

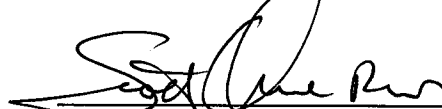
COLLEGE STUDENT ATTITUDES
TOWARDS SEXUAL ASSAULT

by

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A Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the
Master of Science Degree
in
Guidance and Counseling

Approved: 2 Semester Credits



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August, 2004

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ABSTRACT

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College Student Attitudes Towards Sexual Assault

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<u>Guidance and Counseling</u>	<u>Scott Orme</u>	<u>August/2004</u>	<u>32</u>
(Graduate Program)	(Research Advisor)	(Month/Year)	(# of Pages)

American Psychological Association, 5th edition

(Name of Style Manual Used in this Study)

The objective of this study was to determine college students' attitudes regarding sexual assault. In particular whether attitudes about sexual assault had changed since the survey was last completed in 1992 on the same college campus and whether men or women were more likely to subscribe to rape myths.

A total of 172 participants were assessed at an upper Midwestern state university. Students completed a 26 item survey regarding their concurrence with sexual assault mythology. Their degree of accord or conflict was demonstrated through the use of a Likert scale.

Common sexual assault myths are defined and examined by discussing how myths are perpetuated and the effects those myths have on both blaming the victim and

relinquishing responsibility from the perpetrator. Contributing factors to belief in those myths such as societal attitudes, group thinking, and media are discussed.

The study found statistically significant differences between male and female concurrence with the myths discussed. Defining changes in attitude since the last survey were inconclusive.

Educational solutions to the problem are outlined. Questions for further research are delineated including replication of the study to reassess attitudes, modification of the instrument to gather information on how participants have learned information about the opposite sex, and finally define programs which motivate men to speak out against men's violence against women.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I greatly appreciate the help of Dr. Scott Orme for helping me bring this thesis to fruition.

Aaron Walker and Karen Windau have read parts or all of the thesis. I'm very thankful for their contributions and encouragement.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
<i>Statement of the Problem</i>	4
<i>Research Questions</i>	5
<i>Definition of Terms</i>	5
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	6
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY.....	11
<i>Subject Selection and Description</i>	11
<i>Instrumentation</i>	11
<i>Data Collection</i>	11
<i>Data Analysis</i>	12
<i>Limitations</i>	12
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS.....	13
Demographic Information.....	13
<i>Tables 1-6</i>	14-18
<i>Research Questions Meaningful Differences</i>	19
<i>Research Question 1</i>	19
<i>Research Question 2</i>	20
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION.....	21
<i>Discussion</i>	21
<i>Conclusions</i>	21

Recommendations.....22

References.....23

Appendix: Sexual Assault Attitude Survey.....25

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Ages of Participants	14
Table 2: Class Level of Participants	14
Table 3: Gender of Participants	15
Table 4: Significant Differences Between Males and Females	16
Table 5: Significant Tests of Differences Between Females and “Unspecified”	17
Table 6: Significant Tests of Differences Between Males and “Unspecified”	18

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

By the time you finish reading this document approximately fifty women will be sexually assaulted in the United States alone (Foubert & Marriott, 1997). Sexual assault and men's violence against women is a plague on our society. In spite of the education outreach which began in the 1980's (Parrot & Bechhofer, 1991), sexual assault myths continue to thrive. Some of these myths have taught men that women do not really mean "no" in sexual situations and that men deserve sex on dates, as if the act was a payment. Although sexual assault is a problem for all women regardless of race, age, or reputation, the most impacted population is females under 24 years of age. Furthermore, experts believe one in four females will be victims of sexual assault in their lifetime (Bohmer & Parrot, 1993; Szymanski, Devlin, Chrisler, & Vyse, 1993). Considering most women do not even report their assaults (Schaeffer & Nelson, 1993), the scope of this dilemma is unquantifiable.

