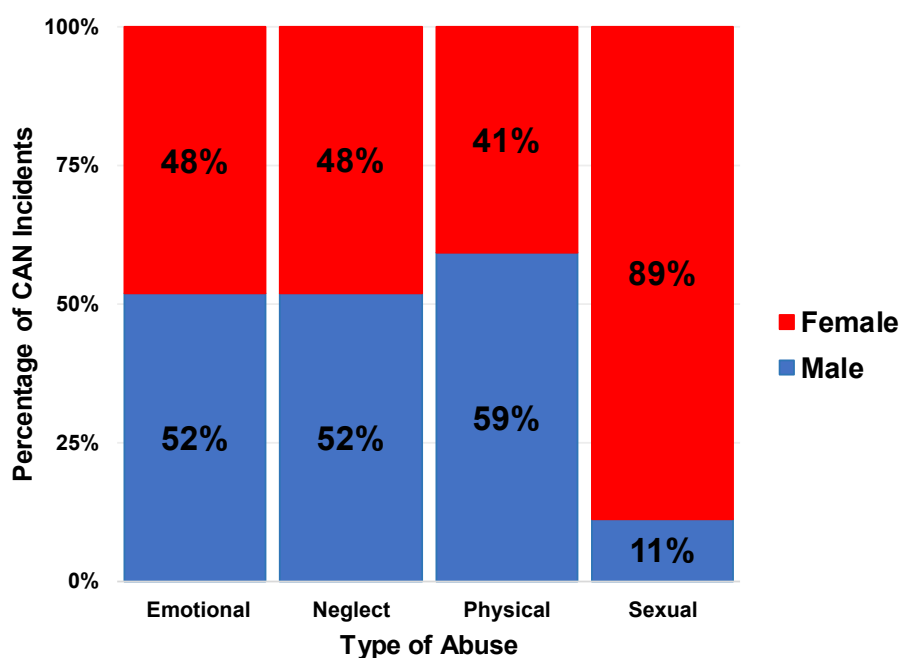


Figure 5. Sex of child victims by maltreatment type in FY 2021 met criteria incidents.

Figures 6 and 7 show the age distribution of child victims in met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents. In FY 2021, there were 3,369 met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents with child victims age 5 or younger, representing more than half (58.8 percent) of all victims of child maltreatment in FY 2021. Within this group of victims age 5 or younger, there were 1,627 met criteria incidents involving children 1 year of age or younger and 1,742 involving children ages 2-5 years old. There were 1,226 met criteria incidents involving children ages 6-10, which represented slightly more than one-fifth (21.4 percent) of all met criteria incidents of abuse or neglect. Among children ages 11-17, there were 1,135 incidents or just under one-fifth (19.8 percent) of all met criteria incidents of abuse or neglect in FY 2021. Additionally, during FY 2021 there were 2 incidents involving children 18 years or older where the abuse occurred while the victims were a dependent child.

Ages of Victims in Met Criteria Child Abuse and Neglect Incidents (FY 2021)

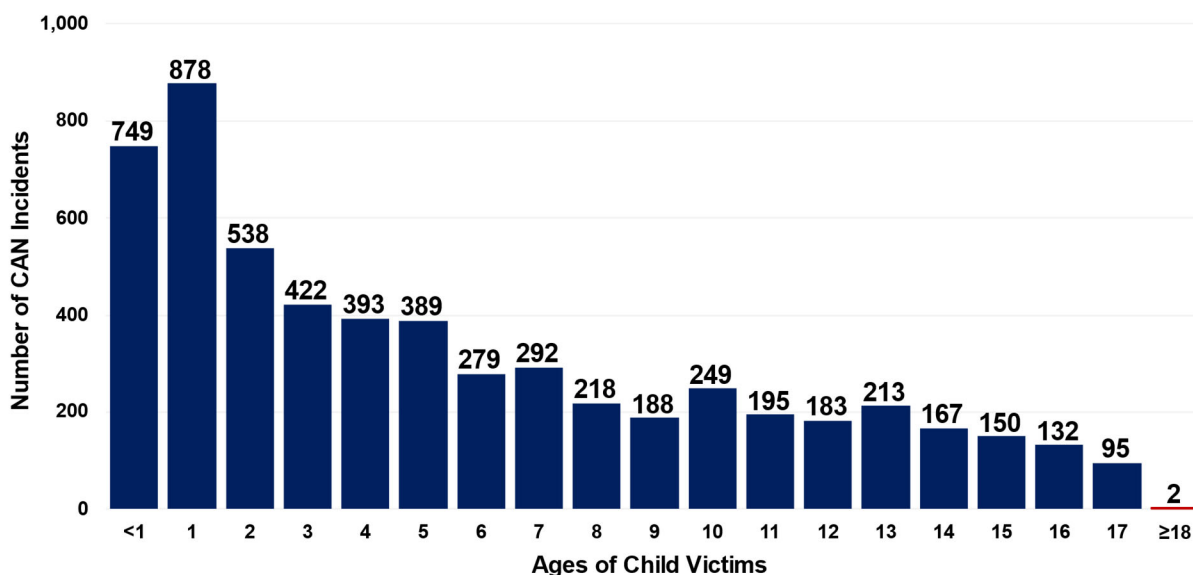


Figure 6. Number of victims by age in met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents in FY 2021.

There are notable differences when comparing the age distribution of unique victims in met criteria incidents of child abuse and neglect in FY 2021 to the age distribution of children in military families. Figure 7 shows that there is a greater proportion of children in met criteria incidents of child maltreatment who are 1 year of age or younger than children of the same age group in the military child population (24.9 percent vs. 14.8 percent). The same pattern holds true for children between the ages of 2 and 5 (31.0 percent of met criteria incidents vs. 28.8 percent of total child population). In contrast, there is a smaller proportion of child victims in met criteria incidents than children in the military child population amongst children ages 6-10 (22.7 percent vs. 29.9 percent) and ages 11-17 (21.4 percent vs. 26.5 percent). We did not include incidents involving victims ages 18 or older in this comparison, as not all military children in this age group are in a dependent status.

Proportion of Unique Victims in Met Criteria Child Abuse and Neglect Incidents by Age Group, Compared to Demographics (FY 2021)

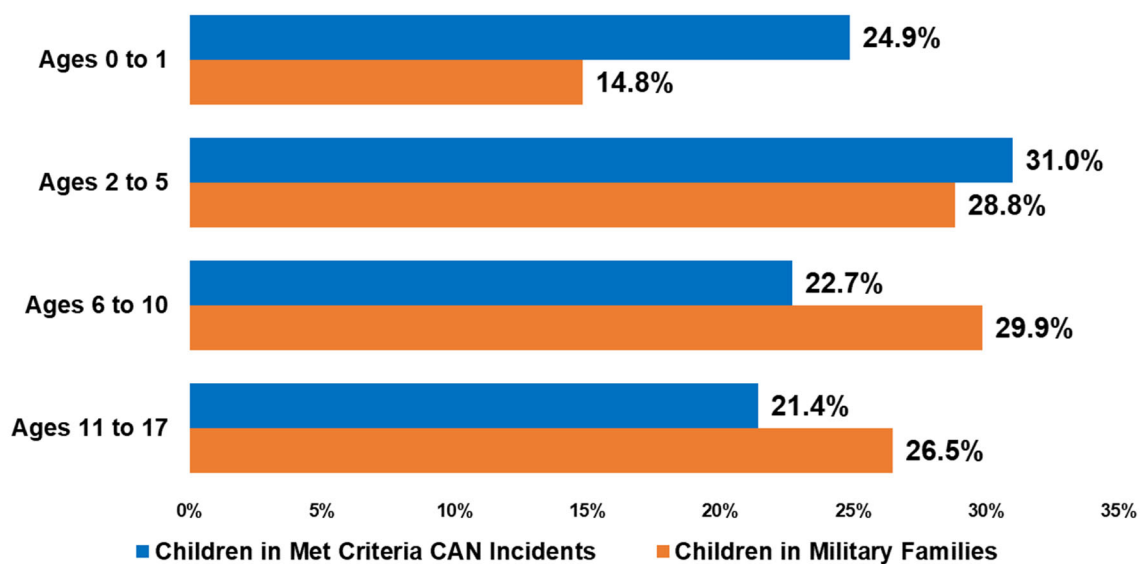


Figure 7. Comparison of the proportion of unique child victims in FY 2021 met criteria incidents by age to the proportion of the military child population by age.

3-3 COMPARISON TO U.S. CIVILIAN DATA

This section compares military child abuse and neglect data to the most recent U.S. civilian child abuse and neglect data.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services publishes an annual report that presents data on child abuse and neglect known to child protective service agencies in the U.S. As shown in Figure 8, both the military met criteria rate and the civilian substantiation (very similar to met criteria) rate have fluctuated over time; however, the military rate has consistently exceeded the civilian rate over the past decade.³² The military met criteria rate in FY 2021 was 48.8 percent, which is lower than the FY 2020 military rate (49.5 percent). The civilian substantiation rate for FY 2020 was 17.6 percent, which is higher than the FY 2019 civilian rate (16.7 percent). Both the military met criteria rate and the civilian substantiation rate increased from FY 2019 to FY 2020, corresponding to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Military Met Criteria Rate vs. U.S. Civilian Substantiation Rate for Child Maltreatment (FY 2012-2021)

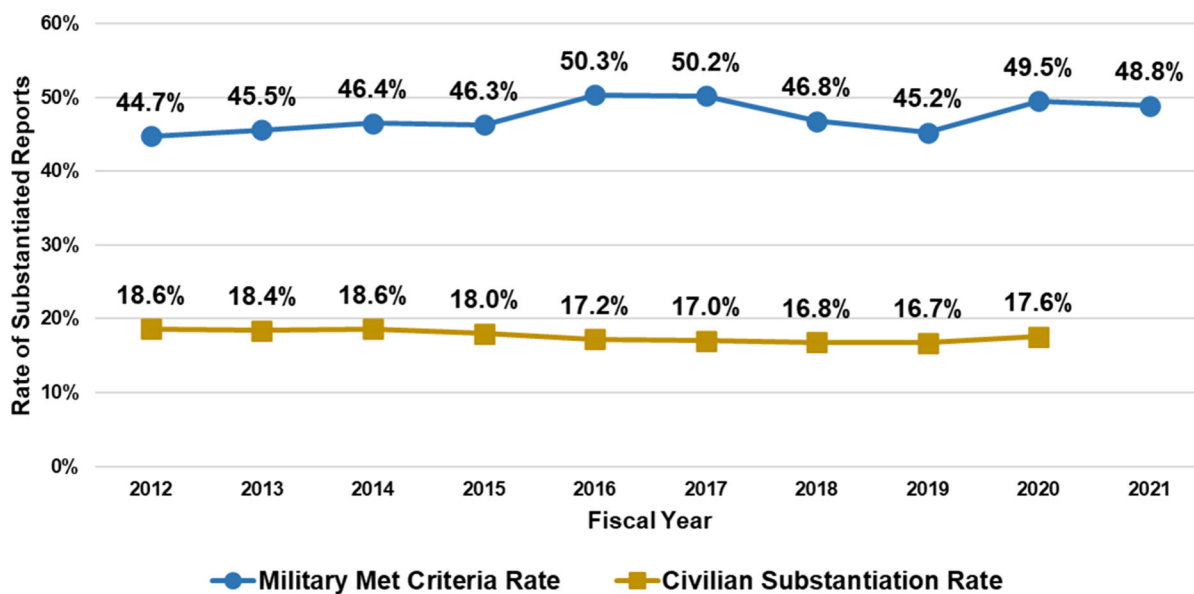


Figure 8. Military met criteria and U.S. civilian substantiation rates for child abuse and neglect over time.

Note. The most recent U.S. civilian data are from FY 2020, which represents a one-year lag compared to DoD data.

³² U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (2022). *Child Maltreatment 2012 through 2020*, inclusive. Available from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/data-research/child-maltreatment>.

Figure 9 shows the military child abuse and neglect victim rate per 1,000 military children (i.e., the military child victimization rate) compared to the U.S. civilian victimization rate per 1,000 children. Although both the military and civilian child victimization rates have fluctuated over time, the military child victimization rate has consistently been lower than the civilian rate over the past decade³³ (see Figure 9). The military child victimization rate for FY 2021 was 4.5 per 1,000 children, which is higher than the FY 2020 military rate (4.3 percent). The civilian child victimization rate for FY 2020 was 8.4 per 1,000 children, which is lower than the FY 2019 civilian rate (8.9). Both the military and civilian child victimization rates decreased from FY 2019 to FY 2020, during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which was likely an underreporting of child abuse and neglect nationally.³⁴

Considering that the military confirms child abuse and neglect at more than twice the civilian rate (see Figure 8) yet the military has a lower rate of victims per 1,000 children, the overall rate of child abuse and neglect in the military is substantially lower than in the civilian sector.

Military Child Victimization Rate vs. U.S. Civilian Child Victimization Rate per 1,000 Children (FY 2012-FY 2021)

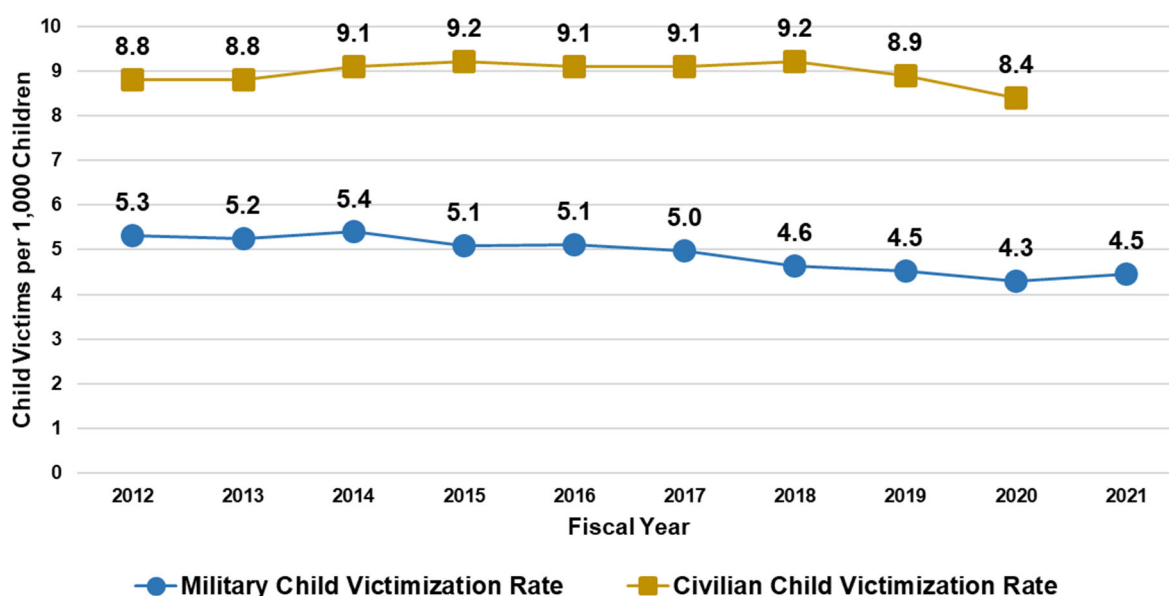


Figure 9. Military child abuse and neglect victim rate and U.S. civilian child victimization rate over time.

Note. The most recent U.S. civilian data are from FY 2020, which represents a one-year lag compared to DoD data.

³³ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (2022). *Child Maltreatment 2016 through 2020*, inclusive. Available from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/data-research/child-maltreatment>.

³⁴ Baron, E. J., Goldstein, E. G., & Wallace, C. T. (2020). Suffering in silence: How COVID-19 school closures inhibit the reporting of child maltreatment. *Journal of Public Economics*, 190, 1-23.

3-4 ABUSER PROFILE

This section describes characteristics of adults involved in incidents that met criteria for child abuse and neglect, including military status and paygrade.

As shown in Figure 10, parents represented the largest proportion of abusers involved in met criteria incidents of child abuse and neglect in FY 2021, where 47.1 percent of abusers were Service member parents and 39.3 percent were civilian parents. Fewer abusers involved in met criteria incidents of child abuse and neglect were extra-familial caregivers (10.2 percent), other family members (2.8 percent), or had an unknown status (0.6 percent). There was a statistically significant difference in the distribution of caregiver statuses in FY 2021 when compared to FY 2020,³⁵ with a notable increase in the proportion of extra-familial caregivers involved in met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents (10.2 percent in FY 2021 vs. 3.9 percent in FY 2020). Appendix C to this report presents an analysis of potential factors contributing to this increase.

Caregiver Status of Abusers in Met Criteria Child Abuse and Neglect Incidents (FY 2021)

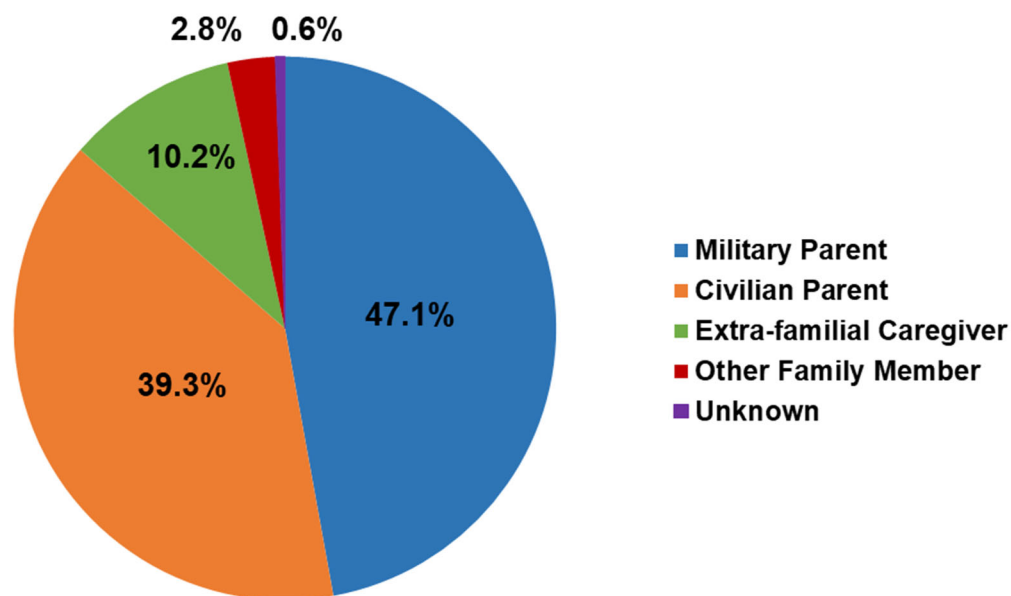


Figure 10. Caregiver status of abusers in met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents in FY 2021.

Note. Service member parents, referred to as military parents in the figure, include active duty members as well as Reserve and National Guard members who are in an active status.

³⁵ The distribution of caregiver statuses involved in child abuse and neglect incidents in FY 2021 differed significantly from the distribution of caregiver statuses in FY 2020 ($\chi^2(4, N = 5,626) = 620.86, p < .001$).

As shown in Figure 11, the military status distribution of abusers in met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents has remained relatively consistent since FY 2012. In FY 2021, 54 percent of abusers were Service members and 46 percent were civilians.

Military Status of Unique Abusers in Met Criteria Child Abuse and Neglect Incidents (FY 2012-FY 2021)

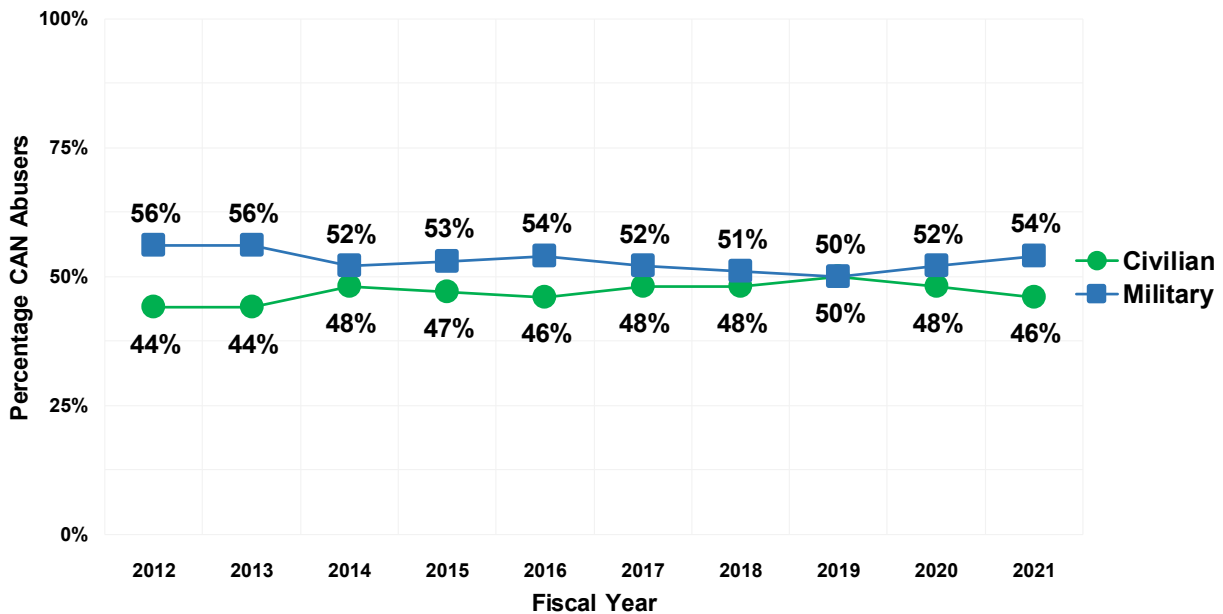


Figure 11. Military status of abusers in met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents over time.

Note. Abusers with an unknown status were excluded from this graph.

Figure 12 displays the pay grade distribution for Service member parent abusers who were involved in met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents. Most Service member parent abusers were junior enlisted members; 66 percent were E4-E6, and 14 percent were E1-E3. Fewer parent abusers were senior enlisted (13 percent were E7-E9), officers (3 percent were O1-O3; 3 percent were O4-O10), or warrant officers (1 percent were WO1-WO5).

Pay Grade Distribution of Service Member Parent Abusers in Met Criteria Incidents (FY 2021)

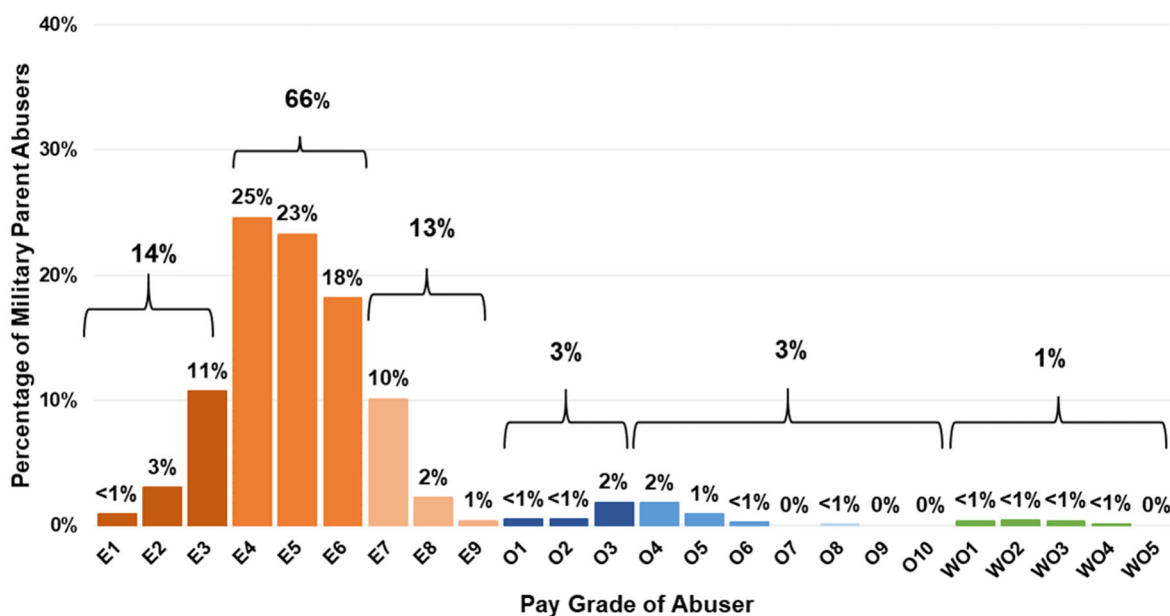


Figure 12. Percentage of Service member parent abusers in each pay grade in FY 2021.

Note. Service member parents, referred to as military parent abusers in the figure, include active duty members as well as Reserve and National Guard members who are in an active status.

When comparing the pay grades of active duty³⁶ parent abusers in met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents to the pay grades of the total population of active duty parents in FY 2021, the differences in relative proportions are pronounced, although they are relatively consistent with FY 2020 data. As displayed in Figure 13, a much greater proportion of active duty parents in met criteria incidents of child maltreatment are in the E1-E3 pay grade (15 percent vs. 4 percent) and the E4-E6 pay grade (66 percent vs. 49 percent) than in the active duty parent population.³⁷

Meanwhile, there are proportionally fewer active duty parents involved in met criteria incidents compared to the active duty parent population in the E7-E9 (12 percent vs. 22 percent), O1-O3 (3 percent vs. 8 percent), O4-O10 (3 percent vs. 14 percent), and WO1-WO5 (1 percent vs. 3 percent) pay grades.

Proportion of Active Duty Parent Abusers in Met Criteria Incidents by Pay Grade, Compared to Demographics (FY 2021)

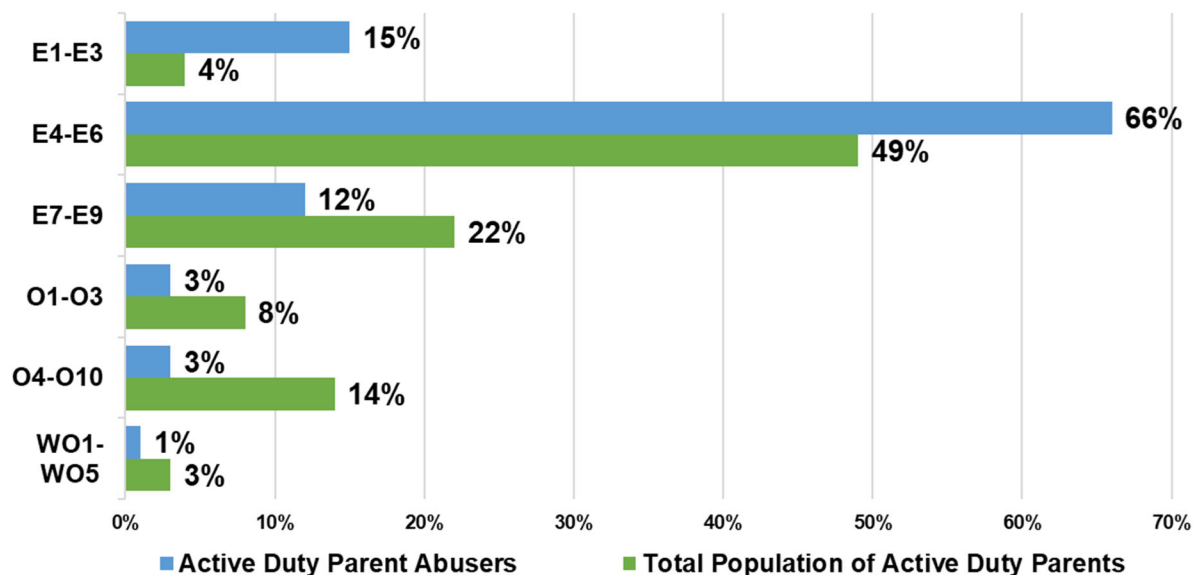


Figure 13. Comparison of the proportion of active duty parent abusers in met criteria child maltreatment incidents with a particular pay grade to the proportion of active duty parents in the military population with a particular pay grade.

³⁶ For the purposes of this report, active duty refers to Regular Component members, exclusively.

³⁷ While Figure 13 displays pay grade of Service member parent abusers in met criteria incidents, this figure focuses on pay grade of active duty parent abusers in met criteria incidents, exclusively.

While the breakdown of active duty parents by pay grade in Figure 13 shows that the greatest proportion of abusers were in the E4-E6 pay grade, the rate of active duty parent abusers per 1,000 involved in met criteria incidents of child maltreatment is highest for parents who are in the E1-E3 (13.7) pay grades (see Figure 14). This means that active duty parents in the E1-E3 pay grades were more likely to be involved in met criteria incidents of child abuse and neglect than active duty parents in any other pay grade band, relative to their proportion in the active duty parent population. This finding is consistent with previous years.

Rate of Active Duty Parent Abusers in Met Criteria Incidents per 1,000 by Pay Grade (FY 2021)

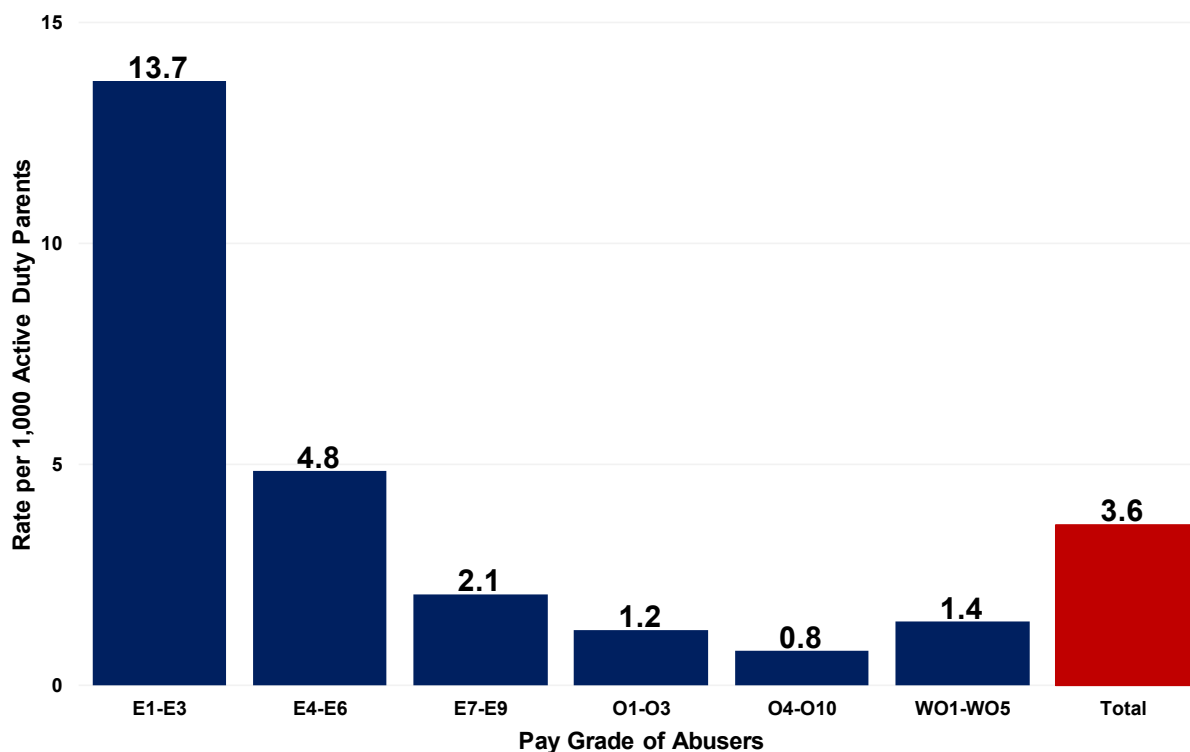


Figure 14. Rate of active duty parent met criteria abusers per 1,000 parents in the population by parent pay grade in FY 2021.

