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Undergraduate Men's Perceptions of Consent in College Campus Acquaintance Rape

M. Colleen McDaniel

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Honors Thesis

M. Colleen McDaniel

Department: Psychology

Advisor: Dario N. Rodriguez, Ph.D.

April, 2017

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University of Dayton, Honors Department

Dario N. Rodriguez

Kristen Altenau Keen

Justin Keen



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Abstract

One in five women on college campuses have experienced sexual assault or attempted sexual assault (National Sexual Violence Resource Center, 2015). About 98% of sexual violence perpetrators are men (Greenfield, 1997). The present study seeks to examine whether a range of individual difference characteristics, including endorsement of masculine gender norms, endorsement of modern myths about sexual assault, and self-reported sexual behavior, predict participants' evaluations of a hypothetical acquaintance rape scenario. One hundred fifty college men completed a survey consisting of the Male Role Norm Inventory (MRNI), followed by the Acceptance of Modern Myths about Sexual Aggression (AMMSA) and the Sexual Experiences Scale (SES). They then read a hypothetical acquaintance rape scenario, and indicated whether the woman provided consent, whether the encounter qualifies as rape, and their attributions of responsibility toward the victim and perpetrator for the encounter. Men who endorsed male role norms and accepted modern myths about rape were more likely to attribute blame to the victim in the acquaintance rape scenario. While men who did not endorse male role norms or accept modern myths about rape were more likely to attribute blame to the perpetrator.

Undergraduate Men's Perceptions of Consent in College Campus Acquaintance
Rape

Sexual violence affects many people on college campuses today. One in five women are affected by sexual violence at some point during their college career (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2015). Female college students ages 18-25 are three times more likely than women of other ages to experience sexual violence (RAINN, 2013). Popular beliefs about rape and sexual assault have typically been characterized by blaming the victim of these visceral crimes (Lonsaway and Fitzgerald, 1994), and, perhaps as a result, research and prevention methods up until the past 30 years have focused on survivors of rape and sexual assault. More recent research has seen a rise in focusing on the perpetrator of such acts, in determining necessary approaches to end this public health issue (e.g. Abbey, McAuslan, & Ross, 1998; Abbey, McAuslan, Zawacki, Clinton, & Buck, 2001; Lisak and Miller, 2002; Loh, Gidycz, Lobo, & Luthra, 2005; ; McWhorter et al., 2010; Murnen, Wright, & Kaluzny, 2002; Tyler, Hoyt, & Whitbeck, 1998). Varying approaches have arisen about how to study perpetration patterns, but no single theory guides this research.

Acts of sexual violence are committed disproportionately by men against women. In a 2007 study by the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics, it was found that 99.6% of imprisoned rape offenders and 98.8% of imprisoned sexual assault offenders were male (Greenfield, 1997). In that same study, 54.6% of rape offenders and 40.6% of sexual assault offenders were between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine—typical college ages. Investigations of college students have shown that 25% to 57% of men have self-reported committing sexual assault and 7% to 15% reported committing

rape, though some of the variability in these estimates may be attributable to differences in the wording of the survey instruments (e.g., provided definitions of sexual assault; McWhorter et al., 2010; Abbey, et al., 2001; Abbey, McAuslan, & Ross, 1998; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987). Thus, continuing research on men's perpetration of sexual violence, more specifically seeking to understand men's sexual aggression and patterns of perpetration, is at the forefront of the fight to end sexual violence.

Theoretical Perspectives of Perpetration

There are currently two perspectives that make rivaling paradigm claims about men's perpetration patterns of sexual violence against women. The most prevalent in popular culture today, and used by many feminist advocates and sexual violence prevention efforts is based on a 2002 study by Lisak and Miller, guided by research done by Koss in the early 1980's. In a survey of 1,882 male students at the University of Massachusetts, Lisak and Miller (2002) found that 6.4% of men self-reported perpetrating sexual violence on college campuses. According to this report, each repeat offender was responsible for an average of 5.8 rapes. Approximately 63.3% of self-reported rapists admitted to committing 91% of the total rapes reported in the study (Lisak & Miller, 2002). The offenders sampled in this study were not incarcerated, but were college men. Lisak (2011) claims that offenders are distinguishable by the characteristic of repeat offending and by having a method of selecting their victim. This small percentage of rapists reported intentionally, even meticulously, selecting their victims (Lisak & Miller 2002; Koss, et al. 1985). In 84% of rape cases, the perpetrator reported being an acquaintance of the victim (Koss, et al. 1985). Lisak later noted that