Many people believe perpetrators of sexual assault are disgusting, strange men lurking in shadows waiting for unsuspecting victims to pass by. The truth is most women are attacked by someone they know (Bohmer & Parrot, 1993; Humphrey & White, 2000). One study found that in 84% of the assaults, the assailant was an acquaintance and 57% of those assaults took place on dates (Szymanski et al., 1993). The stranger waiting in the dark is only one myth giving a false and dangerous impression of what sexual assault is. Women need not fear the man walking behind them on the street nearly as much as their Saturday night date. There are many more misconceptions and false beliefs perpetrators ascribe to that support and normalize sexual violence against women. One example is men who do not believe what they are doing is rape. Rather, they understand

their actions to be typical male sexual behavior. "...the adolescent male subculture provides a powerful indoctrination into sexual violence" (Epps, 1993, p.502). Often men see "real rape" as a man beating a woman or threatening her life in order to have sex with her. They do not consider verbal abuse or rough handling to be precursors of an assault (Schaeffer & Nelson, 1993).

In a culture with pornography depicting live rapes, athletic heroes unfairly acquitted of sexual assault charges (Parrot & Bechhofer, 1991), and politicians who philander and harass (Stan, 1995), adolescent males are finding that disrespect and assault are acceptable forms of intimate involvement with women. For example, Odem and Clay-Warner state that (1998) "...viewing the sexually aggressive films significantly increased male but not female acceptance of interpersonal violence and tended to increase rape myth acceptance. These effects occurred not with X-rated material but with "prime-time" materials" (p.185). Is it any wonder impressionable young men are taught that women are to be used? Some of our nation's most successful and powerful figures are modeling behaviors that adolescent men can witness and accept as normal. As role models they teach adolescents how to interact with others and what it means to be a man in current society.

Men are not alone in believing myths about sexual assault. Women also accept many of the myths as true. For this reason, women sometimes think a sexual assault experience is normal or may believe that they somehow caused the assault (Odem & Clay-Warner, 1998; Stan, 1995). Even if the woman does understand she was assaulted, she is highly unlikely to report the crime "Law Enforcement Assistance Administration figures estimated that for every rape reported to the police, 3 to 10 rapes go unreported"

(Schaeffer & Nelson, 1993, p.175). Regardless of whether or not the rape is reported, there are multiple consequences for the victim.

Effects of sexual assault are both emotional and physical. “As with other forms of abuse, the trauma and long term detrimental consequences for the victim may come more from the sense of powerlessness, stigmatization, and violation of trust than from the actual nature of the forced activity” (Byers & O’Sullivan, 1996, p.2). Post-traumatic stress occurs as a result of highly distressing experiences and victims may suffer symptoms such as nightmares, hyper-vigilance, and avoidance of reminders (Byers & O’Sullivan, 1996). Physical injuries such as bruising, chronic headaches, fatigue, sleep disturbance, recurrent nausea, decreased appetite, eating disorders, menstrual pain, sexual dysfunction, sexually transmitted disease, and genital injuries may occur (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2000). Women who are left untreated are at increased risk to be abused in the future (Humphrey & White, 2000). Women need to hear a clear message that they are worthy of respect and if harmed, they deserve help.

Solutions to the problem of sexual assault have focused on education and, of course, having perpetrators serve time in penitentiaries. However, in order to find the best solution, one should first understand the causes to the problem. This will be discussed further in the next chapter. Educational programs in the past have attempted to reach both males and females. The females have heard warning after warning about looking out for themselves and their friends by sticking together and not going out late at night. Men have been warned to respect women and understand that “no” means “no”. Men have also been educated about rape myths and the dangerous stereotypes they uphold in relationships between men and women. While some studies have shown

educational programs result in slight improvement in men's belief in rape myths, one study in particular showed increased improvement over a longer period of time (Foubert & Marriott, 1997).

In the past there have been many studies of sexual assault, its effects, and the rate of occurrence. The purpose of this study is to review the facts and literature regarding sexual assault, define sexual assault myths, and investigate the degree to which University of Wisconsin-Stout students internalized those myths. Finally, solutions to the problem will be reviewed and students will be surveyed to better understand their belief of rape myths.

