



# Predictors of Women's Unwanted Sexual Experiences

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## INTRODUCTION

•Sexual victimization is a serious public health concern. Studies have revealed that between 20-25% of college students nationwide report an experience of attempted or completed rape (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000).

•Previous research has implicated alcohol as a primary factor in approximately half of sexual assaults among college age women (Abbey, 2002). Similar research has also found that woman who report low assertiveness with men may be at risk for sexual victimization (Greene & Navarro, 1998).

•The current study focused on how a woman's pattern of alcohol consumption (frequency and amount per drinking occasion) interacted with three situation-specific personality variables in helping to predict her likelihood of experiencing unwanted sexual acts.

•We hypothesized that higher scores on all three situation-specific personality measures would predict higher reported rates of both ambivalent and unwanted sexual experiences. We also predicted that the number of drinking days and the amount of alcohol a woman consumes on her average drinking occasion would be associated with a higher reported rate of ambivalent and unwanted sexual experiences.

## METHODS

•201 female students 89% Caucasian, mean age = 19.31, sd = 1.56, 96.5% heterosexual

•Questionnaires were administered to participants in groups of no more than 5 women at a time in private rooms on campus. Participants completed an informed consent prior to survey administration.

•The questionnaire included instruments to assess drinking habits, past sexual experiences, and interpersonal problems in relation to personality.

•The Quantity-Frequency-Variety Index (Cahalan, et al. 1969) measures the quantity and frequency of an individual's drinking (if any) during the last 90 days, in order to identify both infrequent (less than once per month).

•Women's Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (Noel & Ogle, 2006 unpublished), similar to the Sexual Experiences Survey (Koss & Oros, 1982), measures consensual, ambivalent, and unwanted sexual interaction and sexual intercourse over an individual's lifetime, and especially in the last 12 months.

•Inventory of Interpersonal Problems (Horowitz et al., 1988). This scale was modified to measure interactions with men by adding "with men" to each item. For the purposes of this study, only items pertaining to the traits of Nonassertive (self-doubt and lack of self-esteem), Overly accommodating (an excess of submissiveness and a reluctance to say "no"), and Self-sacrificing (too eager to please, serve, or give into men) were analyzed.

## Results

•86.6% consumed alcohol

Series of Analyses of Covariance revealed:

The frequency of drinking interacted with the Nonassertive score [F (1,190) = 5.6, p < .02], as well as the Overly accommodating score [F (1,189) = 5.5, p < .02], to predict self-reported ambivalent sexual interaction.

The frequency of drinking interacted with the Nonassertive score [F (1, 190) = 4.6, p < .033], as well as the Overly accommodating score [F (1, 189) = 5.9, p < .016], to predict self-reported unwanted (versus ambivalent) sexual interaction.

The frequency of drinking interacted with the Nonassertive score [F (1,190) = 3.9, p < .049], the Overly accommodating score [F (1,189) = 5.1, p < .025], as well as the Self-sacrificing score [F (1,189) = 8.9, p < .003] to predict self-reported ambivalent sexual intercourse.

The amount of drinking interacted with the Self-sacrificing score [F (1,189) = 5.2, p < .026] to predict self-reported ambivalent sexual intercourse.

The frequency of drinking interacted with the Nonassertive score [F (1, 190) = 4.6, p < .033], and the Overly accommodating score [F (1, 189) = 5.9, p < .016] to predict self-reported unwanted sexual interaction.

## Discussion

•It appears that women who drink alcohol and lack assertiveness with men may be at an increased risk for ambivalent and unwanted sexual experiences.

•Though this study did not find that this 'type' of woman is experiencing unwanted sexual intercourse, a pattern of ambivalent or unwanted sexual interactions may increase a woman's risk of experiencing subsequent assault.



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