

Legacy Project Final Draft

N442 Population and Global Health

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Introduction

Our legacy project group chose to volunteer and do research on the Survivor Resource Center located in Danville, Illinois. They provide services for sexual assault victims in the community and surrounding area. We chose this facility because of its importance in providing service to population health, its accessible location, and its availability to accommodate group volunteer work. We toured the facility with our point of contact, Abby, who introduced us to the organization's leaders and explained what kind of services they provide.

Our group volunteered for eight hours on Friday, Feb 28, 2025. During that time, we helped prepare the organization for its annual "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes" event by cleaning and sorting high-heeled shoes. The shoes are sized for men to wear and symbolize walking a mile in women's shoes. Because we are a fast and efficient team, we were also able to help the organization sort through donations, make new file charts for incoming clients, and get creative by making poster boards to hold during events.

Xitlally

1. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-criminol-011518-024456>

Currently, sexual assault is seen as a crime issue. However, this article suggests that instead of seeing sexual assault as an issue with crime, it should be seen as a public health problem (Khan et al., 2020). When we try to reason why sexual assault happens, we focus primarily on the individual determinants of behavior: was there any alcohol involved, any prior experiences with sex and sexual abuse, or their sex and gender (Khan et al., 2020). This article defines sexual assault as any nonconsensual sexualized touching, attempted penetration, or complete penetration (Khan et al., 2020). It is known that victims of sexual assault will suffer

from mental health issues and other consequences, but it is still unknown what is the full long-term consequences of sexual assault.

Sexual assault understanding and assessment are more often viewed through the framework of sociopathy, which focuses on the framework of gender and power (Khan et al., 2020). This article proposes seeing sexual assault with a focus on sociology and ecological understandings that go outside of the regular notion of gender and power imbalance (Khan et al., 2020). Using various frameworks to understand sexual assault allows one to realize that there are multiple factors to sexual assault and that it doesn't only affect one sex or that there is a fine line between consensual and nonconsensual sex (Khan et al., 2020). Research suggests that if the general public had a better understanding of consent practices, then it could result in effective sexual assault prevention (Khan et al., 2020). Overall, sexual assault should be seen as an issue that impacts public health and not just a crime that happens to some people. With an outlook that sexual assault is a public health issue, people might work together to understand this issue that impacts everyone and get rid of any stigmas.

2. <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-328X/13/4/304>

Sexual assault is a human rights issue that does not discriminate between gender, race, sexual orientation, or age. Even though sexual assault is a growing issue, the discourse is mainly centered around female victims and their experiences. In contrast, male victims are left in the dark, or their experiences are not taken as seriously. Research shows that 27% of males have been sexually victimized at one point in their lives (Thomas et al., 2023). While there is a growing knowledge base on female sexual victimization, estimates predict that help and support for male sexual abuse victims are roughly 20 years behind in comparison to females (Thomas et al., 2023).

This research article by Thomas and Kopel looks into the literature and media surrounding the research, discourse, and statistics that are currently available for male sexual abuse victims. They find that a common issue surrounding male sexual assault victims is defining what counts as sexual assault, for example, does penetration has to be involved or not (Thomas et al., 2023). They also note the difficulty of finding reliable data and resources since much of the information is outdated. Overall, male victims of sexual abuse are a growing issue, and being able to support and help these people is crucial in our profession.

Maggie's:

1. <https://evidence.nihr.ac.uk/alert/sexual-assault-lasting-effects-teenagers-mental-health-education/>

This scholarly article describes several effects of sexual assault experiences on teenagers and young adults. The article utilizes study results to articulate how this population of victims may be negatively impacted following sexual abuse. The article reflects on the results of a study held in London clinics with seventy-five participants in total. Notable mental health results include an increase in anxiety, difficulty sleeping, depression, and posttraumatic stress disorder. A behavioral effect described in the article includes an increase in missed days of school, which victims attributed to their new onset of difficulty sleeping and anxiety. There are also results describing increased physical ailments that victims reported to have begun after their assault. These physical ailments include headaches and stomachaches. From the victim's reports, there was a seventeen percent increase in seeking healthcare for physical healthcare needs. The results of the study also indicate one in four of the victims included in the study reported self-harming

following their assault. From the evidence provided in the article, it is apparent that the teenagers affected by sexual assault experience several negative effects afterward (Beeston, 2024).

2. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/mhs2.51>

This article compares the psychological effects of child sexual abuse against the psychological effects of adult sexual abuse. This research claims that 15-32% of girls and 5-14% of boys experience sexual abuse in childhood in the United States (Rowland et al., 2024). Therefore, it is important to understand the psychological implications because this can help shape more effective counseling and other mental health treatments for victims. The article claims post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety disorder, major depressive disorder, and substance use disorder result from both adult and childhood sexual abuse. Childhood sexual abuse victims have a higher likelihood of obsessive-compulsive disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, dissociative disorders, and conduct disorders than victims of adult sexual abuse.

Pinpointing the differences in the effects seen in adult and child victims is important to provide the best treatment and support. The type of support received is crucial for the victims healing and perceived safety. Proper handling of the situation by healthcare professionals is imperative for leading the victims away from unhealthy or even destructive coping behaviors.

Jessica

1. <https://www.aafp.org/pubs/afp/issues/2021/0201/p168.html>

Sexual assault is a significant public health and human rights issue (Farahi & McEachern, 2021). Sexual violence can happen to anyone, whether young or old, male or female. The populations that are uniquely impacted by sexual assault include women, children, lesbians,

gays, and active-duty military service members (Farahi & McEachern, 2021). Sexual assault can result in many health and psychological consequences for the survivor (Farahi & McEachern, 2021). Sexual violence affects more than 40% of women in the United States throughout their lifetime (Farahi & McEachern, 2021). Among the survivors of rape, 16% to 38% actually report the crime to law enforcement (Farahi & McEachern, 2021). Rape is one of the most underreported crimes, and it is a crime that has many short and long-term effects on the survivor.

It is essential that all sexual assault survivors receive timely treatment for pregnancy and disease prevention. Treatment and care are extremely important because many individuals don't report experiencing sexual assault. Therefore, it is important to give the best care possible to those who do report assault and encourage those to seek care that haven't reported it. This article discusses a study completed of women receiving mental health services for childhood sexual assault and reported an average time to disclosure of 16 years (Farahi & McEachern, 2021). Survivor-centered and trauma-informed care should be used when caring for an individual of sexual assault (Farahi & McEachern, 2021). Using this specific type of care can help to improve the patient's experience, optimize patient-physician relationships, and improve health outcomes (Farahi & McEachern, 2021).

2. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0099176722001532?fr=RR-2&ref=pdf_download&rr=918284fe4d008708

The pathway to healing from sexual assault or violence can be a long-term recovery. It is important to understand necessary sexual assault screening tools, examination, and how to respond (Miyamoto et al., 2022). A sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE) is a specially trained nurse who provides care and collects forensic evidence from those who experience sexual

assault. A SANE nurse can help the patient by providing screenings, examining the patient, responding therapeutically, and offering support. This study found that only 5% of reported sexual assault cases result in arrest, and only 2.5% result in successful prosecution (Miyamoto et al., 2022).

The negative effects of sexual trauma take a toll on those who are victimized (Miyamoto et al., 2022). Due to the significant effects, it is important to initiate early interventions in care to establish a healing pathway that encompasses compassionate, trauma-informed care by health care, advocates, and law enforcement responders (Miyamoto et al., 2022). When giving care and treatment to those affected by sexual assault, it is necessary to understand the barriers to victim disclosure and the obstacles that survivors face when seeking help (Miyamoto et al., 2022).

Many fears and concerns affect whether a survivor reports or seeks care. Many individuals may worry they won't be believed, will be shamed, or judged if they report the incident and seek care. This article emphasizes the pre-examination worries of those affected by sexual assault and how healthcare professionals can initiate a pathway of recovery and healing (Miyamoto et al., 2022).

References

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