

Confronting the Reality
of
Sexual Violence
on the
College Campus

David Lisak, Ph.D.

Sexual Violence is a Planetary Problem



It Affects Every Institution



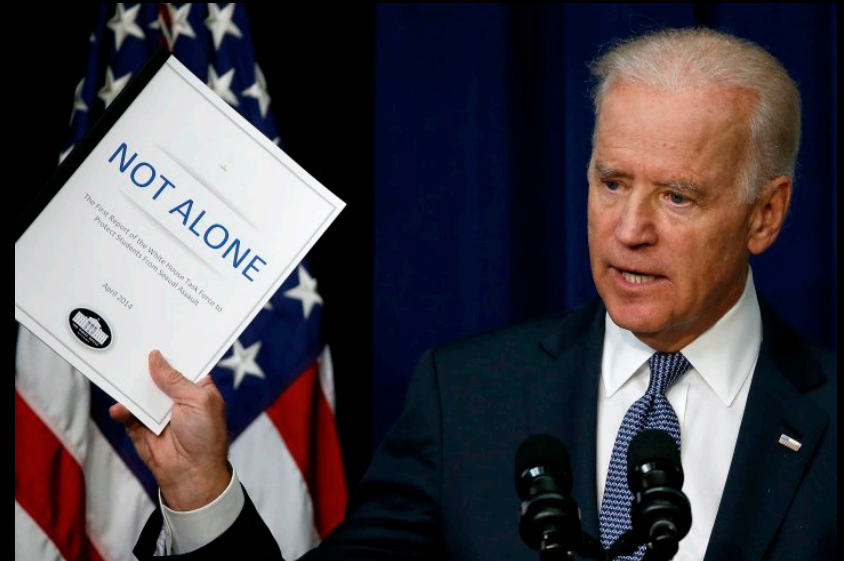
And Every Community



The only question:

Is it confronted with honesty and
commitment?

Sexual Violence is Political



And it is Personal



The Dilemma:

How does an academic institution respond effectively to an extremely serious violent crime?



The Dilemma (continued):

In the context of a criminal justice system that has historically mishandled sexual violence cases?



The Dilemma (continued):

In the context of enduring myths
about the behavior of campus sex
offenders?



Myths about Campus Rapists



- He was drunk (and so was she)
- There was miscommunication
- It was an accident of circumstance
- He would never do it again
- He's basically "a nice guy"

Miscommunication vs. Intention

Research on Sexual Cues

- Men and women use similar cues and understand acceptance and rejection cues¹
- Women say “no” to sexual activity using the same methods that people use to say “no” in other contexts²
- Young men understand sexual refusal cues³

1

Knowledge', J. Community & Applied Soc. Psychol., 18,168.

² Ketzinger & Frith, (1999). Just Say No? The Use of Conversation Analysis in Developing a Feminist Perspective on Sexual Refusal, 10 Discourse & Society, 10, 293

³ McCaw & Senn, (1998). Perception of Cues in Conflictual Dating Situations, Violence Against Women, 4, 609.

The Reality about Offenders

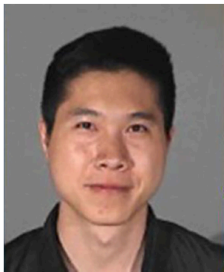
1. There is no “profile” of a sex offender
2. Most offenders are serial offenders
3. The vast majority of sexual assaults are perpetrated by serial offenders
4. Serial offenders are typically predatory: they identify, manipulate and exploit vulnerabilities

No Profile of a Sex Offender

Lessons from a Foiled Rape

'He Took Out a Little Black Vial.' Then 3 Women Foiled Man's Attempt to Drug Date, Police Say

By CHRISTINE HAUSER JUNE 1, 2016



Michael Hsu Santa Monica Police Department

It was happy hour at Fig, an upscale restaurant in Santa Monica, Calif., and three friends were enjoying lively conversation and a platter of charcuterie when an odd expression fell across the face of one of the women.

"That guy just put something in her drink," Monica Kenyon told her friends, staring at another diner.

And so it began, a narrative of crime-stopping that lit up social media after it was [described in detail on Facebook](#): How Ms. Kenyon and the other women on May 26 foiled what they thought was a stranger's plan to drug and possibly rape his date.

On Tuesday, the man, Michael Hsu, 24, was charged with two felonies: administering a drug and assault with intent to commit a sex crime, the [district attorney's office said](#) in a statement.



