

# Prevalence of Male Sexual Assault in Virginia: A Population-Based Study

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# Background

- Sexual assault (SA) in men under-reported
- Nationwide, 1 of every 33 men a victim of completed/attempted rape
- Approximately 1.2 rapes/1,000 men
- Male sexual assault most prevalent in minors: 71% reporting rape in NVAWS victimized before age 18

# Myths & Problems

- Beliefs that
  - Males rarely sexually abused
  - Abuse has minimal effect on males
  - Men are self-reliant, able to defend themselves
- Limitations in literature
  - Many clinic-based studies; limited population-based or community-focused
  - Focus on severe assault, missing full spectrum
  - Inadequate sample size of studies
- Need for additional data to inform prevention & treatment

# Methods

- Virginia Dept of Health-funded study of prevalence, correlates of sexual assault
- First survey in state involving males
- Study included 705 males

# Methods:

## Survey Administration

- An independent equal probability sample was drawn to represent the male population of Virginia
- Telephone survey; random-digit dial, conducted 11/2002-2/2003
- Asked for adult male who most recently had birthday
- Up to 15 phone calls at varying times

# Methods:

## Survey Administration

- Choice of male or female interviewer
- Interviewer training in managing/referring victims in distress
- Toll-free number for callback
- Refusal conversions unless respondent asked for no further contact
- Response rate 21%

# Methods: Survey Questions

- Instrument was adopted from
  - Washington State Sexual Assault Study
  - The National Women's Study (NWS)
  - National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS)
- Pre- tested

# Methods:

## Survey Questions

- The Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system was utilized for this survey.
- The Questionnaire was programmed using Computer Assisted Survey Execution System (CASES).
- VCU-IRB



# Methods: Survey Questions

- Questions include:
  - Lifetime and past year sexual violence experiences
  - Perpetrator characteristics
  - Consequences of SA
  - Help-seeking behaviors
  - Lifetime experience of other traumatic events
  - Perception of personal safety
  - Availability of services
  - Perceptions of community response to SA

# Methods:

## Survey Questions

- Questionnaire begin with more general questions ... to... violence and victimization
- Sexual assault questions:
  - forced to have oral sex, anal sex, forced sex with objects
  - attempted rape,
  - sex when the victim was unable to give consent due to heavy alcohol consumption or illicit drugs.
  - Non-forcible sex or molestation <18y

# Sample question

- *“Regardless of how long ago it happened or who did it, has a man or boy/woman or girl ever made you have sex by using force or threatening to harm you or someone close to you?”*

# Survey Questions and Definitions

- Sexual assault was defined to include rape, attempted rape, inappropriate touch of the breast, buttock and/or genitalia area, inability to consent, non-forcible child rape and child molestation.

# Survey Questions and Definitions

- Demographic variables were coded according the literature
- Depression
- Suicide ideation
- Drug use
- Alcohol use

# Data Analysis

- Frequency distributions, means, medians and ranges
- Demographic characteristics of victims and non-victims were compared
- Odds ratios and 95 percent confidence intervals and t-tests were calculate.
- Multiple logistic regression
- Data were analyzed using SPSS v14

# Results

- 705 respondents
- Average age (47.2 years)
- Majority:
  - White (78%)
  - More than high school education (53.1%)
  - Earnings of > \$50,000 annually (56%)
  - Married/living as married (71.3%)

# Results

- **Lifetime Prevalence of Sexual Assault**  
**12.9%**
- **Victimized in previous 12 months**  
**0.1%**



# Lifetime Prevalence of Male Sexual Assault, Virginia

Type of Assault	Prevalence (%)
Total sexual victimization	12.9
Rape	3.5
Attempted rape	2.7
Inappropriate touch	2.6
Unable to consent	2.1
Non-forcible child rape	4.5
Non-forcible child molest.	6.4

