STALKING IN OHIO, 2016 - 2022

Kaitlyn Rines, M.S.

OCJS
Office of Criminal Justice Services

Ohio Department of Public Safety

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Section 1: Introduction and Data

Executive Summary

Stalking Offenses

Between 2016 and 2022:

- The stalking victimization rate increased by 31.7%.

- Intimate partners were victimized in 27.0% of incidents.

- Most instances of stalking occurred at residential structures (63.8%).

- In 81.8% of stalking incidents, law enforcement did not report a weapon. When a weapon was used, a part of the body (i.e. fist, foot, knee, elbow, etc.) was the most common weapon reported.

Victim Characteristics

- Most victims of stalking were female, white, and between 26-35 years of age.

- Black females between the ages of 18-35 years had the highest victimization rates compared to all other groups.

Introduction

Stalking is a pattern of conduct directed at another person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for their safety or the safety of others or suffer substantial emotional distress[1]. Anyone, regardless of age, economic status, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ability, or education level can become a victim of stalking, and in severe cases, stalking can lead to violent behaviors resulting in assault, robbery, and even homicide[2]. Stalking can also happen in the context of intimate partner violence, and a greater number of women experience stalking compared to men[3].

Stalking tactics include actions against victims such as unwanted following and watching, being spied upon, repeated unwanted contacts, and threats of violence[4]. Stalking behaviors may also look non-threatening to an outside observer (e.g., sending unwanted gifts, such as flowers or cards)[5]. Despite the methods used by stalkers, these actions can lead the victim to experience fear of not knowing what will happen next, and victims often suffer higher rates of depression, anxiety, insomnia, and social dysfunction compared to people in the general population as a result of this crime[6,7]. Victim reactions to stalking can be difficult to understand and could change as stalking actions are identified. For example, victims may seek out help, report the stalking incidents to law enforcement, create changes in their routine, and other self-protective factors to deter the stalker[8].

According to the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS), an estimated 13.5 million people are victims of stalking in a one-year period throughout the United Status[9]. Like other types of interpersonal violence, stalking is an under-reported crime. It may be experienced on its own or as part of other crimes (e.g., intimate partner or sexual violence). Due to the prevalence and subsequent effects stalking has on victims, it is vital that stalking prevention efforts are strengthened, survivors are given the proper services, and stalkers are held accountable for their actions.

The Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) helps those affected by stalking with funding for law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, victim service providers, and other organizations providing direct services through the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program (JAG), the Violence Against Women Act Program (VAWA), and the Family Violence Prevention & Services Act Grant Program (FVPSA).

The goal of this report is to use data from Ohio's Incident-Based Reporting System (OIBRS) to provide accurate and detailed information about stalking in Ohio from January 1, 2016, to December 31, 2022. It should be noted that this is only a statistical report; it does not attempt to understand why these incidents occurred or make recommendations about what should be done to address stalking. It is meant to inform on the current trends of stalking in Ohio to assist in awareness as well as policy guidance.

---

[1] Stalking. (2019, May 16). Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). https://www.justice.gov/ovw/stalking

[2] Rai A, Villarreal-Otalora T, Blackburn J, Choi Y. (2020). Correlates of intimate partner stalking precipitated homicides in the United States. J Fam Violence, 35:705-16

[3] Smith, S.G., Zhang, X., Basile, K.C., Merrick, M.T., Wang, J., Kresnow, M., Chen, J. (2018). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2015 Data Brief – Updated Release. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[4] Smith, S.G., Basile, K.C., & Kresnow, M. (2022). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2016/2017 Report on Stalking. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease control and Prevention.

[5] Smith, S.G., Zhang, X., Basile, K.C., Merrick, M.T., Wang, J., Kresnow, M., Chen, J. (2018). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2015 Data Brief – Updated Release. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[6] Logan T. (2020). Examining stalking experiences and outcomes for men and women stalked by (ex)partners and non-partners. J Fam Violence, 35:729-39.

[7] Dressing H, Kuehner C, Gass P. (2005). Lifetime prevalence and impact of stalking in a European population. Br J Psychiatry, 187(2):168-72.

[8] Randa, R., Reyns, B. W., & Fansher, A. (2022). Victim reactions to being stalked: Examining the effects of perceived offender characteristics and motivations. Behavioral Sciences & the Law, 40(5), 715-731.

[9] Smith, S.G., Basile, K.C., & Kresnow, M. (2022). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2016/2017 Report on Stalking. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease control and Prevention.

Data

Data from this report are taken from the Ohio Incident Based-Reporting System (OIBRS), a voluntary crime reporting program that enables law enforcement agencies in Ohio to submit crime data directly to the state and federal government. OIBRS contains detailed information about criminal incidents, and is used to generate official crime statistics for the state of Ohio. Participation in OIBRS has increased over the years. Figure 1 shows the percent of the state population covered by law enforcement agencies that participated in OIBRS(i.e. submitted at least one incident report to the system), as well as the agencies that reported complete data to the system for a full year.

This report contains data from agencies that provided complete data to OIBRS for individual years between 2016 - 2022. Data from unfounded incidents are excluded from this report.
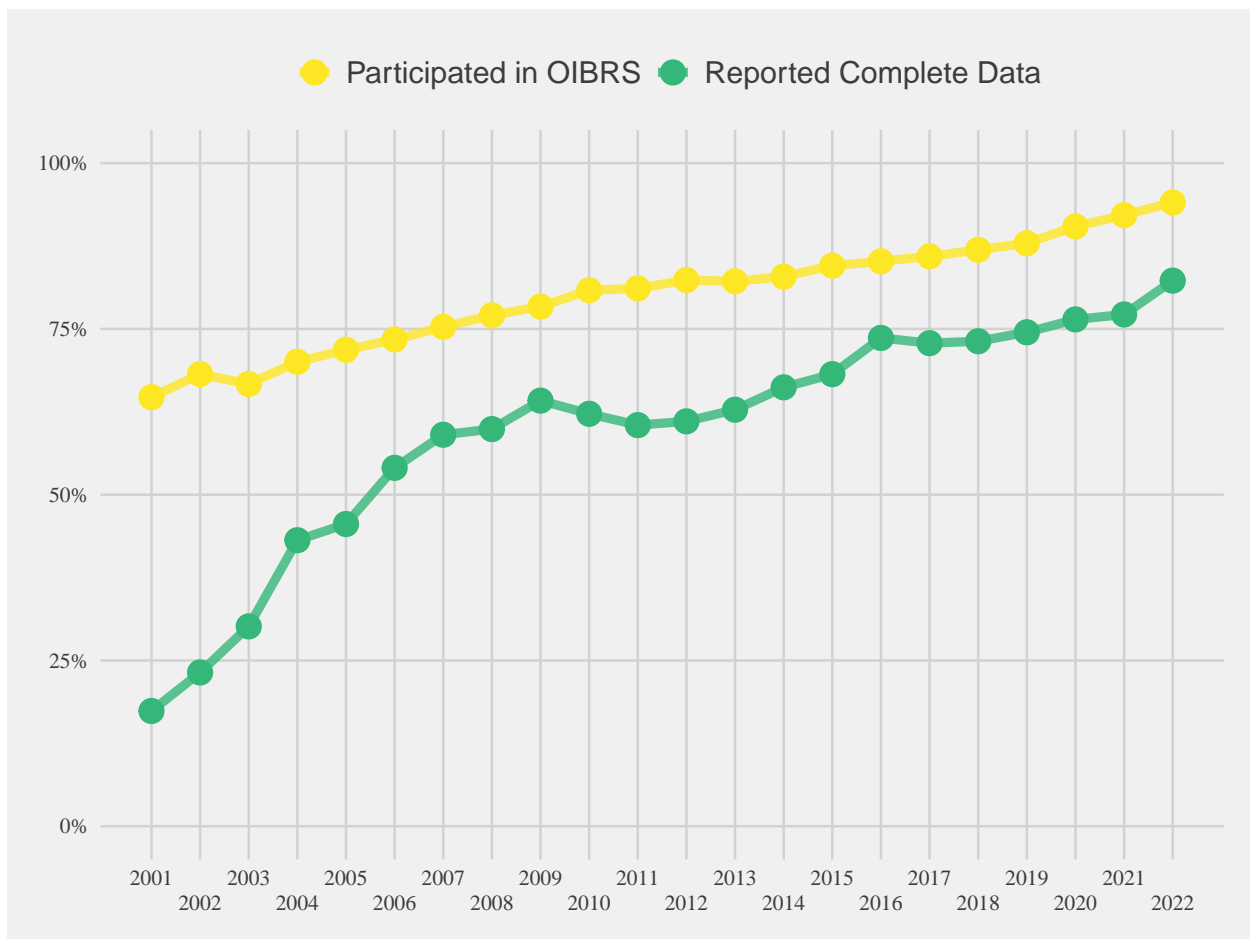

Figure 1: OIBRS Participation, 2001 - 2022

Definition of Stalking

In this report, stalking is defined based on the Ohio Revised Code (ORC), 2903.211, Menacing by Stalking statute. Incidents reported to OIBRS were considered to be stalking based on the following criteria:

1. Incidents containing ORC 2903.211 (Menacing by Stalking) which is defined as[10]:

   - (A)(1) No person by engaging in a pattern of conduct shall knowingly cause another person to believe that the offender will cause physical harm to the other person or a family or household member of the other person or cause mental distress to the other person or a family or household member of the other person. In addition to any other basis for the other person's belief that the offender will cause physical harm to the other person or the other person's family or household member or mental distress to the other person or the other person's family or household member, the other person's belief or mental distress may be based on words or conduct of the offender that are directed at or identify a corporation, association, or other organization that employs the other person or to which the other person belongs.

   - (2) No person, through the use of any form of written communication or any electronic method of remotely transferring information, including, but not limited to, any computer, computer network, computer program, computer system, or telecommunication device shall post a message or use any intentionally written or verbal graphic gesture with purpose to do either of the following: violate division this section, urge or incite another to commit a violation of this section.

   - No person, with a sexual motivation, shall violate division (A)(1) or (2) of this section.

   - Whoever violates this section is guilty of menacing by stalking.

---

[10]Section 2903.211: Menacing by stalking. Section 2903.211 - Ohio Revised Code | Ohio Laws. (2016, August, 16). https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-revised-code/section-2903.211.

Report Organization

This report presents stalking data in four detailed sections.

- **Section 1: Introduction and Data** - This section provides a summary of the key findings from the report, an introduction to the crime of stalking, information on the data used in this report, along with a definition of stalking and an overview of how the report is organized.

- **Section 2: Stalking Offenses** - This section provides an overview of stalking crimes in Ohio by including information on:

    1. The total stalking rate per year and month,
    2. the relationship between the victim and offender,
    3. the location of stalking offenses, and
    4. weapons used in stalking crimes.

- **Section 3: Victim Characteristics** - This section provides details, including rates, on the victim characteristics of age, race, and sex.

- **Section 4: Tables** - This section provides the crime rates that were used to create the figures presented in this report.

Disclaimers

- Some law enforcement agencies do not report their data to OIBRS because it is a voluntary reporting system. For this reason, data are presented as rates instead of totals, and only data from agencies that provided complete annual data are included for a given year.

- The accuracy of these crime statistics is based on the information reported by participating law enforcement agencies. Information in this report may change over time based on updated or new data sent to OIBRS in future crime data submissions.