these perpetrators can be collectively characterized as “extremely adept at identifying ‘likely’ victims, and testing prospective victims’ boundaries”, planning “and premeditat[ing] their attacks” by using grooming and isolation, using “instrumental” violence, using “psychological weapons—power control, manipulation, and threats”, and using “alcohol deliberately to render victims more vulnerable to attack, or completely unconscious” (Lisak, 2011, p. 56).

This model of sexual aggression depicts perpetrators of sexual violence who share similar characteristics, approach rape in a similar manner, and exhibit similar beliefs and behaviors about sexual violence. This model implies that most sexual assaults are committed by a small, homogeneous subset of the general population. Thus, offenders (or, potential offenders) as a group should be identifiable on certain dimensions, and score differently on relevant individual difference measures (e.g., masculinity, rape myth acceptance). Although this idea has informed mass media, advocacy groups, and even federal legislation (Swartout et al., 2015), it is based on a single study conducted 15 years ago using a sample that is notably different from most college campuses (e.g., it was a commuter school, the age range of participants was wider than that of typical college students).

An alternative model posits that sexual violence is not committed by a small percentage of men who share certain constellations of traits, but rather by a larger portion of men, who vary in their experiences, perceptions, and beliefs about sex, consent, sexual intent, and sexual encounters (e.g. Abbey, McAuslan, & Ross, 1998; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987; McWhorter et al., 2010, Swartout et al., 2015) That is, this model implies that offenders will not necessarily deviate markedly

from the general population; instead, offenders are a rather “normal,” heterogeneous group. Whereas Lisak’s (2011) model implies a small, predatory group of serial offenders, McWhorter’s (2015) model implies a larger, diffuse group of offenders who each commits relatively few offenses. In one study, 7%-15% of Navy recruits self-reported committing acts of sexual violence before joining the military (McWhorter et al., 2010). Other studies have found that between 25% and 57% of male respondents have self-reported committing sexual assault (Abbey, McAuslan, & Ross, 1998; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987). According to Swartout et al. (2015), there were three trajectories of sexual offending for men ages 14 through college age: “(1) consistently low or time limited (i.e., only at risk for a short period of time), (2) decreasing, and (3) increasing rape likelihood across the high school and college years” (Swartout et al., 2015, 1152-1153). There was not a “cohesive group of men who consistently committed rape across emerging adulthood” as Lisak had described (Swartout, et al., 2015, p. 1149).

The perpetrators from these studies generally do not share similar characteristics, do not approach rape in the exact same way, and do not repeat rape—at least not as often as reported by Lisak’s study. These more recent data suggest that although perpetrators may have similarities in behaviors and certain beliefs, in many respects they will be virtually indistinguishable from the general population. That is, offenders’ individual difference characteristics will largely match those of non-offenders.

These diverging interpretations have implications for the role of using individual difference assessments in identifying those at risk of offending. If relatively few men commit most rapes, they may share some characteristics that research can empirically

identify; if rape is committed by relatively more men with more diffuse characteristics, then individual differences may be less informative for identifying such potential offenders. An understanding of the relationships between individual difference variables and perceptions of acquaintance rape scenarios may enable further research to identify college men “at risk” of perpetrating acquaintance rape for additional intervention and education programs.

Individual Difference Predictors of Sexual Assault

Endorsement of Masculine Gender Norms

The fact that men are vastly more likely to commit sexual assault than women has led some researchers to focus on individual difference correlates of gender that may predict sexual violence (e.g., Hammond, Berry, & Rodriguez, 2011). One potential predictor may be men’s endorsement of stereotypical male gender norms. In western culture, masculine ideology can be defined by a set of rigid, hegemonic norms that endorse violence, promote exclusively heterosexuality, and standardize male dominance and supremacy over women and other men (Levant, Rankin, Williams, & Hasan, 2010). Some stereotypical male gender norms include the notion that men always want sex to the point of never turning it down, and use “any and all means to ‘convince’ a woman to have sex” (Levant, et al., 2010, p. 32). Across almost all cultures, men tend to develop the same personality characteristics, perhaps because they also perform the same social roles (e.g. procreators, providers, and protectors; Levant et al., 2010). With societal expectations such as these dictating masculinity and the norms by which a man lives his life, interacts with others, and experiences sexual encounters, it is possible that endorsement such norms may predict men’s patterns of sexual aggression. Levant et al.