Overall, 53 percent of abusers in child abuse and neglect incidents that met criteria were male and 47 percent were female.

Figure 15 shows the proportions of male and female abusers in met criteria incidents for each type of child maltreatment and demonstrates how the sex of abusers varies in these incidents. The vast majority of abusers for incidents of child sexual abuse were male (95 percent male vs. 5 percent female). Males were also more likely to be abusers in physical abuse incidents (54 percent male vs. 46 percent female) and emotional abuse incidents (68 percent male vs. 32 percent female). In contrast, among incidents of neglect, the most common type of child maltreatment in military families, 54 percent of abusers were female and 46 percent were male.

Sex of Abusers in Met Criteria Child Abuse and Neglect Incidents by Maltreatment Type (FY 2021)

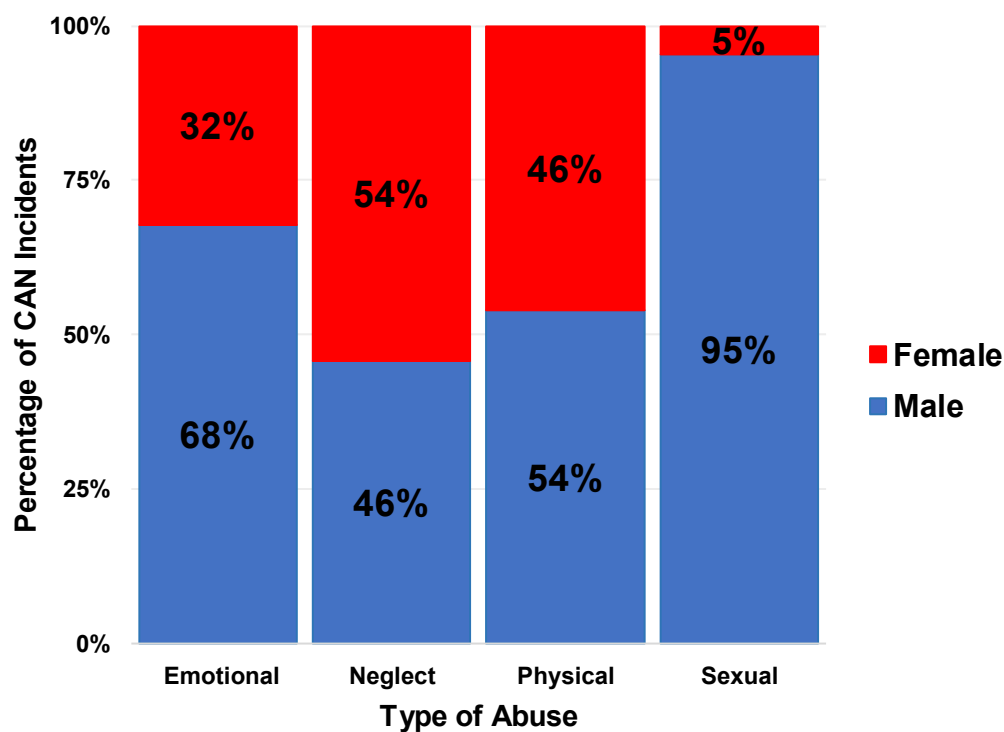


Figure 15. Sex of abusers in met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents by maltreatment type in FY 2021.

Note. The sex of the abuser was unknown in 30 met criteria incidents of child abuse and neglect. Those incidents were excluded from this graph.

Figure 16 shows the proportion of unique abusers in met criteria incidents of child maltreatment by age group and sex. The majority of abusers (46.3 percent) in met criteria incidents of child abuse and neglect were ages 25-34 (26.2 percent male and 20.1 percent female). About a quarter of abusers (25.2 percent) were ages 18-24 (13.2 percent male and 12.0 percent female), nearly a quarter of abusers (23.9 percent) were ages 35-44 (15.0 percent male and 8.9 percent female), and a smaller proportion of abusers (4.5 percent) were 45 years of age or older (2.7 percent male and 1.8 percent female). Less than 1 percent of abusers were younger than age 18.

Proportion of Unique Abusers in Met Criteria Child Abuse and Neglect Incidents by Age Group and Sex (FY 2021)

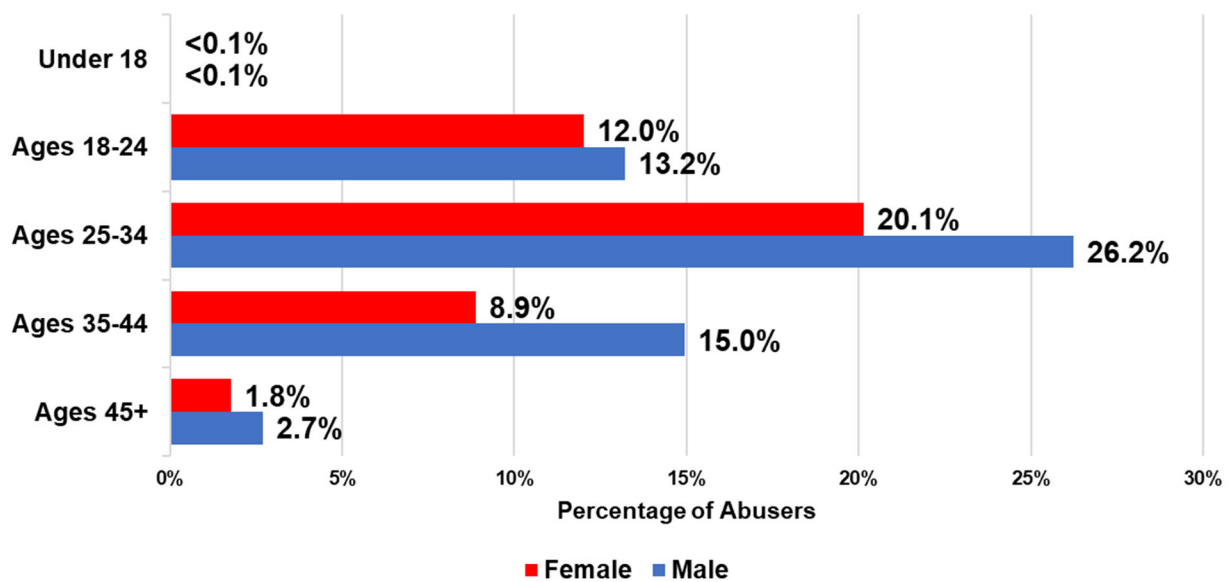


Figure 16. Age group and sex of unique abusers in met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents in FY 2021.

Note. Abusers with an unknown status were excluded from this graph.

3-5 CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

For the fourth time in this annual report series, we specifically examine child sexual abuse as a subset of child abuse.³⁸ These incidents are also reported in an appendix to the *FY 2021 DoD Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military*.³⁹ Child sexual abuse is defined as:

“The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct; or the rape, and in cases of caretaker or inter-familial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children.”⁴⁰

In FY 2021, there were 260 met criteria incidents of child sexual abuse (see Table 3), and 247 unique victims of child sexual abuse who received FAP services. Given that there were more incidents than victims, one or more victims experienced more than one incident of child sexual abuse during the fiscal year. Despite the increase in the rate of child sexual abuse incidents per 1,000 military children in FY 2021, it did not vary significantly relative to the 10-year period.⁴¹

Table 3: Incidents of Met Criteria Child Sexual Abuse (FY 2012-FY 2021)

Fiscal Year	Met Criteria Incidents	Met Criteria Child Sexual Abuse Incidents	Child Population	Met Criteria Child Sexual Abuse Incidents/1000	Percentage of Overall Met Criteria Child Abuse
2012	7,003	346	1,140,024	0.304	4.94
2013	6,989	289	1,099,702	0.263	4.14
2014	7,676	328	1,050,889	0.312	4.27
2015	7,208	317	1,005,626	0.315	4.40
2016	6,998	311	969,058	0.321	4.44
2017	6,450	286	939,186	0.305	4.43
2018	6,010	227	921,193	0.246	3.78
2019	5,600	212	917,891	0.231	3.79
2020	5,369	222	905,577	0.245	4.13
2021	5,732	260	892,457	0.291	4.54

Note. Total met criteria child abuse incidents numbers include physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect met criteria numbers combined.

³⁸ DoDI 6400.01, “Family Advocacy Program (FAP),” May 1, 2019 defines child abuse as the physical or sexual abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect of a child by a parent, guardian, foster parent, or by a caregiver, whether the caregiver is intra-familial or extra-familial, under circumstances indicating the child’s welfare is harmed or threatened. Such acts by a sibling, other family member, or other person shall be deemed to be child abuse only when the individual is providing care under express or implied agreement with the parent, guardian, or foster parent.

³⁹ The *FY 2021 DoD Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military* will be released September of 2022.

⁴⁰ DoDI 6400.03, “Family Advocacy Command Assistance Team (FACAT),” Glossary, April 25, 2014, as amended.

⁴¹ Despite the notable increase from FY 2020 to FY 2021, the FY 2021 number of met criteria incidents of child sexual abuse (260) and the rate of child sexual abuse incidents per 1,000 military children (0.291) did not vary significantly when compared to their respective averages during the FY 2012-FY 2021 period (95 percent CI [245.82, 313.78] and [0.259, 0.307], respectively).

Of the 247 unique victims of child sexual abuse who received FAP services in FY 2021, 220 (89.1 percent) were female and 27 (10.9 percent) were male. Figure 17 shows the proportion of unique child sexual abuse victims by age and sex. Of the unique victims in met criteria incidents of sexual abuse, 62.3 percent (58.7 percent female and 3.6 percent male) were ages 11-17, 18.6 percent (16.2 percent female and 2.4 percent male) were ages 6-10, and 17.0 percent (12.6 percent female and 4.5 percent male) were ages 2-5. Of the unique victims, 1.2 percent (0.8 percent female and 0.4 percent male) were age 1 or younger. Less than 1 percent of all unique child sexual abuse victims were child dependents 18 years old or older.

Proportion of Unique Victims in Met Criteria Child Sexual Abuse Incidents by Age Group and Sex (FY 2021)

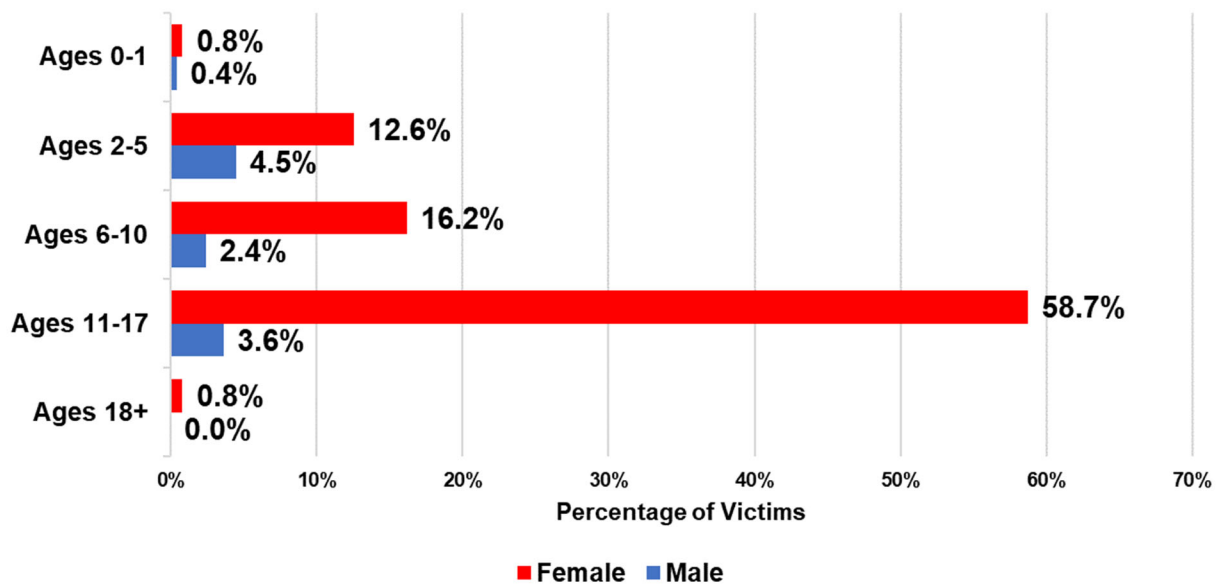


Figure 17. Age group and sex of unique victims in met criteria incidents of child sexual abuse in FY 2021.

There were 220 known unique abusers in met criteria child sexual abuse incidents.⁴² Among those known abusers, 105 (47.7 percent) were Service member parents, 48 (21.8 percent) were civilian parents, 38 (17.3 percent) were other family members, and 29 (13.2 percent) were extra-familial caregivers (see Figure 18).

Of the known abusers, 128 were Service members, including 125 (97.7 percent) active duty members and 3 (2.3 percent) members of the Reserves or Guard. Of the 128 Service members, 113 (88.3 percent) were enlisted members, 10 (7.8 percent) were officers, and 5 (3.9 percent) were warrant officers.

Caregiver Status of Unique Abusers in Met Criteria Child Sexual Abuse Incidents (FY 2021)

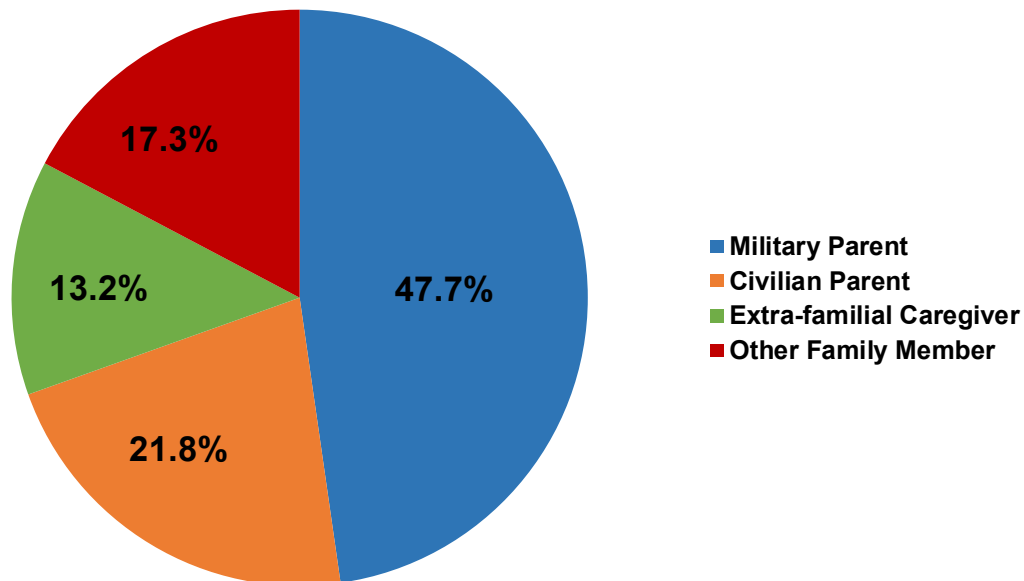


Figure 18. Caregiver status of unique abusers in met criteria incidents of child sexual abuse in FY 2021.

Note. Service member parents, referred to as military parents in the figure, include active duty members as well as Reserve and National Guard members who are in an active status. Abusers with an unknown status are excluded from the graph.

⁴² In FY 2021, there were 5 met criteria incidents of child sexual abuse where the abuser was unknown.

Of the 220 known unique abusers in met criteria child sexual abuse incidents, 209 (95.0 percent) were male and 11 (5.0 percent) were female. Figure 19 shows that 44.6 percent of the 220 known child sexual abusers were ages 25-34 and overwhelmingly male (42.3 percent male and 2.3 percent female), 31.4 percent were ages of 35-44 (30.5 percent male and 0.9 percent female). Of the known abusers, 8.2 percent were ages 18-24 (7.7 percent male and 0.5 percent female) and 15.8 percent were 45 years of age or older (14.5 percent male and 1.3 percent female).

Proportion of Unique Abusers in Met Criteria Child Sexual Abuse Incidents by Age Group and Sex (FY 2021)

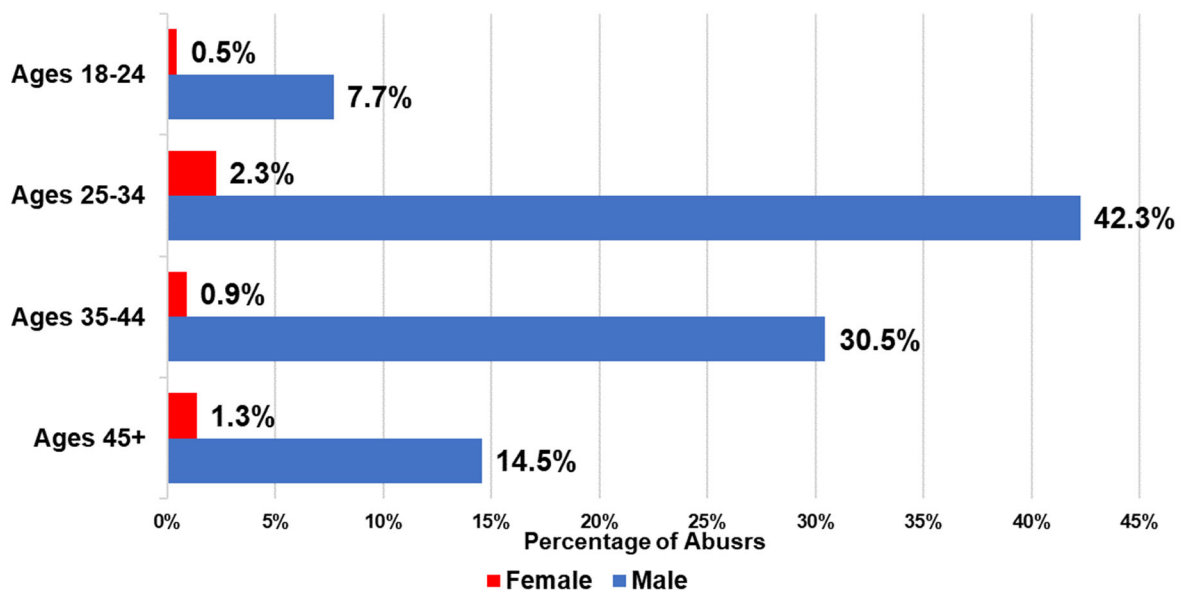


Figure 19. Age group and sex of unique abusers in met criteria incidents of child sexual abuse in FY 2021.

Note. Abusers with an unknown status were excluded from this graph.

3-6 CHILD ABUSE FATALITIES

As discussed previously, reviews of fatalities reported to the Central Registry in FY 2021 will occur in the Military Departments in FY 2023. Data on child fatalities included in this report represent only those fatalities taken to the IDC after the death of the victim and that met criteria for child abuse and neglect in FY 2021.

There were eight child abuse-related fatalities involving nine abusers taken to the IDC and entered into the Central Registry in FY 2021 (see Table 4). Of the eight child abuse-related fatalities, three child victims and four met criteria abusers were previously known to the Central Registry.⁴³ Among the child fatality victims, one (12.5 percent) was female and seven (87.5 percent) were male. Four (50 percent) child victims were 1 year of age or younger, two (25 percent) child victims were 2-5 years old, one (12.5 percent) child victim was 6-10 years old and one (12.5 percent) was 11-17 years old. Among the met criteria abusers in these child fatality incidents, three (33.3 percent) were female and six (66.7 percent) were male. Of the nine met criteria abusers, five (55.5 percent) were Service members and four (44.5 percent) were civilians.

Table 4: Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities Reported to FAP in FY 2021

Total Fatalities: 8	
- 9 Met criteria abusers involved (including 3 fatalities with 2 or more abusers)	
- 3 Child victims previously known to the Central Registry	
- 4 Met criteria abusers previously known to the Central Registry	
Victims	
Sex of Victims	Ages of Victims
- 1 Female	- 4 One year of age or younger
- 7 Male	- 2 Between ages 2-5 years old
	- 1 Between ages 6-10 years old
	- 1 Between ages 11-17 years old
Met Criteria Abusers	
Sex of Abusers	Military Status of Abusers
- 3 Female	- 5 Service member
- 6 Male	- 4 Civilian

Note: Represents only those fatalities taken to the IDC in FY 2021. Military Service fatality reviews of these incidents will take place in FY 2023. Service member includes active duty members as well as Reserve and National Guard members who are in an active status.

⁴³ “Known to the Central Registry” means that the victim or abuser was involved in a previous met criteria incident of abuse.

4. DOMESTIC ABUSE

This section discusses domestic abuse and provides information on reports to FAP in FY 2021, incidents of domestic abuse that met criteria, and the characteristics of the adult victims and abusers involved in those incidents.

DoD policy defines “domestic abuse” as, “domestic violence, or a pattern of behavior resulting in emotional/psychological abuse, economic control, and/or interference with personal liberty that is directed to a person who is:

- A current or former spouse;
- A person with whom the abuser shares a child in common; or
- A current or former intimate partner with whom the abuser shares or has shared a common domicile.”⁴⁴

For purposes of this report, FAP distinctly analyzes incidents of spouse abuse and incidents of intimate partner abuse in addition to the umbrella category of domestic abuse, which contains the sum of all incidents. Unlike child abuse and neglect, there is no federal mechanism to track rates of civilian spouse abuse for comparison to the military population. This is, in part, because each state has different laws and definitions of domestic abuse. As such, a comparative analysis to civilian data is not possible.

Spouse abuse – Either the victim or abuser may have been a Service member or the civilian spouse of a Service member.

Intimate partner abuse – In FY 2006, an additional category, “intimate partner”, was added to capture incidents involving: (1) a former spouse; (2) a person with whom the victim shares a child in common; or (3) a current or former intimate partner with whom the victim shares or has shared a common domicile. In such cases, the victim or the abuser may have been a Service member or civilian.

Domestic abuse, per DoD policy, encompasses four distinct types of abuse for either spouse or intimate partner abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. Spouse neglect is a type of domestic abuse in which an adult fails to provide necessary care or assistance for his or her spouse who is incapable of self-care physically, emotionally, or culturally. Each of these types of abuse is outlined in implementing guidance for use during the standardized incident determination process.⁴⁵

Incidents of domestic abuse are reported separately by type of abuse. One or more incidents may be submitted to the Central Registry involving an individual victim. Prior to FY 2015, incidents may have included multiple types of abuse under one incident. Since FY 2015, reporting has been standardized for consistency.

⁴⁴ This domestic abuse definition cited appeared in DoDI 6400.06, August 21, 2007, as amended, and was in place during FY 2021—the period covered by this report. DoDI 6400.06 was reissued on December 15, 2021, under a new name, and contains an updated, expanded definition of domestic abuse.

⁴⁵ DoDM 6400.01, Volume 3, Glossary, August 11, 2016.

4-1 DOMESTIC ABUSE INCIDENTS

The FY 2021 report includes an expanded analysis of the overarching category of domestic abuse, which provides a better understanding about the demographic characteristics of domestic abuse victims and abusers.

As shown in Figure 20, the number of reports and met criteria incidents of domestic abuse has steadily decreased over the past decade. The number of reports of domestic abuse (14,299) in FY 2021 represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the 10-year average.⁴⁶ Although the number of met criteria domestic abuse incidents increased from FY 2020 to FY 2021, the number of met criteria domestic abuse incidents in FY 2021 (7,957) represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the 10-year average.⁴⁷

Number of Domestic Abuse Reports vs. Met Criteria Incidents (FY 2012-FY 2021)

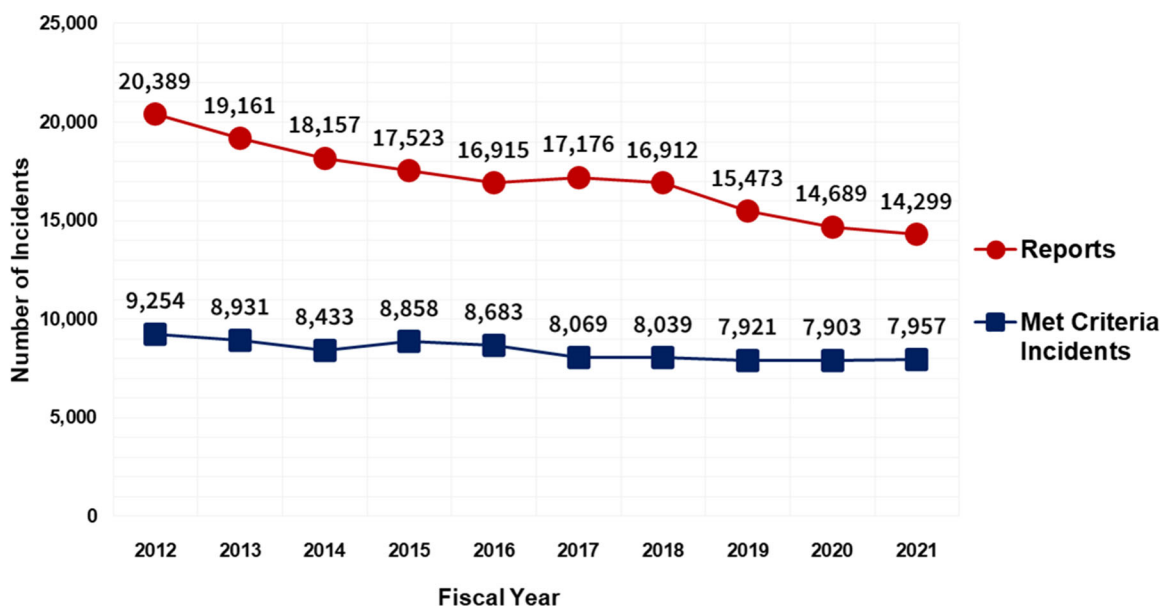


Figure 20. Number of domestic abuse incidents reported to FAP and the number of domestic abuse incidents that met DoD criteria over time.

Note. Domestic abuse includes spouse abuse and intimate partner abuse. Prior to FY 2015, incidents may have included multiple types of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect) under one incident report.

⁴⁶ The FY 2021 number of domestic abuse reports (14,299) represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the average number of domestic abuse reports during the FY 2012-FY 2021 period (95 percent CI [15,705.15, 18,433.65]).

⁴⁷ The FY 2021 number of met criteria incidents of domestic abuse (7,957) represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the average number of domestic abuse incidents during the FY 2012-FY 2021 period (95 percent CI [8,049.95, 8,759.65]).

As shown in Figure 21, physical abuse accounted for the largest proportion of met criteria domestic abuse incidents in FY 2021 (71.35 percent). Emotional abuse (23.46 percent) accounted for the next largest proportion of met criteria incidents. Sexual abuse (5.14 percent) and neglect (0.05 percent) accounted for a much smaller proportion of incidents.

The proportion of domestic abuse incidents involving sexual abuse (5.14 percent) was 1.0 percentage point higher than the proportion in FY 2020 (4.14). Since FY 2013, the proportion of domestic abuse incidents involving sexual abuse has increased incrementally, although there was a slight decrease in FY 2018. In FY 2021, the increase in the proportion of adult sexual abuse incidents as a subset of domestic abuse is statistically significant when compared to the 10-year average.⁴⁸

Types of Abuse in Met Criteria Domestic Abuse Incidents (FY 2021)

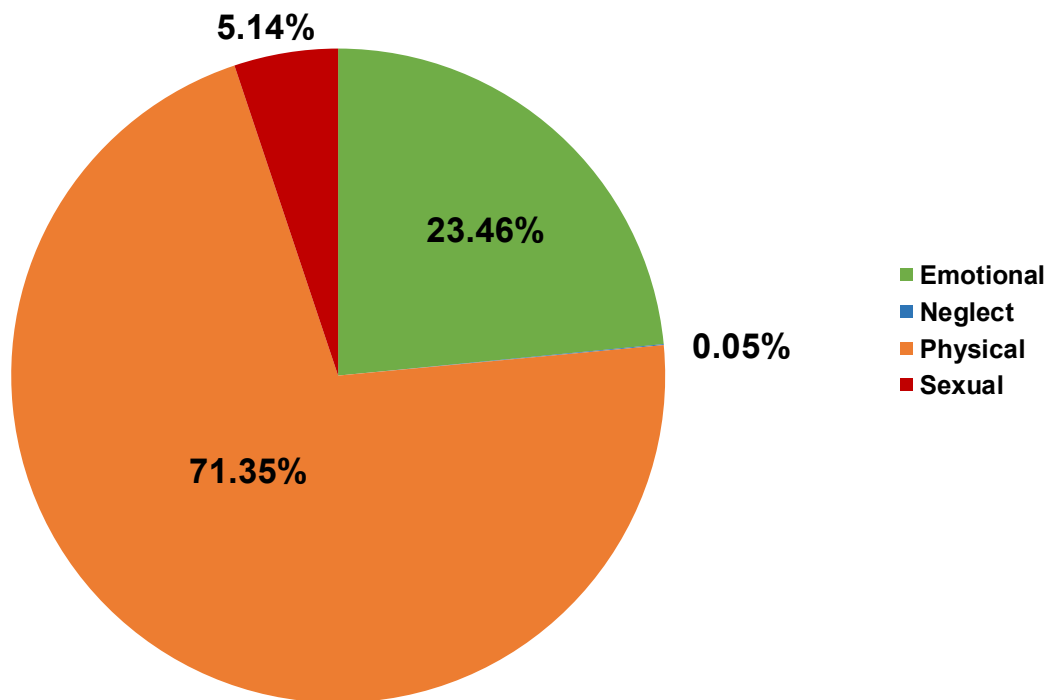


Figure 21. Percentage of the types of abuse in domestic abuse incidents that met DoD criteria in FY 2021.

Note. Domestic abuse includes spouse abuse and intimate partner abuse incidents.

⁴⁸ The FY 2021 proportion (5.14 percent) of adult sexual abuse incidents among all domestic abuse incidents represents a statistically significant increase when compared to the average proportion of sexual abuse incidents among domestic abuse incidents during the FY 2012-FY 2021 period (95 percent CI [0.0279, 0.0406]).

For the first time in FY 2021, FAP examined victim and abuser sex in met criteria domestic abuse incidents. In 69 percent of all met criteria domestic abuse incidents, the victim was female and the abuser was male. In 27 percent of incidents, the victim was male and the abuser was female. In 3 percent of incidents, the victim and abuser were female. And in 1 percent of met criteria domestic abuse incidents the victim and abuser were male (see Figure 22).