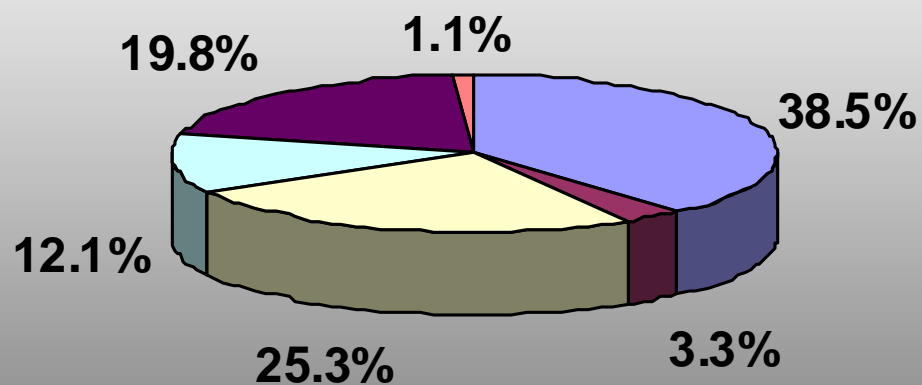
# Age at First Sexual Assault

Age	All assaults <i>N=90</i>	Rape <i>N=24</i>	Child rape <i>n=41</i>	Child molest. <i>N=56</i>	Unable to consent <i>N=15</i>	Attempted rape <i>N=18</i>
Mean	12.2	10.9	13.3	11.9	18.2	14.2
Median	13.0	10.0	15.0	13.0	17.0	14.0

# Age at First Sexual Assault

Age	All assaults <i>N=90</i>	Rape <i>N=24</i>	Child rape <i>n=41</i>	Child molest <i>N=56</i>	Unable consent <i>N=15</i>	Attempt rape <i>N=18</i>
	<i>Percent Distribution</i>					
<12	40.0	54.2	26.8	39.3	0.0	22.2
12-17	54.4	29.2	73.2	60.7	60.0	66.7
18+	5.6	16.7	0.0	0.0	40.0	11.1