(2010) claim that male gender role norms are defined by a dominant masculine ideology which serves the purpose of upholding white, heterosexual, able-bodied male dominance. Thus, men who strongly endorse male role norms may be more “at risk” for perpetrating sexual violence, perhaps via its relationship with men’s endorsement of rape myths.

Rape Myth Acceptance

Rape myths were originally defined as “prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists” (Burt, 1980, p. 217). More recent concepts define rape myths as “attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women” (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994, p. 134). The degree to which a man believes in these rape myths likely influences his interpretations of his own and others’ sexual encounters. Men who accept rape myths are consistently more “at risk” to perpetrate sexual violence or rape than those who do not hold such false beliefs (e.g. Abbey et al., 1998; Abbey, McAuslan, Zawacki, Clinton, & Buck, 2001; Loh, Gidycz, Lobo, & Luthra, 2005; Murnen et al., 2002; Tyler et al., 1998). Indeed, some evidence suggests that men who commit sexual violence more strongly endorse these myths than the general population of men (Malamuth, 1981). The generalizability of such studies is uncertain, however, due to the difficulties of identifying and obtaining representative samples of men who perpetrate the most common form of sexual violence, namely acquaintance rape. Nonetheless, given its association with the perpetration of more severe forms of sexual violence, rape myth acceptance may be one individual difference characteristic that distinguishes men “at risk” of perpetrating acquaintance rape (compared to those who have not and will not commit the same offense).

Perceptions of Rape

Given the ethical and logistical difficulties in studying sexual behavior directly, many researchers have investigated men's perceptions of hypothetical rape scenarios under the assumptions that such perceptions are suggestive of related behaviors, and the notion that behaviors tend to be influenced by beliefs when they were stable over time (Glasman & Albarracín, 2006). For example, endorsement of rape myths (which is correlated with sexually violent behavior) predicts men's perceptions of rape, including justification for rape and attributions of responsibility (see Abbey et al., 2001; Wegner et al., 2015). As Wegner, Abbey, Pegram, and Woerner (2015) explain, "when potential perpetrators perceive situational cues [...] as consistent with their rape supportive attitudes, they are likely to feel justified in using force to obtain sex." Further, sexual assault can be predicted by a man's misperceptions of sexual intent (i.e., whether consent was granted; Abbey et al., 1998; Wegner et al., 2015; Zawacki, Abbey, Buck, McAuslan, & Clinton-Sherrod, 2003). A lack of awareness of the nature of consent in sexual encounters may account for certain instances of sexual aggression, perhaps particularly among men who feel entitled to sexual contact. Misperceptions of consent may play a vital role in sexual violence perpetration (Abbey et al., 1998; Abbey & Harnish, 1995; Muelenhard & Linton, 1987; Shotland & Craig, 1988;). Indeed, "a sizable percent of young men believe that forced sex is acceptable if they have been 'led on' or sexually aroused" (Abbey et al., 2001, p. 786). Therefore, it is possible that men who perceive these actions by the woman as "leading on" or arousing, may misperceive consent in the situation, and may attribute blame to the victim over the perpetrator. In addition, misperceptions of sexual intent can lead to sexual assault in severe cases (Abbey, 2002).

One potential way to predict perpetration (within the bounds of ethical limitations) is to assess men's perceptions of a hypothetical scenario or question (Malamuth, 1981).

The Present Study

A sample of college men reported their attitudes and beliefs about rape and masculinity, read an acquaintance rape scenario, and reported their perceptions of consent and attribution of blame in the scenario. I predicted that endorsing masculine norms would positively predict victim blame, and negatively predict perpetrator blame; and that these two relationships would be mediated by rape myth acceptance. I also predicted that participants who strongly endorsed male role norms would be more likely to blame the victim and excuse the perpetrator encounter than those who did not strongly endorse male gender norms. I also used a self-report instrument to identify self-reported offenders; I then compared self-reported offenders to non-offenders on these measures in an exploratory fashion to examine if these variables distinguished the two samples.

