The UK's European university

REDUCING SEXUAL AGGRESSION IN MALE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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OVERVIEW

- Background
- Rationale
- Ph.D. Studies
- Implications
BACKGROUND
Where are we & how did we get here?
Context Setting

• Campus sexual assault is a widespread issue
Context Setting

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70% of female students & recent graduates report having experienced sexual violence at university.

The Student Room (2018)
(Sample. 4,491 students across 153 UK HEIs)
Context Setting

- Campus sexual assault is a widespread issue

8% of female students & recent graduates report having been raped.

The Student Room (2018) (Sample. 4,491 students across 153 UK HEIs)
Context Setting

• Campus sexual assault is a widespread issue
  – Largely student-on-student

72% of respondents report the perpetrator being a student at their institution.

NUS (2010): "Hidden Marks"
(Sample: 2,058 women students from UK HEIs)
Context Setting

- Campus sexual assault is a widespread issue
  - Largely student-on-student
  - Mostly male perpetrated

97% of university-based sexual offences are committed by males

U.S. Department of Justice (2014): “Special Report” (Sample. 19,951 women graduate students from the U.S.)
Context Setting

- Campus sexual assault is a widespread issue
  - Largely student-on-student
  - Mostly male perpetrated
- Large body of academic literature
  - Heavily US-based (see Fisher, Daigle, & Cullen, 2009)
  - Victim over perpetrator focused
- No standardization in prevention approaches (EROC UK, 2016; Towl & Walker, 2019)
RATIONALE

Why study what you’re studying?
Rationale

- UK universities not exempt from sexual violence
- Lots of climate surveys; few (practical) studies
  - Why do individuals offend?
  - What responses are effective?
- Current public interest

“Psychologists are particularly well placed to contribute to policies and practices in the area, given our knowledge and understanding of [...] sexual offending, and with a number of us working with victims/survivors of sexual violence.”

Towl (2018)
Ph.D. STUDIES
What are you studying?
General Overview

Phase One

- What are the treatment needs of sexually aggressive male students in the UK?
- Are there sub-types of sexually aggressive male student?

Phase Two

- How effective is a tailored, easy-to-access clinical intervention in reducing sexual aggression amongst male students?
Phase One (a)

- Male students at UKC (N=250)
- Battery of psychometrics administered online
- Offence history compared to national statistics
- SA vs. Non-SA males
- Logistic regression model
  - ROC analysis – Predictive accuracy
  - AUC – Discriminative ability

IV Sexual aggression
DV Aggression
  Alcohol consumption
  Assertiveness
  Athletic involvement
  Emotion regulation
  Hostility toward women
  Loneliness
  Rape myth acceptance
  Self-efficacy
  Self-esteem
  Sexual fantasies
CV Impression management
Demographic variables
Phase One (b)

- Direct replication of previous study
- Male students at UK HEIs (N=300)
- Do significant effects replicate?
  - Potential treatment needs, if so

- Secondary analysis of all data
  - Hierarchical cluster analysis with significant predictors
  - Average linking method
  - Euclidean distance for standardized data (z-scores)

Are there “clusters” (sub-types) of sexual aggressive male student?
Phase Two

- Evidence-based self-help intervention
  - Tailored to identified treatment needs
- Male students (N = TBC)
- Treatment vs. Waitlist
- Intention-to-treat ANOVA
  - 3 (time) x 2 (group) design
  - Pre-post shifts in psychometrics
  - Confidence intervals – Clinical significance

INTERVENTION

- Informed by pertinent clinical literature
- Easy-to-access (online-based)
- Self-led course
  - Tasks no longer than 15-30 mins in duration
- Grounded in principles of CBT
IMPLICATIONS

What are you contributing?
Contribution

- Better understanding of male student perpetrators
  - Tailored and more standardized prevention interventions
- Introduction of clinical ideas to the field
  - Broader evidence-base for interventions
- Provide impetus for continued empirical investigation
  - e.g., the generation of theory

"Academics are well-placed to leverage sexual assault data and empirically evaluate the success (or failure) of [...] university policies. By doing [more research], we may see a rise in reporting figures and a drastic decline in sexual violence incidents happening on our campuses."

Klein et al. (2018)
ANY QUESTIONS?

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References

End Rape on Campus UK. (2016). *Strengthening the University of Cambridge’s policy for cases of sexual harassment and assault*. Retrieved from: [https://www.thewilberforcesociety.co.uk/](https://www.thewilberforcesociety.co.uk/).


References


References


NB: References for the materials used in my studies are available upon request.