- This report only contains descriptive data, which means that the information in this report does not describe why crime occurs, what factors cause an increase or decrease in crime, or make recommendations about what should be done to reduce crime.

Section 2: Stalking Offenses
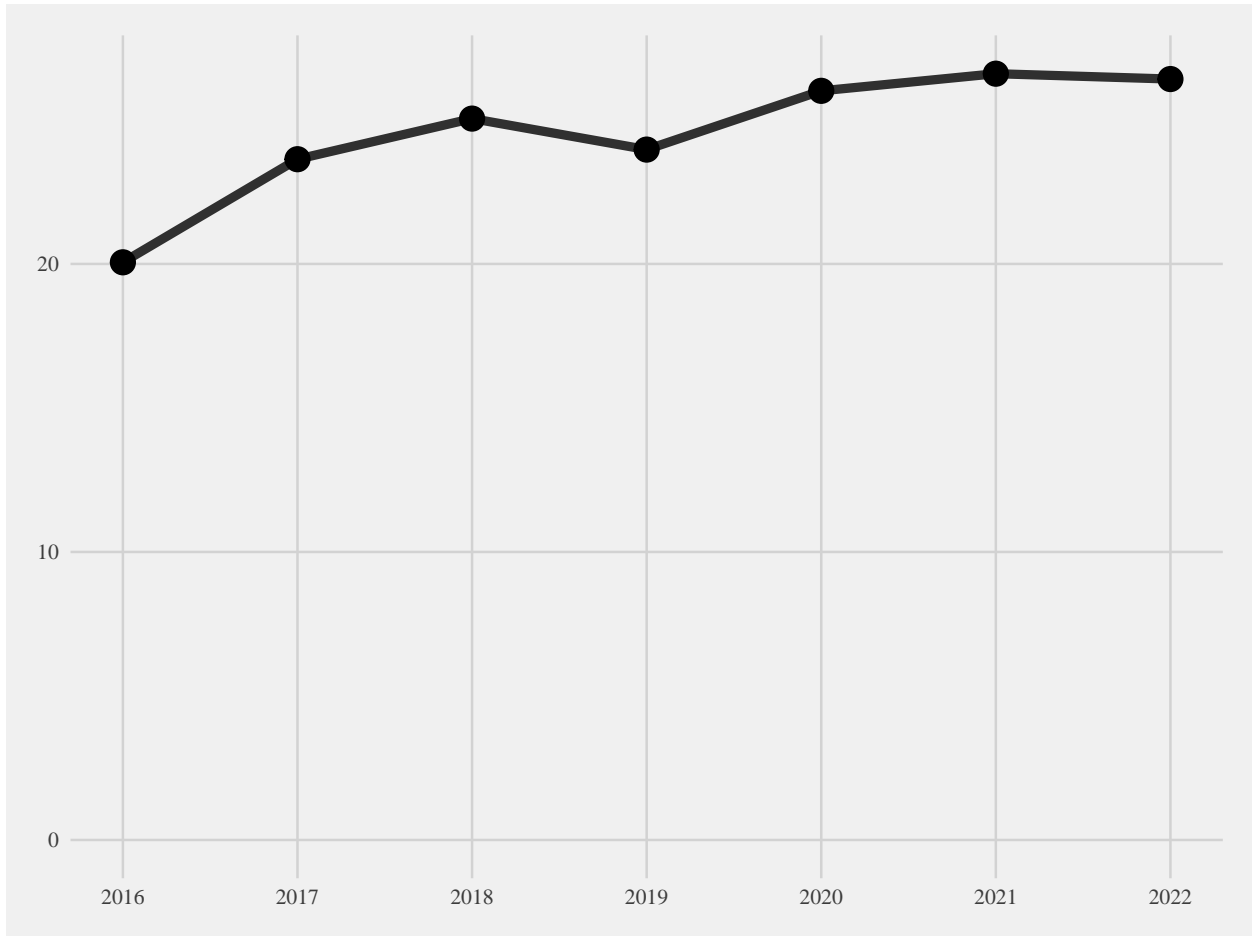
Figure 2: Stalking Victimization Rate per 100,000 People, 2016 - 2022

- Between 2016 and 2022, the stalking victimization rate increased by 31.7%. See Table 1 for rates.
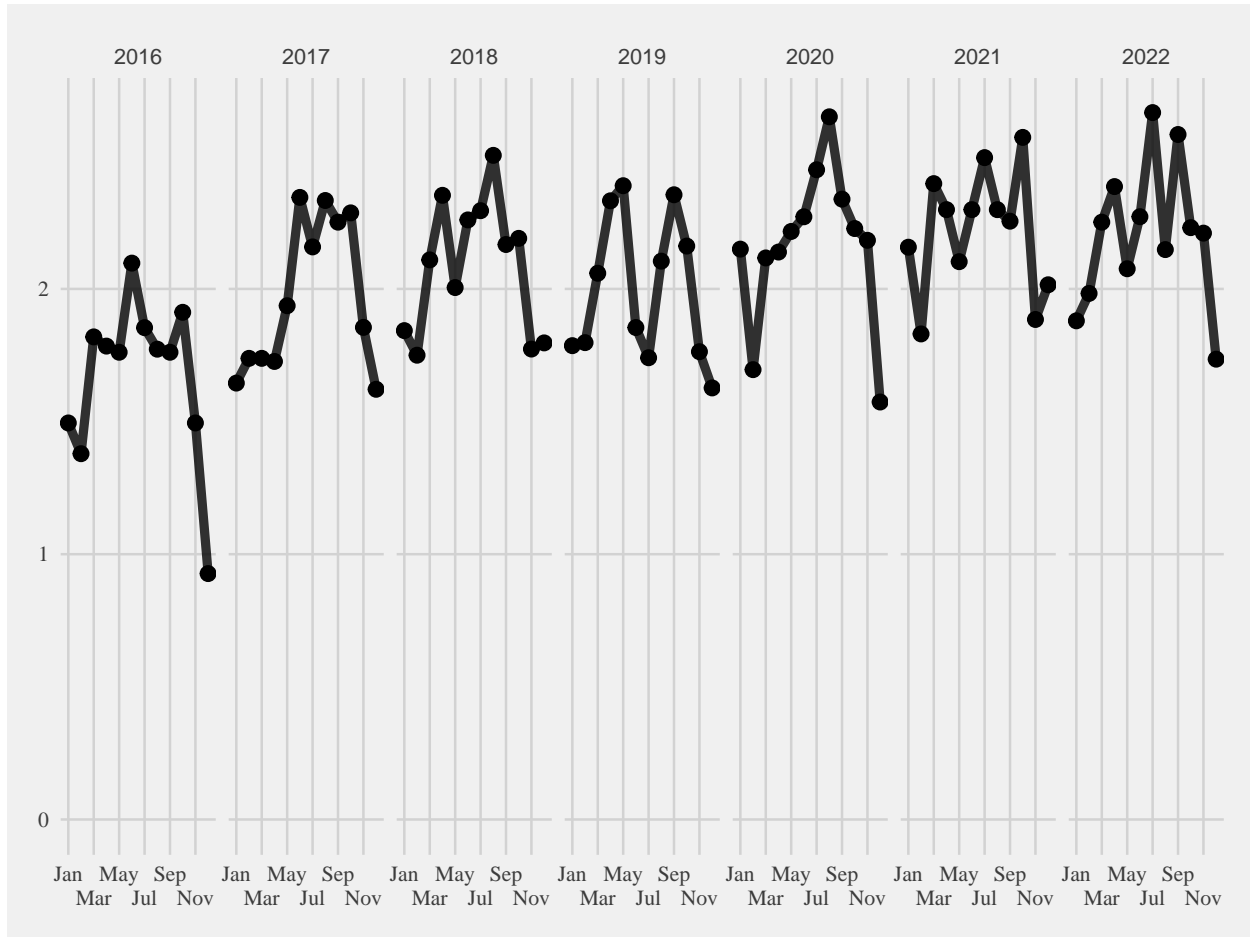
Figure 3: Stalking Victimization Rate per 100,000 People by Month, 2016 - 2022

- There is no definable pattern to stalking offenses. Crime typically follows a seasonal pattern of peaking in the summer (June - August) before declining throughout the rest of the year. However, between 2016 and 2022, the crime of stalking does not adhere to this pattern. It should be noted that while stalking did increase over this time frame, the rate of stalking is low, with less than 3 incidents per 100,000 individuals monthly reported to law enforcement. See Table 2 for rates.

Figure 4: Victim and Offender Relationship, 2016 - 2022

- Figure 4 shows the relationship between the victim and the offender in stalking incidents, and are broken down by percentage. In these instances of stalking, the victim could be classified as an intimate partner, acquaintance/friend, an 'otherwise known' individual, family member, stranger, or neighbor[11].

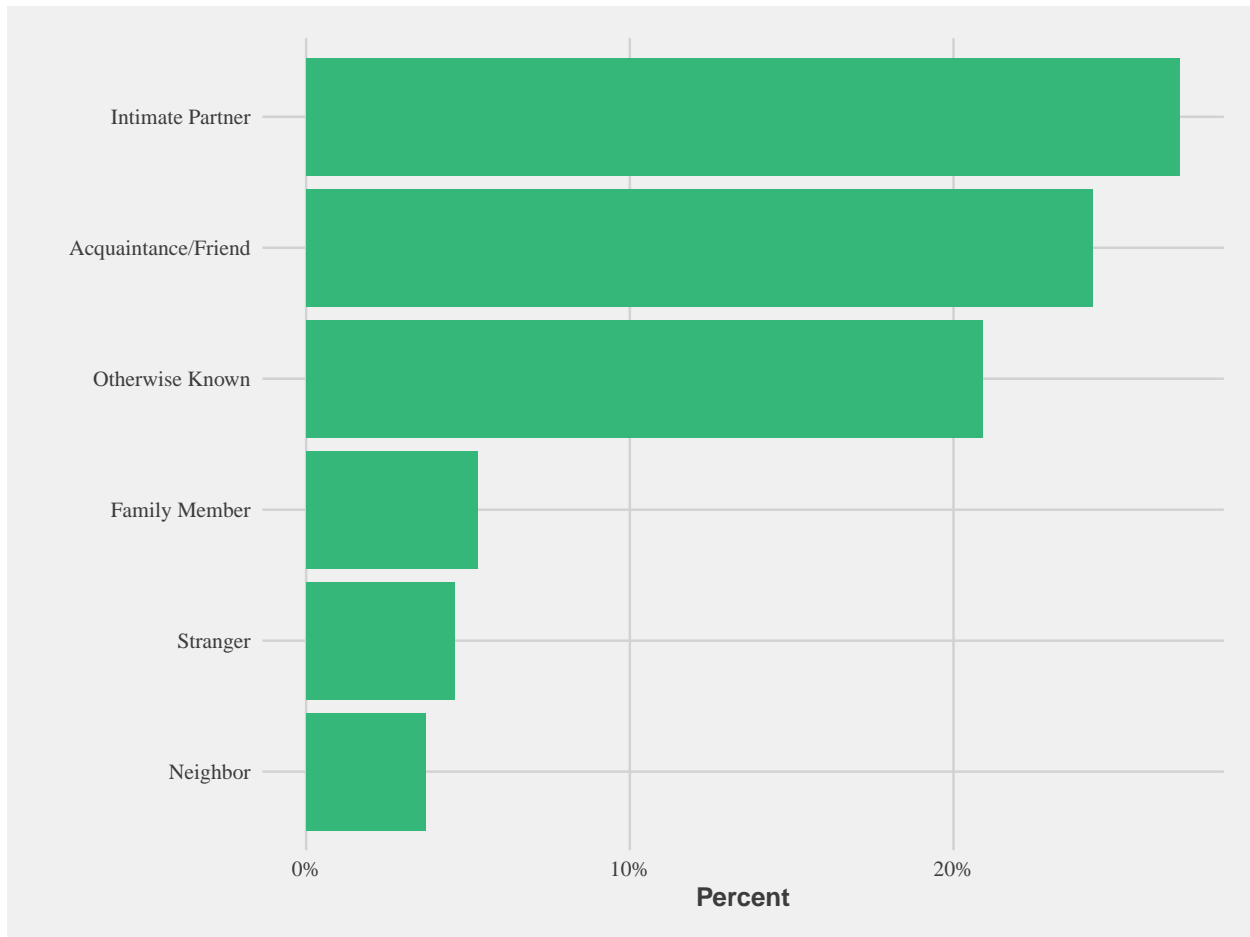- Intimate partners[12] were the most common victim in 27.0% of stalking incidents.