The study will find more men than women accepting myths concerning sexual assault. By discovering students' attitudes, the university will be able to better educate and assist students in learning more healthy views of male/female relationships. Increased education regarding sexual assault would benefit students and the university at large. Individual students will be more aware of false beliefs concerning sex and sexual assault. They will better understand their rights and responsibilities. In addition, they will be able to educate their peers about the harmful effects of sexual assault myths. The university will be aided in its awareness of student attitudes concerning sex and sexual assault. By giving attention to educational deficits, the issue will improve.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to determine student attitudes regarding sexual assault. A survey will be given to UW-Stout students enrolled in English 102 during the spring of 2003. The results will be compared to the studies done at the same university by Larson (1989) and Urman (1992).

Research Questions

There are two questions this research addresses:

1. Have students' perceptions of rape myths changed since this survey was last completed?
2. Are men or women more likely to subscribe to rape myths?

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined in order to better understand this research. These terms are:

Sexual assault - "...a general term that describes all forms of unwanted sexual activity" (Bohmer & Parrot, 1993, p.3),

Acquaintance rape - "...describes a rape in which the victim and the assailant know each other..." (Bohmer & Parrot, 1993, p.3-4),

Date rape - is included in the definition of acquaintance rape and describes a rape that occurs while the victim and the assailant are on a date,

Sexual assault myths - are prejudicial, stereotypical, or false beliefs about sexual assault, victims, and assailants (Odem & Clay-Warner, 1998).

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

One out of four women becomes a victim of sexual assault sometime in their life (Koss, 1992). This is an often repeated statistic and is just one characteristic to a problem which has a severe deficit in solutions. Although men are sometimes sexual assault victims, the emphasis here will be on sexual assault of women because the problem is far more widespread for females. This chapter will discuss specific sexual assault myths, factors that contribute to belief in those myths, and attempted solutions to the problem.

Sexual Assault Myths

Sexual assault myths do not cast victims in a positive light. Rather, they promote false and stereotyped roles, thoughts, and beliefs of both women and men. "Rape myths can be classified in four categories: nothing happened, no harm was done, she wanted it or liked it, and she asked for it or deserved it" (Odem & Clay-Warner, 1998, p.4). Though it would be impossible to document all myths about sexual assault, a discussion of myths and contributing factors follows.

Under the first category of myths, perpetrators deny that anything happened to the woman. The assailant (or his defense) may declare that the woman is trying to cover up her own actions (for example, in an unwed pregnancy), attempting to cause trouble, or perhaps he will assert that the accusation of assault is simply wishful thinking on the woman's part. The second category of myths partially relies on the woman's reputation. In this case, it will be stated that nothing injurious happened to the woman because she wasn't a virgin, had sex with many other men, or the sex was simply consensual. Women who are prostitutes or have multiple sexual partners are more likely to have this

myth used against them (Parrot & Bechhofer, 1991). The third group of sexual assault myths declares that the woman wanted the intimacy or she would have fought harder against it. Again in this case, the victim's reputation is a major factor. Without doubt, "The victim is held to a higher standard than is the assailant; her testimony must be perfectly consistent and impeccable" (Bohmer & Parrot, 1993. p.38). Finally, the last group of myths indicates the woman deserved to be assaulted. In this case, the victim will be blamed for flirting, teasing, being dressed provocatively, or putting herself in an unsafe situation (Parrot & Bechhofer, 1991).

Due to these myths, the woman's story is often dismissed because she is viewed as the responsible party. Parrot and Bechhofer (1991) state that rape is "...an outgrowth of a culture that creates and propagates rape myths, which target the female as the culprit of the crime and exonerate the rapist..." (p.225). The United States culture, which is discussed below, has produced a hostile environment for victims of sexual assault.

Factors Contributing to Belief in Myths

Beliefs and values are a result of our upbringing, involvement with peers, and societal values. Belief in sexual assault myths is no different. Societal attitudes toward gender roles and relationships, group thinking, and the media are some of the specific contributing causes to belief in rape myths (Parrot & Bechhofer, 1991). A child growing up watching the women around her/him being mistreated and disrespected will believe that type of treatment is normal and may repeat those same actions.