Method

Participants

One hundred fifty University of Dayton undergraduates enrolled in introductory psychology classes participated in exchange for course credit. One participant reported the same response to all questions and was removed from the dataset, resulting in a final sample of $n = 149$. To reduce the possibility of identifying individuals given the sensitive nature of items dealing with sexual violence, participants were only asked a few, non-identifying demographics. We did not record participants' ages; 24.8% of the sample were first years, 43% were sophomores, 22.8% were juniors, 5.4% seniors, and 4% were fifth years or beyond. Given the typical composition of students enrolled in these classes,

these men are likely between the ages of 18 and 24. Eighty-two percent self-identified as white and 90.6% identified as heterosexual.

Materials

Male Role Norms Inventory. The Male Role Norms Inventory (MRNI) assesses the degree to which the respondent endorses traditionally male norms (Levant et al., 2010). Participants indicate their agreement with several statements concerning male norms (e.g., “Men should always like to have sex,” “Men should make the final decision involving money”) using a 7-point scale. The scale has 53 items. Responses are averaged to arrive at an overall index of a participant’s endorsement of male gender norms. Higher scores correspond to greater endorsement of stereotypical male gender norms ($\alpha = .973$).

Acceptance of Modern Myths About Sexual Aggression. There are several scales for assessing participants’ endorsement of rape myths (e.g., Burt, 1980; Payne et al., 1999), but these measures often contain items referring to overt attitudes of sexism. Because varying measures and phrasing have had an effect on responses relevant to sexual attitudes and behavior (Abbey et al., 2001), and issues of sexual attitudes have become more common in mass media and popular culture, a more recent measure with contemporary phrasing and wording appeared most appropriate for this study. The Acceptance of Modern Myths about Sexual Aggression (AMMSA) scale assesses men’s rape myth acceptance via more socially acceptable wordings of the items (e.g., “It is a biological necessity for men to release sexual pressure from time to time,” “Alcohol is often the culprit when a man rapes a woman”; Watson, 2016). The scale has 30 items, scored on a 7-point scale. Responses are averaged to arrive at an overall index of a

participant's endorsement of modern rape myths. Higher scores indicate greater endorsement of rape myths ($\alpha = .934$)

Sexual Experiences Survey. The Sexual Experiences Survey (SES) measures self-reported levels of coercion that the participant used in prior sexual encounters (Koss & Oros, 1985). The scale has 12 yes-no questions (e.g., "Have you attempted sexual intercourse (get on top of her, attempt to insert your penis) when the woman didn't want to by threatening or using some degree of force (twisting her arm, holding her down, etc.) but intercourse did not occur?"). "Yes" responses to coercive behaviors are scored as a 1; "no" responses are scored as a zero. Scores are summed to arrive at an overall index of a participant's tendency to engage in coercive sexual behavior. This study only used 7 of the 12 questions, excluding items that asked men to directly self-report certain nonconsensual acts (e.g. penetration with a foreign object, using alcohol or other drugs).

Scenario. Participants read an acquaintance rape scenario based on those used in prior studies (Gray, 2006; Hammond et al., 2011). This scenario describes a female college student who attends a party with a male college student, and then they both spend the night at a friend's house. Actions that could potentially be misperceived as "leading on" were included, such as the victim removing her clothing in front of her perpetrator prior to the rape. Throughout the night prior to the encounter, they also danced together and flirted with each other. At the house the male student forces the female student to have sexual intercourse while she says "no" and tries to push him off. The female student eventually stops resisting.

Dependent variables. The participants reported a series of judgments about the scenario. Items were based on those used in similar studies (e.g. Hammond et al., 2011)

in which participants judged a rape scenario. The scale consisted of 8 items, scored on a seven-point scale; 4 tended to blame the victim, and 4 tended to blame the perpetrator (see Appendix for the full scale). Self-reported offenders and non-offenders were compared on three of these items.

Procedure

Participants completed the questionnaire individually online. The questionnaire took approximately 30 minutes. After granting consent and completing the demographic items, participants completed the MRNI, AMMSA, and SES. Participants then read the hypothetical scenario and indicated their perceptions of the encounter. Participants were then debriefed.