- The victim as an acquaintance or friend in 24.3% of stalking incidents.

- 20.9% of victims were 'otherwise known'[13].

- Family members[14] were the victim in 5.3%, strangers were the victim in 4.6%, and neighbors were the victim in 3.7% of incidents.

---

[11]14.2% of victims were listed as 'Unknown' in the victim-offender relationship field. Unknown is excluded from this analysis.
[12]For the purposes of this report, a victim was considered an intimate partner if the victim-offender relationship field in OIBRS was "Boyfriend/Girlfriend", "Spouse", "Common-Law Spouse", "Ex-Boy/Girlfriend)", or "Ex-Spouse".

[13]A victim was considered 'otherwise known' if the victim-offender relationship field in OIBRS was "Babysittee (the child)", "Teacher", "Student", "Employer", "Employee", or "Otherwise Known". Most victim-suspect relationships in this category were labeled at "Otherwise Known" (20.2%), this is a person that is known to the victim, but is not listed and does not fit any other category.

[14]Including "In-Law", "Stepchild", "Step sibling (Stepbrother or Stepsister)", "Stepparent", "Grandchild", "Grandparent", "Child of Boyfriend/Girlfriend", "Child", "Parent", " Sibling", "Sibling (Brother or Sister), any other family member type that is not listed and does not fit any other category.
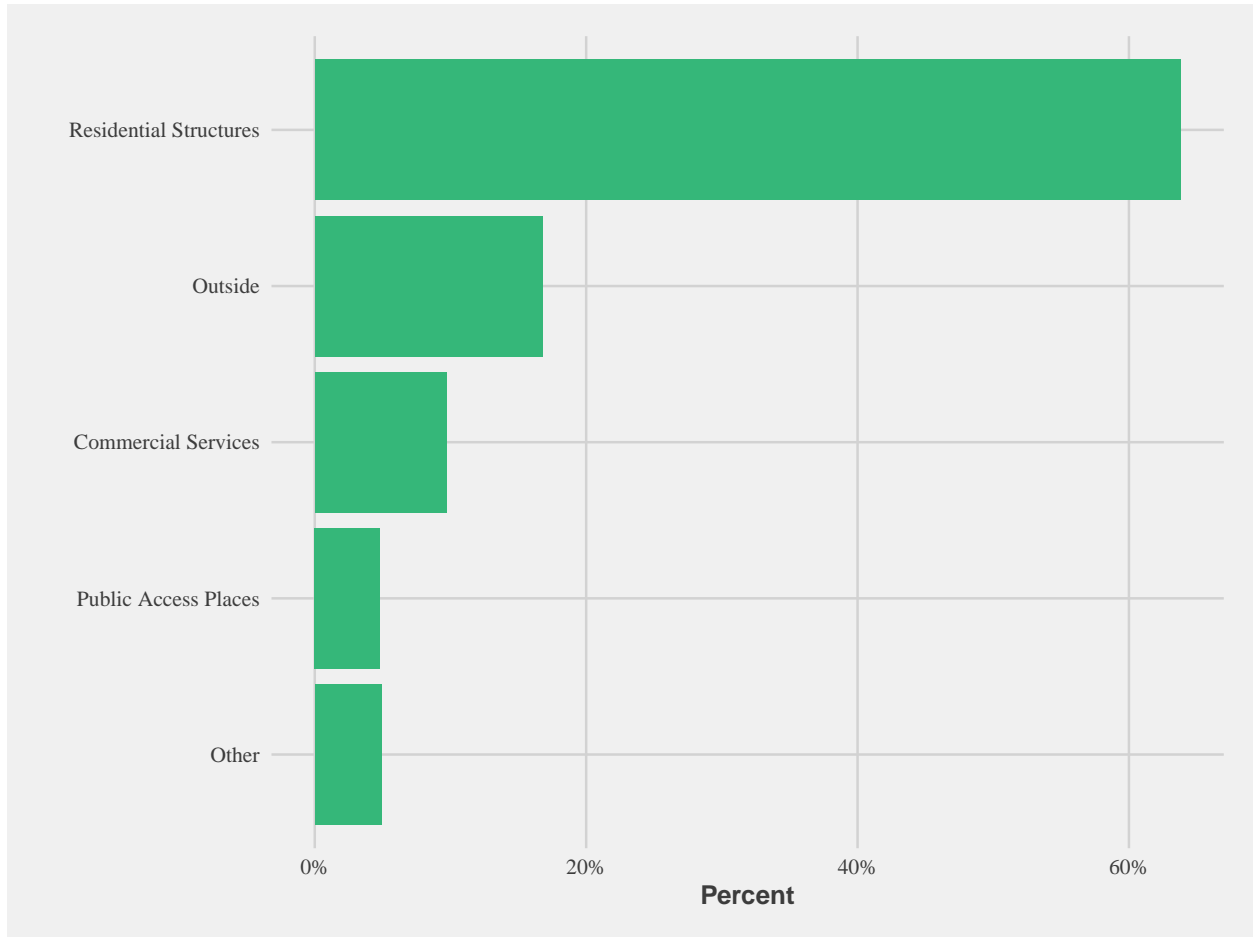
Figure 5: Location of Stalking Incidents, 2016 - 2022

- Figure 5 shows the location of where stalking incidents occurred.

- Most instances of stalking occurred at residential structures (63.8%), followed by outside locations (16.8%).

- 9.7% of stalking incidents happened at commercial service locations[15], 4.8% at public access locations[16], and 4.9% at 'other'[17] locations.

---

[15]Including "Amusement Center","Auto Sales Lot", "Auto Shop","Bar","Barber/Beauty Shop", "Buy/Sell/Trade Shop","Camp/Campground","Clothing Store","Construction Site","Daycare Facility", "Department/Discount Store","Doctor's Office","Drugstore","Dry Cleaners/Laundry","Factory/Mill/Plant","Farm Facility","Financial Institution","Gambling Facility/Casino/Race Track", "Gas Station","Grocery/Supermarket","Hotel/Motel","Jewelry Store","Liquor Store","Other Business Office", "Other Commercial Service Location","Other Retail Store","Professional Office","Rental Storage Facility", "Restaurant","Shopping Mall","Sporting Goods", "Variety/Convenience Store".

[16]Including "Arena/Stadium/Fairgrounds/Coliseum","Cemetery","Church","College","Community Center","Dock/Wharf/Freight/Modal Terminal", "Government Office","Hospital", "Library","Other Public Access Buildings","Parking Garage","Public Transit Vehicle", "School","Shelter-Mission/Homeless","Transit Facility".

[17]Including "Abandoned/Condemned Structure","Jail/Prison","Other Building","Other Location", and "Other Vehicle".
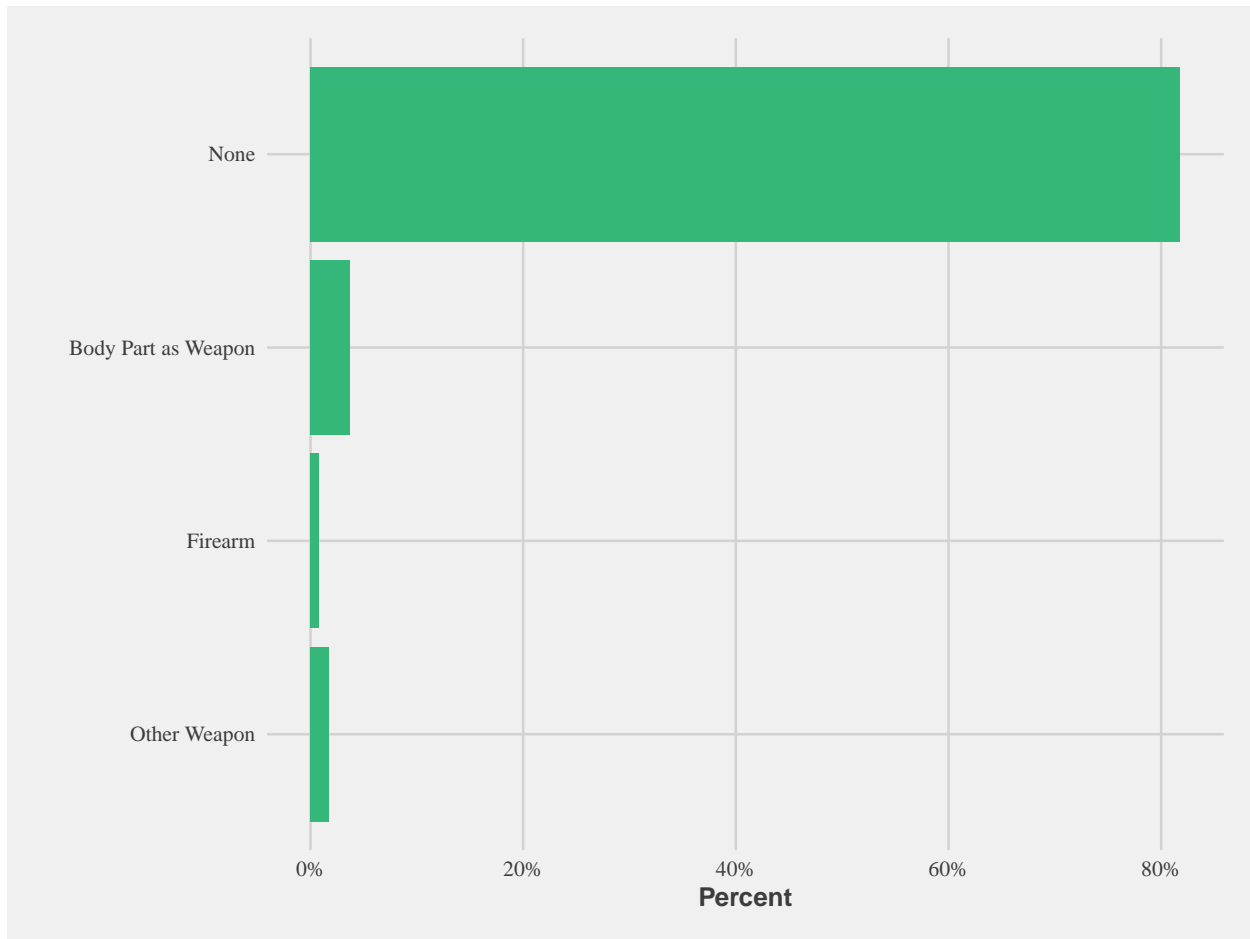
Figure 6: Weapon Type used in Stalking Incidents, 2016 - 2022

- Figure 6 displays the weapon types that were used in stalking incidents[18].