1. You can foil a rape
2. If you see something, do something
3. The intended victim thought the intended rapist was one of her "best friends"

No Profile of a Sex Offender



The Reality about Offenders

1. There is no “profile” of a sex offender
2. Most offenders are serial offenders
3. The vast majority of sexual assaults are perpetrated by serial offenders
4. Serial offenders are typically predatory: they identify, manipulate and exploit vulnerabilities



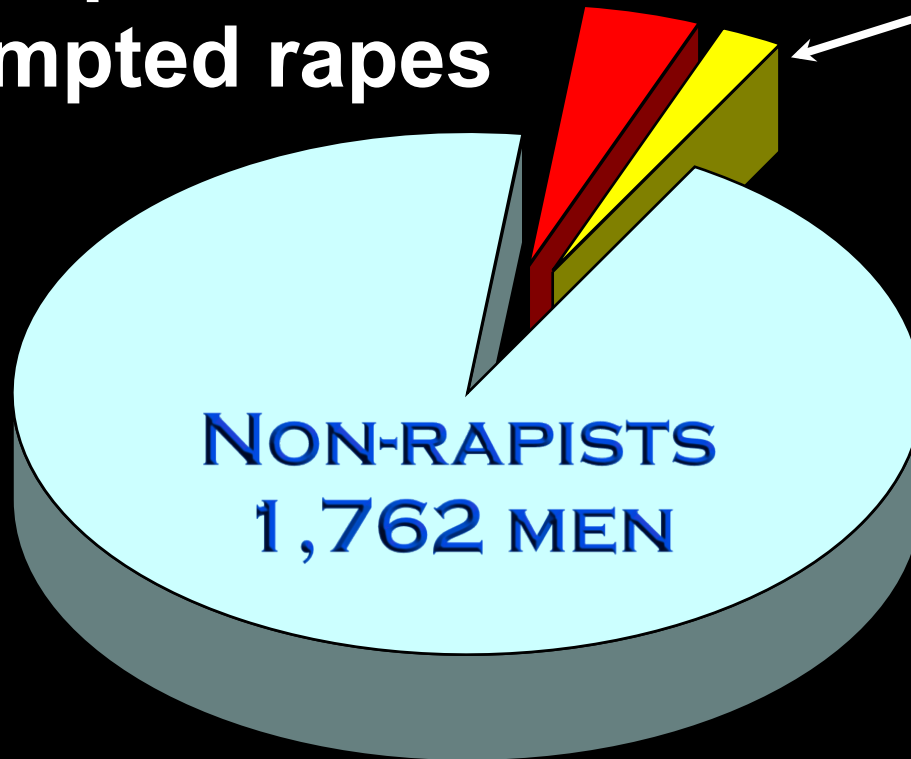
Serial Rape by Undetected Rapists: A Boston-Area Study

1,882 Men Assessed: 120 Rapists

63% were serial offenders

Serial Rapists
76 men
439 rapes &
attempted rapes

Single Act Rapists
44 men
44 rapes &
attempted rapes



NON-RAPISTS
1,762 MEN

Violence Committed by Serial Rapists

The 76 Serial Rapists Committed:

49 sexual assaults

439 rapes & attempted rapes

66 acts physical abuse of children

277 acts sexual abuse of children

214 acts of battery

Total: 1,045 offenses

Serial Rape by Undetected Rapists: 2009 U.S. Navy Study

- 1,146 men assessed: 13% rapists
- 71% of rapists were serial offenders
- Serial offenders averaged 6 rapes

McWhorter, S.K., Stander, V.A., Merrill, L.L., Thomsen, C.J., & Milner, J.S. (2009). Reports of rape perpetration by newly enlisted male navy personnel. *Violence and Victims, 24*, 204-218.

Predicting Sexual Violence 2009 U.S. Navy Study

Men who had committed a rape prior to entering the Navy were **10 times** more likely to commit a rape during their 1st year in the service than men who had never before raped.

McWhorter, S.K., Stander, V.A., Merrill, L.L., Thomsen, C.J., & Milner, J.S. (2009). Reports of rape perpetration by newly enlisted male navy personnel. *Violence and Victims*, 24, 204-218.

The Controversy over Repeat Offending on College Campuses

Why has this
article been so
controversial?

Violence and Victims, Vol. 17, No. 1, 2002

Repeat Rape and Multiple Offending Among Undetected Rapists

David Lisak

*University of Massachusetts, Boston
Boston, MA*

Paul M. Miller

*Brown University School of Medicine
Providence, RI*

Pooling data from four samples in which 1,882 men were assessed for acts of interpersonal violence, we report on 120 men whose self-reported acts met legal definitions of rape or attempted rape, but who were never prosecuted by criminal justice authorities. A majority of these undetected rapists were repeat rapists, and a majority also committed other acts of interpersonal violence. The repeat rapists averaged 5.8 rapes each. The 120 rapists were responsible for 1,225 separate acts of interpersonal violence, including rape, battery, and child physical and sexual abuse. These findings mirror those from studies of incarcerated sex offenders (Abel, Becker, Mittelman, Cunningham-Rathner, Rouleau, & Murphy, 1987; Weinrott and Saylor, 1991), indicating high rates of both repeat rape and multiple types of offending. Implications for the investigation and prosecution of this so-called "hidden" rape are discussed.

