

Honors Thesis Proposal: A Descriptive Study of Male Victims of Sexual Assault Seen for a
Sexual Assault Forensic Medical Examination

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Brigham Young University College of Nursing

Honors Thesis Proposal: A Descriptive Study of Male Victims of Sexual Assault

Project Purpose

The purpose of this retrospective, descriptive study will be to explore, identify, and analyze variables of male sexual assault victims who received sexual assault forensic medical examinations.

Project Importance

Ten percent of all victims who report sexual assault are male, yet there has been little research of their experiences (Porta, Johnson, & Finn, 2018). Male victims of sexual assault may not be connected to available resources, because healthcare providers may simply be unaware of the prevalence of male sexual assault, and even less aware of supportive services (Porta et al., 2018). Therefore, further research on this topic so that healthcare providers, social services, and the general public can be aware of the unique characteristics of male sexual assault victims is warranted. The proposed project will result in novel research findings on male sexual assault victims to inform multidisciplinary practice in addressing male sexual assault. The scope of the project is also the largest sample size of male sexual assault victims in current literature.

Project Overviews

In the current era of #MeToo and Time's Up, victims of sexual assault are empowered to speak up, report assaults, and receive treatment for physical and emotional trauma. The majority of sexual assault victims represented in the current #MeToo movements are females, yet males also suffer sexual assaults.

While much research has been done about female victims of sexual assault, there is still a lack of evidence explaining male victims' experiences. The missing information cannot because these situations are rare; in fact, some studies report up to 10% of all victims are male, instead

societal stigmas surrounding sexual assault may lead to decreased reporting rates (Porta et al., 2018). The lack of information could also be due to the fact that current published studies on male sexual assault victims often consist of small sample sizes, examine a very limited number of factors, or are set in a foreign country (Peterson, Liu, Merrick, Basile, & Simon, 2019; Casali, Palazzo, Blandino, Battistini, Motta, Kustermann, & Cattaneo, 2017; Budd, Rocque, & Bierie, 2019).

This retrospective, descriptive study focuses on male sexual assault victims receiving a sexual assault forensic medical examination (SAFME) from a database of 5758 sexual assault cases, 4.7% ($n = 266$) of which are males, reported in the state of Utah from the years 2010 – 2018. The article will explore a multitude of variables, including age, race, relationship of victim to suspect, use of alcohol or drugs, suspected drug-facilitated assault, victim injuries, and physical or mental impairment.

Dr. Valentine, my faculty advisor, created a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) database in 2011, in collaboration with the Utah state crime laboratory to code and analyze information on sexual assault cases. The data includes counties from southern to northern Utah and covers 80% of the state's population. Using descriptive statistics, Pearson Chi-square tests of association, and t-test statistical analyses, this study will explore, identify, and analyze variables of male sexual assault victims who received sexual assault forensic medical examinations. Statistics on male victims will be compared to female victims from the same data set.

Thesis Committee and Qualifications

Faculty Advisor Dr. Julie Valentine

Dr. Julie Valentine, PhD, RN, CNE, SANE-A, is a forensic nurse who has researched and published extensively on sexual assault from data gathered in the state of Utah. She works closely with local and national government leaders, lobbying for the rights of sexual assault victims and the organizations that help them. Her current projects include a collaborative, large-scale research study on sexual assault with Utah Bureau of Forensic Services and a collaborative research study with law enforcement on Trauma Informed Response in sexual assault cases.

Dr. Valentine is an Associate Professor of the College of Nursing. I met her while taking her nursing course, Acute and Chronic Illness. I approached her and asked her to be my Faculty Advisor soon after I saw her teach for the first time because I was intrigued with her work with at-risk populations and wanted her guidance in my thesis. She kindly agreed to do be my Faculty Advisor, and we have been meeting regularly as I do a literature review and prepare this thesis proposal. I will be using data points that she has collected to perform this descriptive study.