- Between 2016 and 2022, the majority (81.8%) of stalking incidents did not have a weapon involved.

- When a weapon was involved, a body part was used as weapon in 3.7% of incidents, a firearm was used in less than 1% of incidents, and an 'other weapon' was used in 1.7% of incidents[19].

---

[18]In 12% of incidents, the weapon type was unknown. These incidents were excluded from this analysis.

[19]The 'other weapon' category includes "Drugs/Narcotics/Sleeping Pills", "BB And Pellet Guns", "Explosives", "Fire/Incendiary Device", "Other Weapon", "Simulated Firearm", "Imitation Firearm", "Poison", "Asphyxiation", "Blunt Object", "Knife/Cutting Instruments", and "Motor Vehicle/Vessel".

Section 3: Victim Characteristics
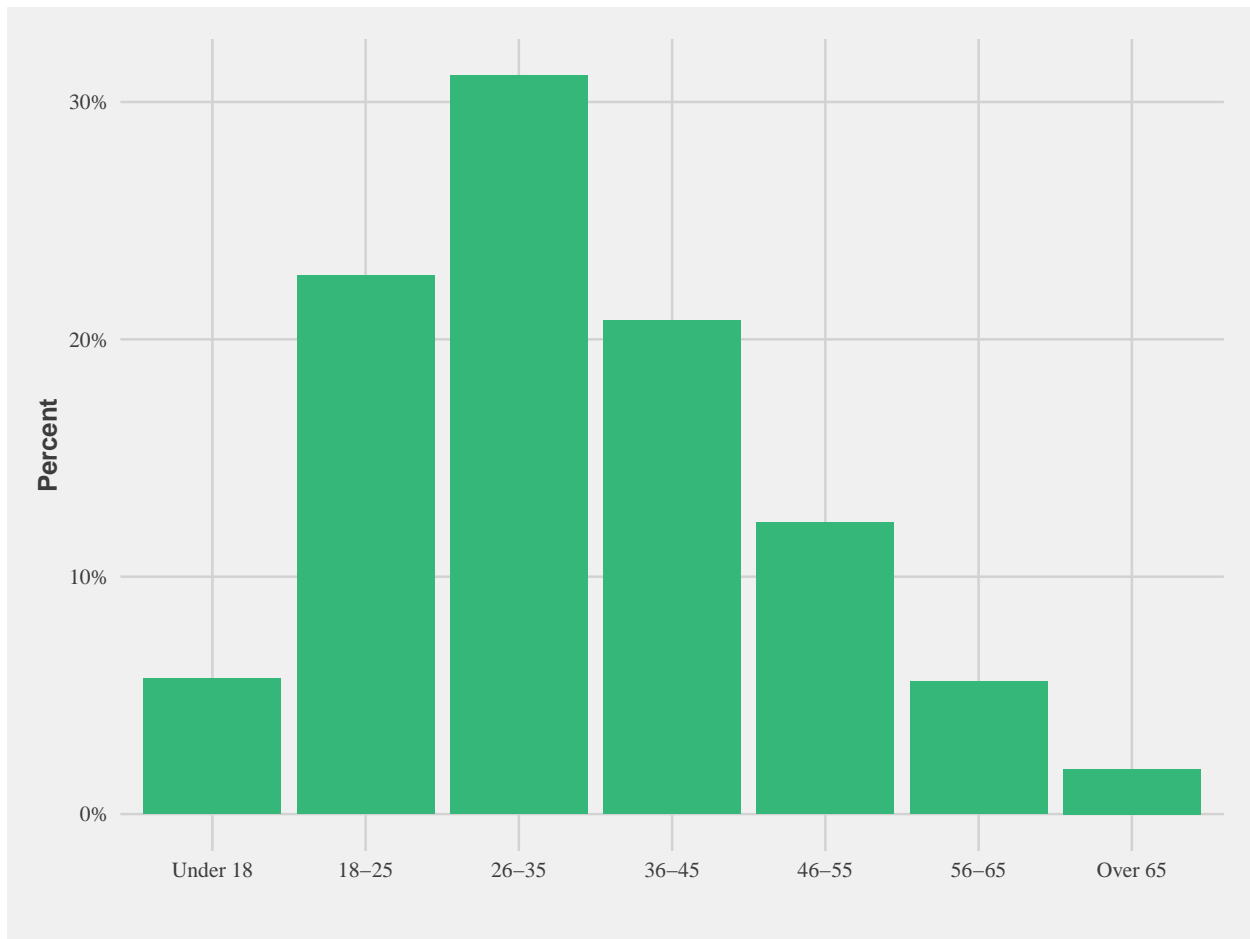
Figure 7: Percent of Stalking Victimization by Age, 2016 - 2022

- The percent of stalking incidents increased from the 'Under 18' age group to the '26-35' age group before steadily decreasing across all other age groups.

- Most victims of stalking were 26-35 years of age (31.1%), followed by victims ages 18-25 years (22.7%).

- Percent of stalking victims for all other age groups:

  - Under 18 = 5.7%
  - 36-45 = 20.8%
  - 46-55 = 12.3%
  - 56-65 = 5.6%
  - Over 65 = 1.9%
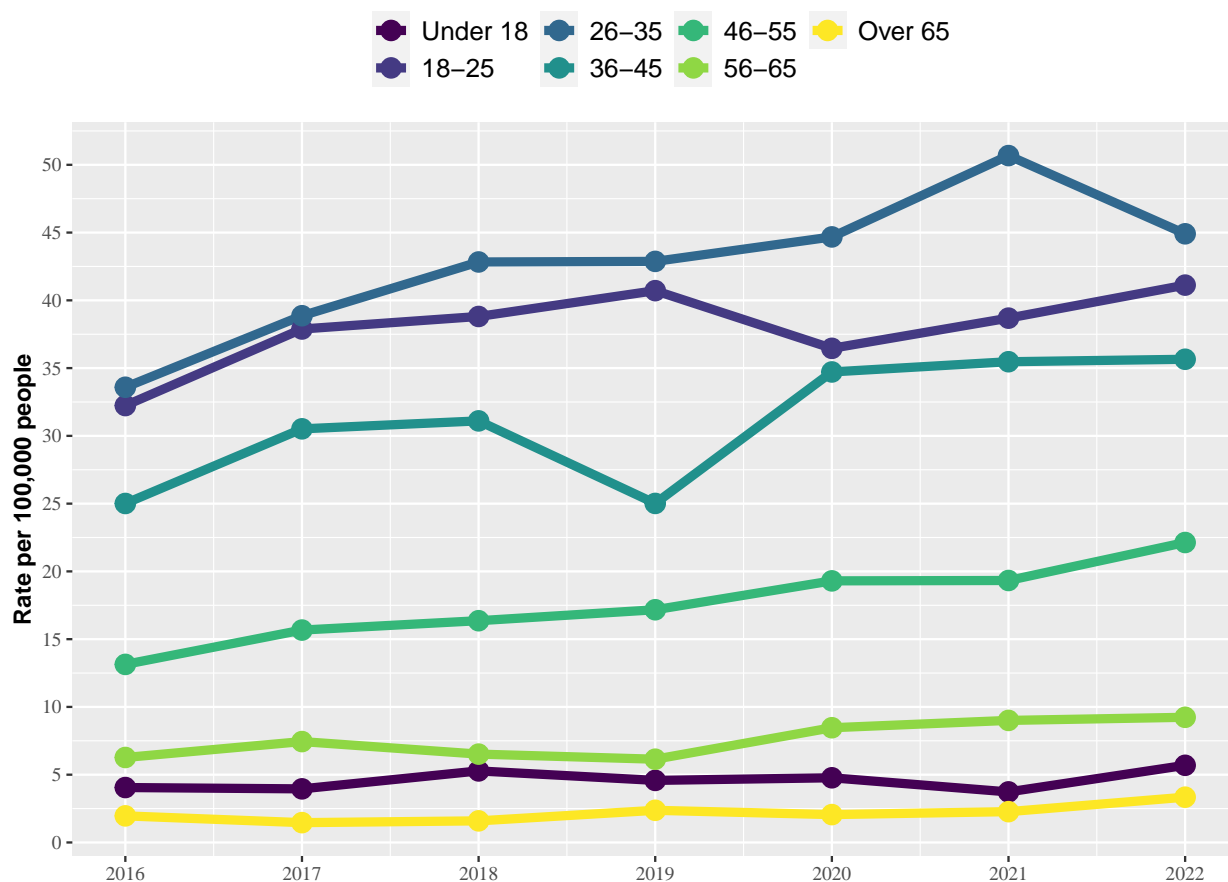
Figure 8: Rate of Stalking Victimization by Age, 2016 - 2022

- The stalking victimization rate was highest for those 26-35 years of age compared to all other age groups. See Table 3. Refer to 'Methodology for Rates' in Section 5 for an overview of how demographic-specific rates were calculated.

- Persons over 65 years of age consistently had the lowest victimization rates out of all age groups.