Societal Attitudes. The problem of rape ensues when young men and women view force in intimate relationships as normal. In addition, young men who grow up with traditional male and female roles are more likely to believe sexually coercive behavior is

appropriate (Schaeffer & Nelson, 1993). As a result of oversubscribing to the traditional male roles, women become objects. The issue is further complicated when those men who use force in order to have sex with women do not see their actions as assault or rape (Stan, 1995). "These hidden rapists have oversubscribed to traditional male roles....They believe that aggression is normal and that women don't really mean it when they say no to sexual advances" (Stan, 1995, p.11-12). Imagine the young man who is having charges brought against him for assault or rape -- he is incredulous as to what the problem is because he believed he was acting as a normal male should. The attitude that this young man exhibits does not result only from family and upbringing. The roles which men subscribe to become further entrenched through interaction with other males who have the same beliefs and values.

Group Thinking. Men whose sexual assault myths align together may lapse into group thinking. Their world view on sexual relationships is normalized by the men around them who believe and act the same. Or as Parrot and Bechhofer (1991) state, "...group identity produces conformity" (p.148). Campus life is an example of this situation. Schaeffer and Nelson (1993) found that men living in all male dorms were likely to be more accepting of traditional male roles and rape myths. These attitudes are even more deeply ingrained in college fraternities and are compounded with substance abuse (Odem & Clay-Warner, 1998; Foubert & Marriott, 1997). Research has revealed, "...higher levels of self-reported sexually coercive behavior among fraternity members than among non-members" (Schaeffer & Nelson, 1993, p.178).

Media. The media is often blamed for many of society's vices. The problem of sexual assault is no different, especially when considering pornography. Even daytime

television shows and movies show inappropriate displays of non-consensual sexual contact. Somehow the torture of women has become entertainment in our culture (Stan, 1995). In some cases, as with pornography, the woman is depicted as initially refusing to have sex; however, she becomes so turned on that she enjoys herself (Parrot & Bechhofer, 1991). The idea is incredibly ridiculous and frightening when, in truth, sexual assault is scary and haunting not to mention painful.

Another issue is a lack of resolution regarding the assault. For example, the woman may be assaulted and she later falls in love with the assailant and they get married. Such was the case in the soap opera "General Hospital" (Parrot & Bechhofer, 1991). The message this storyline depicts is that women do indeed enjoy being assaulted. As mentioned earlier, women sometimes do not realize they have been assaulted and they carry on the relationship. However, it is irresponsible and cruel for the media and television producers to glorify the act of assault.

There seem to be many causes to the problem of sexual assault myths and misconceptions; however, the solution really comes down to one challenge. That challenge is to modify society's attitudes regarding treatment of women. In doing so, many individual pieces of the problem will need to be addressed including, but not limited to, education for men and women about the true nature of sexual assault so that myths may be dispelled.

Solutions to the Problem

Although expecting a complete extermination of sexual assault myths is unrealistic, any decrease would be beneficial. Unfortunately, myths become engrained as part of a person's belief system. Of course, beliefs are only one piece of the problem.

“...personality characteristics, situational factors, and socialization all play a role in the development of sexual coerciveness in general, and rape in particular” (Parrot & Bechhofer, 1991, p.226). Little may be done for people’s personalities or situations which are out of societal control. One malleable piece of the problem is socialization. Individuals are socialized through the people and things around them. Through educational programs, people could realize the lies they have accepted as truths.

