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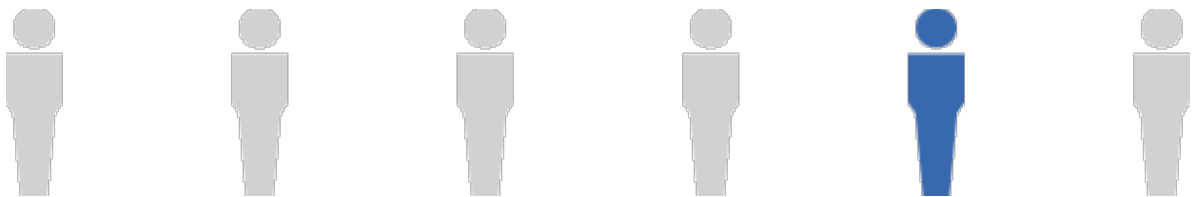
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1in6 (<https://1in6.org>) - Get Information (<https://1in6.org/get-information/>) - The 1 in 6 Statistic

# The 1 in 6 Statistic

**Yes, it's hard to believe. There's strong scientific evidence.**



**At least 1 in 6 men have been sexually abused or assaulted.**

Researchers have found that at least 1 in 6 men have experienced sexual abuse or assault, whether in childhood or as adults. And this is probably a low estimate, since it doesn't include noncontact experiences, which can also have lasting negative effects. If you've had such an experience, or think you might have, you are not alone.



If you wonder whether such an experience may be connected to some difficulties or challenges in your life now, you are not alone.

Whoever you are, maybe you're thinking something like, "1 in 6?! Come on, how can that be?" or even "That can't be true!" Again, if so, you're not alone. Those are common responses to this statistic, which many people

find hard to believe – including men who've had such experiences themselves.

This page is about saying, briefly, “Yes, it’s hard to believe,” and “There’s strong scientific evidence.”

**Please note:**

Researchers use “sexual abuse” to describe experiences in which children are subjected to unwanted sexual contact involving force, threats, or a large age difference between the child and the other person (which involves a big power differential and exploitation). See former advisory board member Dr. Jim Hopper’s Sexual Abuse of Males for a detailed discussion of definitions and research methods, including how some result in lower estimates than 1 in 6 (e.g., large national surveys using telephone interviews with few questions).

Having such an experience does not mean a boy will definitely suffer significant long-term negative consequences. That depends on several factors, including how many times it happened, how long it went on, who else was involved, whether the boy told anyone and, if so, the response he received.

## **What the research tells us:\***

A 2005 study conducted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, on San Diego Kaiser Permanente HMO members, reported that 16% of males were sexually abused by the age of 18.1 (/get-information/the-1-in-6-statistic/#number-1)

A 2003 national study of U.S. adults reported that 14.2% of men were sexually abused before the age of 18.2 (/get-information/the-1-in-6-statistic/#number-2)

A 1998 study reviewing research on male childhood sexual abuse concluded that the problems is "common, under-reported, under-recognized, and under-treated."<sup>3</sup> (/get-information/the-1-in-6-statistic/#number-3)

A 1996 study of male university students in the Boston area reported that 18% of men were sexually abused before the age of 16.4 (/get-information/the-1-in-6-statistic/#number-4)

A 1990 national study of U.S. adults reported that 16% of men were sexually abused before the age of 18.5 (/get-information/the-1-in-6-statistic/#number-5)

## **Why these statistics are probably underestimates:**

Males who have such experiences are less likely to disclose them

than are females.<sup>6</sup> (/get-information/the-1-in-6-statistic/#number-6)

Only 16% of men with documented histories of sexual abuse (by social service agencies, which means it was very serious) considered themselves to have been sexually abused, compared to 64% of women with documented histories in the same study.<sup>7</sup> (/get-information/the-1-in-6-statistic/#number-7)

**Men who've had such experiences are at much greater risk than those who haven't for serious mental health problems, including:**

Symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and depression.<sup>1</sup> (/get-information/the-1-in-6-statistic/#number-1), 2 (/get-information/the-1-in-6-statistic/#number-2), 8 (/get-information/the-1-in-6-statistic/#number-8)

Alcoholism and drug abuse.<sup>1</sup> (/get-information/the-1-in-6-statistic/#number-1), 9 (/get-information/the-1-in-6-statistic/#number-9)

Suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts.<sup>1</sup> (/get-information/the-1-in-6-statistic/#number-1), 9 (/get-information/the-1-in-6-statistic/#number-9)

Problems in intimate relationships.<sup>1</sup> (/get-information/the-1-in-6-

statistic/#number-1), 10 (/get-information/the-1-in-6-  
statistic/#number-10)

Underachievement at school and at work.1 (/get-information/the-1-  
in-6-statistic/#number-1), 10 (/get-information/the-1-in-6-  
statistic/#number-10)

## **Think about it, and about educating others**

In summary, the 1 in 6 statistic is supported by solid scientific research, including a study conducted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, and is likely an underestimate of the actual prevalence. Furthermore, this widespread problem contributes to mental health, personal and work difficulties of many men.

Yet few people are aware that there are just as many men who experienced sexual abuse as children as there are who develop prostate cancer, the most common cancer among men and one of the leading causes of cancer death among men. And few know that the 21 million men with histories of childhood sexual abuse are more than 4 times the number with heart disease, the leading cause of death among men.

Please consider helping to educate others by letting them know about this page, [lin6.org/statistic](http://lin6.org/statistic). (/get-information/the-1-in-6-statistic/)

## References\*

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\* There are many more studies than these referencing the one in six statistic. Our goal here is to summarize some key research that has been published by respected scientists, in reputable journals, after their work was reviewed and approved by their scientific peers. For a detailed discussion of definitions and research methods, see former advisory board member Dr. Jim Hopper's *Sexual Abuse of Males*.

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