- Between 2016 and 2022, stalking rates across all age groups increased.
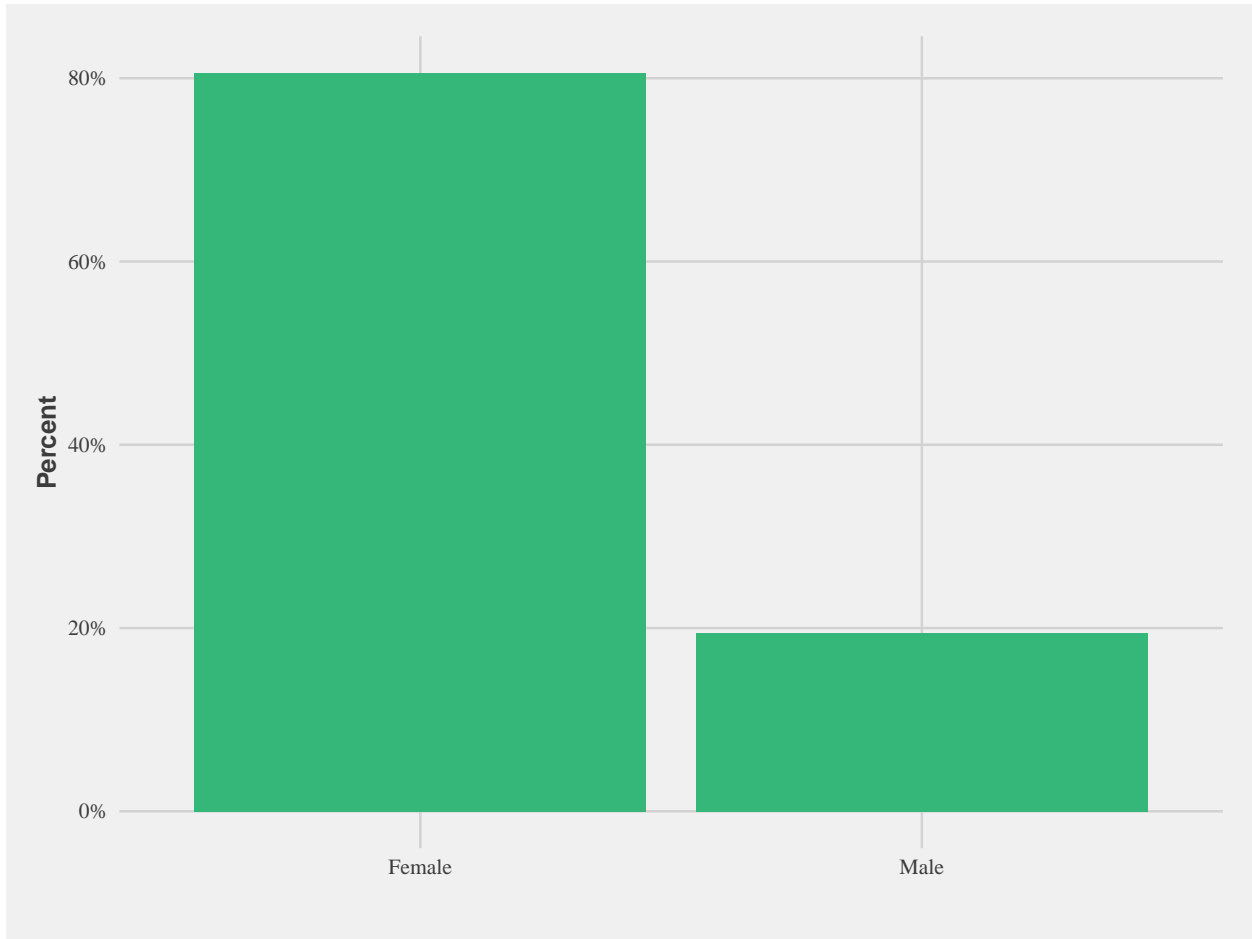
Figure 9: Percent of Stalking Victimization by Sex, 2016 - 2022

- Females accounts for 80.6% of stalking victims, while males accounted for 19.4%.
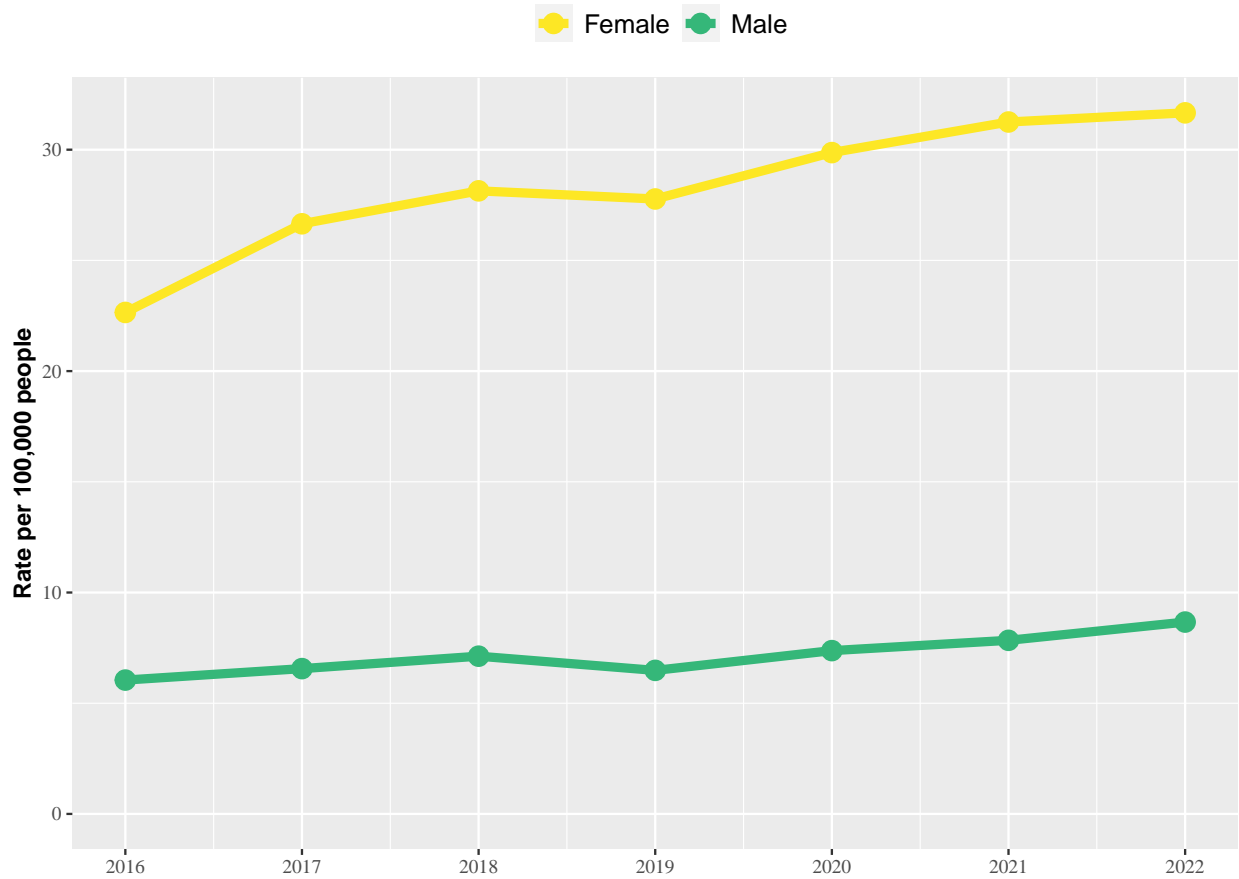
Figure 10: Rate of Stalking Victimization by Sex, 2016 - 2022

- The stalking victimization rate for females was, on average, 4 times higher compared to the rate for males. See Table 4.

- Between 2016 and 2022:

  - The victimization rate for females increased 39.8%.
  - The victimization rate for males increased 43.3%.
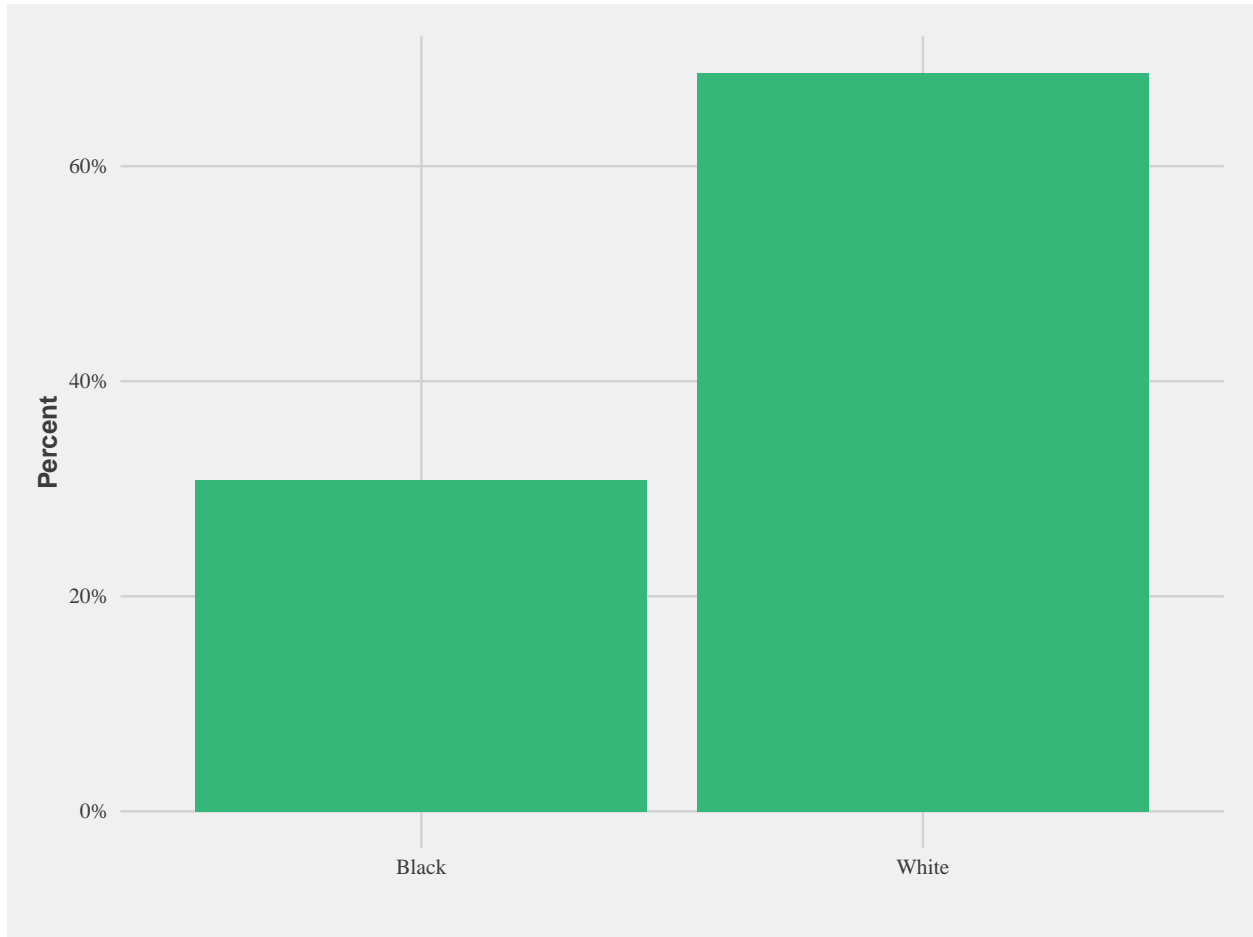
Figure 11: Percentage of Stalking Victimization by Race, 2016 - 2022

- Figure 11 shows the percentage of stalking victimization by race[20].

- 68.7% of domestic violence victims were white and 30.8% were black.