Educational programs have been one attempt at dealing with the problem. Whereas programs that educate men on how not to be a rapist do not effectively change attitudes, a number of studies have shown that peer education with a focus on aiding the victim do. By teaching men how to assist somebody who has been assaulted, they are able to hear the message without feeling defensive. Although these groups do not promise permanent change, they have longer lasting effects on attitude about sexual assault myths than programs that treat men as enemies (Foubert & Marriott, 1997). There are other approaches to education which help change the predicament of women being disrespected. Koss (1992) states, “...rape thrives in an environment of inequality. So the efforts made by higher education institutions to promote diversity and gender equality will likely reduce the extent to which the campus climate is conducive to rape” (p. 27). Perhaps there will come a time when men and women can look at each other as equals and not as the powerful and the powerless. Perhaps our children’s children will talk about the odd beliefs in our current culture when it came to women and sex.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will include information on how subjects were selected. Participants and the instrument used will be described. Data collection and data analysis procedures will also be included. Finally, limitations will be presented.

Subject Selection and Description

Students enrolled in English 102 at UW-Stout during the spring semester of 2003 were surveyed. All students were included regardless of race, age, class rank, or gender.

Instrumentation

The instrument used to survey students had been used twice in the past by graduate students at UW-Stout in their thesis work. Most recently, it was used by Urman in 1992. Originally, the survey consisted of 27 items. There was one item excluded because it was viewed as too subjective and would reveal little information regarding student's attitudes. The survey used for this research contained 29 total items (three of which were developed to find participants' demographic information). The other 26 items were answered using a Likert scale (1-5) with an answer of 1 meaning "Strongly Disagree" and an answer of 5 meaning "Strongly Agree". To view the complete survey, see Appendix A.

Data Collection

Students were informed of their rights to confidentiality. Completion of the survey implied consent. Permission was attained from the UW-Stout English 102 professors who allowed the survey to be distributed and completed in their classrooms.

Surveys were handed out in classrooms during regular class hours. The researcher then waited outside the classroom until the professor gave the completed surveys to the researcher (ensuring confidentiality).

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics and significance tests were computed using SPSS 10.0 © for Windows.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study. The study took place with a limited sample of the university population in the upper Midwest and the findings should, therefore not be generalized to all university students. Also, as this is a highly sensitive topic, it may have evoked resistance from some students; therefore they may give false or misleading answers. The student population is mostly Caucasian. Therefore, caution should be used when making comparisons with students of other racial backgrounds.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Introduction

This chapter will present the results of the College Student Attitudes Toward Rape Myths survey. The demographic information and descriptive statistics will be reported first. Data collected on each of the research questions will then be given.

A total of 172 surveys were dispatched for this study. The surveys were handed out during English 102 classes at University of Wisconsin Stout. This sampling technique was extremely effective and yielded a return rate of 100%.

The majority of surveys were completely filled out. However, questions 1 (In most cases when a woman was raped she was asking for it.), 8 (When a woman says no to a man she means no.), 11 (Women are trained by society to be rape victims.), and 22 (A charge of rape reported by a woman two days after the act has occurred is probably not a rape.) were not answered on one occasion each. Question 2 (A woman cannot be raped against her will.) was not answered on two occasions.

Demographic Information

The demographic section included questions concerning: 1) age, 2) class, and 3) gender. Although respondent age and class were requested on all surveys, gender information was only requested on 110 surveys. This was done to test whether respondents answered differently when specifying gender.

Ages of participants consisted of 90.7% (N=156) under 23 years old, 5.8% (N=10) 23-30 years old, 1.7% (N=3) 31-40 years old, .6% (N=1) 41 and over, and 1.2% (N=2) age unspecified. This data can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1

Ages of Participants

	Under 23	23 – 30	31 – 40	41 and over	Unspecified
N	156	10	3	1	2
%	90.7	5.8	1.7	.6	1.2

Class level of participants ranged from freshman to senior status. (Please see Table 2). Class level included 70.9% (N=122) freshman, 18.6% (N=32) sophomore, 6.4% (N=11) junior, 2.3% (N=4) senior, and 1.7% (N=3) class level unspecified. Due to a rounding error with the software, the percentages do not add up to 100 in this table.

Table 2

Class Level of Participants

	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Unspecified
N	122	32	11	4	3
%	70.9	18.6	6.4	2.3	1.7

Gender of participants was requested on 110 surveys. Gender demographics for this study consisted of 29.1% (N=50) male, 30.8% (N=53) female, and 40.1% (N=69) unspecified gender. This information is reported in Table 3.

