

Risk Factors of Aggravated Assault

Summary of Key Factors: Bars and nightclubs; Entertainment venues; Gang activity; Drug trade; Drug or alcohol use.

Aim: To assist analysts with the identification of risk factors for the production of risk terrain maps. Specifically, this brief provides an annotated review of the factors related to aggravated assault and the settings and times for which some factors may be most relevant. This information should be especially useful to help choose a time period for creating risk terrain maps (i.e., Stepⁱ 3), to identify aggravating and mitigating risk factors to include in your risk terrain model (i.e., Steps 5 and 6), and to inform the operationalization of your risk factors to risk map layers (i.e., Step 7).

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Operational Definition

For the purpose of this research brief, aggravated assault is defined as an attack or attempted attack with a weapon, regardless of whether or not an injury occurred, as well as an attack without a weapon when serious injury occurred. Serious injury includes broken bones, lost teeth, internal injuries, loss of consciousness, and any other unspecified injury that requires two or more days of hospitalization.ⁱⁱ

Aggravating/Mitigating Risk Factors Based on a Review of Empirical Literature

Bars and nightclubs

Many assaults occur in and around bars, nightclubs, and similar liquor serving facilities such as pubs or taverns. Alcohol consumption leads to risk taking behavior, less concern over consequences or punishments, high levels of emotion, and poor communication, all which may cause a violent altercation. The physical environment of bars or nightclubs are conducive to altercations as they are often overcrowded and under-regulated. Bars and nightclubs may also cater to prostitution, drug dealing or aggressive entertainment. In addition, if a particular geographical location has many bars and

nightclubs, customers from different social groups may encounter one another leading to violence.ⁱⁱⁱ

Entertainment Venues

Stadiums, arenas, sporting grounds, and concert halls are conducive to aggravated assault because of overcrowding, high level of physical contact, alcohol consumption, high energy levels, and the adversarial nature of competitions.^{iv}

Gang Activity

According to the FBI, criminal gangs commit as much as 80% of crime in many areas. Such crimes include simple and aggravated assault.^v

Drug Trade

The presence of drug markets increases the likelihood of violence, including aggravated assault. Violence is common in drug markets as dealers and customers often resort to violence in order to solve disputes and to maintain business.^{vi}

Drug or Alcohol Use

In 2007, the Criminal Victimization in the United States report indicated that 33.5% of offenders arrested for aggravated assault were perceived to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.^{vii}

Demographic Factors

Age

In 2004, 7% of felons convicted of aggravated assault were under the age of 20, 42% were between ages 20 and 29, 27% were between ages 30 and 39, 17% were between ages 40 and 49, 5% were between ages 50 and 59, and 2% were between ages 60 and 69.^{viii}

Gender

Men are more likely to experience aggravated assault than females.^{ix}

Race

Blacks are more likely than all other races to be victims of aggravated assault. Hispanics and non-Hispanics are equally likely to experience aggravated assault.^x

Setting Effects

Of the 806,843 total aggravated assaults committed in 2009 that were analyzed by the FBI, 701,454 (86.9%) occurred in metropolitan areas; 57,750 (7.2%) occurred in cities outside metropolitan areas; and 47,639 (5.9%) occurred in nonmetropolitan counties.

Rates of aggravated assault are greatest in the South (44.5%). The Northeast (14.2%), Midwest (18.9%), and Western (22.5%) regions of the United States have lower aggravated assault rates.^{xi}

Temporal Effects

Of 2007's 775,060 aggravated assaults analyzed in the Crime Victimization in the United States report, 45.6% occurred between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m., 39.8% occurred from 6 p.m. to midnight, 12.6% occurred from midnight to 6 a.m.^{xii}

Endnotes

ⁱ For steps of risk terrain map production, download the RTM Manual at www.riskterrainmodeling.com

ⁱⁱ Bureau of Justice Statistics (n.d.). *Assault*. Retrieved February 26, 2011, from <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=316>

ⁱⁱⁱ Scott, M. S., & Dedel, K. (2006). *Assault in and around bars* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice.

^{iv} Madensen, T. D., & Eck, J. E. (2008). *Spectator violence in stadiums*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice.

^v U. S. Department of Justice, National Gang Intelligence Center. (2009). *National gang threat assessment*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Gang Intelligence Center.

^{vi} Office of National Drug Control Policy. (2000). *Drug-related crime fact sheet*. Washington, DC: Office of National Drug Control Policy.

^{vii} Rand, M. R. (2008) *Criminal victimization, 2007*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

^{viii} Maguire, K. (Ed.). *Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics, (3.32.2007)* [Online]. Available: <http://www.albany.edu/sourcebook/pdf/t5452004.pdf>

^{ix} Truman, J. L., & Rand, M. R. (2010). *Criminal victimization, 2009*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics

^x Truman, J. L., & Rand, M. R. (2010). *Criminal victimization, 2009*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics

^{xi} U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation (2010). *Crime in the United States 2009*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

^{xii} Rand, M. R. (2008) *Criminal victimization, 2007*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.