Proportion of Met Criteria Domestic Abuse Incidents by Victim and Abuser Sex (FY 2021)

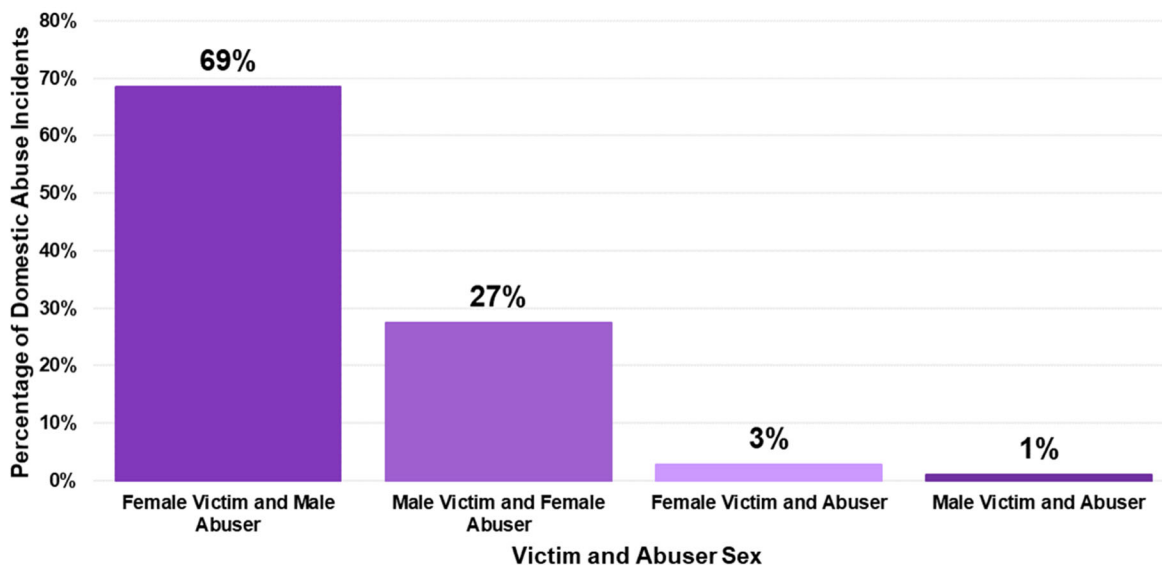


Figure 22. Proportion of met criteria domestic abuse incidents by victim and abuser sex in FY 2021.

4-2 DOMESTIC ABUSE VICTIM PROFILE

This section describes characteristics of adults who were victims in met criteria domestic abuse incidents, including military status, sex, age, and pay grade.

In FY 2021, there were 6,306 unique victims of domestic abuse. Figure 23 shows unique victims of domestic abuse by military status and sex. Overall, a majority of unique victims in met criteria domestic abuse incidents were Service members (53 percent Service members vs. 47 percent civilians), and a majority were female (69 percent female vs. 31 percent male).

When examining the military status and sex of unique victims in combination, 45 percent were female civilians, 29 percent were male Service members, 24 percent were female Service members, and 2 percent were male civilians. Males comprise a much larger portion of the total force than females—contributing to the larger proportion of male Service member domestic abuse victims compared to female Service member victims.⁴⁹ When examining the domestic abuse victimization rate for active duty members by sex, female active duty members were nearly four times more likely to experience domestic abuse than male active duty members (6.2 per 1,000 for female active duty members vs. 1.6 per 1,000 male active duty members).

Proportion of Unique Victims in Met Criteria Domestic Abuse Incidents by Military Status and Sex (FY 2021)

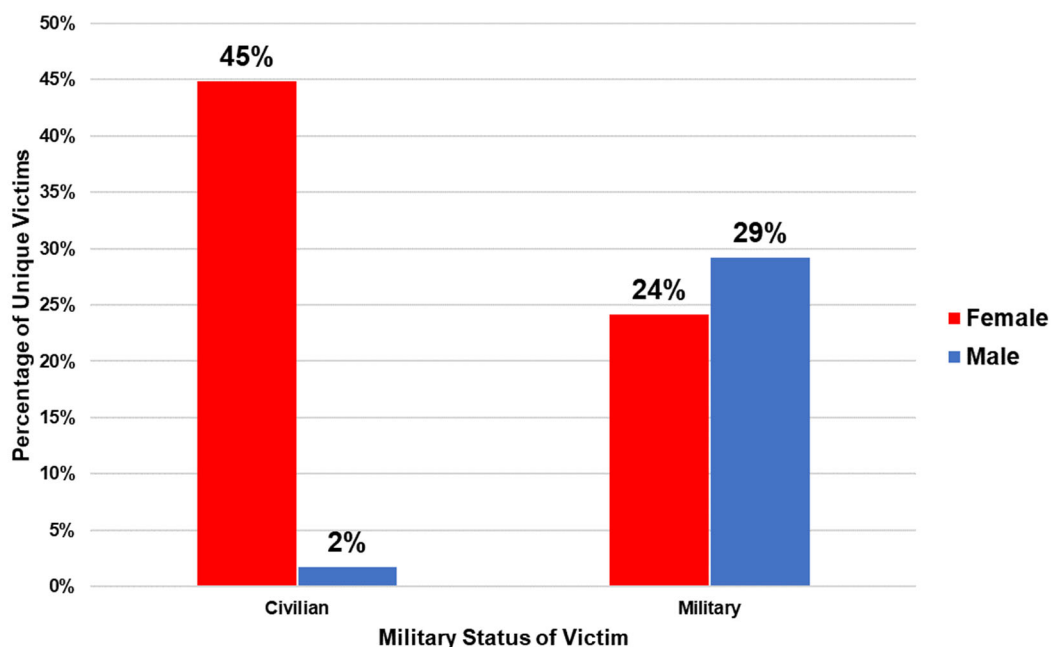


Figure 23. Military status and sex of unique victims in met criteria domestic abuse incidents in FY 2021.

⁴⁹ In FY 2021, males comprised 82.7 percent of the total force. Data retrieved from the September 2021 DMDC Self-Service Report, *Active Duty by Demographics*.

Figure 24 shows the proportion of unique victims of domestic abuse by age group and sex. More than four-fifths of victims were 34 years or younger. Of unique domestic abuse victims, 43.0 percent were ages 18-24 (31.2 percent female and 11.8 percent male), 41.0 percent were ages 25-34 (27.5 percent female and 13.5 percent male), and 14.1 percent were ages 35-44 (9.0 percent female and 5.1 percent male). Less than 2 percent of unique victims were ages 45 years or older (1.2 percent female and 0.6 percent male). Less than 1 percent of victims were 17 years or younger; these victims experienced domestic abuse as a spouse or intimate partner even though they were under the age of 18.

Proportion of Unique Victims in Met Criteria Domestic Abuse Incidents by Age Group and Sex (FY 2021)

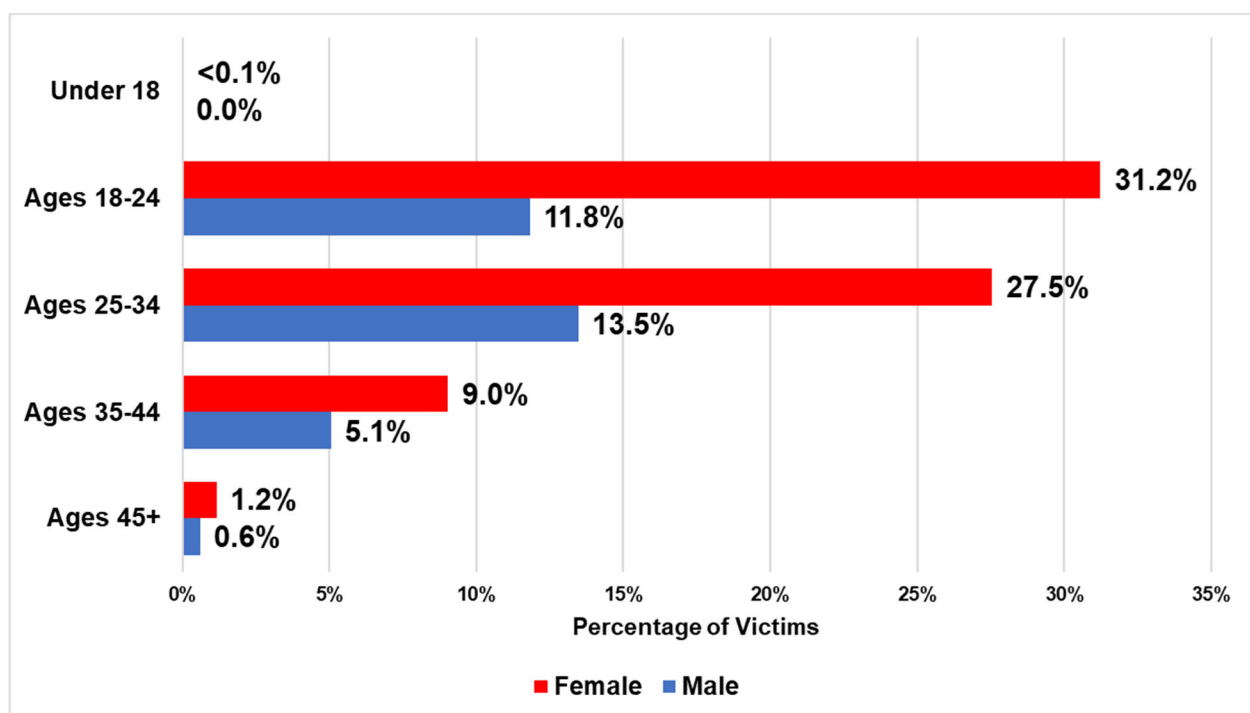


Figure 24. Age group and sex of unique victims in met criteria domestic abuse incidents in FY 2021.

As previously noted in Figure 23, more than half (53 percent) of unique domestic abuse victims in FY 2021 were Service members. Figure 25 displays the pay distribution of Service member victims of domestic abuse. The majority of victims in met criteria domestic abuse incidents were junior enlisted members; approximately 63 percent were in the E4-E6 pay grades, and 25 percent were E1-E3. Approximately seven percent of victims were E7-E9, five percent were officers (three percent were O1-O3, two percent were O4-O10), and less than one percent were warrant officers (WO1-WO5).

Pay Grade Distribution of Service Member Victims in Met Criteria Domestic Abuse Incidents (FY 2021)

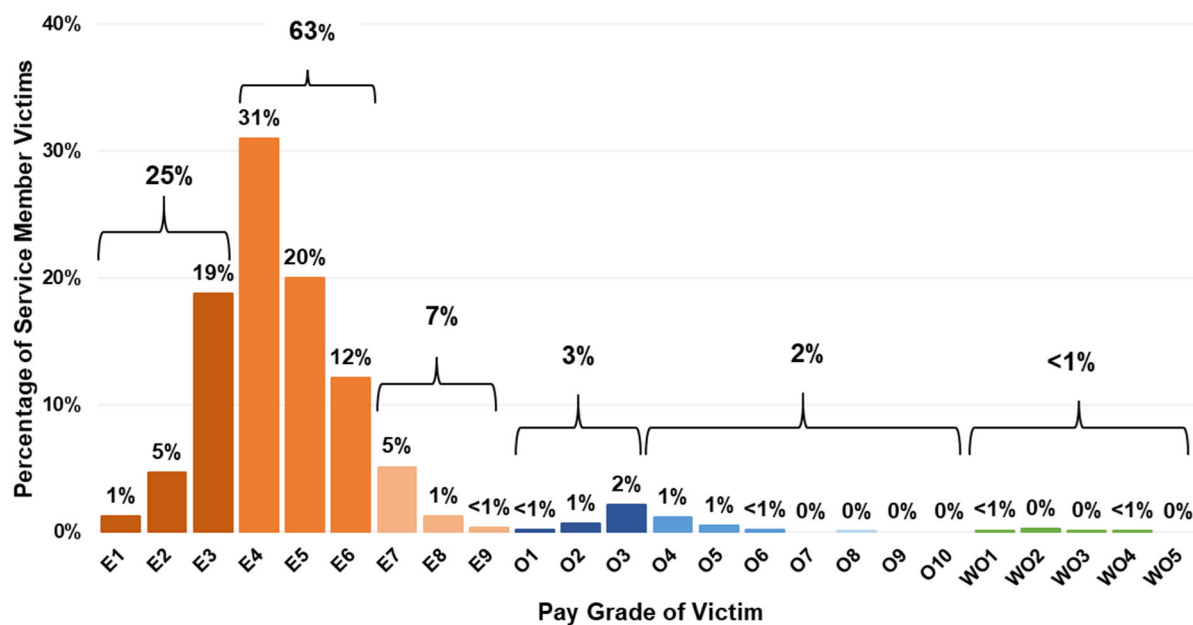


Figure 25. Percentage of Service member victims in met criteria domestic abuse incidents in each pay grade in FY 2021.

Note. Service member includes active duty members as well as Reserve and National Guard members who are in an active status.

4-3 DOMESTIC ABUSE ABUSER PROFILE

This section describes characteristics of adults who were the abusers involved in met criteria incidents of domestic abuse, including military status, sex, and age.

Figure 26 shows unique abusers in met criteria domestic abuse incidents by military status and sex. Overall, a majority of unique abusers in met criteria domestic abuse incidents were Service members (60 percent Service members vs. 40 percent civilians), and a majority were male (67 percent male vs. 33 percent female).

When examining the military status and sex of unique abusers in met criteria domestic abuse incidents in combination, 55 percent were male Service members, 26 percent were female civilians, 12 percent were male civilians, and 7 percent were female Service members.

Proportion of Unique Abusers in Met Criteria Domestic Abuse Incidents by Military Status and Sex (FY 2021)

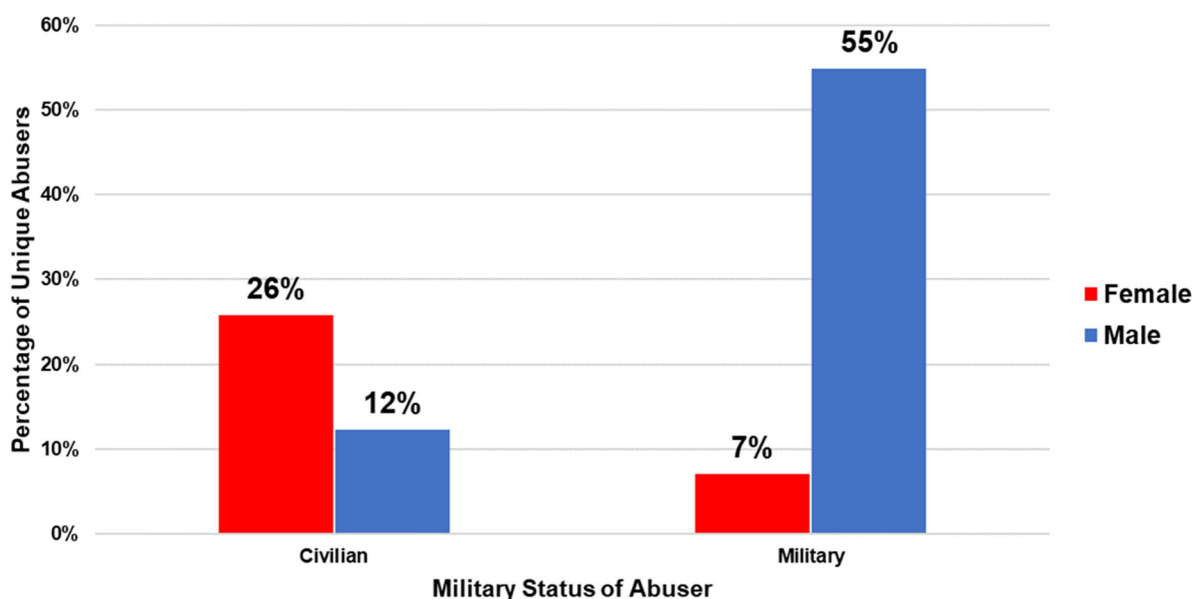


Figure 26. Military status and sex of unique abusers in met criteria domestic abuse incidents in FY 2021.

Figure 27 shows the proportion of unique abusers in met criteria domestic abuse incidents by age group and sex. More than four-fifths of abusers were 34 years or younger, which is similar to the age distribution for unique victims in met criteria domestic abuse incidents.

Of unique abusers in met criteria domestic abuse incidents, 40.3 percent were ages 18-24 (25.4 percent male and 14.9 percent female), 42.0 percent were ages 25-34 (29.3 male and 12.7 percent female), and 15.5 percent were ages 35-44 (10.8 percent male and 4.7 percent female). Slightly more than two percent of unique abusers were ages 45 years or older (1.6 percent male and 0.5 percent female). Less than 1 percent of abusers were 17 years or younger; these abusers were involved in domestic abuse as a spouse or intimate partner even though they were under the age of 18.

Proportion of Unique Abusers in Met Criteria Domestic Abuse Incidents by Age Group and Sex (FY 2021)

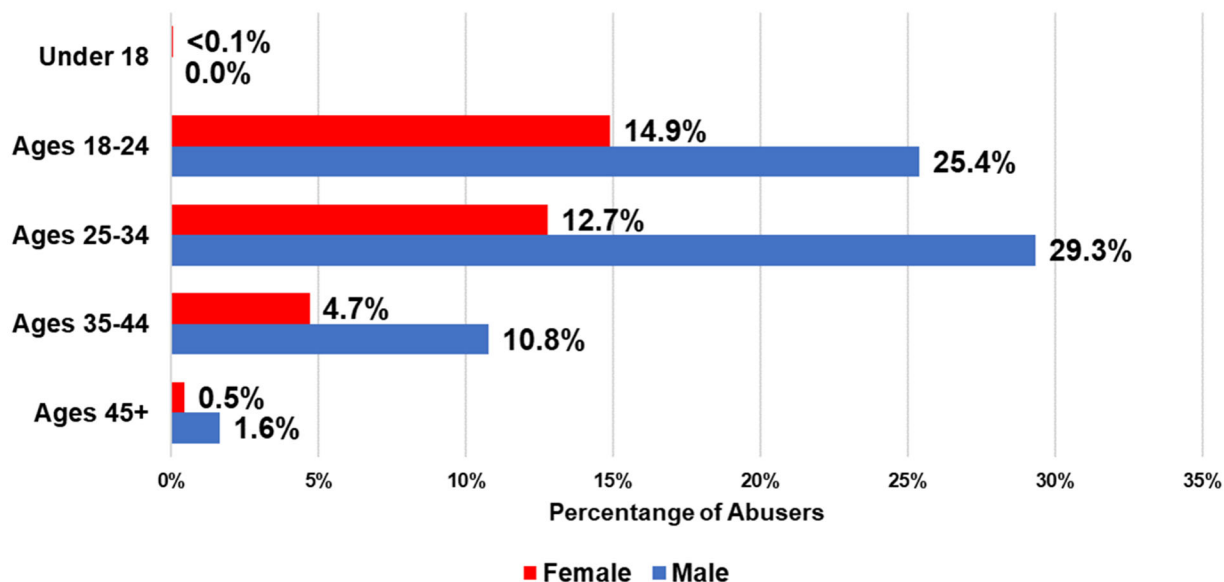


Figure 27. Age group and sex of unique abusers in met criteria domestic abuse incidents in FY 2021.

4-4 SPOUSE ABUSE

As outlined in the previous section, spouse abuse includes acts of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect. Incidents of abuse are reported separately by type of abuse. One or more incidents may be submitted to the Central Registry involving an individual victim. As noted previously, prior to FY 2015, incidents may have included multiple types of abuse under one incident. Beginning in FY 2015, reporting was standardized for consistency. The data on spouse abuse included in this section are limited to only those incidents involving married individuals.

There are three elements calculated for spouse abuse in this report: the number of reported incidents, the number of met criteria incidents, and the rate of spouse victimization. The first two elements can be impacted by external factors. For example, the number of reports can fluctuate based on the impact of awareness campaigns, training, and efforts to reduce stigma in the community associated with contacting FAP. Process improvements such as the implementation of the IDC and counting each type of maltreatment as a distinct incident can impact the number of met criteria incidents. The spouse abuse victimization rate measures the number of married individuals who experience spouse abuse per 1,000 married military couples and offers an alternative way to examine the rates of spouse abuse.

As shown in Table 5, the FY 2021 rate of reported spouse abuse per 1,000 married couples was 19.5, which is lower than the rate per 1,000 in FY 2020 (20.4). This numerical difference of 0.9 represents a 4.4 percent decrease in the rate of reported incidents and is statistically significant.⁵⁰

Table 5: Reports and Incidents of Spouse Abuse (FY 2012-FY 2021)

Fiscal Year	Reported Incidents	Met Criteria Incidents	Married Couples Population	Reports /1000	Met Criteria Incidents/1000
2012	18,671	8,345	734,308	25.4	11.4
2013	17,295	7,935	713,135	24.3	11.1
2014	16,287	7,464	690,460	23.6	10.8
2015	15,725	7,892	665,429	23.6	11.9
2016	15,144	7,661	646,782	23.4	11.8
2017	15,657	7,153	638,132	24.5	11.2
2018	15,242	7,015	628,167	24.3	11.2
2019	13,571	6,800	626,705	21.7	10.9
2020	12,663	6,596	620,387	20.4	10.6
2021	12,104	6,629	620,442	19.5	10.7

Note. Incidents of spouse abuse are reported separately by type of abuse; one or more incidents may be submitted to the Central Registry involving an individual victim.

⁵⁰ The FY 2021 rate of spouse abuse reports per 1,000 married couples (19.5) represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the average rate of spouse abuse reports during the FY 2012-FY 2021 period (95 percent CI [21.70, 24.44]).

There were 6,629 incidents of spouse abuse that met criteria in FY 2021. The rate of met criteria spouse abuse incidents per 1,000 married couples was 10.7, which is higher than the rate per 1,000 in FY 2020 (10.6). This numerical difference of 0.1 represents a 0.5 percent increase in the rate of incidents that met criteria. Despite the slight uptick in the rate of incidents that met criteria in FY 2021, the rate represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the 10-year average.⁵¹ The rate of spouse abuse reported to FAP and the rate of spouse abuse incidents that met criteria per 1,000 married couples from FY 2012-FY 2021 are displayed in Figure 28.

Spouse Abuse Reports vs. Met Criteria Incident Rates per 1,000 Married Couples (FY 2012-FY 2021)

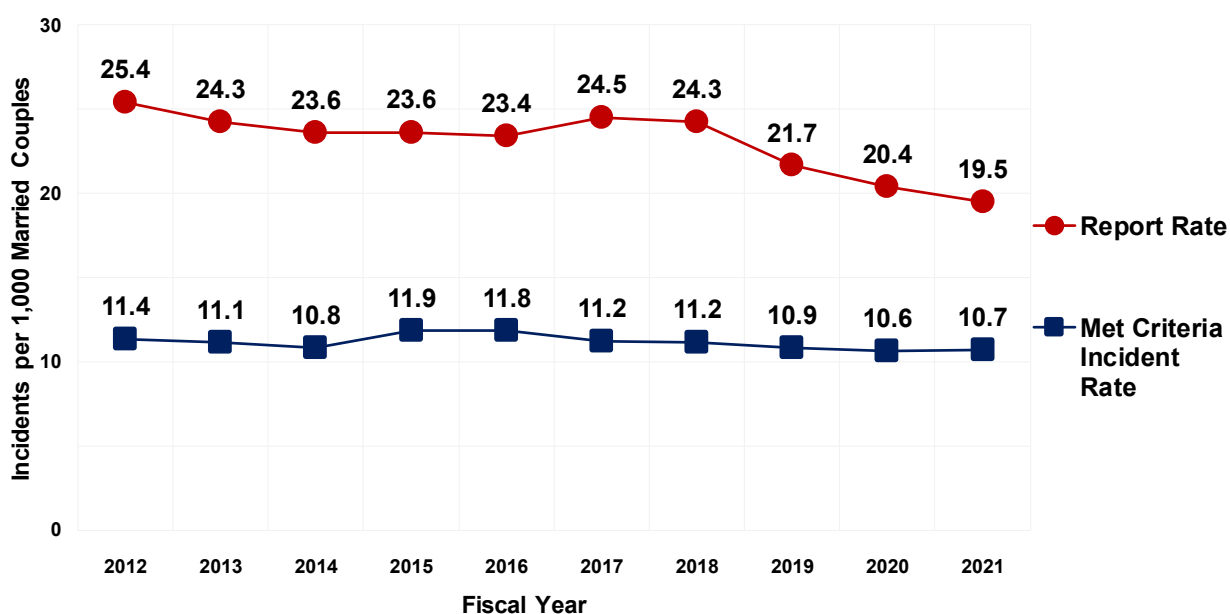


Figure 28. Rates of spouse abuse incidents reported to FAP and the rates of spouse abuse incidents that met DoD criteria over time.

Note. Prior to FY 2015, incidents may have included multiple types of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect) under one incident report.

⁵¹ The FY 2021 rate of met criteria spouse abuse incidents per 1,000 married couples (10.7) represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the average rate per 1,000 married couples during the FY 2012-FY 2021 period (95 percent CI [10.84, 11.47]).

As shown in Table 6 there were 5,276 unique victims of spouse abuse in FY 2021. The FY 2021 unique spouse abuse victim rate per 1,000 married couples was 8.5, which is lower than the rate per 1,000 in FY 2020 (8.6) (see Figure 29). This numerical difference of 0.1 represents a 1.2 percent decrease in the rate of reported incidents and represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the average 10-year rate.⁵²

Table 6: Unique Victims of Spouse Abuse (FY 2012-FY 2021)

Fiscal Year	Met Criteria Incidents	Unique Victims	Married Couples Population	Met Criteria Incidents/1000	Rate of Victims/1000
2012	8,345	7,462	734,308	11.4	10.2
2013	7,935	6,928	713,135	11.1	9.7
2014	7,464	6,491	690,460	10.8	9.4
2015	7,892	6,314	665,429	11.9	9.5
2016	7,661	6,033	646,782	11.8	9.3
2017	7,153	5,781	638,132	11.2	9.1
2018	7,015	5,550	628,167	11.2	8.8
2019	6,800	5,505	626,705	10.9	8.8
2020	6,596	5,363	620,387	10.6	8.6
2021	6,629	5,276	620,442	10.7	8.5

Note. This table shows the number of spouse abuse incidents that met criteria and the number of unique victims who experienced those incidents. Incidents of abuse are reported separately by type of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect); one or more incidents may be submitted to the Central Registry involving an individual victim.

⁵² The FY 2021 spouse abuse victim rate per 1,000 married couples (8.5) represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the average spouse abuse victim rate per 1,000 married couples during the FY 2012-FY 2021 period (95 percent CI [8.82, 9.57]).

Rate of Unique Spouse Abuse Victims per 1,000 Married Couples (FY 2012-FY 2021)

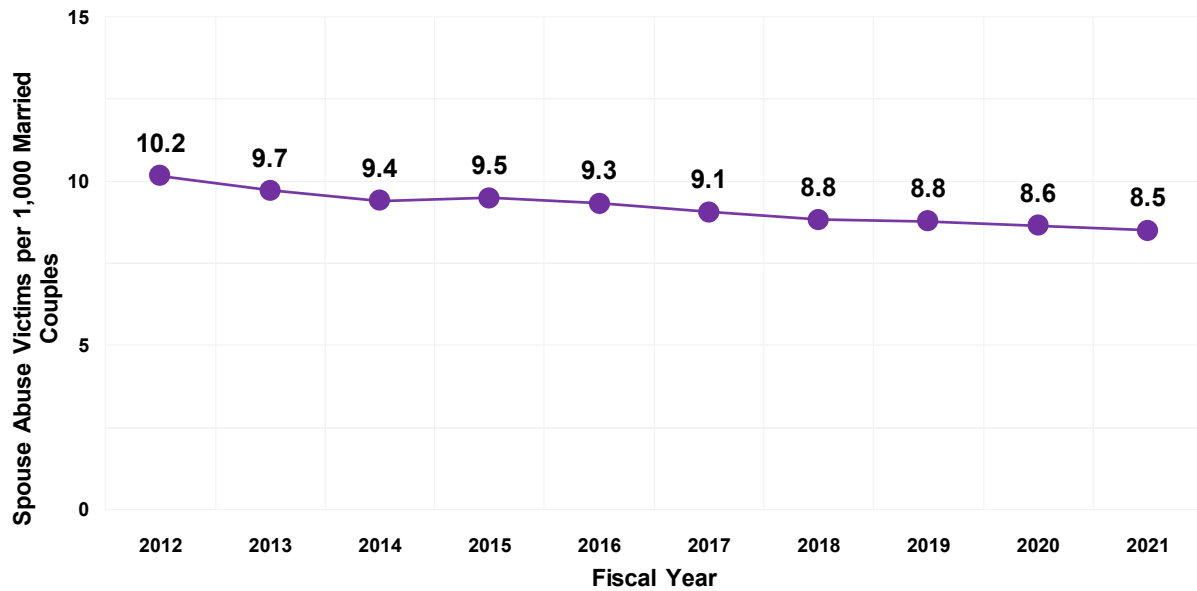


Figure 29. Rate of unique spouse abuse victims per 1,000 married couples in the military population over time.

4-5 SPOUSE ABUSE VICTIM PROFILE

This section describes adults who were victims in met criteria incidents of spouse abuse.

The military status of victims involved in spouse abuse incidents that met criteria in FY 2021 is displayed in Figure 30. Of the total victims, 51 percent were Service members and 49 percent were civilians.

Military Status of Unique Victims in Met Criteria Spouse Abuse Incidents (FY 2021)

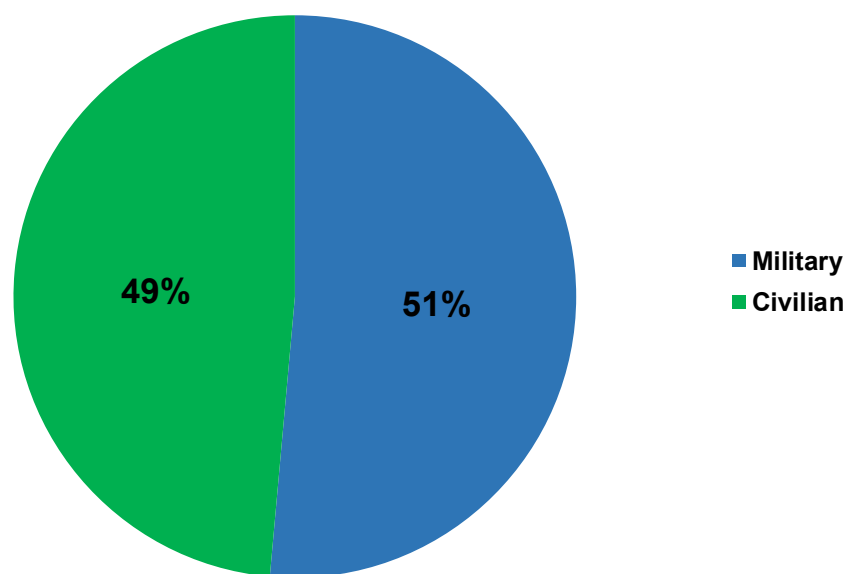


Figure 30. Military status of spouse abuse victims in FY 2021.