Results

Self-Reported Offenders

We categorized participants who answered “yes” to any of the SES items as a self-reported offender. Four percent ($n = 6$) of participants self-reported having committed an act of sexual violence. Five participants (3.4% of total sample) responded “yes” to having “engaged in sex play (fondling, kissing, or petting, but not intercourse) when the woman didn’t want to because she was overwhelmed by your continual arguments and pressure.” One participant (.7% of total sample) responded “yes” to having a woman give “into sexual intercourse with you when she didn’t want to because you used your position of authority (residential assistant, camp counselor) to make her?” No one answered yes to more than one item.

Self-reported offenders were then compared to the total sample of college men on (1) endorsement of Male Role Norms, (2) Acceptance of Modern Myths about Sexual

Assault, and (3) their overall victim-blame in response to an acquaintance rape scenario. To find overall victim-blame, I used what percent of the sample responded with a score of five or above on the seven-point scale. Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics for all measures for self-reported offenders and for the entire sample. The small number of self-reported offenders prevents any inferential statistical analysis. Self-reported offenders did not score higher on measures of masculinity or rape myth acceptance than the total sample.

Factor Analysis

I conducted a principal components factor analysis with Varimax rotation on the eight dependent variable questions in response to the acquaintance rape scenario to reduce the items to a smaller number of more reliable indices. Results of these analyses are in Table 2. Five items loaded on a Perpetrator Blame factor, and three loaded on a Victim Blame factor. I averaged the two sets of items to form overall indices of Perpetrator and Victim blame, with higher scores indicating greater attributions of responsibility toward the associated person. These two measures were significantly negatively correlated ($r = -.379, p < .001$).

Model for Blame Attribution

I conducted a series of regression analyses to examine the relationships among endorsement of male norms, rape myth acceptance, and attributions of responsibility. I then used Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro to directly test for mediating relationships. Table 3 displays the correlations among all variables entered in the analysis.

Results showed a significant relationship between MRNI and AMMSA, $b = .6501$, $t(146) = 13.0620, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [.5518, .7485]$. As endorsement of male gender

norms increased, endorsement of rape myths also increased. MRNI also significantly predicted perpetrator blame, $b = -.3069$, $t(146) = -3.8644$, $p = .0002$, 95% CI [-.4639, -.1500], and victim blame, $b = .5342$, $t(145) = 5.2491$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.3330, .7353]. Specifically, as endorsement of stereotypical gender norms increased, participants tended to attribute more blame to the victim and less blame to the perpetrator.

When added to the models, AMMSA did not significantly predict perpetrator blame, $b = -.0343$, $t(145) = -.2589$, $p = .7961$, 95% CI [-.2962, .2276], but did significantly predict victim blame, $b = .7368$, $t(145) = 4.6520$, $p < .011$, 95% CI [.4238, 1.0498]. As participants' endorsement of rape myths increased, they attributed more blame to the victim. Lastly, I examined whether AMMSA mediated the effects of MRNI on attributions of blame. The indirect effect of MRNI on victim blame via AMMSA was statistically significant, $b = .4790$, 95% CI [.2645, .6967], but the indirect effect on perpetrator blame was not, $b = -.0223$, 95% CI [-.1918, .1855].

Discussion

College men were asked to report their endorsement of male role norms, their rape myth acceptance, and their past sexual aggression. They then evaluated an acquaintance rape scenario and attributed blame to either the victim or the perpetrator. Self-reported offenders were compared to non-offenders. The present results replicate several key findings from the literature, and extend our knowledge of male-perpetrated sexual assault in several important ways.

Attributions of Responsibility

I predicted that participants who strongly endorsed male gender norms would be more likely to believe that consent was given, that the acquaintance rape encounter did

not constitute rape, and that the victim was more responsible for the encounter than those who did not strongly endorse male gender norms. Further I predicted that acceptance of rape myths would mediate these relationships. The data supported both of these hypotheses, and add to the growing literature documenting the importance of understanding attitudinal predictors of perceptions of rape.

