

214333 Determinants of reporting sexual assault in pregnant adolescents

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Abstract

Alabama teachers of Grades 6-9 ($n = 424$) participated in a cross-sectional random survey to explore underlying factors of reporting sexual assault of pregnant adolescents younger than the legal age of consent. Survey data included knowledge of mandatory reporting requirements, criteria for statutory rape, reporting responses to three vignettes, and beliefs and attitudes toward reporting. Protection motivation theory (Rogers, 1983) guided the research process including the review of professional literature, construction of the survey tool, and interpretation of results.

Results showed that teachers were aware that they were mandatory reporters ($n = 364$, 85.8%), but they were not familiar with other reporting laws. Multiple regression analysis showed that prior training was the most significant predictor of knowledge, $p < .001$. Less than half of the teachers reported they had received prior training in sexual assault reporting. Most of the teachers ($n = 312$) requested additional training on sexual assault recognition and legal requirements for reporting.

Teachers who knew the legal age of consent for sex were more likely to correctly report just the two reportable vignettes (Odds Ratio = 2.2). Teachers with more than 10 years experience were more likely to have reported sexual assault of a student in the past (Odds Ratio = 2.2). Self-contained teachers (Odds Ratio = 4.1) and teachers who received prior training (Odds Ratio = 2.3) were more likely to have reported in the past. Teachers who knew that laws protect mandatory reporters were more likely to have reported in the past (Odds Ratio = 2.1).

Teachers responded that student safety was perceived as the most important protection motivation theory reporting factor, while risk of student harm from baby's father was perceived as the most important negative protection motivation theory factor. Multiple regression analysis found that protection motivation theory construct of cost was most associated with reporting just the two reportable vignettes, $p = .001$, with the construct of reward also significant, $p < .01$.

Learning Objectives

- Discuss the difference between forcible rape and statutory rape
- Describe the role of the mandated reporter
- Identify barriers to reporting sexual assault
- Access national and state resources for mandated reporters

Definitions

Statutory rape - rape in the second degree. Statutory rape occurs if a male or female, being 16 years or older, engages in sexual intercourse with a person of the opposite sex less than 16 and more than 12 years old; provided, however, that he or she was at least two years older than the person of the opposite sex (Code of AL 1977, Section 13A-6-62)

Forcible rape - rape in the first degree. Rape occurs if a male or female engages in sexual intercourse with a person of the opposite sex by forcible compulsion; or if a male or female, 16 years or older, engages in sexual intercourse with a person less than 12 years old (Code of AL 1977, Section 13A-6-61)

Resources

Child Welfare Information Gateway <http://www.childwelfare.gov/>

Federal code at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/uscode/>

Your state code (Google or FINDLAW)

Natl. Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCANDS)

http://www.ndacan.cornell.edu/ndacan/Datasets/Abstracts/DatasetAbstract_NCANDS_General.html

Child-Maltreatment-Research-L (CMRL)

<http://www.ndacan.cornell.edu/NDACAN/CMRLlistserv.html>

Children's Trust Fund (Colorado) <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/ps/cctf/>

Educator's Resource Manual on Child Abuse. 3rd Edit. - AL Dept. of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention <http://ctf.alabama.gov/Archived%20Info/pdfs/educatorsresource.pdf>