Note. Military includes active duty members as well as Reserve and National Guard members who are in an active status.

Overall, 70 percent of victims of spouse abuse in met criteria incidents were female and 30 percent of the victims were male.

Figure 31 displays the sex of spouse abuse victims for each abuse type. Females comprised a larger proportion of victims than males for all types of abuse. Ninety-six percent of spouse abuse victims who experienced sexual abuse were female versus 4 percent male. For emotional abuse, 79 percent of victims were female versus 21 percent male. Among incidents of physical abuse, the most common type of domestic abuse in military families, 66 percent of victims were female versus 34 percent male. While 100 percent of victims of neglect were female, it is important to note that neglect accounted for less than 0.1 percent of all met criteria domestic abuse incidents.

Sex of Victims in Met Criteria Spouse Abuse Incidents (FY 2021)

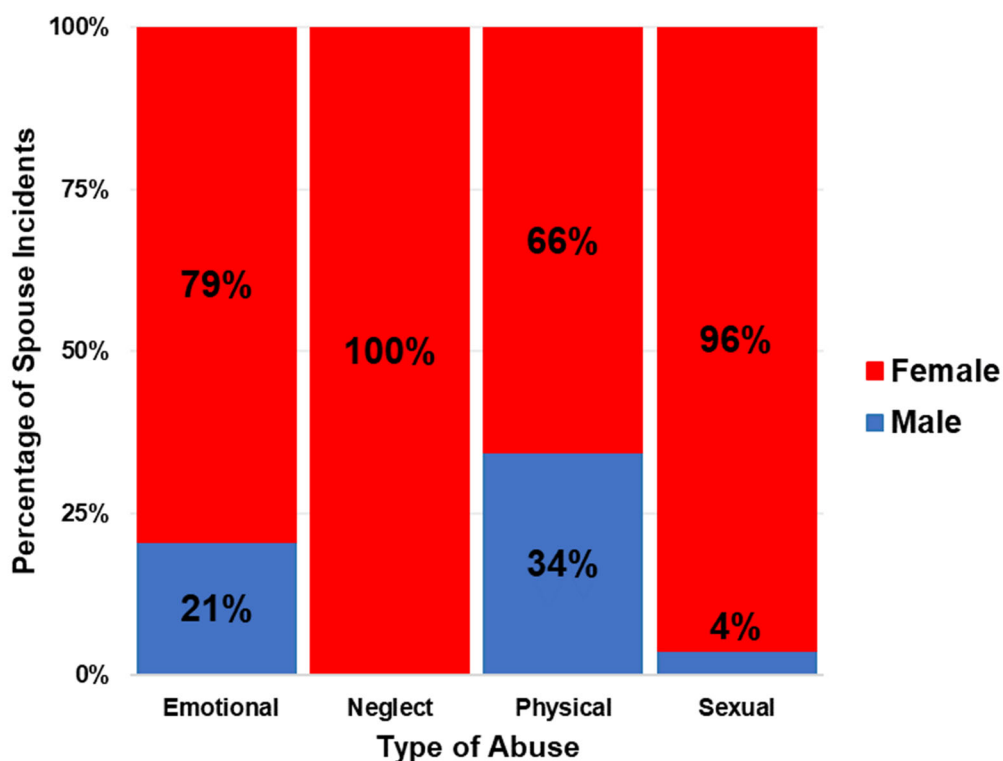


Figure 31. Sex of victims in met criteria spouse abuse incidents, by type of abuse in FY 2021.

4-6 SPOUSE ABUSER PROFILE

This section describes characteristics of adults who were the abusers involved in incidents that met criteria for spouse abuse, including military status and pay grade.

The military status of abusers involved in spouse abuse incidents that met criteria in FY 2021 are displayed in Figure 32. Sixty-one percent of abusers were military members and 39 percent were civilians.

Military Status of Abusers in Met Criteria Spouse Abuse Incidents (FY 2021)

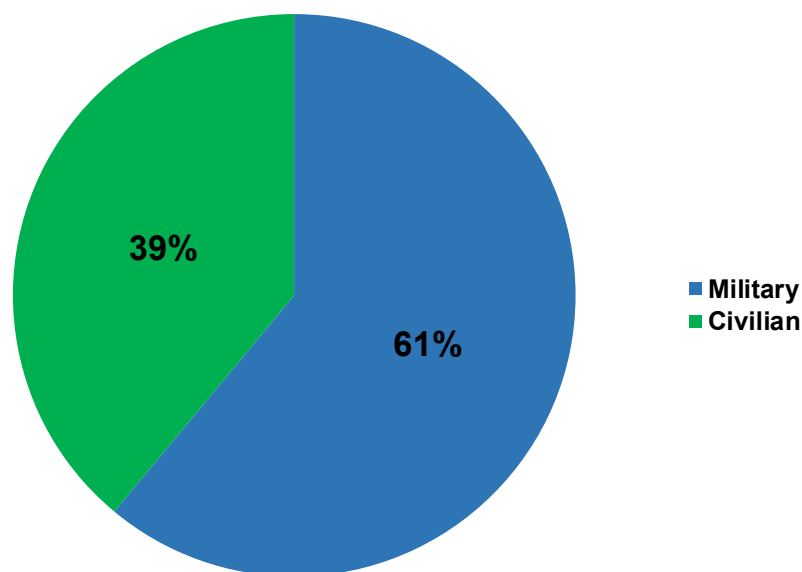


Figure 32. Military status of abusers in met criteria spouse abuse incidents in FY 2021.

Note. Military includes active duty members as well as Reserve and National Guard members who are in an active status.

As shown in Figure 33, the military status distribution of abusers in met criteria spouse abuse incidents has been relatively consistent since FY 2012.

Military Status of Unique Abusers in Met Criteria Spouse Abuse Incidents (FY 2012-FY 2021)

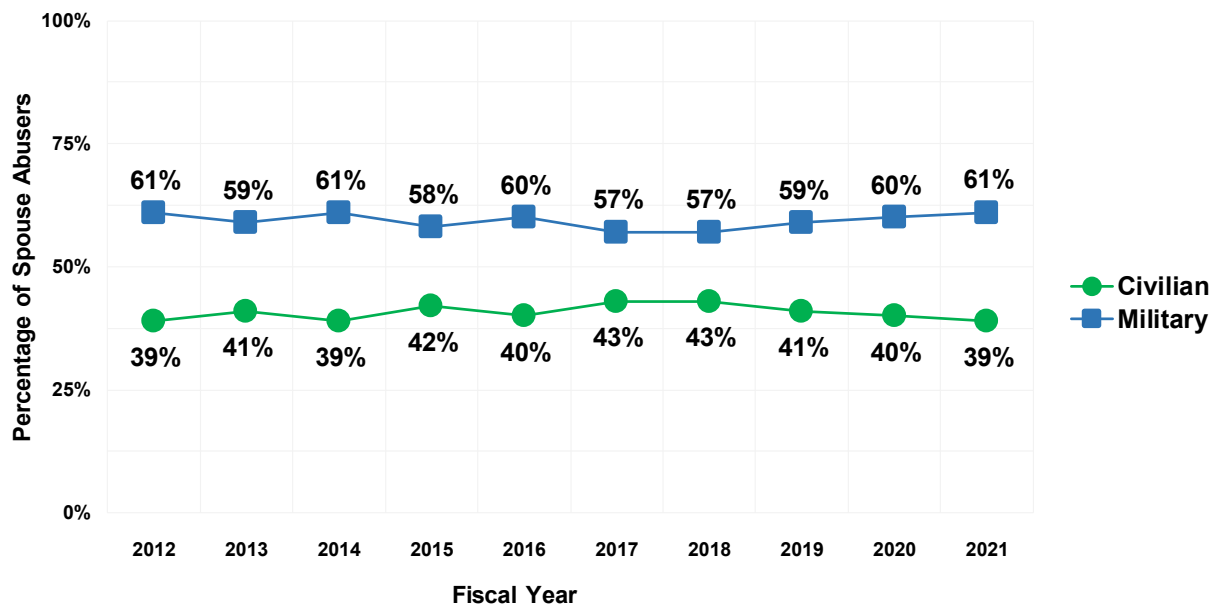


Figure 33. Military status of abusers in met criteria spouse abuse incidents over time.

Figure 34 displays a breakdown by pay grade for military spouse abusers who were involved in a met criteria incident. The majority of abusers in met criteria incidents were junior enlisted members; approximately 64 percent were E4-E6, and 23 percent were E1-E3. Seven percent of abusers were E7-E9, five percent were officers (three percent were O1-O3, two percent were O4-O10), and one percent were warrant officers (WO1-WO5).

Pay Grade Distribution of Military Spouse Abusers in Met Criteria Spouse Abuse Incidents (FY 2021)

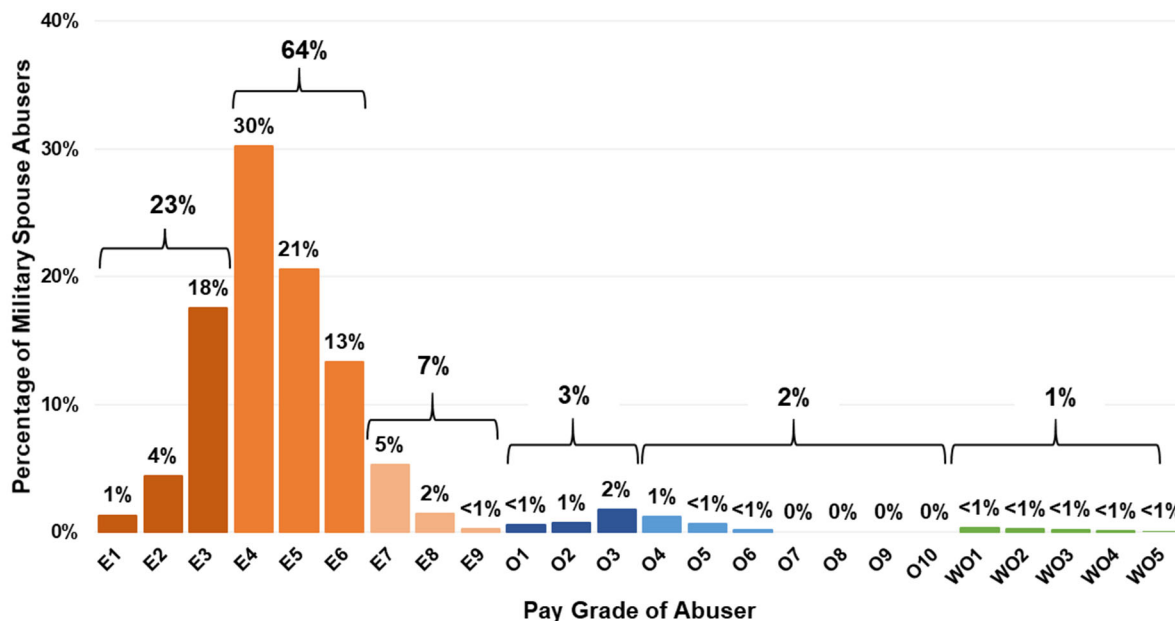


Figure 34. Percentage of military spouse abusers in met criteria incidents in each pay grade in FY 2021.

Note. Military includes active duty members as well as Reserve and National Guard members who are in an active status.

When comparing the pay grades of active duty spouse abusers in met criteria incidents to the pay grades of the total population of active duty spouses in FY 2021, the differences in relative proportions are pronounced, although they are relatively consistent with FY 2020 data. As displayed in Figure 35, the proportion of active duty abusers in met criteria incidents of spouse abuse is greater than the respective proportion of the total active duty population of spouses in the E4-E6 pay grade (64 percent vs. 52 percent) and the E1-E3 pay grade (23 percent vs. 8 percent).⁵³

Conversely, the proportion of active duty abusers in met criteria incidents of spouse abuse is less than the respective proportion of the total active duty population of spouses in the E7-E9 (7 percent vs. 17 percent), O1-O3 (3 percent vs. 10 percent), O4-O10 (2 percent vs. 11 percent), and WO1-WO5 (1 percent vs. 2 percent) pay grades.

Proportion of Active Duty Spouse Abusers in Met Criteria Incidents by Pay Grade, Compared to Demographics (FY 2021)

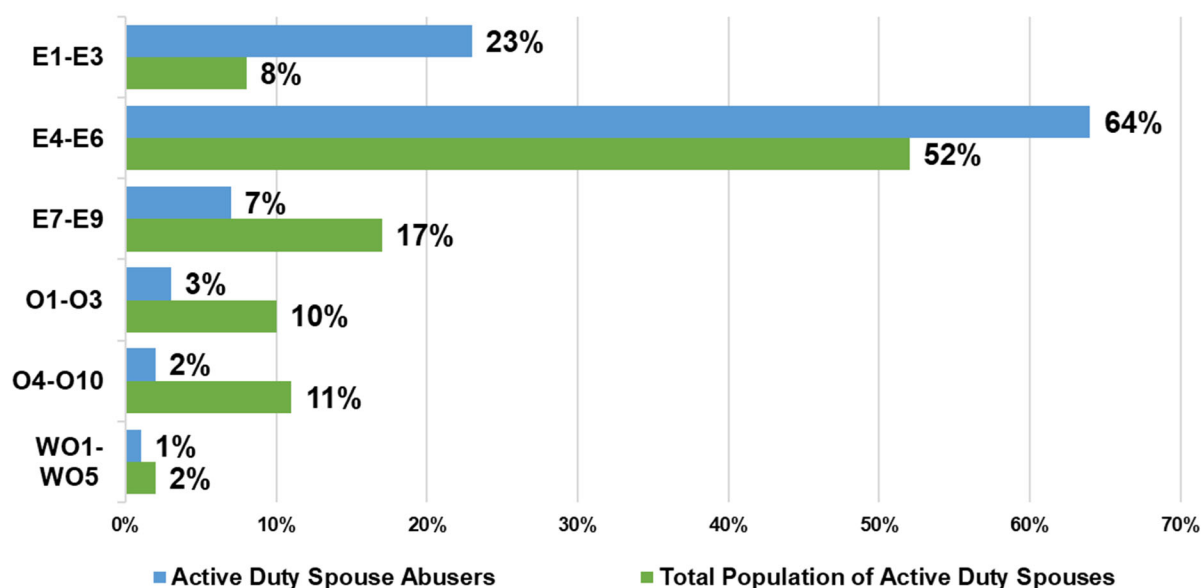


Figure 35. Comparison of the proportion of active duty spouse abusers in met criteria incidents with a particular pay grade to the proportion of active duty spouses in the military population with a particular pay grade.

⁵³ While Figure 38 displays pay grade of military spouse abusers in met criteria incidents, this figure focuses on pay grade of active duty spouse abusers in met criteria incidents, exclusively.

While the breakdown of active duty spouse abusers by pay grade in Figure 38 indicates that the greatest proportion of active duty abusers were in the E4-E6 pay grades, the highest rate per 1,000 of active duty married couples involved in incidents of spouse abuse is for abusers who are in the E1-E3 (14.7) pay grades (see Figure 36).

Rate of Active Duty Spouse Abusers per 1,000 Married Couples by Pay Grade (FY 2021)

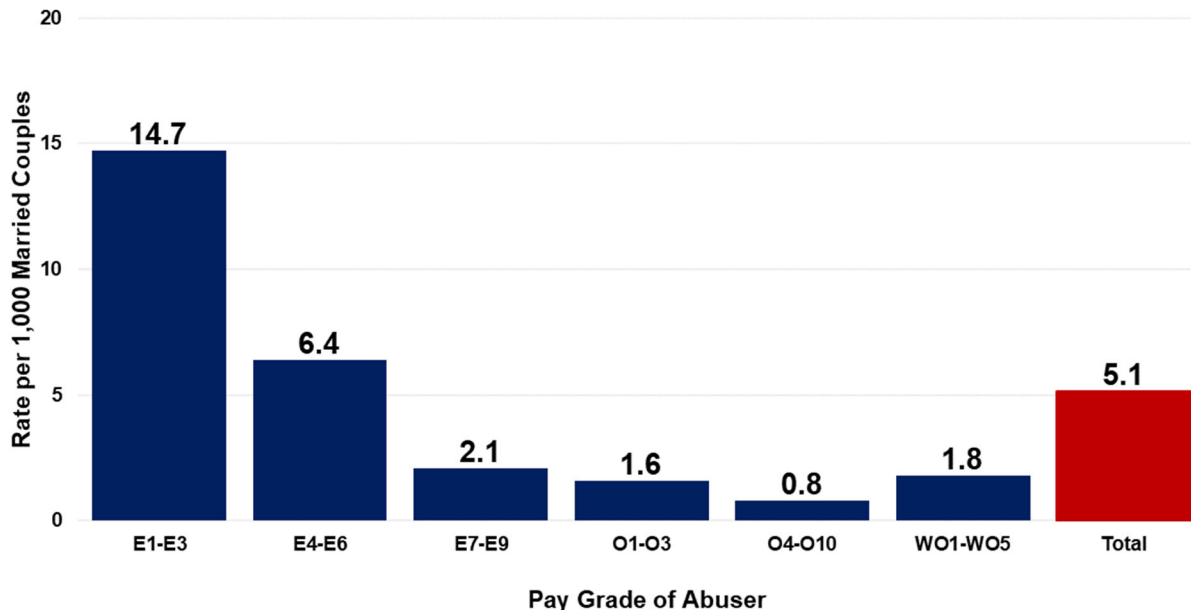


Figure 36. Rate of active duty abusers in met criteria spouse abuse incidents per 1,000 married couples in the population by pay grade in FY 2021.

Overall, 69 percent of abusers in met criteria spouse abuse incidents were male and 31 percent were female.

Figure 37 shows the proportions of male and female abusers for each individual type of met criteria spouse abuse. The vast majority of spouse abusers in met criteria incidents of sexual abuse were male (97 percent male vs. 3 percent female). Males were also more likely to be abusers in emotional abuse incidents (78 percent male vs. 22 percent female) and in physical abuse incidents (64 percent male vs. 36 percent male). Males were more likely to be abusers in neglect incidents (75 percent male vs. 25 percent female); however, it is important to note that neglect accounts for less than 1 percent of all met criteria domestic abuse incidents.

Sex of Abusers in Met Criteria Spouse Abuse Incidents (FY 2021)

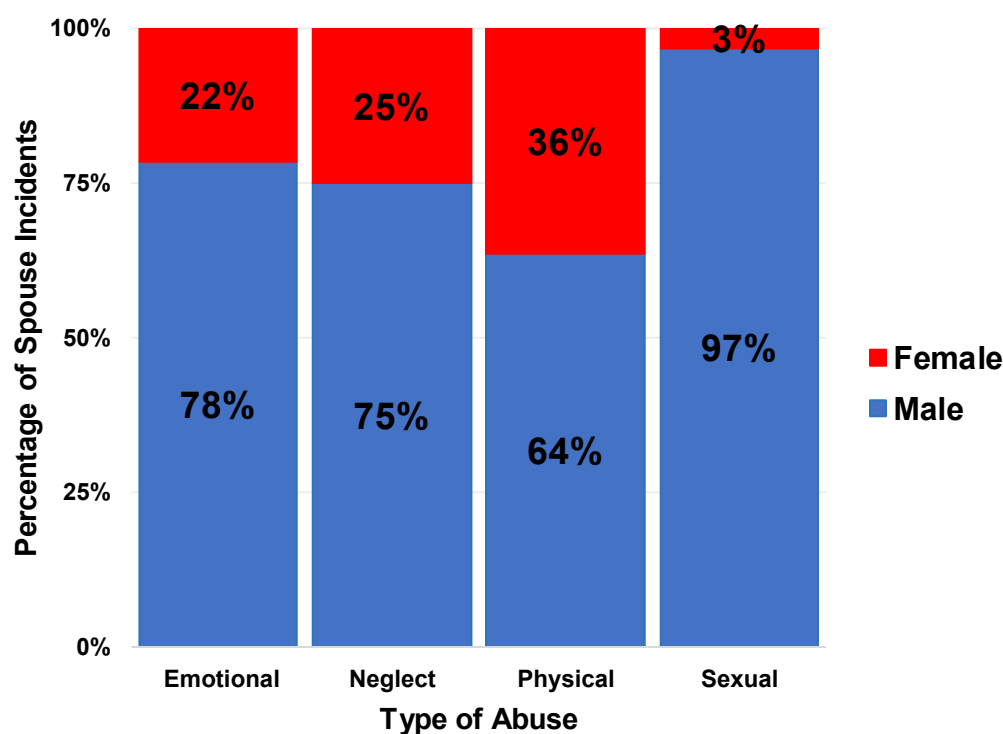


Figure 37. Sex of abusers in met criteria spouse abuse incidents in FY 2021.

Looking specifically at Service member abusers in met criteria spouse abuse incidents, 91 percent were male and 9 percent were female.

Figure 38 shows the proportions of Service member male and female abusers in met criteria spouse abuse incidents for each individual type of abuse. The vast majority of Service member spouse abusers for incidents of sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect were male (99 percent male vs. 1 percent female for sexual abuse, 96 percent vs. 4 percent for emotional abuse, and 100 percent for neglect). Eighty-nine percent of Service member abusers in physical abuse incidents were male versus 11 percent female. Again, it is important to note that neglect accounts for less than 1 percent of all met criteria spouse abuse incidents.

Sex of Service Member Abusers in Met Criteria Spouse Abuse Incidents (FY 2021)

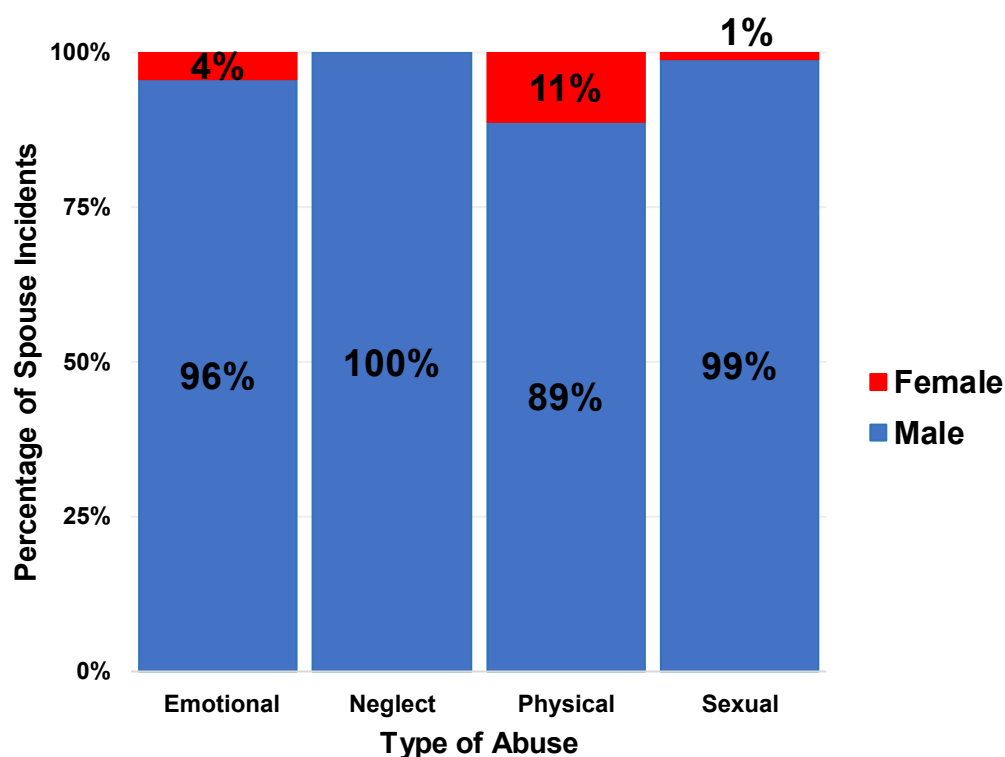


Figure 38. Sex of Service member abusers in met criteria spouse abuse incidents in FY 2021.

Figure 39 shows the breakdown of spouse abusers by sex and military status. Among male abusers in met criteria incidents of spouse abuse, 2,916 were Service members, 580 were family members, and 24 fell into the “other” category.⁵⁴ Among female abusers in met criteria incidents of spouse abuse, 315 were Service members, 1,447 were family members, and 11 were categorized as “other”.

Unique Abusers in Met Criteria Spouse Abuse Incidents by Sex and Military Status (FY 2021)

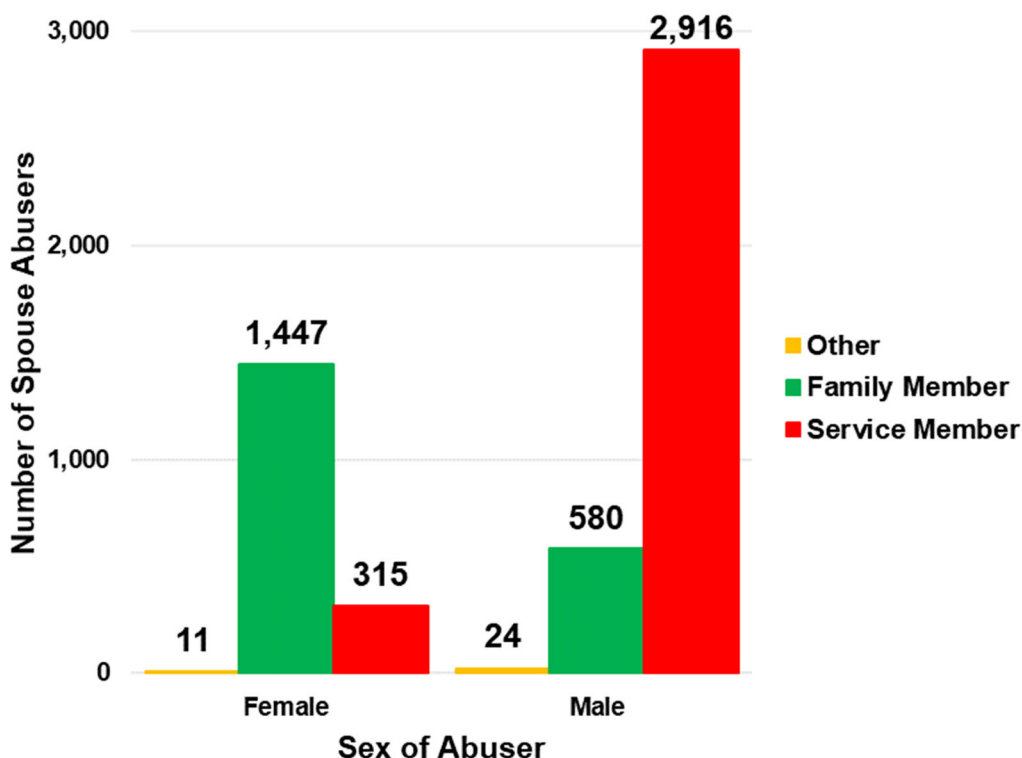


Figure 39. Number of unique abusers in met criteria spouse abuse incidents by sex and military status in FY 2021.

Note. “Other” category includes DoD civilians, non-DoD government civilians, retired Service members, government contractors, non-beneficiaries, and those who had an unknown status.

⁵⁴ The “other” category includes abusers in met criteria incidents who were DoD civilians, non-DoD government civilians, retired Service members, government contractors, non-beneficiaries, and those who had an unknown status. Improvements in data entry (properly categorizing an abuser as a “family member” primarily rather than a “DoD civilian” or “retired”) has resulted in a decrease in the “other” category when compared to prior reports.

4-7 INTIMATE PARTNER ABUSE INCIDENTS

As with child abuse and neglect and spouse abuse, incidents of unmarried intimate partner abuse are reported separately by type of abuse. Prior to FY 2015, incidents may have included multiple types of abuse under one incident. Now, more than one incident may be submitted to the Central Registry involving an individual victim. This represents a change in reporting for consistency. The data on intimate partner abuse included in this section are those incidents involving former spouses, individuals with whom the victim shares a child in common, and current or former partners with whom the victim shares or has shared a common domicile.⁵⁵ As outlined previously, the types of abuse for intimate partner abuse are consistent with those for spouse abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect).

In FY 2021, there were 1,328 met criteria incidents of intimate partner abuse involving 1,048 adult unique victims (see Table 7).⁵⁶ The number of met criteria incidents and the number of unique victims represent a statistically significant increase when compared to their respective 10-year averages. A rate per 1,000 of intimate partner abuse cannot be established, as data on unmarried individuals involved in intimate partner relationships as defined by the DoD, are not available.

Table 7: Incidents of Intimate Partner Abuse (FY 2012-FY 2021)

Fiscal Year	Reported Incidents	Met Criteria Incidents	Unique Victims
2012	1,718	909	656
2013	1,866	996	689
2014	1,870	969	669
2015	1,798	966	778
2016	1,771	1,022	847
2017	1,519	916	756
2018	1,670	1,024	822
2019	1,902	1,121	886
2020	2,026	1,307	996
2021	2,195	1,328	1,048

⁵⁵ The definition cited here was in place during the period covered by this report. A more expansive intimate partner definition appears in 6400.06, December 15, 2021, as amended.

⁵⁶ The number of met criteria intimate partner abuse incidents in FY 2021 (1,328) is a statistically significant increase when compared to the average number of intimate partner abuse incidents during the FY 2012-FY 2021 period (95 percent CI [948.13, 1163.47]). The number of unique intimate partner abuse victims in FY 2021 (1,048) is a statistically significant increase when compared to the average number of unique intimate partner abuse victims during the FY 2012-FY 2021 period (95 percent CI [719.17, 910.23]).

4-8 INTIMATE PARTNER ABUSE VICTIM PROFILE

This section describes characteristics of victims in met criteria intimate partner abuse incidents.

The military status of unique victims in met criteria intimate partner abuse incidents in FY 2021 is displayed in Figure 40. Of the victims of intimate partner abuse, 64 percent were Service members and 36 percent were civilians.

Military Status of Unique Victims in Met Criteria Intimate Partner Abuse Incidents (FY 2021)

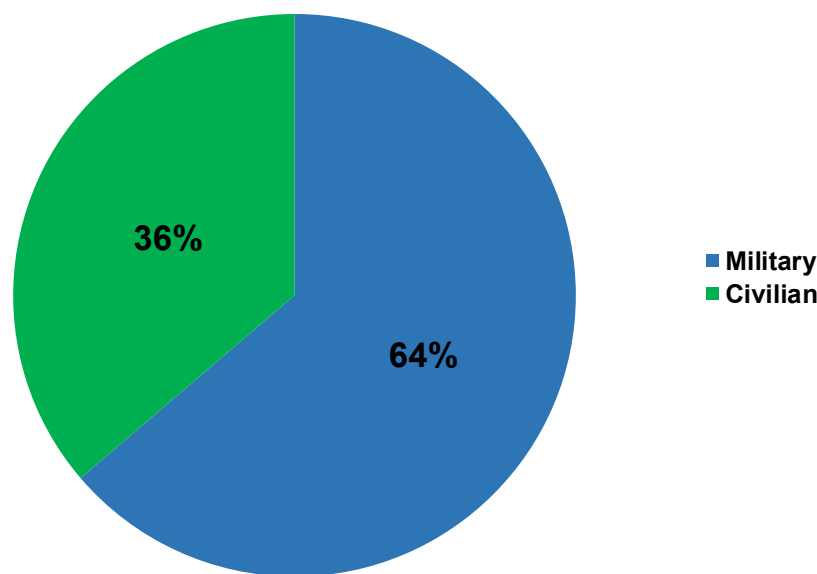


Figure 40. Military status of unique victims in met criteria incidents of intimate partner abuse in FY 2021.