---

[20]Asian, American Indian or Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander victims were excluded from this figure because they made less than 1% of victims.
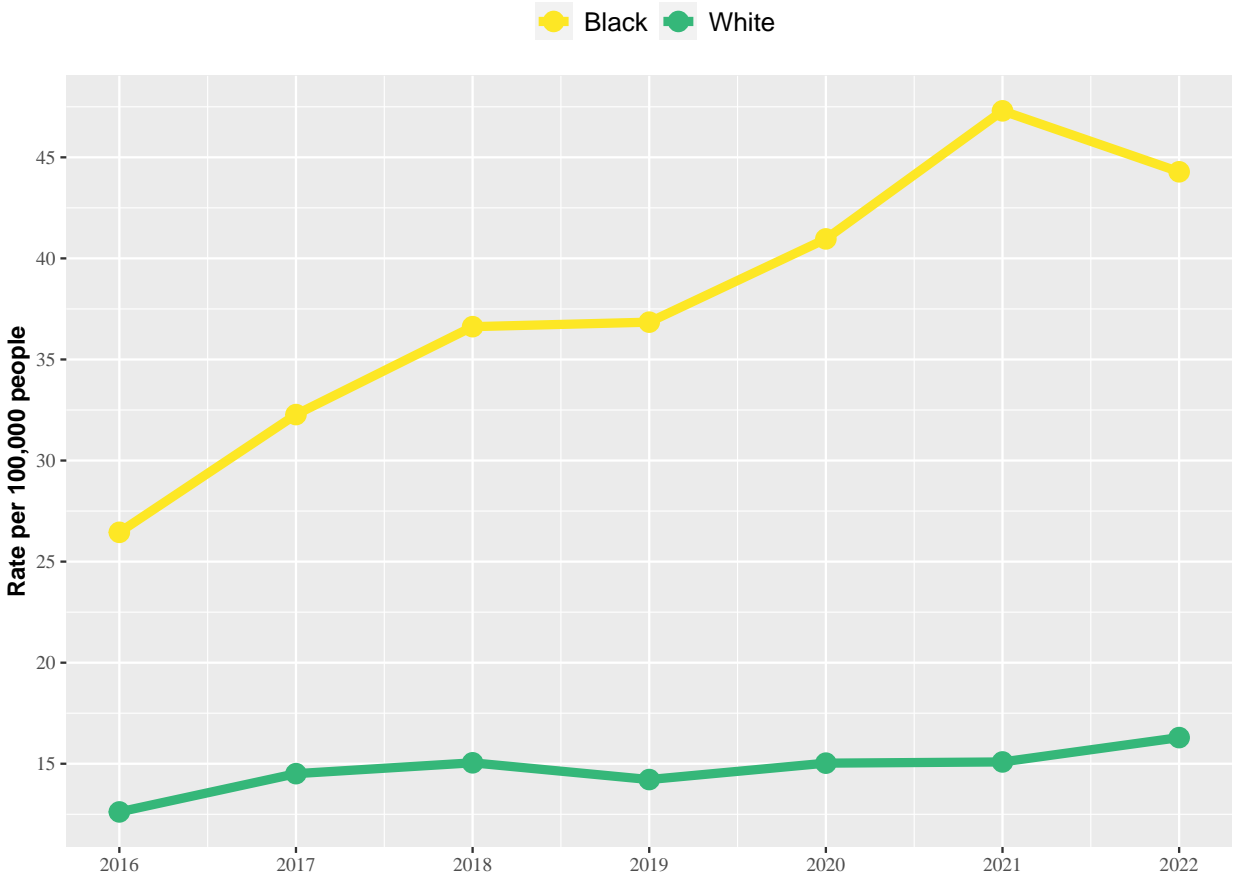
Figure 12: Rate of Stalking Victimization by Race, 2016 - 2022

- The victimization rate for stalking was, on average, 2.5 times higher for black individuals compared to white individuals. See Table 5.

- Between 2016 and 2022:

  - The victimization rate for black individuals increased 65.8%.
  - The victimization rate for white individuals increased 28.0%.
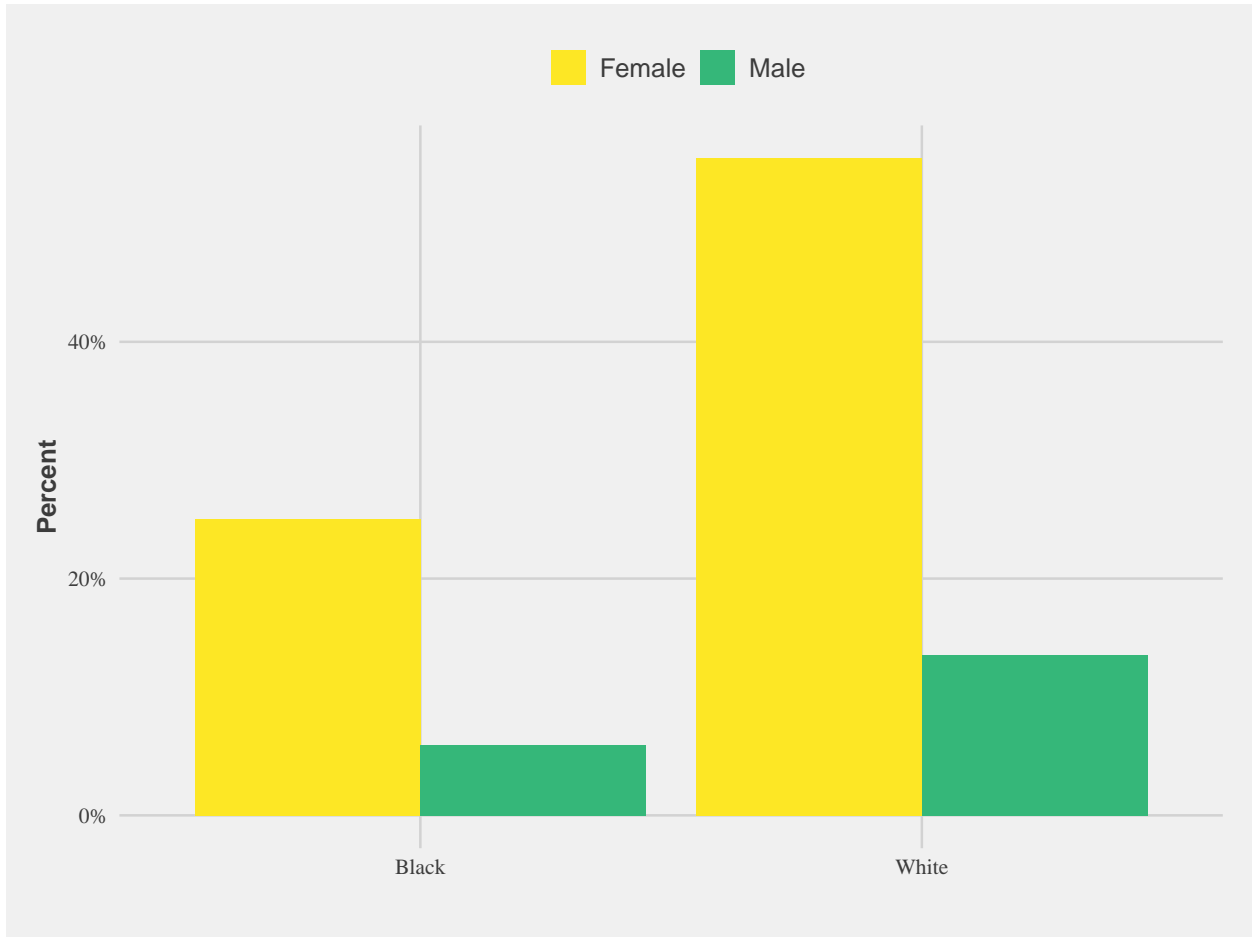
Figure 13: Percent of Stalking Victims by Sex and Race, 2016 - 2022

- Females accounted for a greater percentage of stalking victims across both race categories.

- White victims were more frequent than black victims across both sex categories.

Figure 14: Rate of Stalking Victims by Sex and Race, 2016 - 2022

- The stalking victimization rate was higher for black victims compared to white victims across both sex categories. See Table 6.

- Black females had the highest victimization rate, and was on average, 2.5 times higher than the victimization rate for white females. Black males, on average, had a victimization rate 2.5 times higher than white males.

- Between 2016 and 2022:

  - The victimization rate for black females increased 63.6%.
 - The victimization rate for black males increased 80.8%.
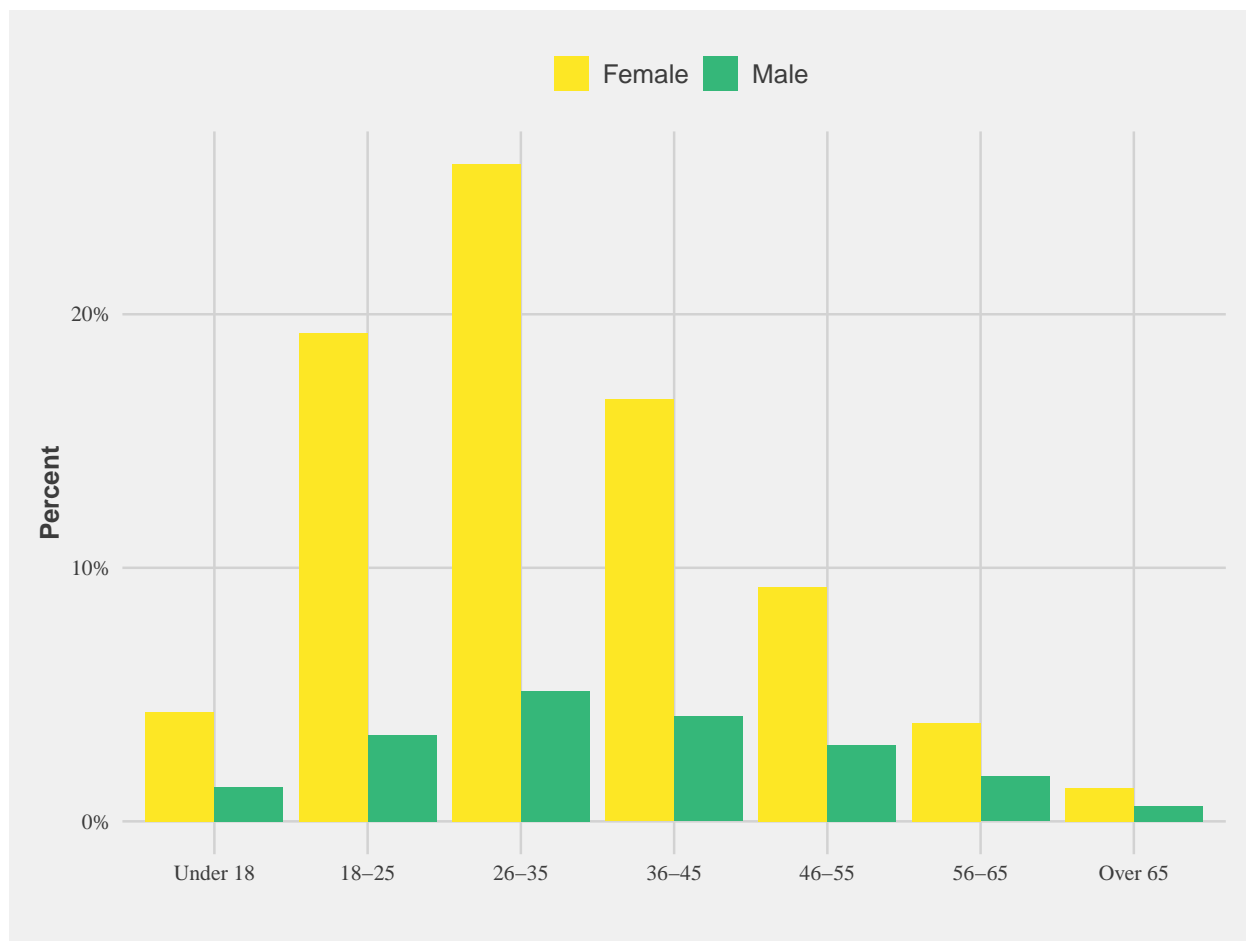
Figure 15: Percent of Stalking Victimization by Sex and Age, 2016 - 2022

- Females accounted for a greater percentage of stalking victims than males across all age groups.

