

FACT SHEET

EFFECTS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

Psychological Effects

42% of drug-dependent women experienced childhood sexual abuse and were twice as likely to be anti-social as those who did not experience childhood sexual abuse. There was an increased prevalence of severe personality disturbances among those women who experienced multiple types of childhood abuse.

Haller, D., and Miles, D. "Personality Disturbances in Drug-Dependent Women: Relationship to Childhood Abuse," American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse. 30(2), 2004.

In one study, 73% of the women surveyed reported that they were "extremely fearful" or "concerned" about contracting HIV as the result of a rape. Women who were raped by a stranger were significantly more likely to express fear or concern about HIV exposure than women who were raped by partners of acquaintances. Over 80% of the women surveyed indicated that they wanted more HIV/AIDS related information during post-assault medical care.

Resnick, H., Monnier, J., Seals, B., et al. "Rape-related HIV Risk Concerns Among Recent Rape Victims," Journal of Interpersonal Violence. 17(7), 2002.

Female students who have been physically and/or sexually abused by a dating partner in the 9th through 12th grades are at increased risk for substance use, unhealthy weight control, risky sexual behavior, pregnancy and suicide. The study found that:

- 1 in 5 experienced physical or sexual dating violence.
- Females with a history of physical and sexual dating violence were significantly more likely to engage in substance abuse (i.e. binge drinking, cocaine use and heavy smoking) and in unhealthy weight control behaviors including the use of laxatives and diet pills.
- Researchers also noted a correlation between risky sexual behavior (i.e. multiple partners, sexual intercourse before the age of 15) and dating violence victimization.
- Girls experiencing physical and sexual dating violence were 4-6 times more likely to become pregnant than non-abused peers. They were 8-9 times more likely to have attempted suicide in the previous year than non-abused peers.

Silverman, J.G., Raj, A., Mucci, L.A., & Hathaway, J.E. "Dating Violence Against Adolescent Girls and Associated Substance Abuse, Unhealthy Weight Control, Sexual Risk Behavior, Pregnancy and Suicidality," The Journal of the American Medical Association. 286(5), 2001.

Rape, childhood sexual abuse and domestic violence are among the most common causes of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in women. The chances that a woman will develop PTSD after being raped are 50-90%. Sexual assault is also closely associated with depression and anxiety disorders.

Population Reports: Ending Violence Against Women. Population Information Program, Center for Communication Programs, The Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and Center for Health and Gender Equity. 2000.

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Girls who were raped are about three times more likely to suffer from psychiatric disorders and over four times more likely to suffer from drug and alcohol abuse in adulthood.

Kendler, Kenneth S., et al. Archives of General Psychiatry, Medical College of Virginia Commonwealth University. 2000.

Physical Effects

Among victims raped since their 18th birthdays, 31.5 percent of the women, and 16.1 percent of the men, said they incurred an injury other than the rape itself during their most recent rape. Of those females injured, 74% reported scratches, welts, or bruises as the injury.

National Institute of Justice. Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Rape Victimization: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey. 2006.

A review of evaluations of all female sexual assault victims (892) presenting to an urban hospital emergency room over a 34-month period found that general body injury was found in 52% of the patients, but serious injury requiring emergency medical intervention was uncommon. 20% of those examined had genital or anal injury. 15% had bruises or abrasions of the vulvar or perineal tissues. 7% had lacerations of those areas. Genital or anal injury was more than twice as likely in women older than 49 years of age.

Sugar, N.F., D.N. Fine, and T. Eckert. Physical Injury After Sexual Assault: Findings of a Large Case Series, American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology. 190(1), 2004.

According to a study of 6,864 female students (9th through 12th grade) researchers found that:

- Slightly less than 1 out of 5 sexually experienced adolescent females reported being intentionally hurt by a dating partner in the previous year.
- 1 out of 25 sexually inexperienced adolescent females reported being intentionally hurt by a dating partner in the previous year.
- Girls who reported dating violence in the previous year were twice as likely to use condoms and were at greater risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

Silverman, J.G., Raj, A., and Clements, K. "Dating Violence and Associated Sexual Risk and Pregnancy Among Adolescent Girls in the United States," Pediatrics. 114(2), 2004.

Participants in a longitudinal study who reported sexual abuse in childhood and early adolescence were almost four times as likely to have inflicted self-harm (in the form of suicide attempts or self-mutilation) and reported significantly higher rates of physical revictimization than participants with no history of sexual abuse.

Noll, J., Horowitz, L., Bonano, G., Trickett, P., and Putnam, F. "Revictimization and Self-Harm in Females who Experienced Childhood Sexual Abuse," Journal of Interpersonal Violence. 18(12), 2003.

39% of attempted rapes and 17% of sexual assaults against females resulted in injured victims.

Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, Rape and Sexual Assault: Reporting to Police and Medical Attention 1992-2000. 2002.

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