

Victims of crime earn up to 12.9 percent less

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Victims earn up to 12.9 percent less in the aftermath of a crime and become more dependent on social benefits, according to new research by the University of Cologne and the VU Amsterdam.

The study, conducted by Associate Professor Anna Bindler and Assistant Professor Nadine Ketel, analysed data of more than 800,000 crime victims in the Netherlands over a 12-year period. It provides important insights into the real cost of crime for victims of crime.

The researchers found that depending on the offence, both men and women earn up to 12.9 percent less than before a crime and received social benefits on up to 6 percent more days per month.

This may be because some change to a lower-paid job, or lose employment because they are no longer able to continue their work due to physical or mental health impacts of the incident.

The research also found that the income of women declined more than that of men for the examined offences.

One year after a violent crime, earnings decreased by up to 7.5 percent for males and up to 10.4 per cent for females.

After property crimes, especially robbery, males earned up to 8.4 percent less, while females faced a decline of up to 12.9 percent.

They also examined the effect after domestic abuse, and found a larger effect of up to 17.9 percent lower earnings, as well as a strongly increased dependence on social benefits.

Overall, the authors calculated an aggregated loss of earnings of about 366 million Euros within just the first year after assault.

“Our research helps to further our understanding of the social costs of crime,” says Anna Bindler, Economist at the University of Cologne. The results could be an impetus for thinking about appropriate compensation payments or further assistance for victims of crime, such as labour market programmes.

The study can be found as part of the ECONtribute Discussion Paper series.

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