- The percentage of female victims increased across each age group until the ages of 26-35. After 35 years of age, the percent of female victims declined with each age group. The percentage of male victims followed a similar pattern.
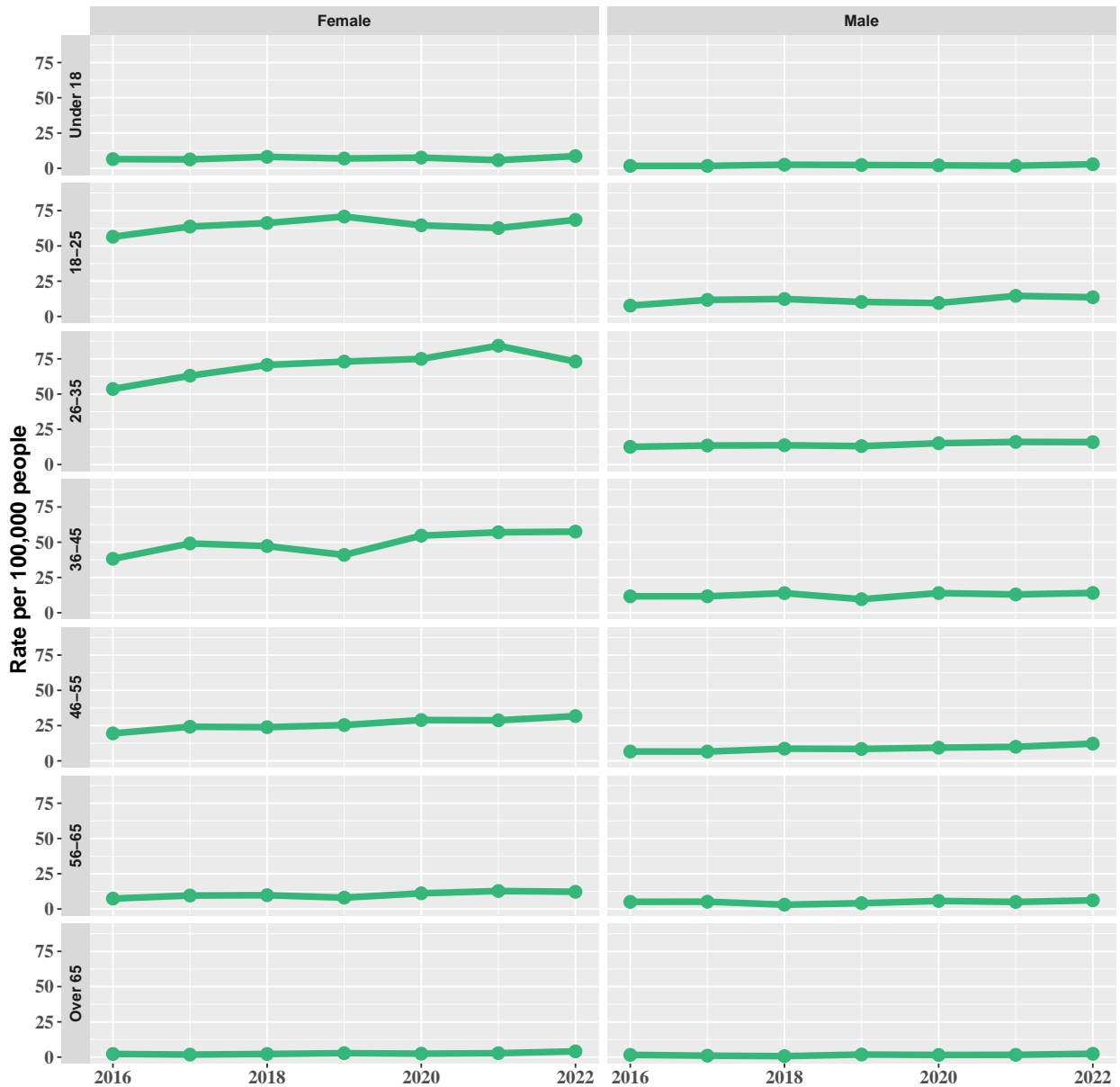
Figure 16: Rate of Stalking Victimization by Sex and Age, 2016 - 2022

- The stalking victimization rates were higher for females across all age groups. See Table 7.

- Females across the two age groups of 18-25 and 26-35 had the highest rates of stalking victimization compared to any other age group.
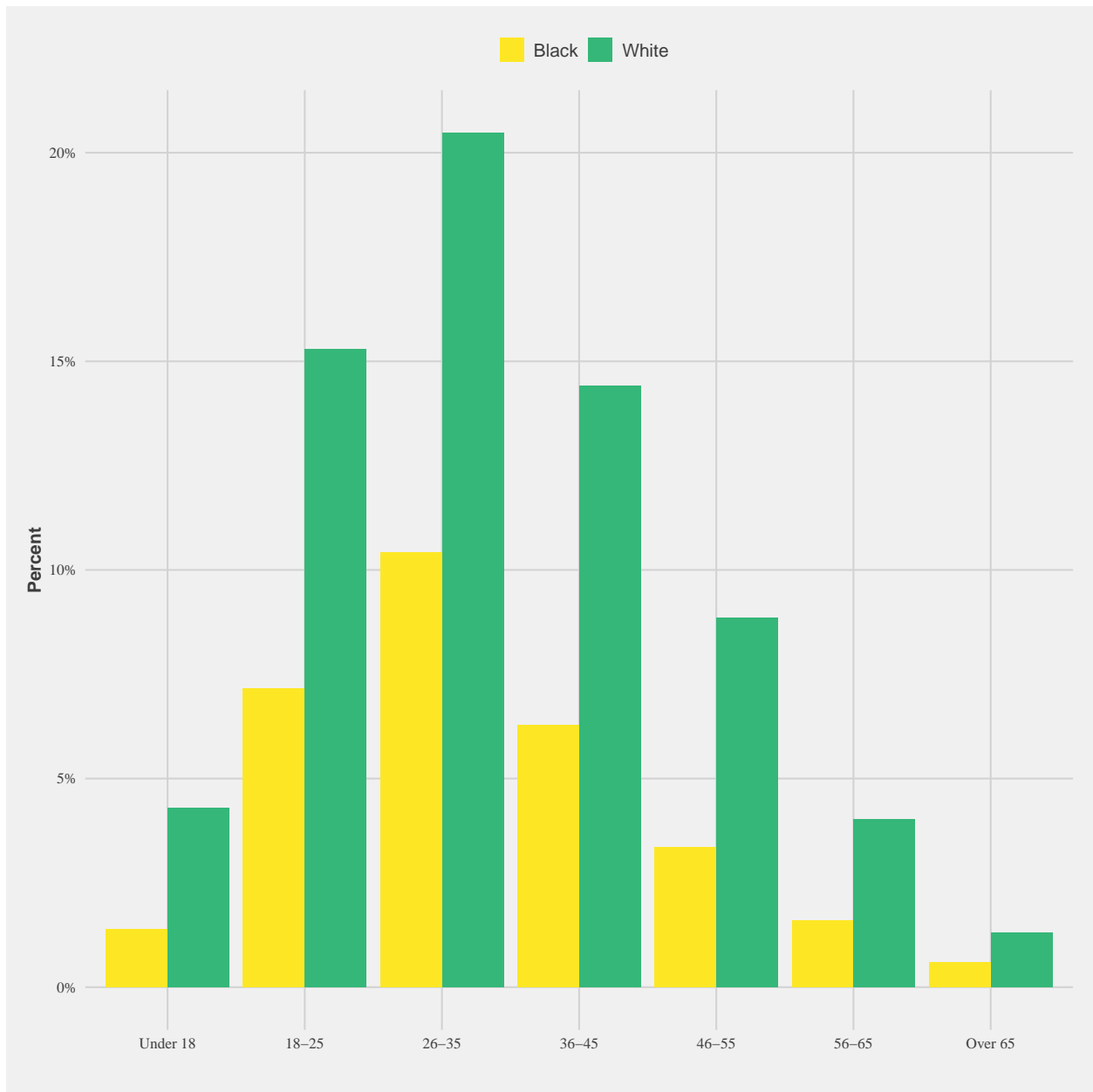
Figure 17: Percent of Stalking Victimization by Age and Race, 2016 - 2022

- White victims were more frequent than black victims across all age groups.