Table 3

Gender of Participants

	Female	Male	Unspecified
N	53	50	69
%	30.8	29.1	40.1

Significant differences between males and females were found on items 1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 12, 15, 16, 17, 22, 25, 26 which can be seen in Table 4 below, and between females and “unspecified” as shown in table 5.

Table 4

Significant Differences Between Males and Females

Item	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
In most cases when a woman was raped she was asking for it.	3.200	101	*.002
A woman cannot be raped against her will.	2.587	100	.011
If a woman is going to be raped she might as well relax and enjoy it.	2.528	101	.013
Most women secretly desire to be raped.	3.467	101	*.001
During a rape a woman should do everything she can to resist.	-1.033	101	.304
Women provoke rape by their appearance or behavior.	3.102	101	*.002
The primary motivation for rape is sex.	.988	101	.326
When a woman says no to a man she means no.	-3.395	100	*.001
Rape is a male exercise in power over women.	-2.831	101	*.006
Rape provides the opportunity for many rapists to show their manhood.	-2.566	101	.012
Women are trained by society to be rape victims.	.778	100	.439
A woman who says she has been raped by a man she knows can be defined as "a woman who changed her mind afterward."	3.313	101	*.001
Rape is one of the worst crimes that can be committed.	-.931	101	.354
All rapists have a severe mental illness.	-1.148	101	.254
A woman should be responsible for preventing her victimization in a rape.	3.060	101	*.003
A raped woman is a less desirable woman.	2.829	101	*.006
When a woman allows a man to pay for her share of an expensive date she is agreeing to allow "sexual favors."	3.582	101	*.001
In forcible rape the victim is always at least partly to blame.	1.182	101	.240
The degree of a woman's resistance should be the major factor in determining if a rape has occurred.	2.410	101	.018
The rapist is usually a total stranger.	.874	101	.384
"Nice" women do not get raped.	2.399	101	.018
A charge of rape reported by a woman two days after the act has occurred is probably not a rape.	3.454	101	*.001
Rape is a humiliating experience for a woman.	-1.663	101	.099
In order to protect the male it should be difficult to prove that a rape has occurred.	2.307	101	.023
It would do certain women some good to be raped.	2.756	101	*.007
It is not possible for a woman to be raped by her husband.	3.161	101	*.002

* - indicates p values $< .001$

Table 5

Significance Tests of Differences Between Females and "Unspecified"

Item	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
In most cases when a woman was raped she was asking for it.	-2.216	119	.029
A woman cannot be raped against her will.	-1.480	119	.141
If a woman is going to be raped she might as well relax and enjoy it.	-1.192	120	.236
Most women secretly desire to be raped.	-2.720	120	*.007
During a rape a woman should do everything she can to resist.	-.190	120	.849
Women provoke rape by their appearance or behavior.	-2.104	120	.037
The primary motivation for rape is sex.	-.531	120	.596
When a woman says no to a man she means no.	3.738	119	*.000
Rape is a male exercise in power over women.	2.318	120	.022
Rape provides the opportunity for many rapists to show their manhood.	2.715	120	*.008
Women are trained by society to be rape victims.	-1.604	119	.111
A woman who says she has been raped by a man she knows can be defined as "a woman who changed her mind afterward."	-1.311	120	.192
Rape is one of the worst crimes that can be committed.	-1.106	120	.271
All rapists have a severe mental illness.	1.699	120	.092
A woman should be responsible for preventing her victimization in a rape.	-2.600	120	.010
A raped woman is a less desirable woman.	-2.541	120	.012
When a woman allows a man to pay for her share of an expensive date she is agreeing to allow "sexual favors."	-3.213	120	*.002
In forcible rape the victim is always at least partly to blame.	-1.334	120	.185
The degree of a woman's resistance should be the major factor in determining if a rape has occurred.	-2.176	120	.032
The rapist is usually a total stranger.	-.620	120	.536
"Nice" women do not get raped.	-2.707	120	*.008
A charge of rape reported by a woman two days after the act has occurred is probably not a rape.	-2.761	120	*.007
Rape is a humiliating experience for a woman.	2.054	120	.042
In order to protect the male it should be difficult to prove that a rape has occurred.	-1.364	120	.175
It would do certain women some good to be raped.	-1.214	120	.227
It is not possible for a woman to be raped by her husband.	-2.774	120	*.006