Note. Military includes active duty members as well as Reserve and National Guard members who are in an active status.

The sex of unique victims involved in met criteria intimate partner abuse incidents in FY 2021 is displayed in Figure 41.

Sex of Unique Victims in Met Criteria Intimate Partner Abuse Incidents (FY 2021)

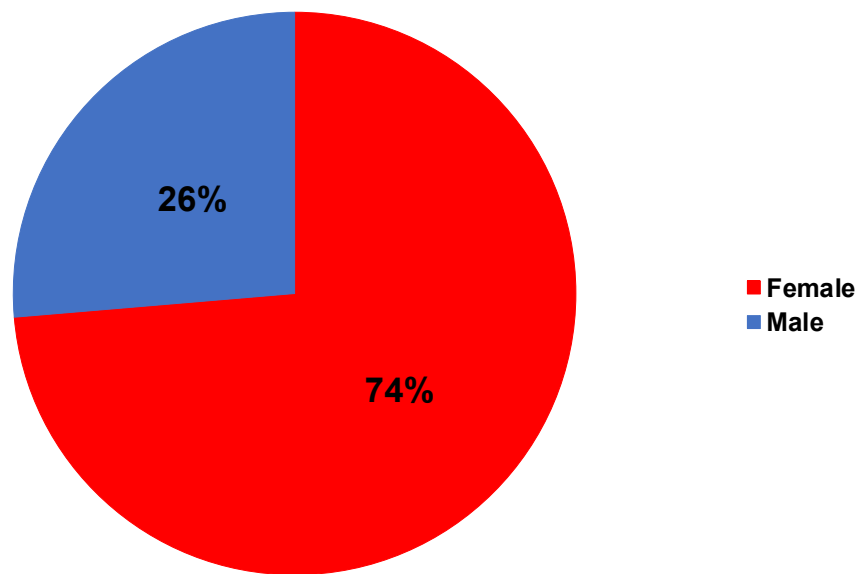


Figure 41. Sex of victims in met criteria incidents of intimate partner abuse in FY 2021.

4-9 INTIMATE PARTNER ABUSER PROFILE

This section describes characteristics of abusers in met criteria intimate partner abuse incidents.

The military status of abusers involved in met criteria intimate partner abuse incidents in FY 2021 is displayed in Figure 42. Sixty-seven percent of abusers were Service members and 33 percent were civilians.

Military Status of Unique Abusers in Met Criteria Intimate Partner Abuse Incidents (FY 2021)

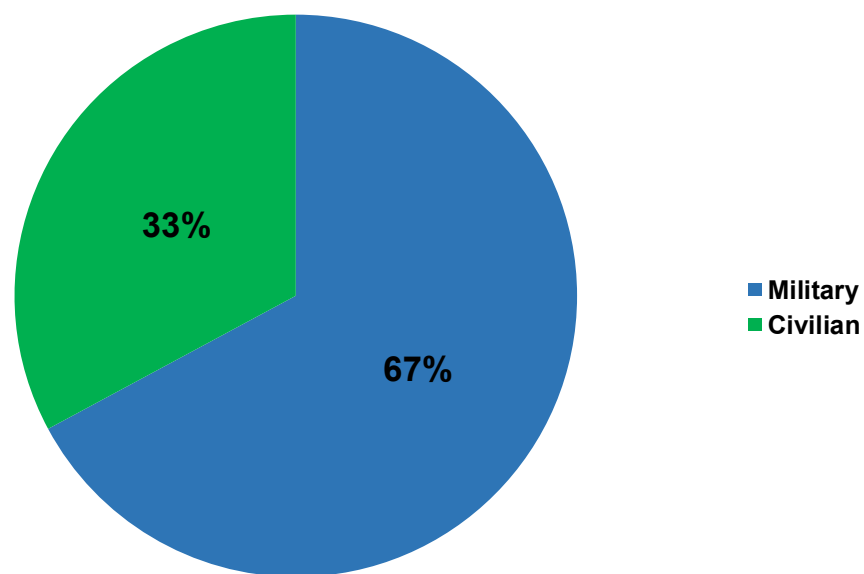


Figure 42. Military status of unique abusers in met criteria intimate partner abuse incidents in FY 2021.

Note. Military includes active duty members as well as Reserve and National Guard members who are in an active status.

Figure 43 displays a breakdown by pay grade for military intimate partners who were abusers in met criteria intimate partner incidents. The majority of abusers were junior enlisted members; approximately 63 percent were E4-E6 and 25 percent were E1-E3. Seven percent of abusers were E7-E9, four percent were officers (three percent were O1-O3, one percent were O4-O10), and less than one percent were warrant officers (WO1-WO5).

Pay Grade Distribution of Military Intimate Partner Abusers in Met Criteria Intimate Partner Abuse Incidents (FY 2021)

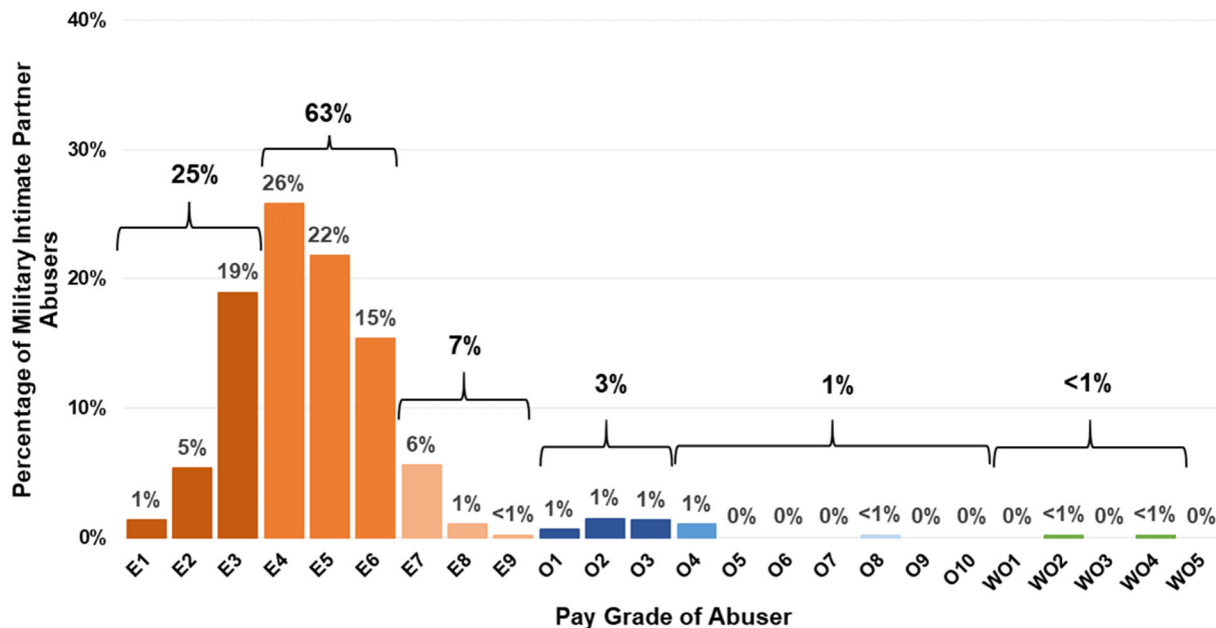


Figure 43. Percentage of Service members who were abusers in met criteria intimate partner incidents in each pay grade in FY 2021.

Note. Military includes active duty members as well as Reserve and National Guard members who are in an active status.

The sex of abusers in met criteria intimate partner abuse incidents in FY 2021 is displayed in Figure 44. Among unique abusers in these incidents, 71 percent were male and 29 percent were female.

Sex of Unique Abusers in Met Criteria Intimate Partner Abuse Incidents (FY 2021)

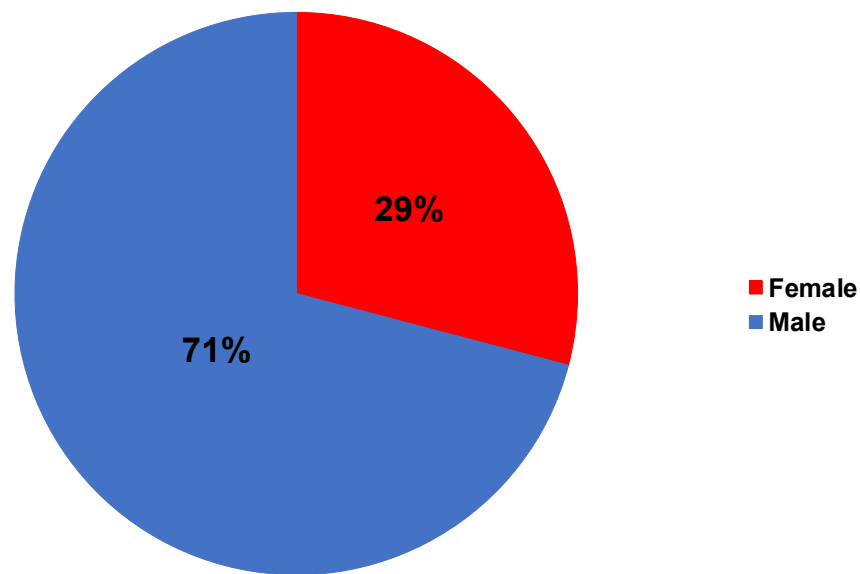


Figure 44. Sex of abusers in met criteria intimate partner abuse incidents in FY 2021.

4-10 ADULT SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse of a spouse or intimate partner is defined as:

“A sexual act or sexual contact with the spouse or intimate partner without the consent of the spouse or intimate partner or against the expressed wishes of the spouse or intimate partner. Includes abusive sexual contact with a spouse or intimate partner, aggravated sexual assault of a spouse or intimate partner, aggravated contact of a spouse or intimate partner, rape of a spouse or intimate partner, sodomy of a spouse or intimate partner, and wrongful sexual contact of an intimate partner.”⁵⁷ In the *FY 2021 DoD Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military*, sexual abuse is referred to as “domestic abuse-related sexual assault” in Appendix F of that report.

Sexual abuse in the domestic violence field is contextually distinct from sexual assault in that it occurs within a marriage or intimate partner relationship as part of a larger pattern of behavior resulting in emotional or psychological abuse, economic control, and/or interference with personal liberty. Sexual abuse occurring within the context of a domestic relationship is indicative of higher risk for more serious injury or fatality, and is referred to FAP for comprehensive safety planning, victim advocacy and support, and treatment (when appropriate and requested by the victim).

In FY 2021, there were 409 met criteria incidents of adult sexual abuse (see Table 8) and 390 unique victims of sexual abuse who received FAP services.⁵⁸ This increase of 82 met criteria incidents in comparison to FY 2020 (327) is statistically significant. Given there were more incidents than victims, one or more victims experienced more than one incident of sexual abuse.

Table 8: Incidents of Met Criteria Adult Sexual Abuse (FY 2012-FY 2021)

Fiscal Year	Total Met Criteria Domestic Abuse Incidents	Met Criteria Adult Sexual Abuse Incidents	Percentage of Overall Met Criteria Domestic Abuse
2012	9,254	202	2.18
2013	8,931	208	2.33
2014	8,433	241	2.86
2015	8,858	262	2.96
2016	8,683	299	3.44
2017	8,069	300	3.72
2018	8,039	290	3.61
2019	7,921	310	3.91
2020	7,903	327	4.14
2021	7,957	409	5.14

Note: Met criteria domestic abuse incidents include spouse abuse and intimate partner abuse combined.

⁵⁷ DoDM 6400.01, Volume 3, Glossary, August 11, 2016, as amended.

⁵⁸ The number of adult sexual abuse incidents in FY 2021 (409) represents a statistically significant increase when compared to the average number of adult sexual abuse incidents during the FY 2012-FY 2021 period (95 percent CI [241.16, 328.44]).

Of the 390 unique victims of adult sexual abuse who received FAP services in FY 2021, 374 (95.9 percent) were female and 16 (4.1 percent) were male. Examining the characteristics of unique victims by age, a majority were between the ages of 18 and 34 (87.1 percent). Figure 45 shows the proportion of unique adult sexual abuse victims by age and sex.

Of the unique victims in met criteria adult sexual abuse incidents, 45.3 percent (43.8 percent female and 1.5 percent male) were ages 25-34, 41.8 percent (39.7 percent female and 2.1 percent male) were ages 18-24, and 10.8 percent (10.3 percent female and 0.5 percent male) were ages 35-44. All victims 45 years or older were female (1.8 percent). Less than 1 percent of unique victims of adult sexual abuse were 17 years or younger; these victims experienced sexual abuse as a spouse or intimate partner even though they were under the age of 18.

Proportion of Unique Victims in Met Criteria Adult Sexual Abuse Incidents by Age Group and Sex (FY 2021)

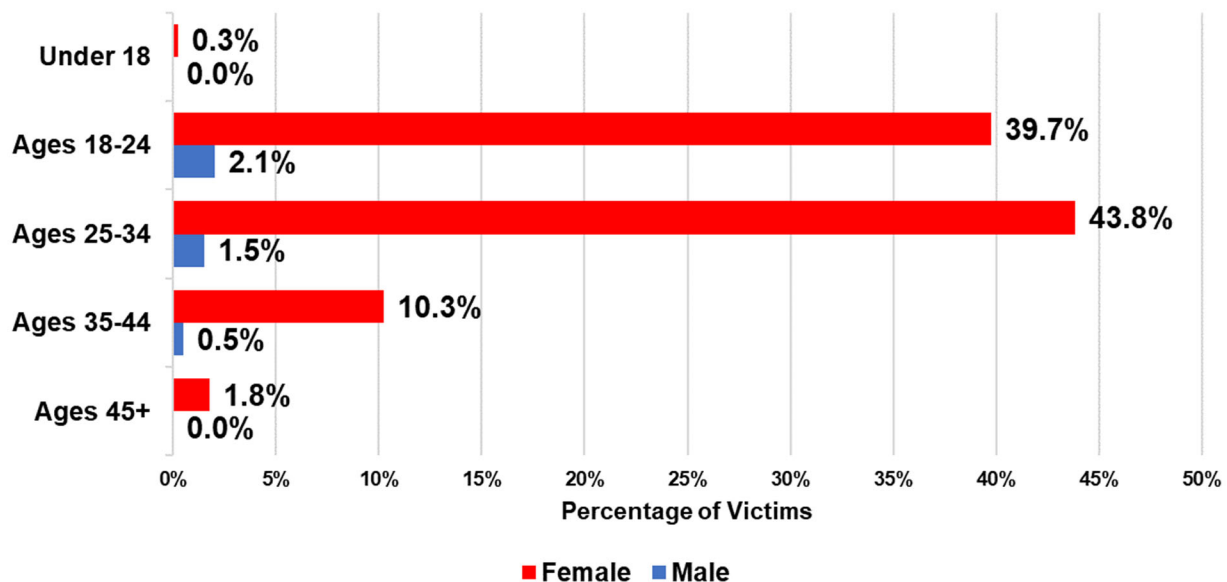


Figure 45. Age group and sex of unique victims in met criteria incidents of adult sexual abuse in FY 2021.

As shown in Figure 46, of the 390 unique victims of adult sexual abuse who received FAP services in FY 2021, 225 (57.7 percent) were family members, 130 (33.3 percent) were Service members, and 35 (9.0 percent) fell into the “other”⁵⁹ category, including 33 (8.5 percent) who were non-beneficiaries and 2 (0.5 percent) who were DoD civilians, non-DoD civilians, retired Service members, or government contractors.

Of the 380 unique abusers in met criteria sexual abuse incidents, 313 (82.4 percent) were Service members, 57 (15.0 percent) were family members, and 10 (2.6 percent) fell into the “other” category.

Among the 313 abusers who were Service members, 307 (98.1 percent) were active duty and 6 (1.9 percent) were Reserve or in the National Guard. The vast majority of Service member abusers in adult sexual abuse incidents were enlisted members (281 or 89.8 percent); fewer were officers (30 or 9.6 percent) or warrant officers (2 or 0.6 percent).

Status of Unique Victims and Abusers in Met Criteria Adult Sexual Abuse Incidents (FY 2021)

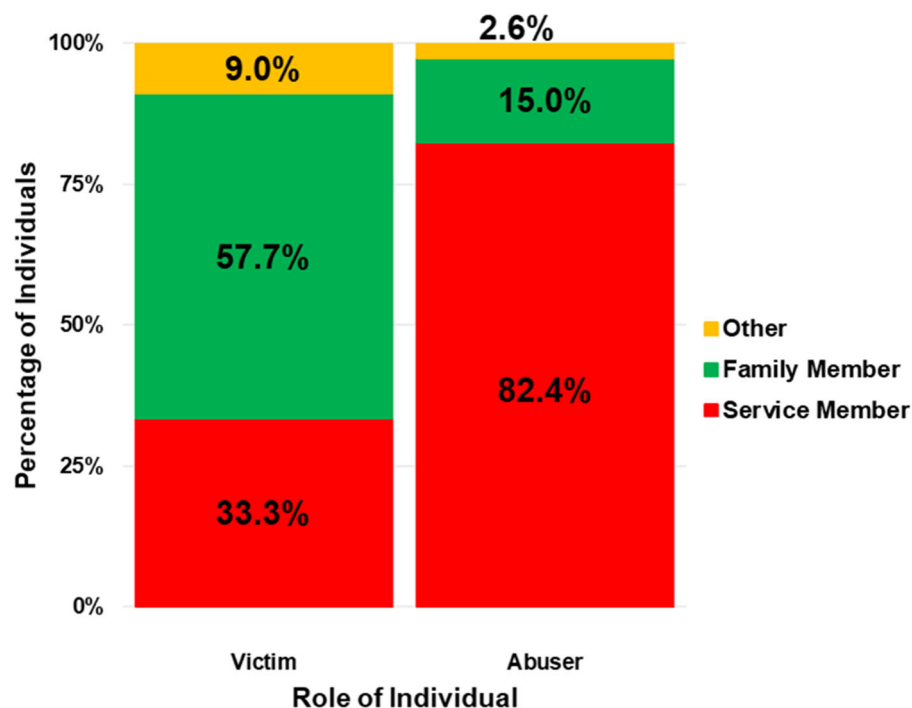


Figure 46. Status of unique victims and abusers in met criteria incidents of adult sexual abuse in FY 2021.

⁵⁹ The “other” category includes abusers in met criteria incidents who were DoD civilians, non-DoD government civilians, retired Service members, government contractors, non-beneficiaries, and those who had an unknown status.

Figures 45 and 46 show that when examining the sex and status of unique victims of adult sexual abuse in FY 2021 separately, the majority were female (95.9 percent) and the majority were family members (57.7 percent). Figure 47 shows unique victims of adult sexual abuse by sex *and* military status. Among adult sexual abuse victims who received FAP services, 57.2 percent were female family members, 29.7 percent were female Service members, and 9.0 percent were females that fell into the “other” category.⁶⁰ Males represented 4.1 percent of unique victims of adult sexual abuse, including 3.6 percent who were Service members and 0.5 percent who were family members. No male victims fell into the “other” category.

Sex and Status of Unique Victims in Met Criteria Adult Sexual Abuse Incidents (FY 2021)

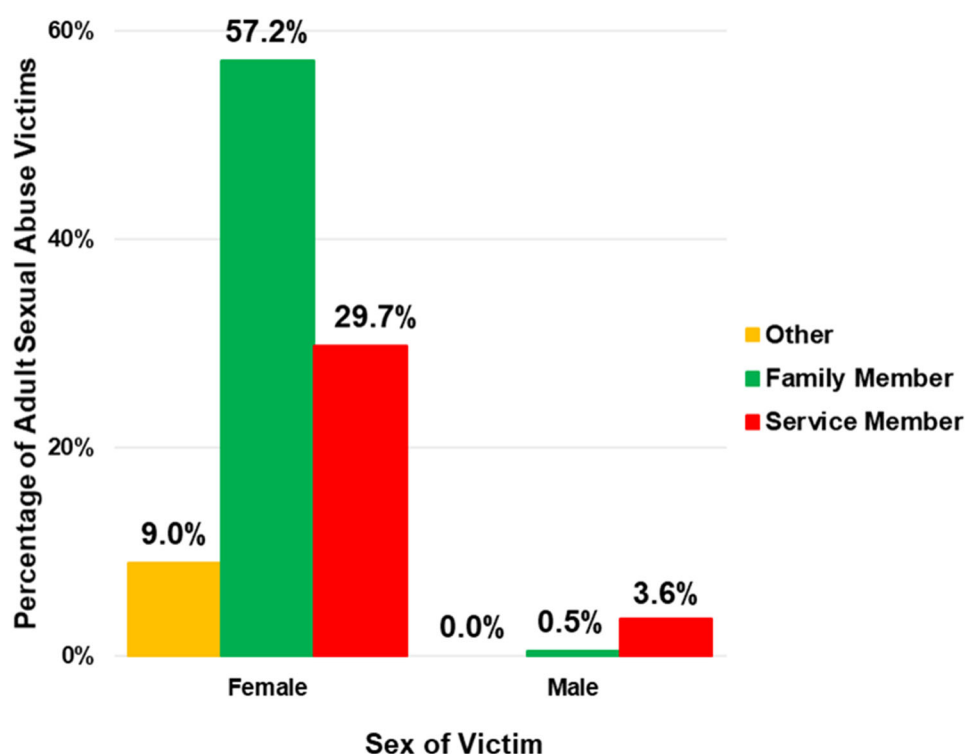


Figure 47. Sex and status of unique victims in met criteria incidents of adult sexual abuse in FY 2021.

⁶⁰ The “other” category includes abusers in met criteria incidents who were DoD civilians, non-DoD government civilians, retired Service members, government contractors, non-beneficiaries, and those who had an unknown status.

Of the 380 unique abusers in met criteria adult sexual abuse incidents, 96.3 percent were male and 3.7 percent were female. Examining the characteristics of unique abusers by age, 80.3 percent were 34 years or younger. Figure 48 shows the proportion of unique abusers in met criteria adult sexual abuse incidents by age and sex.

Of the unique abusers in met criteria adult sexual abuse incidents, 44.2 percent (42.6 percent male and 1.6 percent female) were ages 25-34, 36.1 percent (34.5 percent male and 1.6 percent female) were ages 18-24, and 16.9 percent (16.6 percent male and 0.3 percent female) were ages 35-44. Less than 3 percent of abusers were 45 years of age or older (2.6 percent male and 0.2 percent female).

Proportion of Unique Abusers in Met Criteria Adult Sexual Abuse Incidents by Age Group and Sex (FY 2021)

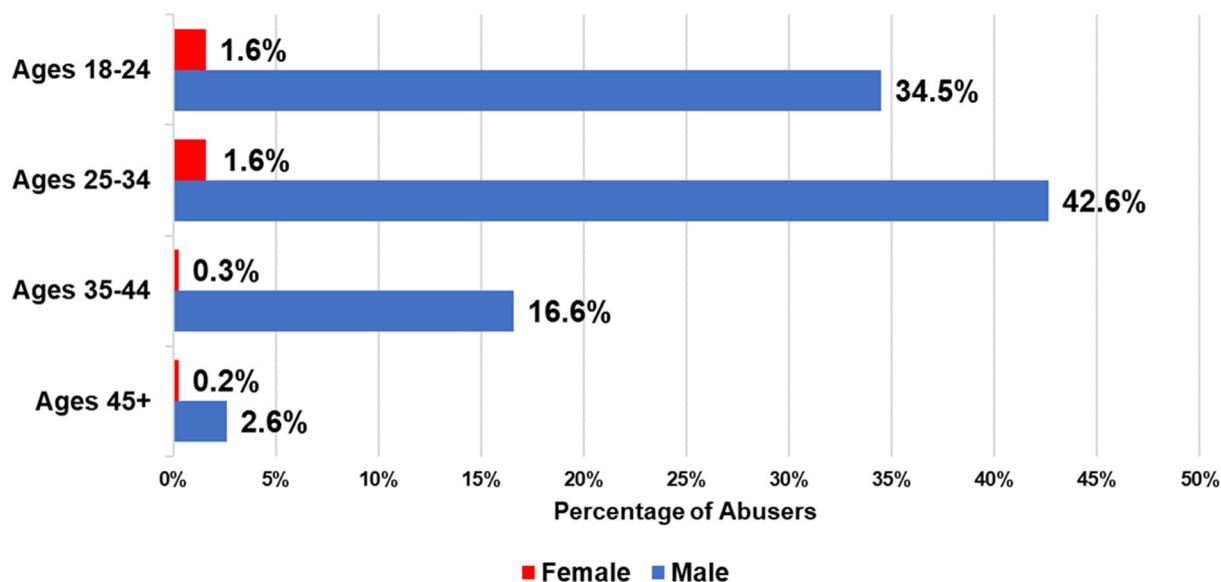


Figure 48. Age group and sex of unique abusers in met criteria adult sexual abuse incidents in FY 2021.

4-11 DOMESTIC ABUSE FATALITIES

As discussed previously, reviews of fatalities reported to the Central Registry in FY 2021 will occur in the Military Departments in FY 2023. Data on domestic abuse fatalities included in this report represent only those fatalities taken to the IDC after the death of the victim and that met criteria for domestic abuse in FY 2021.

There were 5 domestic abuse fatalities taken to the IDC and entered into the Central Registry in FY 2021 (5 spouse abuse fatalities and 0 intimate partner abuse fatalities—see Table 9). Three victims and two met criteria abusers were previously known to the Central Registry.⁶¹ In the domestic abuse fatality incidents, all five of the victims were female. Two victims were active duty members and three victims were civilians. Among the met criteria abusers, all five were male. Three of the met criteria abusers were active duty members and two were civilians.

Table 9: Domestic Abuse Fatalities Reported to FAP in FY 2021

Total Fatalities: 5 (5 spouse, 0 intimate partner)	
- 3 Victims previously known to the Central Registry	
- 2 Met criteria abusers previously known to the Central Registry	
Victims	
Sex of Victims	Military Status of Victims
- 5 Female	- 2 Active duty
- 0 Male	- 3 Civilian
Met Criteria Abusers	
Sex of Abusers	Military Status of Abusers
- 5 Male	- 3 Active duty
- 0 Female	- 2 Civilian

Note: Represents only those fatalities taken to the IDC in FY 2021. Military Service fatality reviews will take place in FY 2023

⁶¹ “Known to Central Registry” means that the victim or abuser was involved in a previous met criteria incident of abuse.

5. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE FAMILY ADVOCACY PROGRAM

In addition to providing an update on specified Central Registry data elements, section 574 of the NDAA for FY 2017 (Public Law 114-328), mandates that the Department provide an annual assessment of the effectiveness of the DoD FAP. This report highlights three different approaches currently utilized to assess and promote effectiveness in the DoD FAP.

The first approach is via quantitative annual metrics, the primary mechanism through which OSD FAP measures the performance and effectiveness of family readiness programs, specifically on the success rates of the New Parent Support Program (NPSP) and domestic abuser treatment.

The second approach highlights Department of Defense-wide efforts intended to support and enhance the overall effectiveness of FAP, as well as associated plans for assessment and measurement, and will include data and results when available.

The third approach is to capture a snapshot of the efforts and initiatives employed at the Military Service level to measure and enhance the effectiveness of respective Military Service FAPs. Although all Military Services comply with core FAP program requirements and DoD policy, they also have considerable flexibility to tailor their approach for prevention programs, safety assessment, and clinical treatment to best meet the needs of military families in their Military Service. Therefore, there is a great amount of innovation in piloting programs, creating effective training to increase the skills of credentialed personnel, and receiving feedback from participating families to ensure that the services provided by FAP are effective and appropriate.

5-1 FAMILY ADVOCACY PROGRAM METRICS

Below are the FY 2021 metric results on the successes of the NPSP and domestic abuser treatment. Both programs are implemented by the Military Services and administered by FAP at the installation level.

These data are collected by the Military Services, as required by section 581 of the NDAA for FY 2008 (Public Law 110-181). Each of the Military Services collects information for these metrics and submits the data annually to OSD FAP for analysis and reporting. Although OSD FAP aggregates data from each of the Military Services upon receipt, there is some minor variation in interpretation of current implementing guidance and how definitions are operationalized across the Military Service FAPs.

Success of NPSP

NPSP is a selected primary prevention program for child abuse and neglect,⁶² which offers intensive home visiting services on a voluntary basis to expectant parents and parents with young children (ages 0-5 years in Marine Corps; ages 0-3 in the other Military Services) who display indicators of being at risk for engaging in harmful, or potentially abusive or neglectful parenting practices. Those reported to FAP for an incident of child abuse or neglect for a child aged 0-5 years in their care may also receive NPSP services in limited circumstances, provided the use of NPSP is clinically recommended for the family.⁶³

To measure the success of NPSP, the Military Services collect annual data on the number of families who began receiving NPSP services at least two times per month during FY 2021 and continued receiving services for at least six months, and who did not have any incidents of child abuse and neglect reported to FAP that met criteria within 12 months after NPSP services ended. To achieve success, the total DoD ratio of families served to families with no child maltreatment reports that meet FAP criteria must be 85 percent or higher.

Table 10 displays the metric for NPSP and the aggregated FY 2021 DoD results. In FY 2021, a total of 1,389 families across the Military Services met the metric criteria and received NPSP services within the required timeframe. Of those families, 1,364 did not have a subsequent met criteria incident for child maltreatment within 12 months after NPSP services ended, resulting in a success rate of 98.20 percent. This rate exceeds the established target rate of 85 percent.

Table 10: Success of the NPSP (FY 2021)

METRIC	TOTAL DoD
Number of families without open FAP child abuse and/or neglect cases that began receiving intensive home visitation NPSP services (at least two home visits per month) during the previous fiscal year (FY 2020) and continued receiving intensive home visitation NPSP services for at least 6 months.	1,389
Such families that had no reported incidents of child abuse and/or neglect that occurred after NPSP services were completed and that met FAP criteria within 12 months after NPSP services ended.	1,364
Percentage successful NPSP	98.20 percent
Target: 85 percent	

⁶²Selected primary prevention takes place BEFORE violence initially occurs. It involves programs and strategies designed to reduce the factors that put people at risk for experiencing violence. Selected primary prevention efforts focus on those individuals or groups that show one more risk factors for violence. Under Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Execution of the Department of Defense Prevention Plan of Action 2.0 (2022-2024)," May 27, 2022.

to modify those behaviors to reduce harm. <https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/main/prevention-information/47>

⁶³ DoDI 6400.05, "New Parent Support Program (NPSP)," Enclosure 3, June 13, 2012, as amended.