Faculty Reader Dr. Janelle Macintosh

Dr. Janelle Macintosh, RN, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor of the College of Nursing. She teaches the Scholarly Inquiry in Nursing course, which is where I met her. She is a professional of nursing research and taught me and my classmates proper nursing research techniques. She is currently doing studies on immunizations and the effectiveness of Intermountain Health patient education programs.

Dr. Macintosh is very familiar with healthcare research and has been helpful expanding my knowledge of the evidence-based practice process. Because of this, I consider her more than qualified to act as the Faculty Reader on my committee and she has graciously agreed to do so.

Honors Coordinator Dr. Deborah Himes

Dr. Deborah Himes PhD, APRN-BC, ANP, is an Assistant Professor and the Honor's Coordinator for the College of Nursing and has agreed to be part of my committee. She is very familiar with the Honors Thesis process and has met with me twice to explain this process and provide clarification on any questions I may have as I prepare to begin my thesis.

Project Timeline

Event	Target Date
Select a chair & topic	completed
Select a committee & invite members	completed
Write proposal -research question -methods -lit review	completed
Submit IRB Addendum	completed
Draft of proposal to committee	Fall 2019
Get feedback from committee of proposal	Fall 2019
Committee's approval for Honor's Thesis	Fall 2019
Continued lit review	Summer and Fall 2019
Data Analysis	Fall 2019
Interpret & writing results	Fall 2019
Connecting results to literature -discussion -implications -limitations -future research	Winter 2020
Draft to Committee	March 6, 2020
Committee Pre-defense	March 20, 2020
Make Revisions	March 20- March 25, 2020
Final Read	March 25, 2020
Schedule Thesis – Thesis Defense Information Form	April 1, 2020
Thesis Defense	April 8, 2020
Thesis Submission Form	Week of April 15, 2020
Thesis Paperwork to Honor's Department	Week of April 15, 2020

Thesis Revisions Following Defense (if needed)	Week of April 22, 2020
Meet with Honor's office (Vika) to be sure it is in the proper format.	Week of April 22, 2020
Thesis Final (submit as PDF to scholars archive)	April 24, 2020
Anticipated Graduation	December 2020

IRB Approvals

An IRB Biographical Sketch was completed and submitted to my Faculty Advisor, Dr. Julie Valentine, so that I could be officially approved to be part of her research team and work with the data she has collected.

Funding

No funding is requested for this project.

Culminating Experience

The goal for this project is to have an article in the *Journal of Forensic Nursing*. Since little research has been done on this subject, it is suspected that this project will be received as an important knowledge to the current lack of information available to forensic nurses, sexual assault nurse examiners, and other interdisciplinary partners.

Conclusion

The proposed retrospective, descriptive study will explore, identify, and analyze variables of male sexual assault victims who received sexual assault forensic medical examinations and compare them to female victims' data. The research is needed to provide descriptive information to improve our knowledge on male sexual assault victims and male sexual assault cases in order to inform healthcare providers, social services, and the general public of the unique characteristics of male sexual assault victims. Using Pearson chi-square tests of association and t-test statistical analyses, variables of data stored in Dr. Valentine's SPSS database on male

sexual assault victims will be compared to that of female victims. Dr. Julie Valentine will serve as the faculty advisor, Dr. Janelle Macintosh as the Faculty Reader, and Dr. Deborah Himes as the Honors Coordinator of this research project. I am very grateful to all three of them for volunteering their guidance, insight, and time. IRB approval has been granted from BYU, and there is no necessary funding required to perform this project. It is the goal that upon the proposed thesis defense and approval in April of 2020, this research will be submitted for publication in the *Journal of Forensic Nursing*.

References

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- Porta, C. M., Johnson, E., & Finn, C. (2018). Male help-seeking after sexual assault: A series of case studies informing Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner practice. *International Association of Forensic Nurses, 14*(2), 106-111. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1097/JFN.0000000000000204>
- Peterson, C., Liu, Y., Merrick, M., Basile, K. C., & Simon, T. R. (2019). Lifetime number of perpetrators and victim–offender relationship status per U.S. victim of intimate partner, sexual violence, or stalking. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260518824648>