## Number of Sexual Assault Experiences and Perpetrators Reported by Male Participants

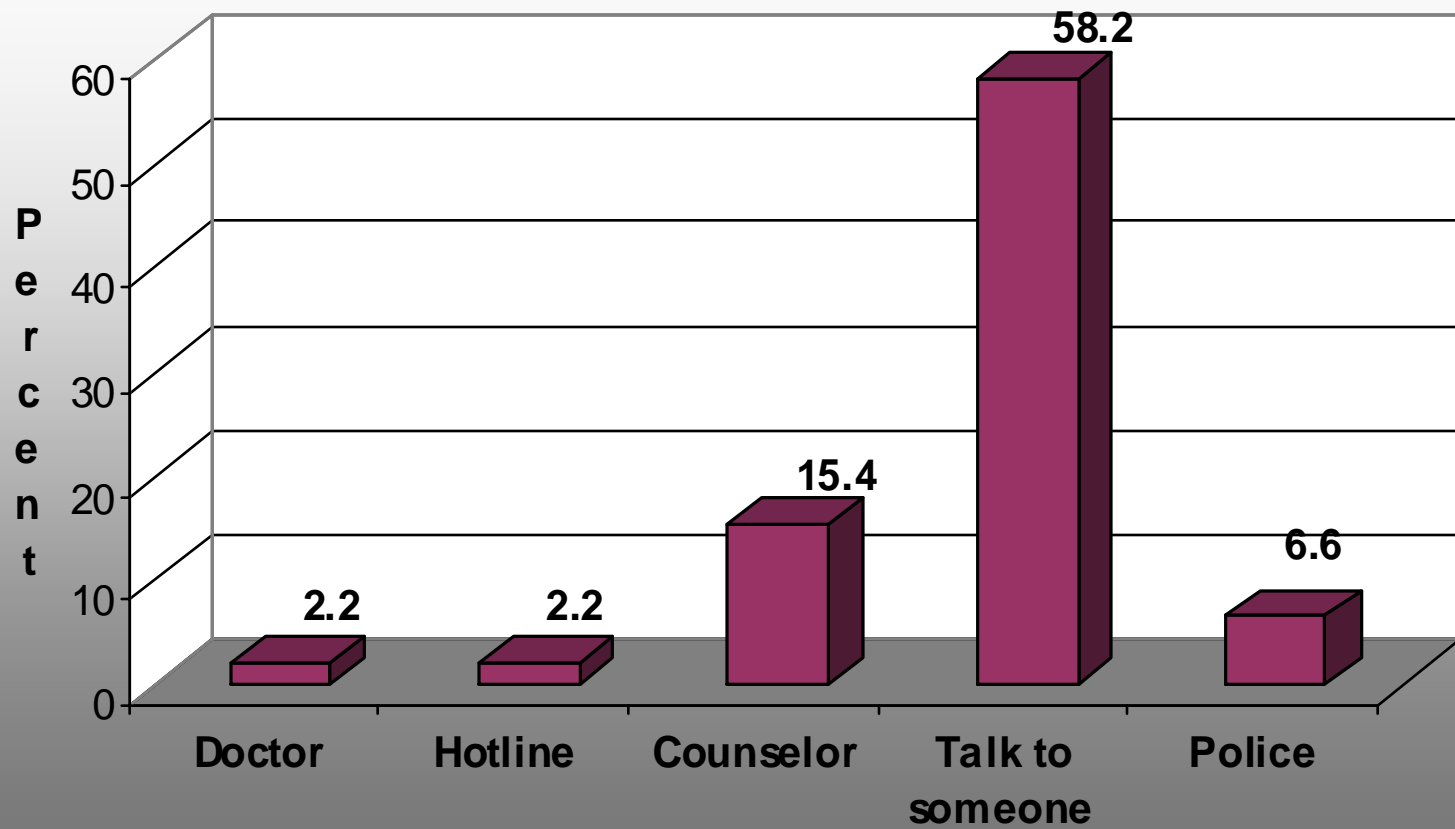


- Single event, by one person
- Single event, by two or more people
- Multiple events by the same person
- Multiple events by two or more different people
- Not unwanted
- Don't Know

# Characteristics of Sexual Assault

- 60% of perpetrators male
- Nearly 75% of perpetrators > age 18
- Nearly 80% victimized by someone known
- About 3% reported use of weapon
- Nearly 9% reported injury

## Help Seeking Behavior of Victims



# Factors Associated with Reporting Sexual Assault

Variable	Lifetime prevalence (%)	Adjusted OR (95% CI)
Current age		
18-24	17.3	3.8 (1.0-13.9)
25-34	19.3	3.2 (1.1-8.9)
35-44	14.8	2.4 (0.9-6.5)
45-64	11.4	1.8 (0.7-4.6)
65+		1.0

**Note: Adjusted for age, race, ethnicity, education, marital status and income.**

# Factors Associated with Reporting Sexual Assault

Education	Lifetime prevalence (%)	Unadjusted OR (95% CI)	Adjusted OR (95% CI)
< High School	10.4	0.5 (0.2-1.2)	0.30 (0.1-0.9)
High School graduate	11.4	0.5 (0.3-0.9)	0.39 (0.2-0.8)
College	12.1	0.5 (0.3-1.0)	0.48 (0.3-0.9)
Postgraduate	20.2	1.0	1.0

**Note:** Each model was controlled for age, race, ethnicity, education, marital status and income.



# Adverse Consequences of Sexual Assault in Men

	Depression	Suicide ideation	Drug use	$\geq 4$ alcoholic drinks
<i>OR (95% CI)</i>				
No	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Yes	3.4 (2.0-5.8)	2.4 (1.2-5.0)	2.3 (0.9-5.3)	1.7 (0.8-3.8)

**Note:** Each model was controlled for age, race, ethnicity, education, marital status and income.

# Strengths

- Population-based sample
- Focused on multiple forms of SA (as opposed to rape only)
- Replicates previous findings on adverse consequences & help-seeking behavior
- May provide foundation for future investigations

# Limitations

- Low response rate: potential for bias, limits ability to generalize
  - BRFSS 2005 response rate
    - Virginia, 40.9%
    - By state, nationwide, range of 22.1%-60.4%
- Project budget prohibited mixed methods or additional follow up
- Excluded men lacking phones or institutionalized
- Self-reported data: under-reporting or recall bias
- Cross-sectional study

# Conclusions

- Higher proportion victimized during childhood
- Lifetime prevalence increasing with age
- Adverse consequences including depression, suicide ideation
- Majority of victims did not seek help
- History of SA not associated with marital status, race, drug and alcohol use

# Conclusions

- Male SA important public health problem
- Targeted primary prevention efforts needed to prevent CSA in boys
- Further investigation needed, employing varying methods

# Thank you!!