Success of Domestic Abuser Treatment

Each Military Service's FAP program delivers clinical interventions to individuals involved in met criteria domestic abuse incidents based on a clinical assessment, and targeted directly to address the specific concerns of each abuser.⁶⁴ By collecting data on the recidivism of spouse and intimate partner abusers who received FAP clinical treatment services, OSD FAP can assess the impact that treatment services have on abusers in preventing incidents of domestic abuse in the short term (12 months).

To measure the success of domestic abuser treatment, the Military Services collect annual data on the number of spouse and intimate partner abusers involved in an incident that met FAP criteria for domestic abuse, started and completed clinical treatment services during FY 2020, and were not involved in any met criteria incident reported to FAP during the 12 months after completing treatment. To achieve success, the total DoD rate of spouses and intimate partners with no subsequent incidents that meet FAP criteria must be 75 percent or higher.

Table 11 displays the metric for domestic abuser treatment, as well as the aggregated FY 2021 DoD results. In FY 2021, a total of 2,146 abusive spouses and intimate partners across all Military Services met the criteria of the metric and started (and completed) FAP clinical treatment services within the required timeframe. Of those spouses and intimate partners, 2,055 did not have a report that met criteria for domestic abuse within the following 12 months after FAP clinical treatment was completed, resulting in a success rate of 95.76 percent. This rate exceeds the established target rate of 75 percent.

Table 11: Success of Domestic Abuser Treatment (FY 2021)

METRIC	TOTAL DOD
Total abusive spouses and intimate partners in any incident that met FAP criteria for domestic abuse who began receiving FAP clinical treatment services during FY 2020 and completed FAP clinical treatment services by September 30, 2020.	2,146
Such spouses/partners who were not reported as allegedly abusive in any incident that met criteria for domestic abuse within 12 months after FAP clinical treatment was completed.	2,055
Percentage successful abuser treatment	95.76 percent
Target: 75 percent	

⁶⁴ Domestic abuse treatment is also offered and provided to individuals involved in incidents that do not meet criteria for abuse. As currently defined, this metric is limited to met criteria incidents.

5-2 DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FAP INITIATIVES

In addition to preventing and responding to child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse in military families, FAP works to strengthen protective factors and reduce risk for violence and abuse through policy, programs, and partnerships. Each of the Military Services implements its own prevention practices and activities at the installation level, while OSD FAP oversees the development of new policies and strategic partnerships to support successful prevention efforts across the total force.

OSD FAP made progress on several initiatives in FY 2021 aimed at improving the Department's response to child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse. Most notably, during FY 2021, OSD FAP finalized a critical update to DoDI 6400.06, now titled, "DoD Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Abuse Involving DoD Military and Certain Affiliated Personnel." The policy closes a gap in service provision by expanding the definition of "intimate partner" to now include those in dating relationships, which brings the Department into alignment with the civilian domestic violence field. In addition, the DoDI advances the "No Wrong Door" approach to maximize victim care and support by ensuring victims receive resources and referrals to the range of helping agencies who comprise the Coordinated Community Response (CCR) and promoting victim choice in where to receive services. Furthermore, the updated DoDI implements several public laws and statutory requirements, to include reference to Special Victims' Counsel eligibility, requirements for the "Catch a Serial Offender (CATCH)" program to identify serial offenders, and reporting requirements for managing civilian and military protective orders.

In support of Section 549C of the FY 2021 NDAA (Public Law 116-283), DoD contracted with RAND National Defense Research Institute⁶⁵ to research the risk of domestic abuse at different points of the military career life-cycle; best practices for reaching those at highest risk for domestic abuse; strategies to prevent domestic abuse by training and educating the breadth of the CCR; the military justice system response; and the impacts of domestic abuse on military housing, children's education, and the physical and mental health of military members and families. Phase 1 data collection of this multi-phase project is complete, and the final report is in-progress.

⁶⁵ Any reference throughout this report to non-federal entities does not constitute an endorsement of those entities.

5-3 MILITARY SERVICE PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

In addition to FAP metrics at the OSD level and Department-wide efforts, provided below is a snapshot of the initiatives employed at the Military Service level that measure and enhance FAP effectiveness. Each section highlights Military Service-level strategies used to improve or assess the effectiveness of different aspects of FAP.

Army

Development of Clinical Risk Assessment Tools

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report 21-289, recommended the Army provide policy guidance requiring risk assessment tools for use by specific personnel. In response to this recommendation, Army FAP Headquarters staff conducted a comprehensive literature review on family violence risk assessment tools and factors, focusing specifically on factors associated with increased risk of homicide or subsequent violence. Given the unique factors associated with active duty service, no existing tools covered all identified risk factors in the GAO report; thus, the Army initiated development of new semi-structured assessment tools, utilizing known scoring and weighing mechanisms. Two new tools, the Child Abuse Risk Assessment and Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment are currently being piloted at four installations. These tools are used at initial report, assessment, and review, and offer specific mitigation strategies designed to lower risk across the duration of a case.

Incident Determination Committee Implementation

With the release of Army Directive 2021-26 on July 12, 2021, the Army initiated the enterprise-wide phased transition from the Case Review Committee process to the IDC model. Research partner New York University (NYU) published IDC implementation pilot study results in October of 2021, which identified important considerations for successful transition to the IDC model.

Safe Sleep Campaign to Reduce Deaths of Infants and Babies

The Army initiated development of a Service-wide public health campaign to promote safe sleep of infants and babies by leveraging an existing Memorandum of Understanding between the DoD and Zero to Three, a national non-profit organization whose mission is to support the healthy development and well-being of infants/babies, toddlers, and their families. The Safe Sleep Campaign launched Army-wide on September 1, 2021. The campaign includes safe sleep education at antenatal pediatric and family practice visits, and public awareness materials such as posters in exam rooms, awareness segments on monitors in waiting rooms, and other measures. Campaign materials provided to all Army installations include a Safe Sleep communication plan, marketing materials, a Garrison Commander proclamation letter and toolkit, and a Safe Sleep video developed by Zero to Three. The Army conducted 11 campaign-related trainings for 337 installation prevention staff and New Parent Support home visitors.

Department of the Navy

Navy FAP Training Curriculum

The Navy implemented enterprise-wide use of a new FAP Training Curriculum for CCR stakeholders. The FAP Training Curriculum ensures that information and resources are accurate and current, that learning activities are engaging, that total lecture time is limited, and that recent laws or programs are incorporated. By participating in the training, the Navy's CCR stakeholders will have the tools necessary to meet DoD training requirements and be able to implement prevention and response strategies to reduce child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse in the military community.

The new training guide includes information on High Risk for Violence-Coordinated Community Response, Deployed Resiliency Counselor program, and updated mandated reporting laws. The guide can be used by experienced FAP facilitators to promote prevention and education and ensure a consistent and standardized approach to all incidents of abuse. CCR stakeholders include commanders and senior leaders, installation law enforcement personnel/Naval Criminal Investigative Service, Child and Youth Program personnel, Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) personnel, and civilian community providers. The training is facilitated by FAP educators, FAP case managers /clinical counselors, Family Advocacy representatives, and FAP victim advocates.

Marine Corps FAP & NPSP Evaluation

The Marine and Family Programs Division conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the FAP and NPSP in FY 2020. The evaluation included a policy review, staffing data, and measures of performance and effectiveness. A survey was sent to all FAP and NPSP staff to assess barriers that impact service delivery (e.g., staffing issues, technology challenges) and time spent engaging in a variety of job activities. A sample of Marines who received FAP and NPSP services responded to a needs assessment survey where they reported family, relationship, or parenting challenges.

Marine Corps Baby Boot Camp (BBC) Evaluation

Headquarters Marine Corps is systematically working to evaluate the effectiveness of core prevention and education curricula. Baby Boot Camp (BBC) is a one-day prevention course that provides education and skills to expectant parents on caring for a newborn and recognizing signs of post-partum depression. The course is available to all Military Treatment Facility eligible expectant parents. Four Marine Corps installations participated in the BBC evaluation pilot, which concluded in FY 2021; there were 251 participants who completed the evaluation. Respondents indicated feeling more prepared for parenthood after participating in BBC.⁶⁶ Additionally, respondents increased their knowledge of post-partum depression/baby blues, self-care, and caring for a newborn (feeding, sleeping) after BBC.⁶⁷

Department of the Air Force (DAF)

Development of a Caseload Allocation Tool

Beginning in 2015, the Family Translational Research Group at NYU has conducted research to address optimal caseload management for the Department of the Air Force (DAF) FAP. The study seeks to determine how many open maltreatment and prevention cases a FAP provider can manage safely for both clients and providers. The research involved collecting data from FAP providers, FAP supervisors, and DAVAs over a 9-month period for up to 27 weeks per provider. The findings of the study revealed that provider, case, and installation variables are predictive of how caseload impacts provider burnout and attrition, improvement in family functioning, and provider success when working with families. In order to reduce provider burnout while improving family functioning, new case management techniques are required.

Online Parenting Program

Researchers at Kansas State University (KSU) conducted a study to determine the effectiveness of the Veterans Affairs (VA) online parenting program and whether it would be a helpful resource for Family Advocacy Intervention Specialists (FAISs) staff. Results indicated it is an effective program, revealing significant decreases in participants' parenting concerns, and improvement in parenting skills following completion of the program. Participants reported enjoying coaching sessions with the FAISs, and the self-paced, online program was convenient.

Following implementation of the program, FAISs reported program benefits resulting from the program's flexibility, including less preparation work and eliminating the need to schedule rooms for in-person meetings. Additionally, FAISs reported that commanders and other leadership were pleased with the online flexibility, as attendees did not have to miss work as they would for in-person parenting programs, benefitting the overall mission.

⁶⁶ BBC survey respondent reported feeling more prepared for parenthood after program participation ($t = -19.09$, $df = 250$, $p < 0.01$, $d = 0.52$).

⁶⁷ BBC survey respondent reported increased knowledge of post-partum depression/baby blues, self-care, and caring for a newborn (feeding, sleeping) after BBC participation ($t = -5.26$, $df = 99$, $p < 0.01$, $d = 0.52$).

Study recommendations included continuing to collect data on the VA online parenting program, as well as additional online programs for stress management, couples education, and/or alcohol and substance abuse. Recommendations also included creating a script for use by FAISs that would assist in effectively introducing the online parenting program to command and participants.

Vista Fidelity Project

The DAF implemented the Vista program, which is a manualized treatment intervention for women who use violence in their relationships. Researchers at KSU and Cherokee Insights, LLC, conducted a study to measure the degree to which FAP clinicians adhere to the Vista protocol when conducting Vista group or individual sessions and if the level of fidelity was related to abuse perpetration or abuser recidivism. A record review of the documentation of Vista sessions was used in this study.

Results showed great variability in the use of Vista in cases where female abusers met criteria for domestic abuse and great variability in the adherence to the Vista protocol; only about one-third of the installations that offered the Vista program covered all protocol topics. The study was inconclusive about the level of fidelity to the Vista protocol related to repeat abuse. Researchers recommended increased training on the Vista protocol to ensure that all installations have clinicians trained in providing the program, as well as an improved understanding of when to provide the Vista protocol.

6. PROGRAM & POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Overview of Key Findings

Despite upticks in the rates of reported child abuse and neglect, met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents, and unique victims per 1,000 military children in FY 2021, the rates either decreased or did not vary significantly when compared to their respective 10-year averages. Following a three-year decline in the rate of child sexual abuse per 1,000 military children, this rate increased in FY 2021 for the second consecutive year. However, that increase was not statistically significant.

For the third consecutive year, findings for domestic abuse are mixed. Continuing the downward trend over the last decade, the number of domestic abuse reports and the number of met criteria domestic abuse incidents decreased in FY 2021. That decline was driven by decreases in spouse abuse. The rates for spouse abuse reports, met criteria incidents, and unique victims per 1,000 married military couples decreased while the number of reports, number of met criteria incidents, and number of unique victims of intimate partner abuse increased. The proportion of met criteria adult sexual abuse incidents increased in FY 2021, for the third consecutive year, representative of an overall trend noted over the past decade.

Continual monitoring and assessment of key findings are necessary to inform current and future program efforts. The DoD recognizes that there is more work to be done and remains committed to enhancing efforts to prevent incidents of child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse by providing effective supportive services, treatment (as appropriate), and resources for military families.

Continued Focus on the Downward Trend in Child Abuse and Neglect

There has been a downward trend in the child victimization rate since FY 2014. That decline reached statistical significance for the first time in FY 2019. Despite an uptick in the child victimization rate in FY 2021, the rate decreased when compared to the 10-year average. OSD FAP is engaged in the final year of a multi-year collaboration with the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences to identify military-specific risk factors associated with child abuse and neglect and is awaiting publication of the study. Results of this study can inform child maltreatment prevention efforts and help guide future initiatives designed to better understand factors contributing to the decline in child maltreatment. Simultaneously, OSD FAP will continue to monitor increasing child sexual abuse rates through internal analyses and will assess DoD results relative to trends the civilian community and the persisting COVID-19 pandemic.

Continued Focus on the Upward Trend in Intimate Partner Abuse and Adult Sexual Abuse

Results from this report show that the inverse relationship between spouse abuse and intimate partner abuse indicators evident in FY 2019 and FY 2020 persisted in FY 2021, with a decrease in spouse abuse indicators and an increase in intimate partner abuse indicators. Increases in the numbers of reports, the number of met criteria incidents, and the number of unique victims of

intimate partner abuse were statistically significant for the second consecutive year. At the same time, the proportion of adult sexual abuse incidents as a subset of domestic abuse increased in FY 2021 for the third consecutive year. With the reissuance of DoDI 6400.06 and the expanded intimate partner definition,⁶⁸ OSD FAP will continue to monitor fluctuations in domestic abuse indicators.

OSD FAP is committed to conducting a deeper analysis on both intimate partner abuse and adult sexual abuse incidents reported to FAP, along with exploring possible drivers of these increased numbers. Through a systematic exploration, OSD FAP will be able to better understand the needs of military families seeking FAP services and target programs and services to support individuals who engage with FAP. The Department remains concerned about any potential uptick in family violence and will continue to monitor these numbers carefully.

Understanding the Impact of the Persisting COVID-19 Pandemic on FAP Data

As discussed in the FY 2020 Appendix, the COVID-19 pandemic had a notable impact on reported incidents of child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse. Appendix A of the current report leverages findings from FY 2020 to explore the prolonged impact of the pandemic on FAP data. Findings suggest that the decrease in reported incidents of both child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse in FY 2020 were at least in part attributable to stay-at-home orders, school closures, and a cultural shift to hybrid work that the world continues to navigate. As the presence of COVID-19 continues, OSD FAP will continue to explore current and emerging data trends to inform policy changes, as necessary, in an effort to consistently improve FAP's agile response to family violence.

Conclusion

The DoD is committed to keeping our families safe and resilient, and to taking every measure to prevent child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse in our military communities. One incident of child abuse and neglect or domestic abuse is too many, and programs like FAP implement evidence-based prevention and treatment programs with the goal of ensuring the safety and well-being of all military families. OSD FAP reinforces the enduring commitment of Department leadership to provide effective, efficient programs to promote the safety, readiness, and well-being of all Service members and their families through a CCR to child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse.

⁶⁸ DoDI 6400.06, "DoD Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Abuse Involving DoD Military and Certain Affiliated Personnel," December 15, 2021, as amended.

APPENDIX A: IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON FAP DATA

INTRODUCTION

The persisting COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact daily life and activities, as additional waves of the coronavirus and its variants continue to surface. At the time of this publication, there have been more than 6 million known COVID-19 deaths globally, including more than 1 million deaths in the United States.⁶⁹ Public ordinances have shifted from government imposed stay-at-home orders to a coordinated public health strategy focused on mass vaccination, with the development of the COVID-19 vaccine.⁷⁰ Despite challenges the pandemic continues to present, FAP has maintained continuity of all services in response to reports of child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse by adapting service delivery, outreach to the community, and the way in which the IDC convenes.

The Report on Child Abuse and Neglect and Domestic Abuse in the Military for FY 2020 included a preliminary analysis of the impacts of COVID-19 on FAP data. The purpose of this appendix is to leverage findings from FY 2020 to explore the prolonged impact of the pandemic on FAP data. In this Appendix we examine reports of abuse from FY 2019-FY 2021 by quarter (Q), which allows for a more nuanced understanding of COVID-19 impacts on the reporting of abuse. In addition, we examine the length of time between the date a suspected incident of abuse was reported to FAP and the date the IDC determined whether the incident met the DoD definition of abuse to help identify potential delays in the IDC process.

It should be noted that while the DMDC Central Registry captures information from each of the Military Services on child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse incidents reported to FAP, data are only submitted to the Central Registry *after* the IDC determines whether an incident meets the DoD definition of abuse. This means that reports of abuse yet to be taken to the IDC do not yet appear in the Central Registry—and thus are not included in this analysis.

TIMELINE OF CRITICAL COVID-19 EVENTS

On January 31, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak a global public health emergency. On March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared the COVID-19 outbreak a national emergency. DoD issued a memo effective that day restricting travel for all DoD uniformed personnel, civilian personnel and their families traveling to, from, or through areas that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention labeled as a Level 3 danger for 60 days.⁷¹ This stop movement order included all forms of official travel, including permanent change of station, temporary duty, and government-funded leave. By the end of March 2020, 22 states had issued stay-at-home orders.

⁶⁹ World Health Organization. *WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard*. Retrieved July 29, 2022, Available from: <https://covid19.who.int/>

⁷⁰ The National Academy for State Health Policy. *Chart: Each State's COVID-19 Reopening and Reclosing Plans and Mask Requirements*. Retrieved December 22, 2020, from <https://www.nashp.org/governors-prioritize-health-for-all/>.

⁷¹ U.S. Department of Defense. *Coronavirus Timeline*. Available from: <https://www.defense.gov/Spotlights/Coronavirus-DOD-Response/Timeline/>.

By May 20, 2020, all 50 states had begun to partially lift stay-at-home orders, and by June 29, 2020, 48 U.S. locations and 8 host nations met the conditions to lift DoD travel restrictions, which included the removal of shelter-in-place orders. Despite this important marker noting an effort to return to normalcy, the re-opening of schools to full-time, in-person instruction remained a slow, cautious process. For example, of the 159 Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools globally, 46 (29 percent) were scheduled to open the 2020-2021 school year remotely.⁷² However, by March of 2021, 99 percent of DoDEA schools were operating in-person.⁷³ In contrast, only 54 percent of U.S. public schools with fourth or eighth grade were open full-time, in-person for all students by March of 2021.⁷⁴ The return to full-time, in-person instruction is an important indicator of when mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect once again had the opportunity to interact with children in-person, on a daily basis.

Overlaying this abbreviated COVID-19 timeline on the time frames within a fiscal year, the end of Q2 of FY 2020 (January-March 2020) corresponds to the national emergency declaration and DoD stop movement travel restriction, while Q3 of FY 2020 (April-June 2020) was the first full quarter after these events. This analysis closely examines the time periods before and after these critical markers.

⁷² U.S. Department of Defense. *Defense Officials Brief on Opening DODEA Schools During COVID-19*. Available from: <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/2311534/defense-officials-brief-on-opening-dodea-schools-during-covid-19/>.

⁷³ Jowers, K. (2021, October 4). DoD schools worldwide navigate the pandemic with mostly open classrooms, low infection rates. *Military Times*. <https://www.militarytimes.com/pay-benefits/2021/10/04/dod-schools-navigate-the-pandemic-with-mostly-open-classrooms-and-low-infection-rates/>

⁷⁴ U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. *Monthly School Survey Dashboard*. Available from: <https://ies.ed.gov/schoolsurvey/mss-dashboard/>

ANALYSIS

Child Abuse and Neglect

Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect

Since FY 2014, there has been a downward trend in the rate of reported child abuse and neglect incidents and the rate of met criteria incidents of child abuse and neglect per 1,000 military children. Preliminary FY 2020 findings on the impact of COVID-19 on FAP data indicated that the pandemic may have had a profound impact on the reporting of abuse than on met criteria incidents of abuse, across all victim types (children, spouses, and intimate partners).⁷⁵

As shown in Table A.1, the FY 2019 to FY 2020 year-over-year decrease (11.1 percent decrease) in the rate of reported child abuse and neglect incidents per 1,000 military children was more precipitous than in any other consecutive two-year period. The rate of reported child abuse and neglect incidents increased from FY 2020 to FY 2021 by 10.0 percent; however, the FY 2021 rate (13.2) represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the 10-year average.⁷⁶ Notably, when comparing the FY 2021 rate of reported child abuse and neglect incidents per 1,000 children to the rates prior to FY 2019, the FY 2021 rate suggests a return to the pre-pandemic trend.

Table A.1: Percent Change in Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect (FY 2012-FY 2021)

Fiscal Year	Reported Incidents	Child Population	Reports/1000	Percent Change in Reports/1,000
2012	15,656	1,140,024	13.7	
2013	15,346	1,099,702	14.0	2.2 percent decrease
2014	16,526	1,050,889	15.7	12.1 percent increase
2015	15,579	1,005,626	15.5	1.3 percent decrease
2016	13,916	969,058	14.4	7.1 percent decrease
2017	12,849	939,186	13.7	4.9 percent decrease
2018	12,850	921,193	13.9	1.5 percent increase
2019	12,392	917,891	13.5	2.9 percent decrease
2020	10,857	905,577	12.0	11.1 percent decrease
2021	11,737	892,457	13.2	10.0 percent increase

⁷⁵ See Appendix A to the *Report on Child Abuse and Neglect and Domestic Abuse in the Military for FY 2020*.

Available from: <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/data-research-and-statistics/reports/family-advocacy-program/>

⁷⁶ The FY 2021 rate of reported child abuse and neglect per 1,000 children was 13.15, shown in the table above as 13.2. This rate represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the average rate of reported child abuse and neglect during the FY 2012-FY 2021 period (95 percent CI [13.18, 14.73]).

Examining reports of child abuse and neglect during the pandemic in a more granular way can provide additional insights into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on FAP data. Figure A.1 shows the number of reports of child abuse and neglect by quarter over time, representing several quarters before and after the COVID-19 national emergency declaration. Even prior to the pandemic, there were fluctuations in the number of child abuse and neglect reports by quarter; however, those fluctuations were relatively small. For example, there were 2,834 reports of child abuse and neglect in Q1 of FY 2019 in comparison to 3,222 reports in Q3 of FY 2019.

The most notable fluctuation in child abuse and neglect reports occurred between Q2 and Q3 of FY 2020. There were 2,975 reports of child abuse and neglect in Q2 of FY 2020 compared to 2,130 reports in Q3 of 2020. This numerical difference of 845 reports represents a 28.4 percent decrease in the the number of child abuse and neglect reports within a single quarter. By Q4 of FY 2020, there were 2,728 reports of child abuse and neglect made to FAP.

Although the decrease in the number of reports of child abuse and neglect was substantial during April-June 2020, at the onset of the pandemic, reports of child abuse and neglect returned to pre-pandemic levels within a quarter—by July-September 2020 when many states began lifting stay-at-home orders. This finding suggests that FAP was both swift and successful in its logistical shift in response to reports of child abuse and neglect during the pandemic.

Number of Child Abuse and Neglect Reports by Quarter (FY 2019-FY 2021)

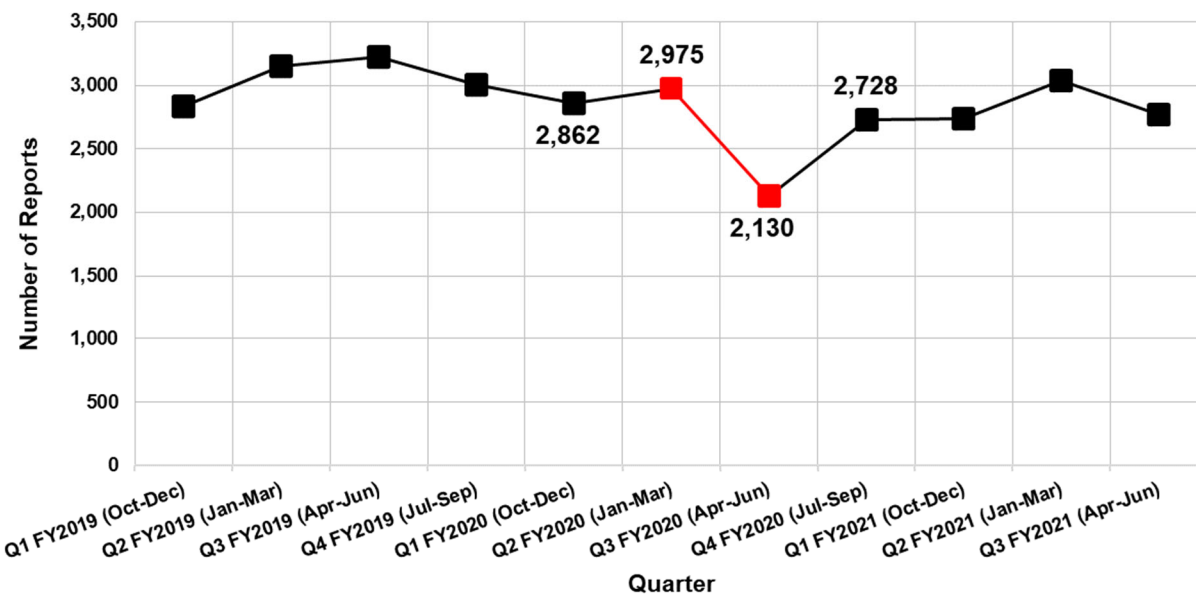


Figure A.1. Number of child abuse and neglect reports made to FAP by quarter, over time.

Note. The Military Services submit Central Registry data after the IDC determines whether an incident meets the DoD definition of abuse. Reports of abuse made to FAP in Q4 of FY 2021 were excluded from this graph.

Child Abuse and Neglect Time to Incident Status Determination

As previously discussed, the pandemic required a logistical shift in the way the IDC convened. Potentially, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the amount of time from the date a suspected incident of abuse was reported to FAP to the date the IDC determined whether a report met the DoD definition for abuse. This decision, called the Incident Status Determination (ISD), is closely guided by definitional criteria outlined in policy.⁷⁷ As a measure of center, the median is less susceptible to wide variations and outliers than the mean; therefore, the median is used in this analysis to represent “typical” time.

Figure A.2 shows the median amount of time from the date suspected child abuse and neglect was reported to FAP to the ISD date, by ISD month. The median time to determination for suspected child abuse and neglect in FY 2020 was 56 days. The median time to determination decreased from 64 days in February of 2020 to 50 days in March of 2020. The median time to determination increased to 55 days in April of 2020, then increased sharply to 78 days in May of 2020 before declining to a near pre-pandemic median time by July of 2020.

On the surface, it appears that the pandemic had a positive impact on the amount of time to determination, decreasing the median time to ISD. However, determinations made in March of 2020, at the onset of the pandemic, reflect incidents of suspected child abuse that were reported more than a month and a half before—in January or February of 2020. The shorter time to determination in March of 2020 likely reflects suspected incidents of abuse voted on by the IDC before stay-at-home orders were issued. In addition, it is likely that those incidents were more straightforward and did not require complex law enforcement investigations, which can impact the time to determination. While determinations made in April of 2020 also likely reflect reports of suspected abuse made to FAP prior to the COVID-19 national emergency declaration, it also reflects the first month that many IDCs convened virtually.

The impact of the pandemic on the amount of time to determination is most apparent in May of 2020. In FY 2020, the typical lag between report and ISD for child abuse and neglect was 56 days. The peak amount of time to determination of 78 days in May of 2020 demonstrates delays in the IDC process. Instead of the IDC making determinations in May of 2020 about suspected incidents of child abuse reported in roughly March of 2020 (approximately 56 days prior), the IDC made determinations about suspected incidents of child abuse reported in February of 2020 (approximately 78 days prior). This additional time to determination (22 days) represents three weeks. After the May 2020 peak, the gradual decline in time to IDC determination suggests that the rapid adaptation to virtual IDC convenings was successful, with the median time to ISD returning to pre-pandemic levels.

⁷⁷ DoDM 6400.01, Volume 3, “Family Advocacy Program: Clinical Case Staff Meeting and Incident Determination Committee,” August 11, 2016, as amended.

Median Time to Incident Status Determination in Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect by Month (FY 2020)

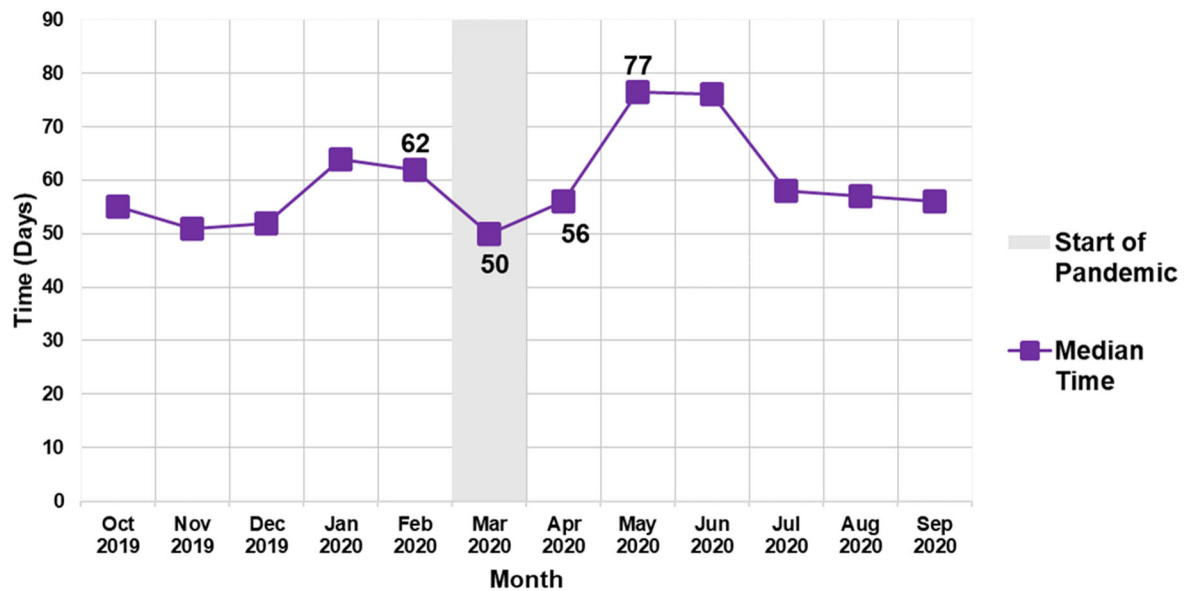


Figure A.4. Median amount of time from report of suspected child abuse and neglect to IDC determination in FY 2020, by month.

Note. The month shown on this graph represents the ISD date as opposed to when a report was made.