- Individuals between the ages of 26-35 years had the highest percentage of victims across both race categories.
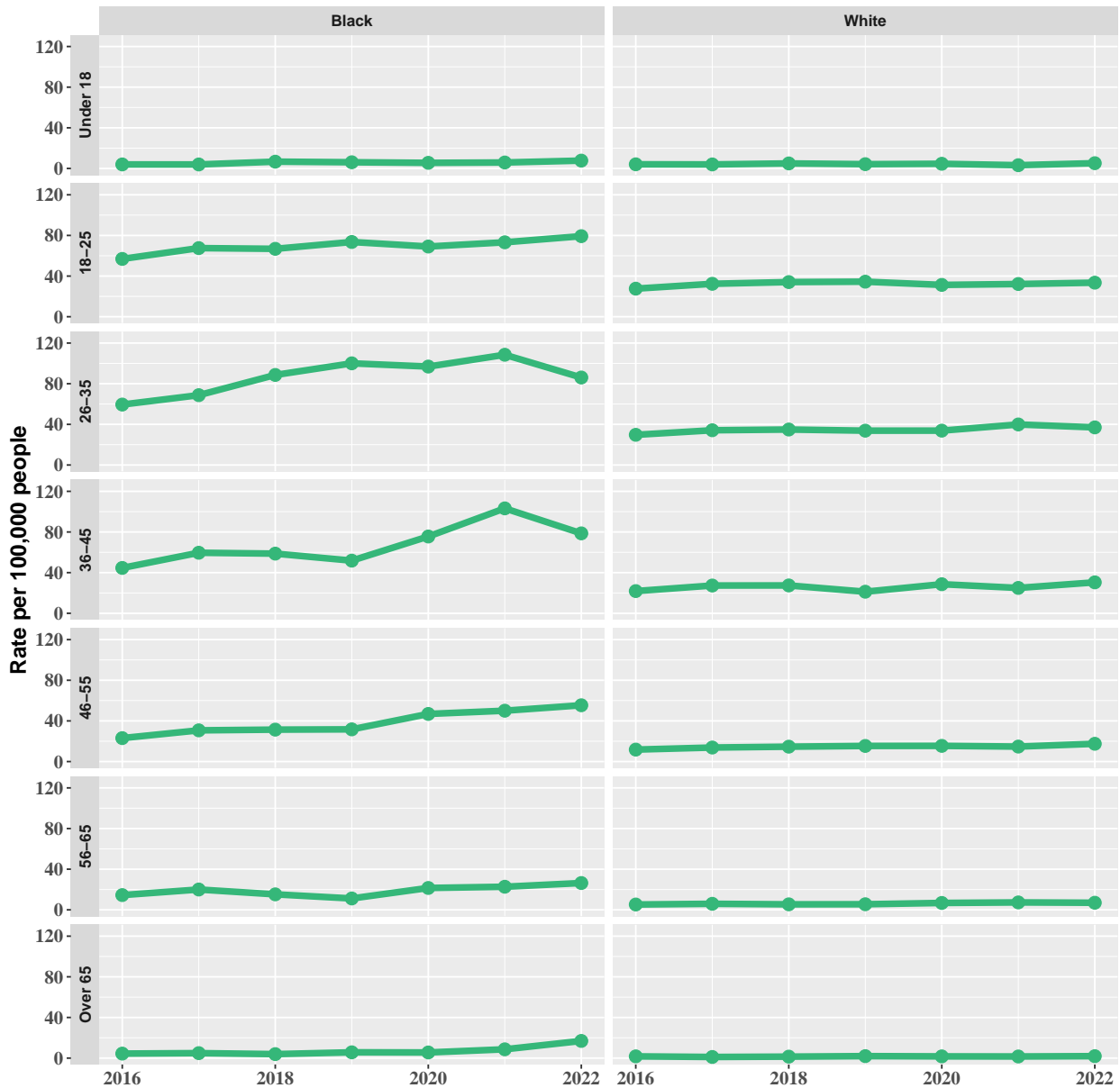
Figure 18: Rate of Stalking Victimization by Age and Race, 2016 - 2022
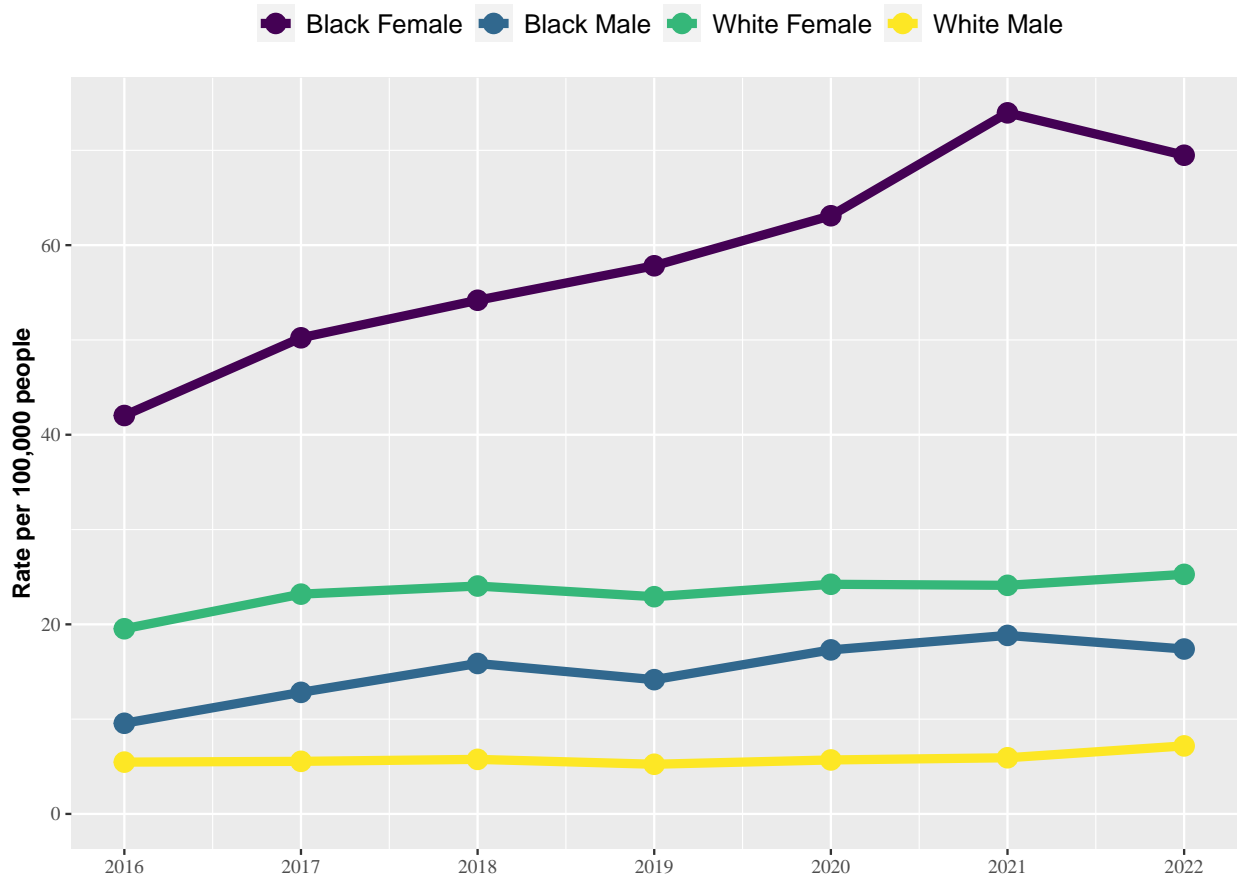
- The stalking victimization rate was higher for black victims across all age groups, except for victims in the 'Under 18' age group. In 2016 and 2017, the victimization rate was higher for white victims under 18 years of age. See Table 8.

- The highest victimization rates for black individuals occurred between the ages of 18-25 years, followed by 26-35 years of age.

- The highest victimization rates for white individuals occurred between the ages of 26-35 years, followed by 18-25 years of age.

Section 4: Tables

Methodology for Rates

Census data are used throughout the victim section to calculate demographic-specific rates. Since OIBRS data do not cover the entire population of Ohio, census estimates are multiplied by the percentage of the Ohio population covered by OIBRS for each specific year to adjust population denominators for rate calculations. This procedure does not account for the specific demographic characteristics of the population covered by OIBRS, as ZIP code level. Further analyses are needed to accurately determine which groups are disproportionately affected by domestic violence.

Population estimates taken from:

U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division (2023). *Annual State Resident Population Estimates for 6 Race Groups (5 Race Alone Groups and Two or More Races) by Age, Sex, and Hispanic Origin: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2022.* Retrieved 10/2023.

U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division (2020). *Annual State Resident Population Estimates for 6 Race Groups (5 Race Alone Groups and Two or More Races) by Age, Sex, and Hispanic Origin: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019.* Retrieved 10/2023.

Tables

Table 1: Stalking Victimization Rate per 100,000 People by Year, 2016 - 2022

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
20.06	23.64	25.05	23.97	26.01	26.61	26.42

Table 2: Stalking Victimization Rate per 100,000 People by Month and Year, 2016 - 2022

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
January	1.49	1.64	1.84	1.79	2.15	2.16	1.88
February	1.38	1.74	1.75	1.80	1.70	1.83	1.98
March	1.82	1.74	2.11	2.06	2.12	2.40	2.25
April	1.78	1.73	2.35	2.33	2.14	2.30	2.39
May	1.76	1.94	2.01	2.39	2.22	2.10	2.08
June	2.10	2.34	2.26	1.85	2.27	2.30	2.27
July	1.85	2.16	2.29	1.74	2.45	2.49	2.66
August	1.77	2.33	2.50	2.10	2.65	2.30	2.15
September	1.76	2.25	2.17	2.35	2.34	2.26	2.58
October	1.91	2.29	2.19	2.16	2.23	2.57	2.23
November	1.49	1.85	1.77	1.76	2.18	1.88	2.21
December	0.93	1.62	1.80	1.63	1.57	2.02	1.74

Table 3: Stalking Victimization Rates per 100,000 individuals by Age, 2016 - 2022

	2016	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**
Under 18	4.05	3.95	5.28	4.58	4.77	3.73	5.69
18-25	32.24	37.89	38.81	40.71	36.46	38.69	41.12
26-35	33.59	38.86	42.83	42.87	44.68	50.68	44.91
36-45	25.01	30.52	31.11	25.02	34.72	35.47	35.65
46-55	13.14	15.67	16.36	17.17	19.3	19.33	22.13
56-65	6.27	7.44	6.52	6.14	8.46	9	9.23
Over 65	1.96	1.46	1.59	2.37	2.06	2.27	3.34

Table 4: Stalking Victimization Rates per 100,000 individuals by Sex, 2016 - 2022

	2016	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**
Female	22.65	26.65	28.14	27.77	29.87	31.25	31.66
Male	6.05	6.56	7.12	6.48	7.38	7.84	8.67

Table 5: Stalking Victimization Rates per 100,000 individuals by Race, 2016 - 2022

	2016	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**
Black	26.45	32.27	36.62	36.85	40.96	47.3	44.28
White	12.62	14.51	15.05	14.22	15.03	15.09	16.29

Table 6: Stalking Victimization Rates per 100,000 individuals by
Race and Sex, 2016 - 2022

	2016	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**
Black Female	42.03	50.23	54.19	57.82	63.1	73.96	69.49
Black Male	9.56	12.82	15.87	14.16	17.3	18.83	17.4
White Female	19.53	23.19	24.04	22.92	24.23	24.12	25.27
White Male	5.47	5.55	5.76	5.24	5.69	5.93	7.18

Table 7: Stalking Victimization Rates per 100,000 individuals by
Sex and Age, 2016 - 2022

	2016	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**
Female, Under 18	6.51	6.31	8.14	6.93	7.59	5.75	8.65
Female, 18-25	56.51	63.73	66.24	70.81	64.62	62.69	68.5
Female, 26-35	53.62	63.03	70.66	73.04	74.97	84.27	73.09
Female, 36-45	38.21	49.11	47.27	40.98	54.65	57.04	57.49
Female, 46-55	19.46	24.2	23.88	25.37	28.95	28.77	31.71
Female, 56-65	7.39	9.56	9.77	8.04	11.11	12.75	12.2
Female, Over 65	2.24	1.79	2.24	2.79	2.45	2.77	4.08
Male, Under 18	1.7	1.71	2.54	2.33	2.09	1.8	2.87
Male, 18-25	7.67	11.74	12.37	10.28	9.54	14.59	13.59
Male, 26-35	12.57	13.5	13.71	13.09	15.11	16.08	15.92
Male, 36-45	11.63	11.64	13.88	9.58	13.92	12.95	14.03
Male, 46-55	6.63	6.6	8.63	8.44	9.35	9.98	12.21
Male, 56-65	5.08	5.18	3.04	4.11	5.71	4.99	6.15
Male, Over 65	1.6	1.04	0.69	1.83	1.55	1.64	2.4

Table 8: Stalking Victimization Rates per 100,000 individuals by
Sex and Age, 2016 - 2022

	2016	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**
Black, Under 18	3.95	3.93	6.67	6.09	5.52	5.86	7.71
Black, 18-25	56.88	67.53	66.82	73.55	69.08	73.25	79.28
Black, 26-35	59.48	68.72	88.62	100.05	96.87	108.48	86.1
Black, 36-45	44.62	59.56	58.7	51.81	75.56	103.24	78.64
Black, 46-55	23.06	30.7	31.42	31.68	46.85	50.04	55.39
Black, 56-65	14.5	20	15.23	11.18	21.51	22.72	26.37
Black, Over 65	4.43	4.88	3.92	5.69	5.55	8.65	16.89
White, Under 18	4.08	3.96	4.94	4.21	4.58	3.19	5.17
White, 18-25	27.62	32.4	34.1	34.49	31.31	32.18	33.51
White, 26-35	29.69	34.19	34.91	33.79	33.82	39.89	37.02
White, 36-45	21.84	27.31	27.39	21.21	28.6	24.94	30.43
White, 46-55	11.76	13.79	14.64	15.36	15.44	14.73	17.48
White, 56-65	5.24	5.92	5.41	5.49	6.76	7.28	6.97
White, Over 65	1.71	1.12	1.45	1.94	1.69	1.6	1.9