Table 6

Significance Tests of Differences Between Males and "Unspecified"

Item	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
In most cases when a woman was raped she was asking for it.	1.008	116	.316
A woman cannot be raped against her will.	1.187	115	.238
If a woman is going to be raped she might as well relax and enjoy it.	1.645	117	.103
Most women secretly desire to be raped.	.914	117	.362
During a rape a woman should do everything she can to resist.	-1.305	117	.194
Women provoke rape by their appearance or behavior.	1.299	117	.197
The primary motivation for rape is sex.	.540	117	.590
When a woman says no to a man she means no.	.064	117	.949
Rape is a male exercise in power over women.	-.854	117	.395
Rape provides the opportunity for many rapists to show their manhood.	-.283	117	.777
Women are trained by society to be rape victims.	-.687	117	.494
A woman who says she has been raped by a man she knows can be defined as "a woman who changed her mind afterward."	2.093	117	.038
Rape is one of the worst crimes that can be committed.	-2.126	117	.036
All rapists have a severe mental illness.	.324	117	.747
A woman should be responsible for preventing her victimization in a rape.	.688	117	.493
A raped woman is a less desirable woman.	.134	117	.894
When a woman allows a man to pay for her share of an expensive date she is agreeing to allow "sexual favors."	.336	117	.738
In forcible rape the victim is always at least partly to blame.	-.208	117	.836
The degree of a woman's resistance should be the major factor in determining if a rape has occurred.	.265	117	.791
The rapist is usually a total stranger.	.284	117	.777
"Nice" women do not get raped.	-.713	117	.478
A charge of rape reported by a woman two days after the act has occurred is probably not a rape.	.607	117	.545
Rape is a humiliating experience for a woman.	.295	117	.768
In order to protect the male it should be difficult to prove that a rape has occurred.	1.052	117	.295
It would do certain women some good to be raped.	1.908	117	.059
It is not possible for a woman to be raped by her husband.	-.042	117	.967

There was no significant difference between males and females and whether they believed rape was a humiliating experience for women. However, there were multiple differences found regarding responsibility for the rape and women's perceived attitudes toward rape.

Research Questions Meaningful Differences

Even after Bonferroni adjustments for multiple comparisons, clinically significant differences between males and females were found on several items.

Question 1: In most cases when a woman was raped she was asking for it (mean difference .48). Question 4: Most women secretly desire to be raped (mean difference .45). Question 6: Women provoke rape by their appearance or behavior (mean difference .68). Question 8: When a woman says no to a man she means no. In comparing females and the unspecified gender group, (mean difference .55). In comparing males and females, (mean difference .60). Questions 12: A woman who says she has been raped by a man she knows can be defined as "a woman who changed her mind afterward" (mean difference .60). Questions 15: A woman should be responsible for preventing her victimization in a rape (mean difference .66). Question 17: When a woman allows a man to pay for her share of an expensive date she is agreeing to allow "sexual favors" (mean difference .44). Question 22: A charge of rape reported by a woman two days after the act has occurred is probably not a rape (mean difference .55).

Research Question 1

Research Question 1: Have student's perceptions of rape myths changed since this survey was last completed? Unfortunately, it is hard to distinguish how much student's perceptions have changed. Urman (1992), the most recent researcher to use this

survey at UW-Stout, used sums and averages of each survey to report whether or not students held mythical beliefs. This type of data analysis does not best suit the survey used as some questions on the survey are not indicative of holding mythical beliefs.

While Larson (1989) also concluded that men were more likely to believe rape myths than were women, she did not specifically describe the type of data analysis used in her study. Therefore, attempting to compare past research to the present data would lead to confusion and inaccuracies.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2: Are men or women more likely to subscribe to rape myths?