Male role norm endorsement predicted perpetrator blame, but not by way of rape myth acceptance. The reason for this is unclear. Perhaps modern rape prevention and education programs (which all students at the University of Dayton experience upon enrolling as a first-year student) have been somewhat successful in discrediting rape myths and associated perpetrator excusal. Such programs often do not address male norms, perhaps leaving the association between endorsement of these norms and perpetrator excusal intact. Future research will be needed to identify the mechanism by which this effect operates. Nonetheless, these results are consistent with others in the literature indicating the perpetrator blame and victim blame are related, though non-redundant outcomes, with potentially different mediating pathways (Hammond et al., 2011; Rodriguez et al., 2015).

Rate of Self-Reported Offenders

The 4% of men who self-reported committing acts of sexual violence, did not score atypically compared to the total population. This means that self-reported offenders did not tend to endorse masculine role norms, accept rape myths, or blame the victim at rates higher than the total sample. The implication from these findings are that offenders may not be distinguishable by individual difference characteristics.

While the data is revealing, there are difficulties in interpreting this data. First, a sample of 6 is low, increasing the chances of a Type II error among comparisons to the total sample. A small sample size and null results may also make it difficult to generalize to the larger population. There is also the possibility that self-reported offenders differ from offenders who do not self-report. It is also possible that there are more offenders who do not believe they have committed these acts (due to a lack of understanding of consent), and so they do not self-report.

Comparisons of Offenders to Non-Offenders

There was not a significant difference between offenders and non-offenders in the individual difference measures I used. This is consistent with research showing that male perpetrators of sexual violence are not different than the normal population (e.g. Abbey, McAuslan, & Ross, 1998; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; McWhorter et al., 2010; Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987; Swartout et al., 2015). Endorsement of male role norms, rape myth acceptance, and Victim Blame did not serve as differentiating characteristics of perpetrators of sexual violence. This study, however, adds to the growing body of research that suggests individual characteristics may not play a significant role in predicting if a man is “at risk” for perpetrating (e.g. Abbey et al., 2001; Abbey, McAuslan, & Ross, 1998; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; McWhorter et al., 2010; Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987), implying that a model involving clear differences between offenders and non-offenders may not necessarily be appropriate for informing prevention efforts and sexual violence legislation. However, given the small sample size and limited number of measures used, it is possible that there is an effect that is present and has not been revealed, or that other individual difference characteristics do play a role in

differentiating offenders from on-offenders. Should individual difference characteristics not predict “at risk” perpetrators, and instead beliefs and attitudes of men be the predictors, then prevention techniques must focus on other approaches (e.g. more focus on consent, education about healthy sexual relationships, etc.).

When individual characteristics are seen as the predictors of perpetration, bystander intervention is the main focus of prevention efforts. While these bystander intervention education techniques could prevent potential instances of sexual violence, these techniques may not be getting at the root of the problem. Should the model be continued to be supported by future research that perceptions of consent and readings of particular situations be the cause of why many men perpetrate, focus on other prevention techniques will become necessary. Rape often happens in private moments, where these “misperceptions” and “misreadings” are most likely to occur, and where there is least likely to be a bystander present. Should intervention only focus on a small portion of the problem, such as clearly distinguishable perpetrators who can be stopped only through bystander intervention or targeted screening and education, sexual violence cannot be ended as efficiently as possible when approaching the problem in ways that research has suggested may help. If average college men do not understand willing consent and how to properly read sexual situations with their partners, then sexual violence will persist. The suggestion of this study for prevention efforts, based at least on present knowledge, is to focus on education about consent and healthy sexual encounters instead of on screening

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

It is possible that because of popular culture, men chose certain answers that were socially desirable. With increasing acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community, for example, men may be less likely to report intolerance for gay relations or gay males (which are aspects queried by the MRNI). Over the past few years as the LGBTQ+ community has made major gains towards equal rights and visibility in popular culture, it is possible that men know that non-homophobic answers are desirable. Self-reporting of sexual violence is also low, which may relate to concern of being identified and reported. Self-reporting perpetrators may also not be fully representative of the entire population of perpetrators. A perpetrator with certain beliefs about rape, masculinity, etc. who self-reports may take a different trajectory than one who does not self-report. These offenders who do not report may not see themselves as rapists, making studies that use self-report difficult.