Domestic Abuse

Reports of Domestic Abuse

The number of domestic abuse reports has steadily decreased over the past decade. In FY 2021, the number of domestic abuse reports (14,299) represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the 10-year average.⁷⁸ Figure A.3 shows the number of domestic abuse reports by quarter, before and after the start of the pandemic. Similar to child abuse and neglect reports, there were fluctuations in the number of domestic abuse reports by quarter prior to the pandemic. In contrast to reports of child abuse and neglect, there is a small but noticeable decline in the number of domestic abuse reports overall from Q1 of FY 2019 to Q3 of FY 2021.

When examining the time frame reflecting the onset of the pandemic, there was a 12.0 percent decrease in the number of domestic abuse reports between Q2 of FY 2020 (3,805) and Q3 of FY 2020 (3,349). By Q4 of FY 2020, the number of reports (3,676) nearly rebounded to pre-pandemic levels; however, the overall decline in domestic abuse reports is evident. This finding shows the immediate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on domestic abuse reports, but it also suggests a larger trend in the number of domestic abuse reports independent of the pandemic.

Number of Domestic Abuse Reports by Quarter
(FY 2019-FY 2021)

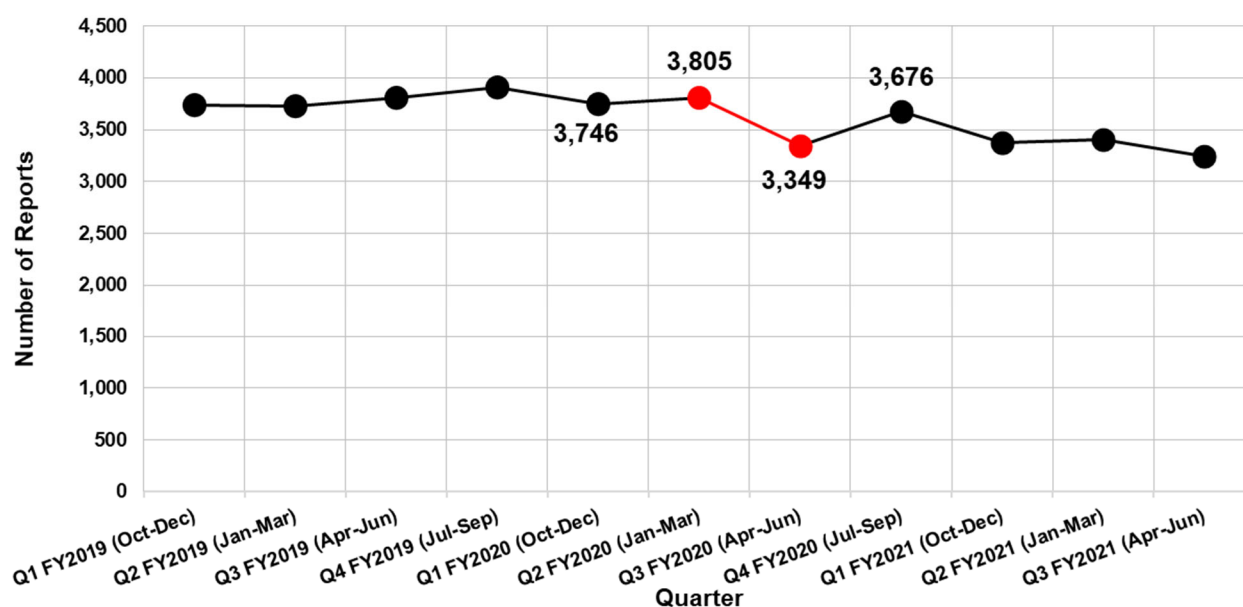


Figure A.3. Number of domestic abuse reports made to FAP by quarter, over time.

Note: Reports of abuse made to FAP in Q4 of FY 2021 were excluded from this graph.

⁷⁸ The FY 2021 number of domestic abuse reports (14,299) represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the average number of domestic abuse reports during the FY 2012-FY 2021 period (95 percent CI [15,705.15, 18,433.65]).

To better understand the relative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the number of reports of domestic abuse, we examine the number of spouse abuse reports and intimate partner abuse reports separately. Given that reports of spouse abuse have been decreasing over the past several years while reports of intimate partner abuse have been increasing and that spouse abuse accounts for the overwhelming proportion of domestic abuse, the overall decrease in reports of domestic abuse is likely driven by decreases in reports of spouse abuse.

As shown in Figure A.4, there were 3,303 reports of spouse abuse in Q2 of FY 2020 compared to 2,926 reports in Q3 of 2020, which represents a 11.4 percent decrease in the number of spouse abuse reports. There were 502 reports of intimate partner abuse in Q2 of FY 2020 compared to 423 reports in Q3 of 2020, which represents a 15.7 percent decrease in the number of intimate partner abuse reports.

Although the decrease in the number of reports is greater for spouse abuse (377 fewer reports) than for intimate partner abuse (79 fewer reports), the percentage decrease in reports is greater for intimate partner abuse than for spouse abuse (15.7 percent decrease vs. 11.4 percent decrease). While it is important to note that the relatively small number of intimate partner abuse reports makes it subject to greater variations, the relative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on reports of intimate partner abuse is noteworthy.

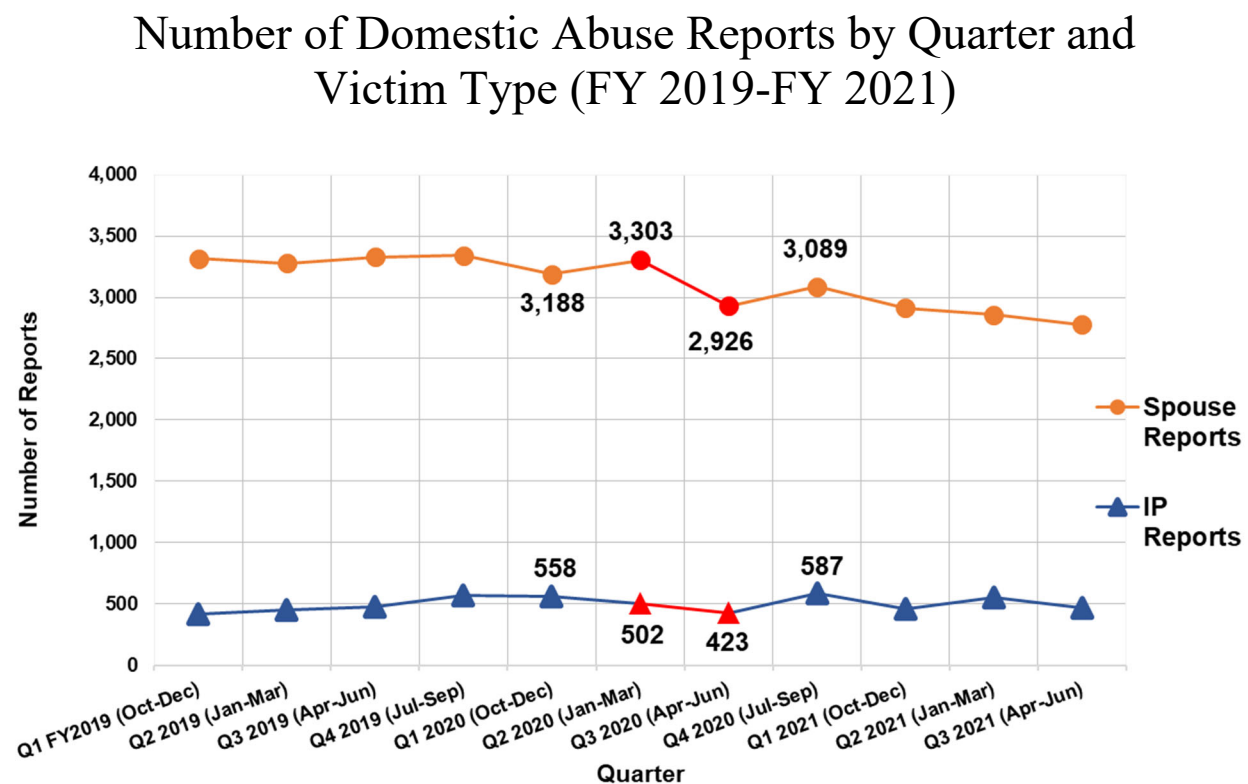


Figure A.4. Number of spouse abuse reports and number of intimate partner abuse reports made to FAP by quarter, over time.

Note. Reports of abuse made to FAP in Q4 of FY 2021 were excluded from this graph.

Domestic Abuse Time to Incident Status Determination

As shown in Figure A.5, the median time from the date a suspected domestic abuse incident was reported to FAP to the ISD date decreased slightly from 59 days in February of 2020 to 57 days in March of 2020, then remained relatively steady in April of 2020 at 58 days. The median time to determination increased dramatically in May of 2020 to 73 days. By August of 2020, the median time to determination for suspected domestic abuse returned to the FY 2020 median of 58 days.

While there are some similarities in the impact of the pandemic on the time to ISD for child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse, there are also some differences. For both child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse, the median time to determination peaked in May of 2020; however, the median time to determination rebounded to the respective median amounts of time within a couple months after the peak. What is different is that the domestic abuse median time to determination remained relatively constant from February to April of 2020, during the initial shift to virtual IDC meetings, while the child abuse and neglect median time to determination decreased 20 percent during the same period. Given that the overall IDC composition and voting body is the same for all victim types, this finding may reflect the complexity of pending child abuse and neglect reports in comparison to domestic abuse reports.

Median Time to Incident Status Determination in Reports of Domestic Abuse by Month (FY 2020)

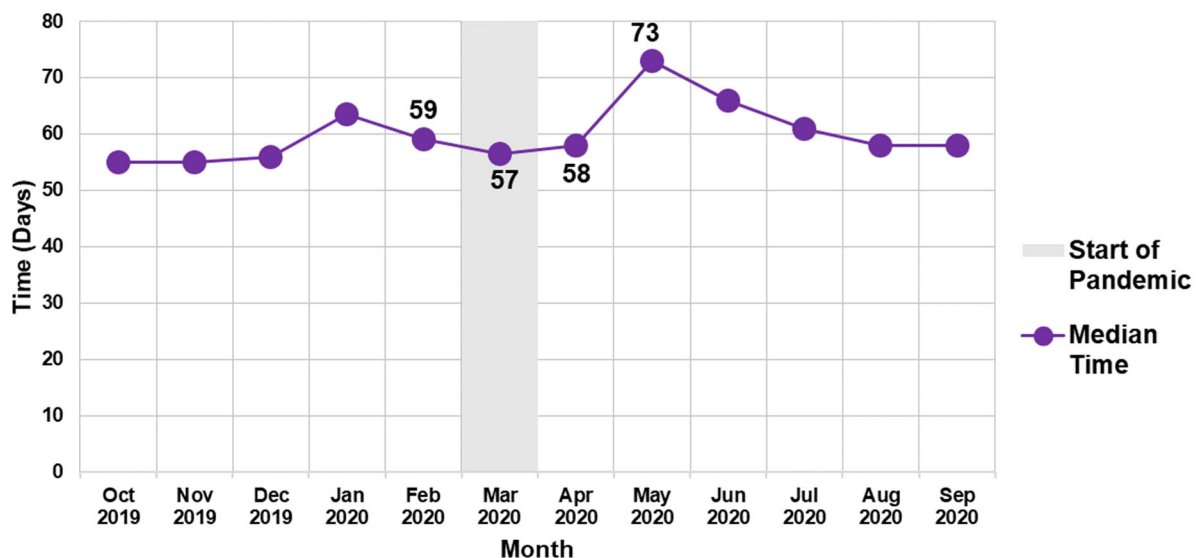


Figure A.5. Median amount of time from report of suspected domestic abuse to IDC determination in FY 2020, by month.

Note. The month shown on this graph represents the ISD date as opposed to when a report was made.

CONCLUSION

Findings from this analysis suggest that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the reporting of abuse and IDC timing was relatively short-lived. For each victim type, there was a noticeable decrease in number of reports of suspected abuse made to FAP in Q3 of FY 2020 (April-June 2020), early in the pandemic; however, the number of reports of abuse began to rebound by the next quarter. Other trends in the reporting of abuse by victim type (i.e., decreases in child abuse and neglect and spouse abuse, and increases in intimate partner abuse) are evident in the data, but those trends reflect longer-term trends, independent of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Seemingly, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the median time to determination, albeit differently for child abuse and neglect than for domestic abuse. The median time to ISD decreased markedly in March of 2020 for child abuse and neglect, then peaked in May of 2020. Although there was a decrease in time to determination for domestic abuse during the same period, the decrease was minimal. For both child abuse and domestic abuse, the time to determination returned to near pre-pandemic levels within a couple of months. Holistically, these findings suggest that FAP was successful in adapting service delivery, outreach to the community, and the way in which the IDC convenes.

APPENDIX B: ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE BY ABUSE TYPE

BACKGROUND

In May of 2021, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued “Domestic Abuse: Actions Needed to Enhance DOD's Prevention, Response, and Oversight to Congress,” outlining actions necessary to improve the Department of Defense’s (DoD) prevention, response, and oversight of domestic abuse.⁷⁹ The GAO report (GAO-21-289) included 32 recommendations to strengthen the Department’s data collection and awareness efforts, enhance incident screening monitoring, and provide guidance on key personnel training. The DoD and the Secretaries of the Military Departments concurred with all 32 recommendations.

Recommendation #3 of GAO-21-289 encouraged the Department to expand the scope of its future reporting to Congress by including an analysis of the types of allegations of abuse. This appendix provides preliminary, baseline reporting on allegations of abuse by abuse type, which allows the Department to gain a better understanding of the types of maltreatment reported to FAP. By incorporating this new analysis, FAP will be able to more accurately assess the met criteria rate overall and by abuse type, and ultimately improve the Department’s efforts to prevent and respond to child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse within the military community.

ANALYSIS

Prior to FY 2021, FAP was unable to comprehensively report information on allegations of abuse by abuse type. For calculation purposes, historically, a “report” of abuse could consist of multiple types of alleged abuse. For example, a report of abuse that involved one victim who experienced both emotional abuse and physical abuse by the same abuser, during the same timeframe, could be recorded as a single report of abuse. This historical calculation method did not allow for disaggregation of reports of abuse by abuse type and undercounted the number of reports (or allegations) of abuse.⁸⁰

The analysis that follows leverages new data collection methods established in FY 2021 to capture allegations of abuse by abuse type. Two alternative calculation definitions of a report are included in this analysis and are described below.

- Method 1 (historic method): a single report could include multiple types of alleged abuse
- Method 2 (proposed): a single report can only be associated with one type of alleged abuse

⁷⁹ U.S. Government Accountability Office. (2021). *Domestic Abuse: Actions Needed to Enhance DOD's Prevention, Response, and Oversight to Congress* (GAO-21-289). Available from: <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-21-289>

⁸⁰ See GAO 21-289, pp. 21-27, for a description and analysis.

Comparison of Methods

This section compares the two alternative calculation definitions of a report in order to assess the relative impact of differential methods on the number of reports of child abuse and neglect, spouse abuse, and intimate partner abuse.

As shown in Table B.1, there were 11,737 reports of child abuse and neglect in FY 2021 using Method 1 and 12,019 reports of child abuse and neglect using Method 2, which represents a 2.4 percent increase in the number of child abuse and neglect reports between Method 1 and Method 2. For spouse abuse, there were 12,104 reports in FY 2021 using Method 1 and 12,630 reports using Method 2, which represents a 4.3 percent increase in reports between the two methods. For intimate partner abuse, there were 2,195 reports using Method 1 and 2,342 reports using Method 2, which represents a 6.7 percent increase in reports between the two methods.

For each victim type, Method 2 yielded an increase in the number of reports. This increase is most pronounced in allegations of domestic abuse, with the largest percentage increase in reports of intimate partner abuse. It is important to note that because intimate partner abuse had the fewest number of reports overall, a relatively small increase in the number of reports yields a large percentage difference.

**Table B.1: Reports of Abuse by Report Type and Methodology
(FY 2021)**

Report Type	Reported Incidents (Method 1)	Reported Incidents (Method 2)	Percent Change in Reports
Child Abuse and Neglect	11,737	12,019	2.4 percent increase
Spouse Abuse	12,104	12,630	4.3 percent increase
Intimate Partner Abuse	2,195	2,342	6.7 percent increase

Allegations of Abuse by Abuse Type

This section examines the distribution of allegations of abuse by abuse type for child abuse and neglect, spouse abuse, and intimate partner abuse.

Figure B.1 depicts the distribution of allegations of child abuse and neglect by abuse type, using Method 2. Neglect accounted for the largest proportion of reports of child maltreatment (52.30 percent), followed by physical abuse (27.95 percent), emotional abuse (16.12 percent), and sexual abuse (3.63 percent). Overall, the distribution of reports of child abuse and neglect by abuse type mirrors the distribution of met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents by abuse type (see Figure 2 in the main body of this report).

Child Abuse and Neglect Reports by Abuse Type (FY 2021)

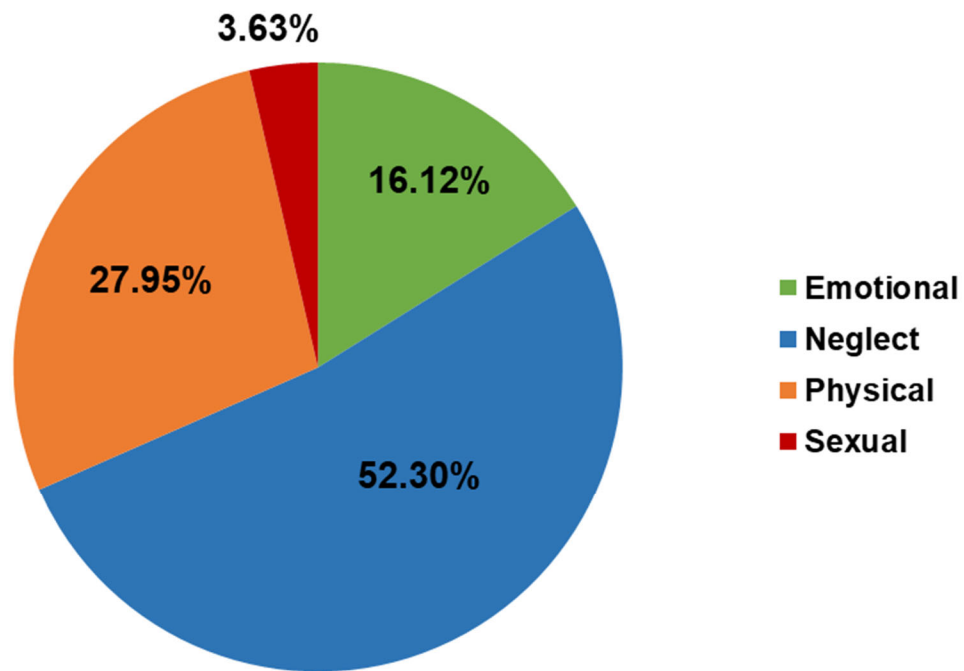


Figure B.1. Reports of child abuse and neglect made to FAP by abuse type, using Method 2 for calculating reports.

As shown in Figures B.2 and B.3, the distribution of allegations of spouse abuse and intimate partner abuse by abuse type using Method 2 is quite similar. For both victim types, physical abuse accounted for approximately 70 percent of allegations of abuse, and emotional abuse accounted for approximately 25 percent of allegations of abuse. There is a slight departure in the proportion of allegations of sexual abuse by victim type, where sexual abuse accounted for approximately five percent of allegations of spouse abuse but seven percent of allegations of intimate partner abuse. Neglect accounted for less than one percent of all allegations of spouse abuse and zero percent of allegations of intimate partner abuse.

Spouse Abuse Reports by Abuse Type (FY 2021)

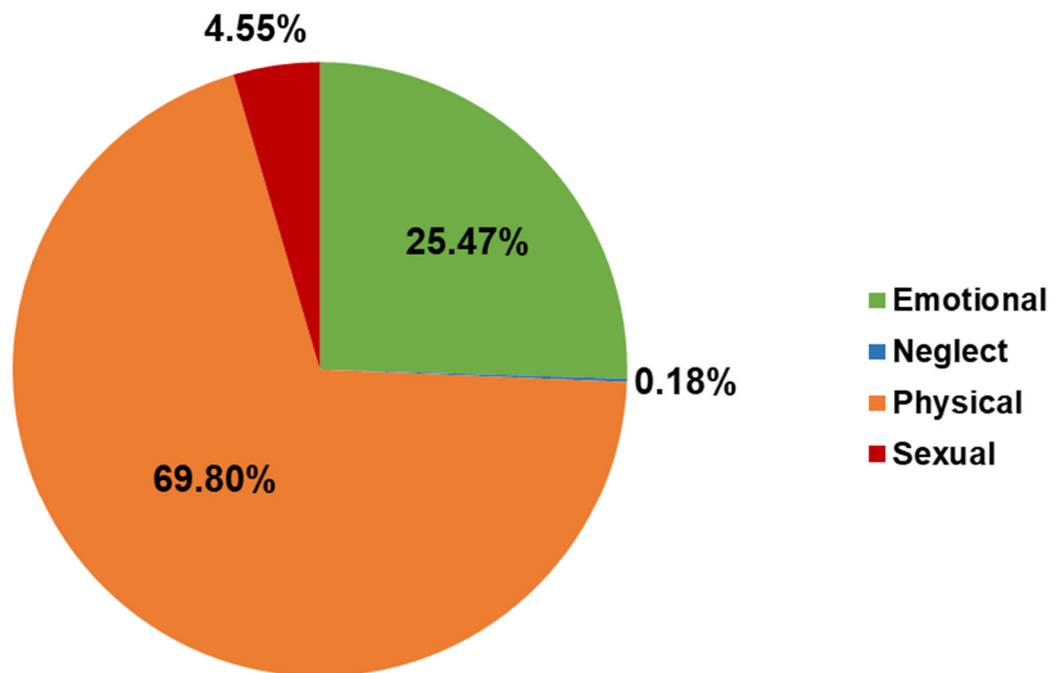


Figure B.2. Reports of spouse abuse made to FAP by abuse type, using Method 2 for calculating reports.

Intimate Partner Abuse Reports by Abuse Type (FY 2021)

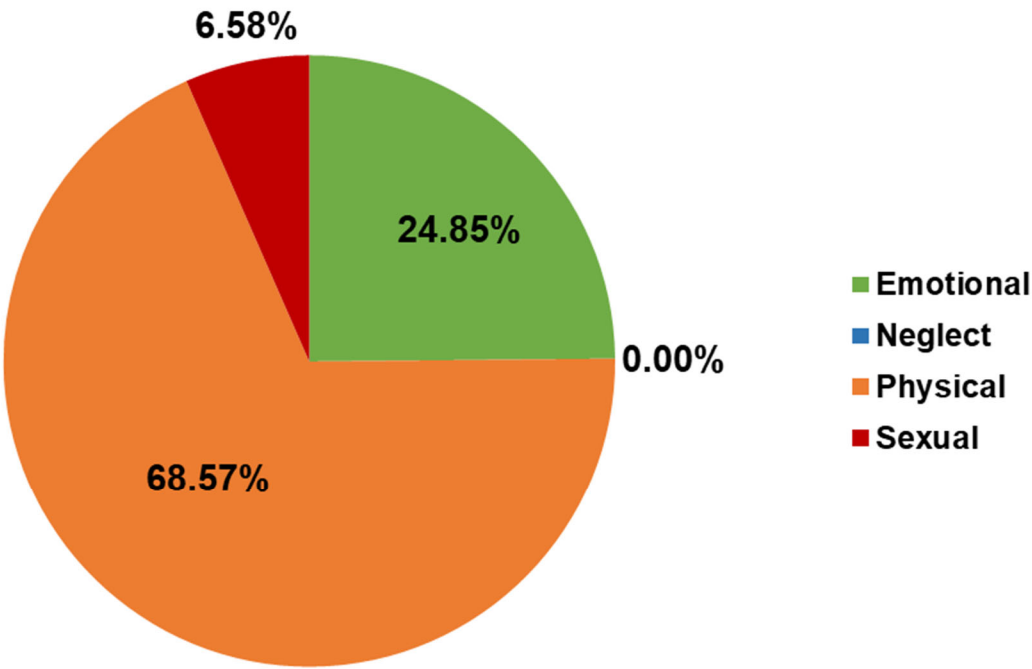


Figure B.3. Reports of intimate partner abuse made to FAP by abuse type, using Method 2 for calculating reports.

Met Criteria Rate by Abuse Type

This section examines the proportion of allegations of child abuse and neglect, spouse abuse, and intimate partner abuse that met the DoD definition of abuse, by abuse type. The proportion of allegations that met criteria for abuse are referenced in this appendix as the “met criteria rate.”

Overall, 48 percent of reported incidents of child abuse and neglect were determined to meet the DoD definition of abuse. As shown in Figure B.4, this met criteria rate varied by abuse type, ranging from 41 percent of allegations of emotional abuse that met criteria to 60 percent of allegations of sexual abuse that met criteria.

Proportion of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect Incidents that Met Criteria by Abuse Type (FY 2021)

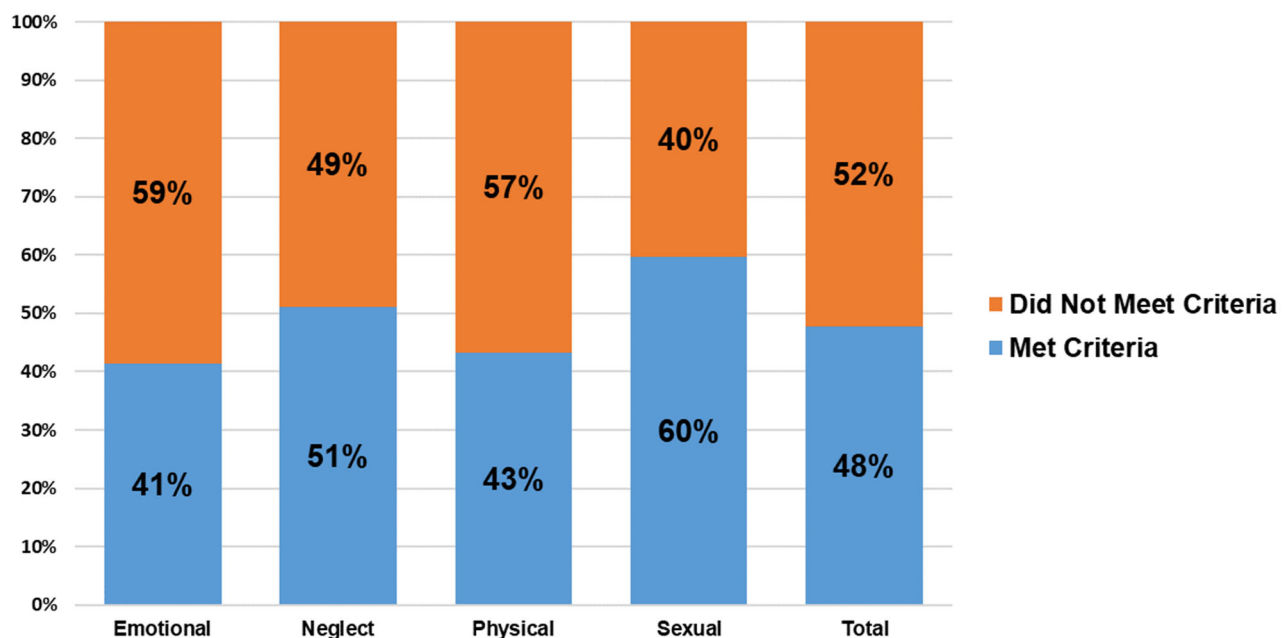


Figure B.4. Child abuse and neglect met criteria rate by abuse type in FY 2021.

Overall, 52 percent of reported incidents of spouse abuse were determined to meet the DoD definition of abuse. As shown in Figure B.5, 55 percent of allegations of sexual abuse met criteria, 54 percent of allegations of physical abuse met criteria, 49 percent of allegations of emotional abuse met criteria, and 18 percent of allegations of neglect met criteria. It is important to note that neglect accounted for the smallest number of allegations and met criteria incidents of spouse abuse—making neglect subject to extreme variations in percentages.

Proportion of Reported Spouse Abuse Incidents that Met Criteria by Abuse Type (FY 2021)

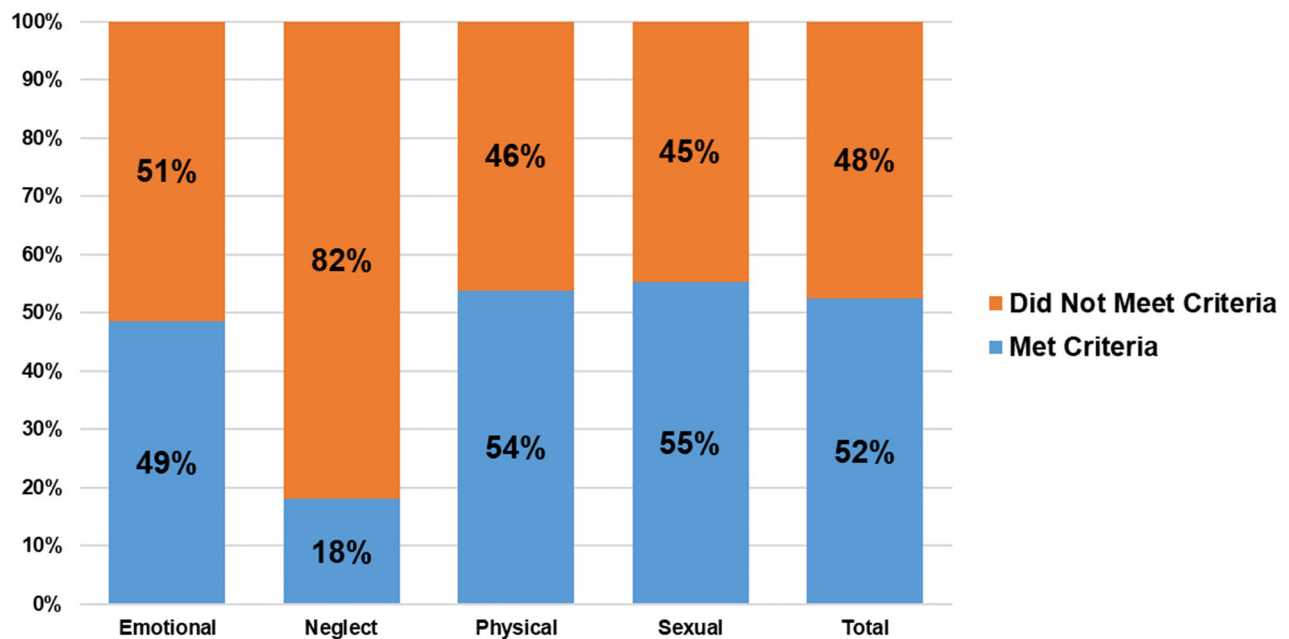


Figure B.5. Spouse abuse met criteria rate by abuse type in FY 2021.