The results indicate that men are more likely to believe rape myths than are women. An item by item break down can be seen in Table 4.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Discussion

According to the research findings, this study shows little change occurring since the reports of previous researchers (Epps, 1993 & Schaeffer & Nelson, 1993). This is true in regards to both general perceptions of rape myths and beliefs held by men and women. Applications of the results of this study are limited to upper Midwest college students who are mainly Caucasian and between 18- 23 years of age.

Conclusions

The results concur with one of the previous two research studies conducted on this topic. As mentioned, exact comparisons of past research cannot be made as the previous researchers either used poor data analysis or did not explain specifically which data analysis they used. However, according to Larson's research in 1989, men were more likely to subscribe to rape myths. Results of the present research confer with Larson's conclusions.

This study sheds light on the current ideas and beliefs held by college-age men and women regarding sexuality and sexual assault. Questions used on the "Sexual Assault Attitude Survey" along with the content and results of this study offer many opportunities for discussion in educational settings. Further education regarding rape and sexual assault would benefit the campus and surrounding communities. Perhaps as a part of freshman orientation students could discuss rape and sexual assault on a myth vs. fact basis. Another option which has been put into use at University Wisconsin-La Crosse is

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a course in which male students discuss the traditional role males play in our society and positive and negative outcomes of following that role.

Recommendations for Further Research

Several suggestions are offered for further research on this topic. They are:

1. Replication of this study to determine whether attitudes have changed,
2. Modifying the instrument to include how individuals have learned information about the opposite sex,
3. Define programs which motivate males to speak out against men's violence against women.

Appendix: Sexual Assault Attitude Survey

1. In most cases when a woman was raped she was asking for it.
1 2 3 4 5
2. A woman cannot be raped against her will.
1 2 3 4 5
3. If a woman is going to be raped she might as well relax and enjoy it.
1 2 3 4 5
4. Most women secretly desire to be raped.
1 2 3 4 5
5. During a rape a woman should do everything she can to resist.
1 2 3 4 5
6. Women provoke rape by their appearance or behavior.
1 2 3 4 5
7. The primary motivation for rape is sex.
1 2 3 4 5
8. When a woman says no to a man she means no.
1 2 3 4 5
9. Rape is a male exercise in power over women.
1 2 3 4 5
10. Rape provides the opportunity for many rapists to show their manhood.
1 2 3 4 5
11. Women are trained by society to be rape victims.
1 2 3 4 5
12. A woman who says she has been raped by a man she knows can be defined as "a woman who changed her mind afterward".
1 2 3 4 5
13. Rape is one of the worst crimes that can be committed.
1 2 3 4 5
14. All rapists have severe mental illness.
1 2 3 4 5
15. A woman should be responsible for preventing her victimization in a rape.
1 2 3 4 5
16. A raped woman is a less desirable woman.
1 2 3 4 5
17. When a woman allows a man to pay for her share of an expensive date she is agreeing to allow "sexual favors".
1 2 3 4 5
18. In forcible rape the victim is always at least partly to blame.
1 2 3 4 5
19. The degree of a woman's resistance should be the major factor in determining if a rape has occurred.
1 2 3 4 5
20. The rapist is usually a total stranger.
1 2 3 4 5
21. "Nice" women do not get raped.
1 2 3 4 5
22. A charge of rape reported by a woman two days after the act has occurred is probably not a rape.
1 2 3 4 5
23. Rape is a humiliating experience for a woman.
1 2 3 4 5
24. In order to protect the male it should be difficult to prove that a rape has occurred.
1 2 3 4 5
25. It would do certain women some good to be raped.
1 2 3 4 5
26. It is not possible for a woman to be raped by her husband.
1 2 3 4 5
27. Age: ___ Less than 23 years
 ___ 23-30
 ___ 31-40
 ___ 41 and over
28. Class: ___ Freshman
 ___ Sophomore
 ___ Junior
 ___ Senior
29. Gender ___ Male ___ Female