Conclusion

The present data indicate that self-reported offenders were not distinguishable from non-offenders based on individual differences. They also indicate that rape myth acceptance mediates the effect of male role norm endorsement on victim blame, but not on perpetration blame. This finding indicates that the two are separate, but related constructs. Follow-up research may look more closely at perceptions of consent in various sexual situations, asking more in-depth questions about what consent is, and when consent is given in varying situations. Future research may also look for interactions among situational factors and personality differences, such as what kind of circumstances can lead those “at risk” of offending to actually perpetrate.

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Table 1: *Descriptive Statistics for Self-Reported Offenders and Entire Sample*

Measure	Offenders	Full Sample
MRNI	2.34 (0.94)	2.97 (1.00)
AMMSA	3.11 (0.78)	3.49 (0.89)
[Victim] should not have changed in front of [perpetrator]	33%	52%
If [victim] didn't really want to engage in sexual intercourse, [perpetrator] just misread the situation.	33%	44%
[Victim's] overall responsibility for the events in question.	33%	17%

Note: Percentages correspond to the portion of the sample scoring at the top end of the scales for these items (i.e., 5 and above), indicating agreement and victim blame.

Table 2: *Factor Analysis on Dependent Measures*

Item	Perpetrator Blame	Victim Blame
It was clear that [victim] did not want to engage in sexual intercourse	.731	.059
[Victim] stopped struggling because she changed her mind (R)	.747	.223
[Victim] should not have changed in front of [perpetrator]	.003	.791
If [victim] didn't really want to engage in sexual intercourse, [perpetrator] just misread the situation	-.078	.701
[Victim] granted consent for the sexual encounter (R)	.760	.264
[Perpetrator] raped [victim] (R)	-.841	.038
[Victim's] overall responsibility for the events in question	-.485	.646
[Perpetrator's] overall responsibility for the events in question.	.573	-.225

Bolded cells indicate the overall index each item was used to create. (R) indicates the item was reverse-scored.

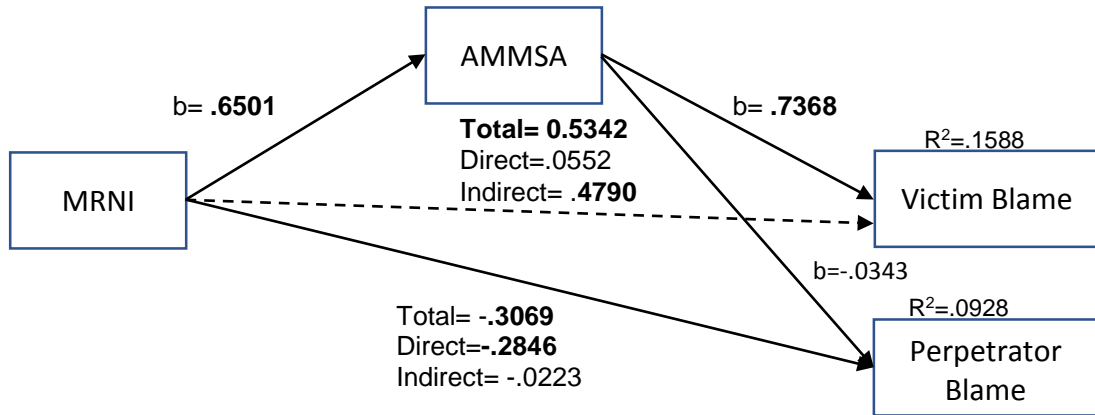
Table 3

Intercorrelations Among Measures Included in Mediation Analyses

Measures	1	2	3	4
1. MRNI-R	–			
2. AMMSA	.734	–		
3. Perpetrator Blame	-.305	-.238	–	
4. Victim Blame	.398	.527	-.379	–

All correlations statistically significant at $p < .005$

Figure 1



Mediation model. Bolded paths are statistically significant, $p < .05$.

Appendix

Dependent Variable Questions

Items were scored on a seven-point scale.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

1. It was clear that Sarah did not want to engage in sexual intercourse.
2. Sarah stopped struggling because she changed her mind.
3. Sarah should not have changed in front of Thomas.
4. If Sarah didn't really want to engage in sexual intercourse, Thomas just misread the situation.
5. Sarah granted consent for the sexual encounter
6. Thomas raped Sarah.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not At All Responsible						Completely Responsible

7. Sarah's overall responsibility for the events in question.
8. Thomas' overall responsibility for the events in question.