Overall, 57 percent of reported incidents of intimate partner abuse were determined to meet the DoD definition of abuse. As shown in Figure B.6, the met criteria rate for intimate partner abuse varied by abuse type: 59 percent of allegations of sexual abuse met criteria, 58 percent of allegations of physical abuse, and 52 percent of allegations of emotional abuse met criteria. There were no allegations of intimate partner neglect reported to FAP in FY 2021.

Proportion of Reported Intimate Partner Abuse Incidents that Met Criteria by Abuse Type (FY 2021)

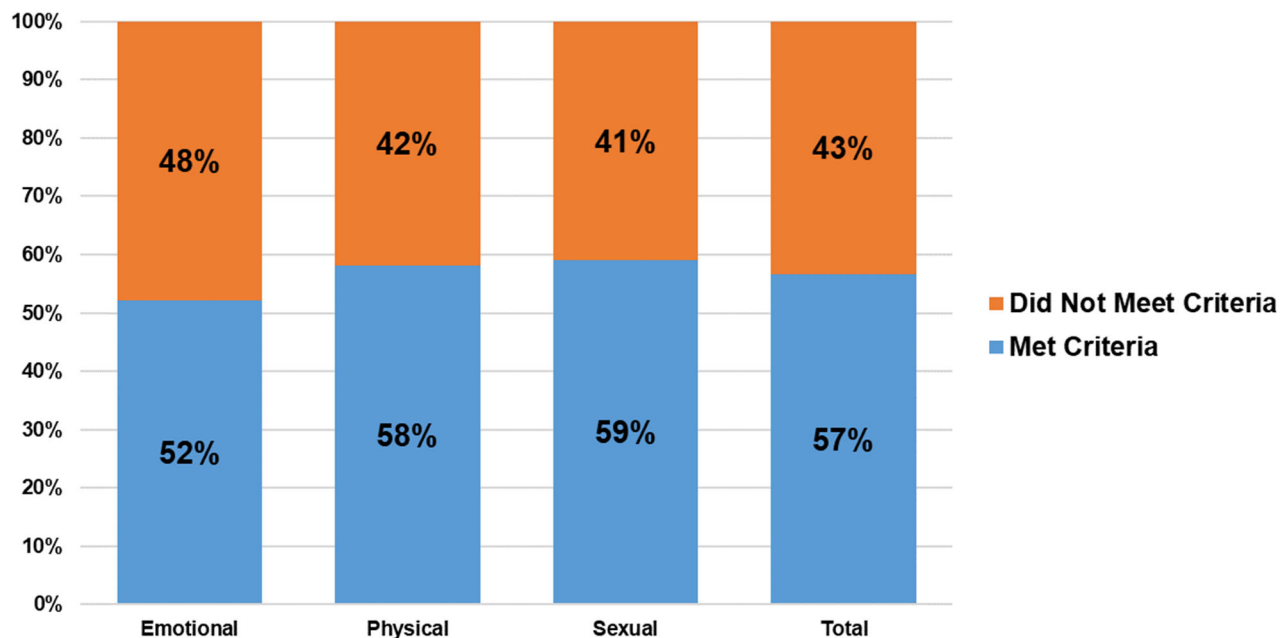


Figure B.6. Intimate partner met criteria rate by abuse type in FY 2021.

CONCLUSION

Findings from this analysis demonstrate that using Method 2 to calculate reports of abuse increases the number of reported incidents of abuse across all victim types. While the distribution of allegations of abuse by abuse type largely mirrors the distribution of abuse types in met criteria incidents, prior to FY 2021 DoD was unable to disaggregate reported incidents of abuse in this manner. This increased visibility on allegations of abuse can support more targeted prevention and intervention efforts.

Across all victim types, allegations of sexual abuse were most likely to meet the DoD definition of abuse. This is due in part to the elements set forth in DoD policy used to determine whether allegations of abuse meet the definition of abuse.⁸¹ Specifically, allegations of emotional abuse, neglect, and physical abuse require both an act or failure to act **and** a resulting impact, in order to meet criteria for abuse. In contrast, allegations of sexual abuse require an act, **only**, in order to meet criteria for abuse. The resulting impact is considered significant.

Overall, reported incidents of intimate partner abuse met criteria at a higher rate than reported incidents of spouse abuse. Updated DoD policy broadened the intimate partner definition to close gaps and to better align with the intimate partner definition in the civilian domestic violence field.⁸² This policy change may impact future reporting, including the relative met criteria rate for allegations of intimate partner abuse compared to spouse abuse. In future years, allegations of abuse by abuse type will be reported in the main body of this report.

⁸¹ DoDM 6400.01, Volume 3, “Family Advocacy Program: Clinical Case Staff Meeting and Incident Determination Committee,” August 11, 2016, as amended.

⁸² The “historical” domestic abuse definition appeared in DoDI 6400.06, “Domestic Abuse Involving DoD Military and Certain Affiliated Personnel,” August 21, 2007, as amended, was in place during the period covered by this report. “was in place during FY 2021, the period covered by this report. A more expansive definition appears in DoDI 6400.06, “DoD Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Abuse Involving DoD Military and Certain Affiliated Personnel,” December 15, 2021, as amended. DoD Instruction 6400.06, published December 15, 2021

APPENDIX C: MULTI-VICTIM CHILD ABUSE CASE

BACKGROUND

Since FY 2014, there has been a downward trend in the rate of reported child abuse and neglect incidents and the rate of met criteria incidents of child abuse and neglect. Although both rates experienced a year-over-year uptick from FY 2020 to FY 2021, the FY 2021 rate of reported incidents represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the 10-year average, and the rate of met criteria incidents did not vary significantly when compared to the 10-year average.⁸³

Child Abuse and Neglect Reports vs. Met Criteria Incident Rates per 1,000 Children (FY 2012-FY 2021)

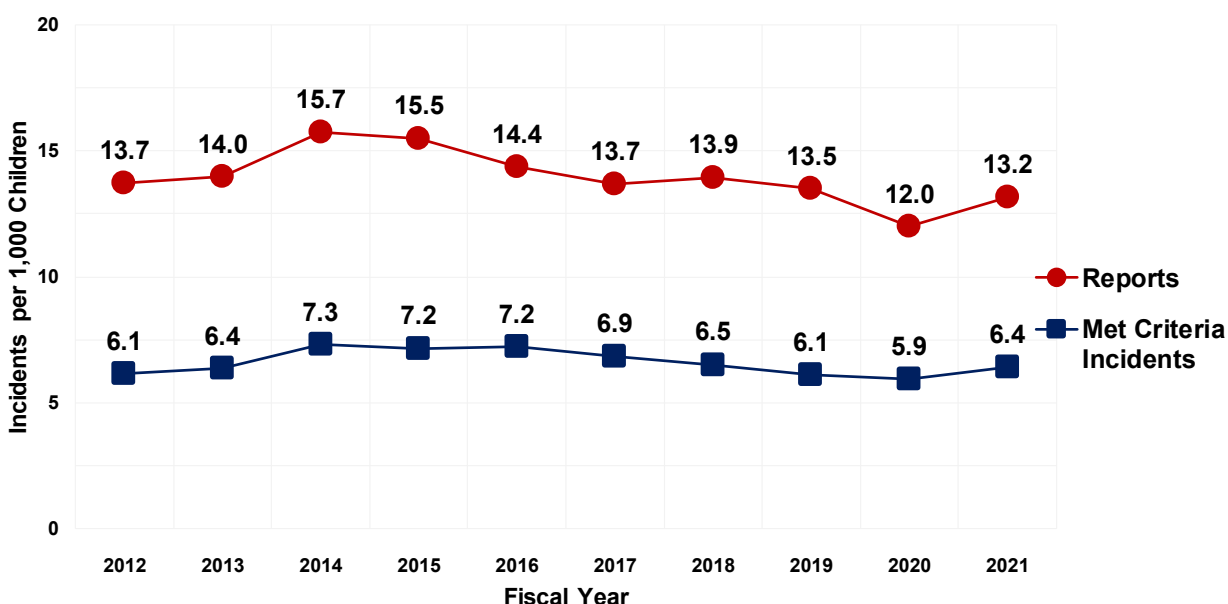


Figure C.1. Rates of child abuse and neglect incidents reported to FAP per 1,000 children and child abuse and neglect incidents that met DoD criteria per 1,000 children over time.

⁸³ The FY 2021 rate of reported child abuse and neglect per 1,000 children was 13.15, shown in the graph above as 13.2. This rate represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the average rate of reported child abuse and neglect during the FY 2012-FY 2021 period (95 percent CI [13.18, 14.73]). The FY 2021 rate of met criteria child abuse incidents per 1,000 children (6.4) did not vary significantly when compared to the average rate from FY 2012-FY 2021 (95 percent CI [6.24, 6.96]).

Similarly, there has been a downward trend in the rate of unique child victims per 1,000 military children since FY 2014. Despite the year-over-year increase in the unique child victim rate from FY 2020 to FY 2021, the FY 2021 rate represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the 10-year average.⁸⁴

Unique Child Victim Rate per 1,000 in Met Criteria Child Abuse and Neglect Incidents (FY 2012-FY 2021)

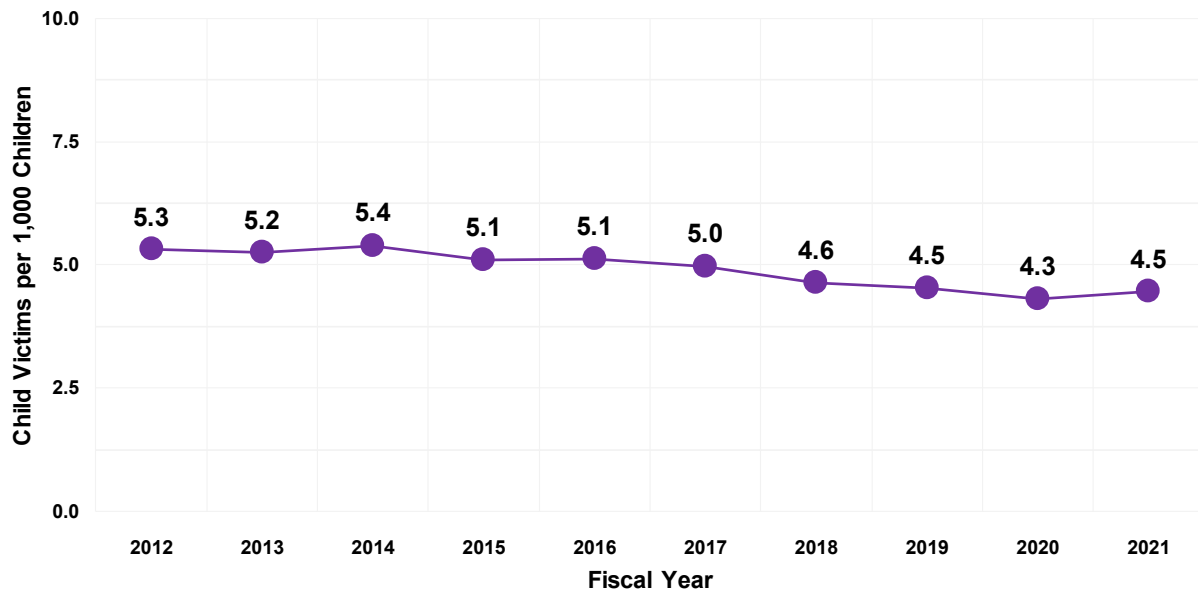


Figure C.2. Rates of unique child victims per 1,000 children per fiscal year.

⁸⁴ The FY 2021 unique child abuse and neglect victim rate per 1,000 children (4.5) represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the average child victim rate during the FY 2012-FY 2021 period (95 percent CI [4.62, 5.19]).

Simultaneously, there was a shift in FY 2021 in the distribution of caregiver statuses involved in met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents, with a notable increase in the proportion of extra-familial caregivers involved in these incidents (10.2 percent in FY 2021 vs. 3.9 percent in FY 2020). In combination, these shifts are atypical within a single fiscal year.

DoD-wide, there were 548 met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents in FY 2021 involving extra-familial caregivers. More than half of them (55.5 percent) involved military child care center personnel at a single military installation. This multi-victim child abuse case at a military child care center represents an isolated situation rather than a systemic one.

The purpose of this appendix is to explore the potential impact of this isolated case on FAP child abuse and neglect data DoD-wide. From a DoD Central Registry data perspective, it is impossible to determine which incidents of child abuse and neglect involving military child care center personnel at this location were connected to the multi-victim child abuse case as opposed to representing disconnected incidents at the same location. As a result, this analysis includes all child abuse and neglect incidents involving military child care center personnel that occurred at the identified military installation.⁸⁵

METHODS

In order to better understand the potential impact of the multi-victim child abuse case on FAP data DoD-wide, this appendix includes a “what-if” analysis. Specifically, we explore three different approaches to estimate the DoD-wide number of child abuse and neglect reports, met criteria incidents, and unique victims—absent the multi-victim child abuse case data.

Zero Baseline Method

As a baseline approach, the first estimation technique examines what the DoD-wide number of reports, met criteria incidents, and unique victims would have been if there had been zero reports of child abuse and neglect involving military child care center personnel at the identified military installation. While there may have been one or more reports of child abuse and neglect at the military child care center in FY 2021 in the absence of the multi-victim case, this method provides an estimate of the lowest number of possible reports.

Previous Year Imputation Method

To provide a historical approach, the second estimation technique examines what the DoD-wide number of reports, met criteria incidents, and unique victims of child abuse and neglect would have been using the FY 2020 numbers of reports, met criteria incidents, and unique victims involving military child care center personnel at the identified military installation. Although there are fluctuations in child abuse and neglect data in the aggregate, data disaggregated by caregiver status and location tend to be relatively stable over time.

⁸⁵ The Military Service confirmed that all met criteria incidents of child abuse and neglect involving military child care center personnel at the identified installation were connected to the multi-victim child abuse case.

Service-wide Rate Imputation Method

The third estimation technique relies on a within-Service analysis. Specifically, this technique examines what the DoD-wide number of reports, met criteria incidents, and unique victims of child abuse and neglect would have been based on the FY 2021 Service-level proportion of child abuse and neglect reports, met criteria incidents, and unique victims involving military child care center personnel—excluding the location of the multi-victim child abuse case.

ANALYSIS

Table C.1 shows the number of child abuse and neglect reports, the number of met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents, and the number of unique victims of child abuse and neglect over time. The number of reported incidents, met criteria incidents, and unique victims of child abuse and neglect decreased from FY 2019 to FY 2020 but increased from FY 2020 to FY 2021.

Table C.1: Reports, Incidents, and Unique Victims of Child Abuse and Neglect (FY 2012-FY 2021)

Fiscal Year	Reported Incidents	Met Criteria Incidents	Unique Victims
2012	15,656	7,003	6,054
2013	15,346	6,989	5,773
2014	16,526	7,676	5,670
2015	15,579	7,208	5,123
2016	13,916	6,998	4,960
2017	12,849	6,450	4,667
2018	12,850	6,010	4,266
2019	12,392	5,600	4,150
2020	10,857	5,369	3,894
2021	11,737	5,732	3,974

Number of Reports

There were 11,737 reports of child abuse and neglect made to FAP in FY 2021 (see Table C.1). As shown in Figure C.3, the **Zero Baseline** imputation method estimated 11,360 reports of child abuse and neglect, which is lower than the actual number of reports of child abuse and neglect in FY 2021. This numerical difference of 377 reported incidents represents a 3.2 percent decrease when compared to the actual number of reports for FY 2021. Both the **Previous Year** and **Service-wide** imputation methods estimated 11,361 reports of child abuse and neglect DoD-wide, which is very similar to the **Zero Baseline** estimate.

Comparing the **Zero Baseline** estimate of reports for FY 2021 to the actual number of reports for previous fiscal years, the **Zero Baseline** estimate represents a 4.6 percent increase in the number of reports when compared to the actual number of reports in FY 2020; however, it represents an 8.3 percent *decrease* when compared to the actual number of reports in FY 2019.

Actual vs. Imputed Number of Child Abuse and Neglect Reports (FY 2021)

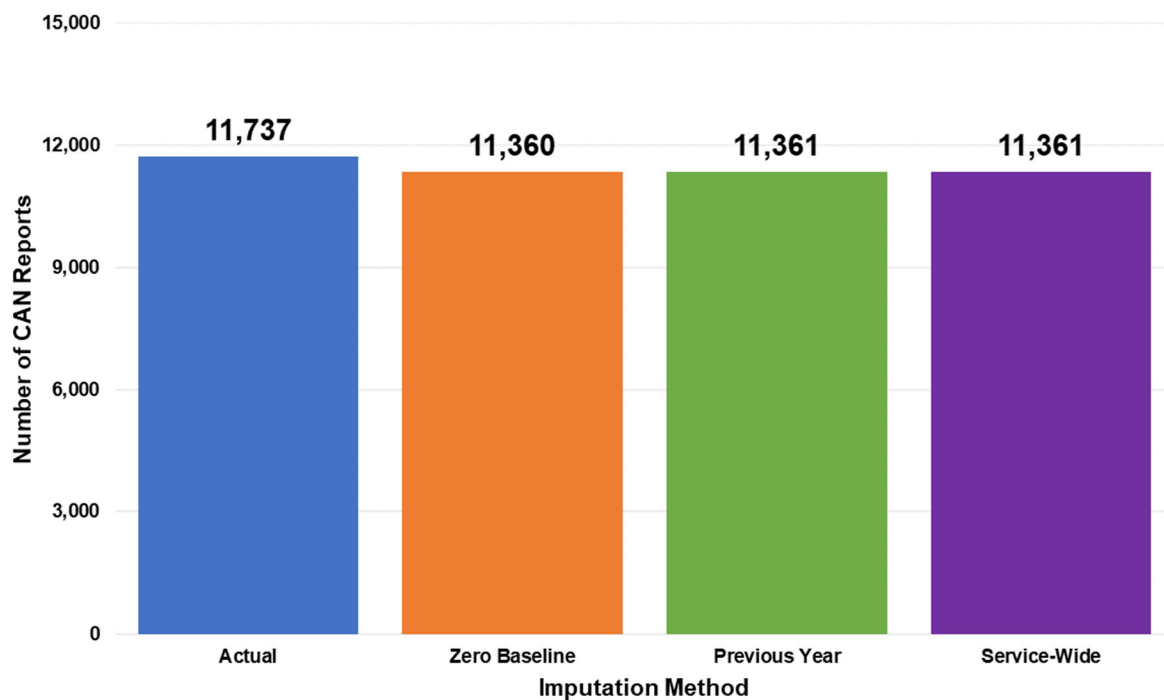


Figure C.3. Actual number of child abuse and neglect reports DoD-wide in FY 2021 compared to the estimated number of reports, using three imputation methods.

Number of Met Criteria Incidents

In FY 2021, there were 5,732 met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents DoD-wide (see Table C.1). As shown in Figure C.4, the **Zero Baseline** imputation method estimated 5,428 met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents, which is lower than the actual number of met criteria incidents in FY 2021. This numerical difference of 304 incidents represents a 5.3 percent decrease when compared to the actual number of met criteria incidents in FY 2021. Both the **Previous Year** and **Service-wide** imputation methods estimated a similar number of met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents as the **Zero Baseline** method.

Comparing the **Zero Baseline** estimate of met criteria incidents for FY 2021 to the actual number of met criteria incidents for previous fiscal years, the **Zero Baseline** estimate represents a 1.1 percent increase in the number of met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents when compared to the actual number of incidents from FY 2020; however, it represents a 3.1 percent *decrease* when compared to the actual number of met criteria incidents in FY 2019.

Actual vs. Imputed Number of Met Criteria Child Abuse and Neglect Incidents (FY 2021)

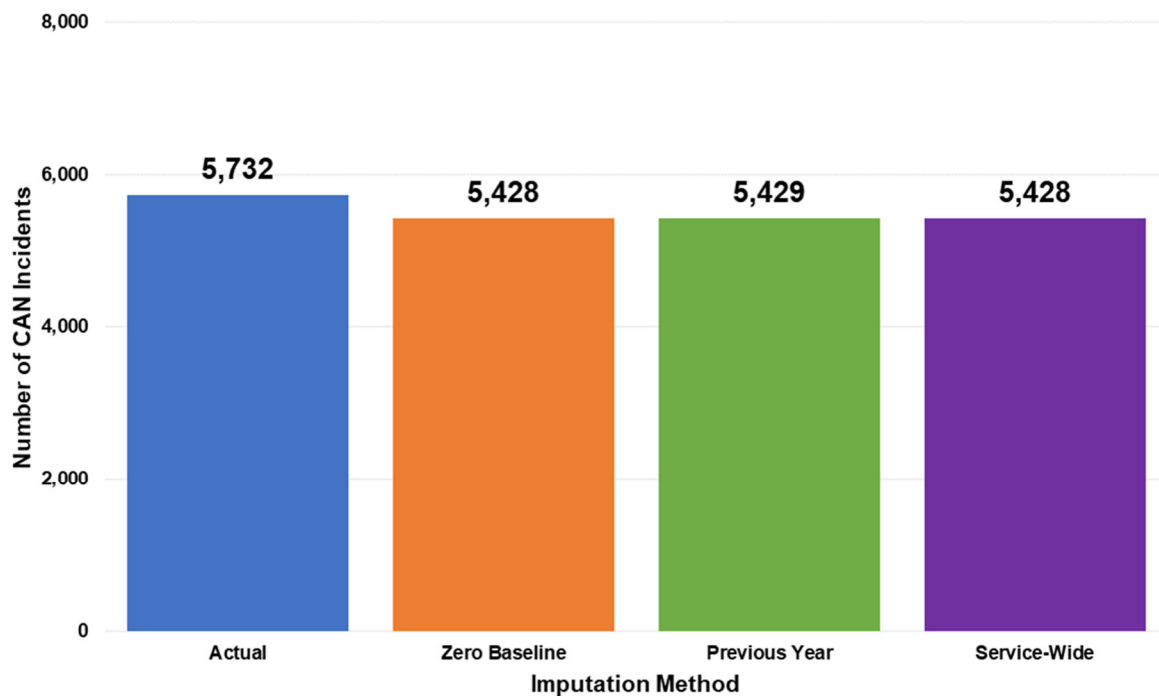


Figure C.4. Actual number of met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents DoD-wide in FY 2021 compared to the estimated number of met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents, using three imputation methods.

Number of Unique Victims

In FY 2021, there were 3,974 unique victims of child abuse and neglect DoD-wide (see Table C.1). As shown in Figure C.5, the **Zero Baseline** imputation method estimated 3,957 unique child victims, which is lower than the actual number of unique child victims in FY 2021. This numerical difference of 17 child victims represents a 0.4 percent decrease when compared to the actual number of unique child victims in FY 2021. Both the **Previous Year** and **Service-wide** imputation methods estimated a similar number of unique child victims as the **Zero Baseline** method.

Comparing the **Zero Baseline** estimate of the number of unique child victims for FY 2021 to the actual number of child victims for previous fiscal years, the **Zero Baseline** estimate represents a 1.6 percent increase in the number of unique child victims when compared to the actual number of unique child victims in FY 2020; however, it represents a 4.7 percent *decrease* when compared to the actual number of unique child victims in FY 2019.

Actual vs. Imputed Number of Unique Victims of Child Abuse and Neglect (FY 2021)

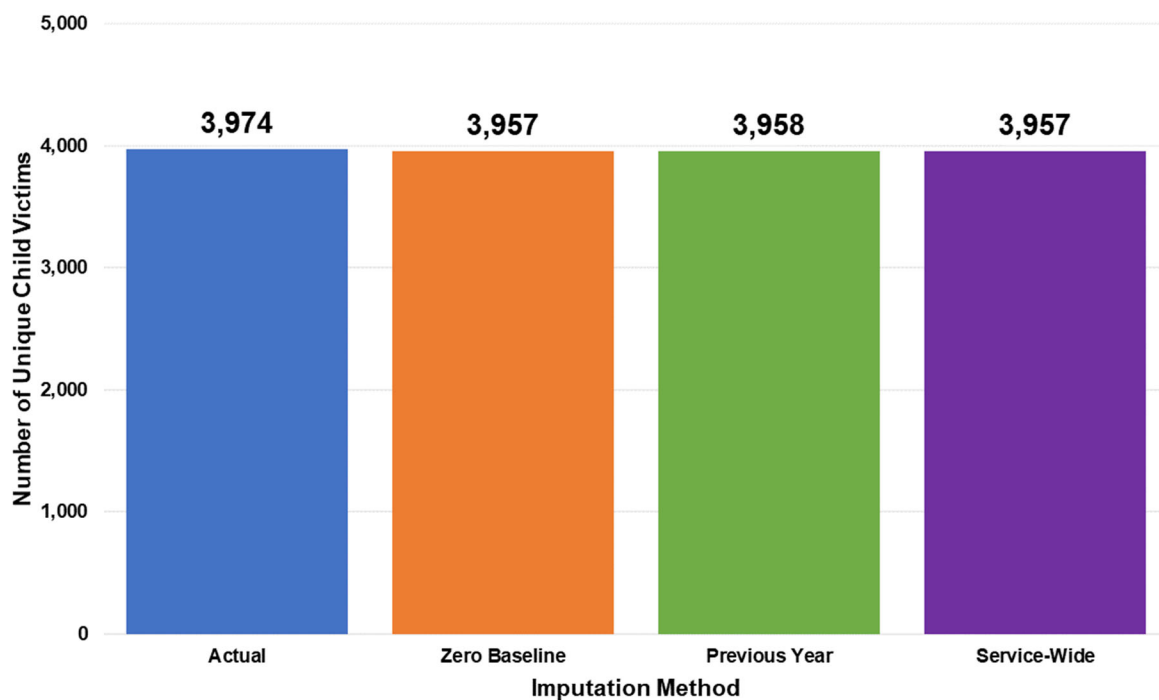


Figure C.5. Actual number of unique child victims DoD-wide in FY 2021 compared to the estimated number of unique child victims, using three imputation methods.

Met Criteria Rates Over Time

As previously noted in this appendix, despite the uptick in the rates of reported child abuse and neglect and unique child victims per 1,000 children in FY 2021, the rates represent statistically significant decreases when compared to their respective 10-year averages. The rate of met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents per 1,000 military children also experienced an uptick in FY 2021; however, this rate did not vary significantly when compared to the 10-year average. Essentially this means that the rates of reported child abuse and neglect and unique child victims per 1,000 military children continued their downward trend in FY 2021, while the rate of met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents remained flat.

What would happen to the rate of met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents per 1,000 children if we replaced the actual number of met criteria incidents with an estimated number of incidents? Figure C.6 shows the actual versus estimated rate of met criteria incidents per 1,000 children in FY 2021 using the **Previous Year** imputation method. The FY 2021 estimated rate of 6.1 represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the 10-year average.⁸⁶

Actual vs. Imputed Met Criteria Incident Rate per 1,000 Children (FY 2012-FY 2021)

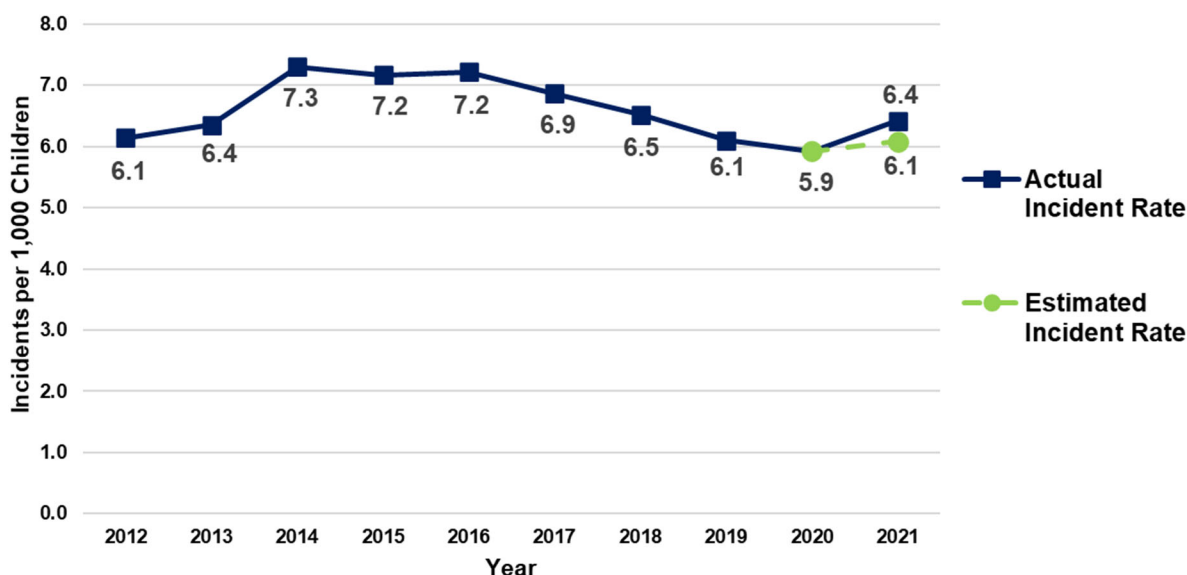


Figure C.6. Actual versus imputed rate of met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents per 1,000 children over time, using the **Previous Year** method for imputation.

Note: The **Previous Year** imputation method was selected because it yielded the largest estimate of incidents.

⁸⁶ The **Previous Year** imputed rate of met criteria child abuse incidents per 1,000 children (6.1) represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the average rate from FY 2012-FY2021 (95 percent CI [6.19, 6.95]).

CONCLUSION

Finding from this analysis show that each of the three imputation methods produced estimates of the number of reports of child abuse and neglect, the number of met criteria incidents, and the number of unique victims that were less than the actual numbers in FY 2021. Despite these lower estimates for FY 2021, the number of reports of child abuse and neglect, the number of met criteria incidents, and the number of unique victims still would have represented an *increase* relative to their respective FY 2020 numbers.

This finding suggests that although the multi-child victim case may have contributed to DoD-wide increases in the number of reports, met criteria incidents, and unique victims, seemingly, it was one of several contributing factors. Even still, replacing the actual number of met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents in FY 2021 with an imputed estimate of incidents would have represented a statistically significant decrease in the DoD-wide rate of met criteria incidents per 1,000 children.

It is important to consider FY 2021 FAP Central Registry data in the larger context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since March 2020, the civilian sector and the military alike have noted shifts in the reporting of child abuse and neglect, notably as children transitioned from in-person to virtual schooling—where mandatory reporters no longer had daily, face-to-face contact with children.⁸⁷ We explore continued impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on FAP data in Appendix A.

⁸⁷ Baron, E. J., Goldstein, E. G., & Wallace, C. T. (2020). Suffering in silence: How COVID-19 school closures inhibit the reporting of child maltreatment. *Journal of Public Economics*, 190, 1-23. *Report on Child Abuse and Neglect and Domestic Abuse in the Military for Fiscal Year 2020*. Available from: <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/data-research-and-statistics/reports/family-advocacy-program/>