The Phenomenon of Serial Offending

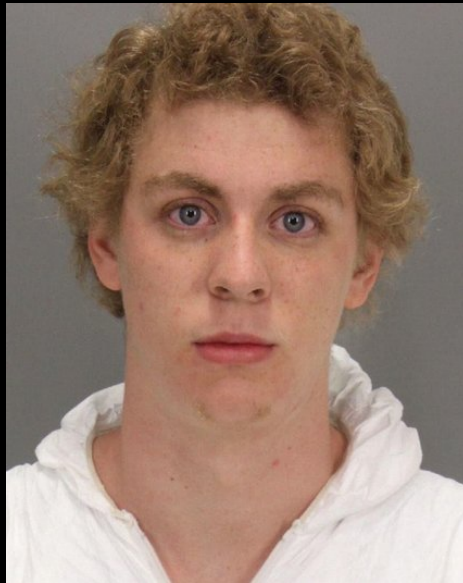
- Decades of research documents serial offending among sex offenders
- Serial offending a well-recognized phenomenon in other crimes
- “If 1,000 burglaries last year, how many burglars?”

The Unspoken Belief: Higher Ed Exceptionalism



The Unspoken Belief: Higher Ed Exceptionalism

The Stanford Rape Case



The Judge:

“A prison sentence would have a severe impact on him. I think he will not be a danger to others.”

The Misplaced Belief: Serial Offending Undermines Prevention

If serial offenders are responsible for the vast majority of rapes, then why bother with prevention?

Just go after the serial rapists!

The Misplaced Belief: Serial Offending Undermines Prevention

**RAPE,
ABUSE &
INCEST
RAINN
NATIONAL
NETWORK**

One of "America's 100 Best Charities"
— *Worth* magazine

February 28, 2014

White House Task Force to
Protect Students from Sexual Assault
United States Department of Justice
Office on Violence Against Women
145 N Street NE
Suite 10W.121
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Members of the Task Force:

On behalf of RAINN, I write to offer comments and recommendations to the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault.

RAINN is the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization. RAINN operates the National Sexual Assault Hotline (800.656.HOPE and online.rainn.org), which has helped more than 1.9 million people since its creation in 1994 (the telephone hotline is run in partnership with more than 1,000 local sexual assault service providers). RAINN also operates the DoD Safe Helpline on behalf of the Department of Defense. Additionally, RAINN carries out programs to prevent sexual assault, help victims, and ensure that rapists are brought to justice. We are encouraged by the renewed national focus on issues of campus sexual assault and are pleased to offer our perspective, which is based on our



David Lisak, Ph.D.

Forensic Consultation and Training
www.davidlisak.com

42 Agua Sarca Road, Placitas, New Mexico, 87043
617-947-4119

david@davidlisak.com

March 8, 2014

White House Task Force to
Protect Students from Sexual Assault
United States Department of Justice
Office on Violence Against Women
145 N Street NE
Suite 10W.121
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Task Force Members:

I am writing to clarify a potential misunderstanding that might arise from the letter submitted to you by RAINN on February 28, 2014, and signed by Scott Berkowitz and Rebecca O'Connor. In that letter, my research on serial offending on college campuses is cited (p. 2 & 3 of the letter), and a written statement of mine is paraphrased (p. 3 of the letter).

I want to clarify that I did not participate in the writing of this letter, nor was I consulted about it.

2015: “New” Research on Serial Offending

Original Investigation

Trajectory Analysis of the Campus Serial Rapist Assumption

Kevin M. Swartout, PhD; Mary P. Koss, PhD; Jacquelyn W. White, PhD; Martie P. Thompson, PhD; Antonia Abbey, PhD; Alexandra L. Bellis, BS

IMPORTANCE Rape on college campuses has been addressed recently by a presidential proclamation, federal legislation, advocacy groups, and popular media. Many initiatives assume that most college men who perpetrate rape are serial rapists. The scientific foundation for this perspective is surprisingly limited.

OBJECTIVE To determine whether a group of serial rapists exists by identifying cohesive groups of young men, indicated by their trajectories of rape likelihood across high school and college.

DESIGN, SETTING, AND PARTICIPANTS Latent class growth analysis of the 2 largest longitudinal data sets of adolescent sexual violence on college campuses using 2 distinct groups of male college students. The first group was used for derivation modeling (n = 850; data collected from August 1990 through April 1995) and the second for validation modeling (n = 795; data collected from March 2008 through May 2011). Final data analyses were conducted from February 16, 2015, through February 20, 2015.

MAIN OUTCOMES AND MEASURES Rape perpetration assessed using the Sexual Experiences Survey.

RESULTS Across samples, 177 of 1645 participants (10.8%) reported having perpetrated at least 1 rape from 14 years of age through the end of college. A 3-trajectory model best fit both the derivation and validation data sets. Trajectories reflected low or time-limited (91.7% of participants), decreasing (5.6%), and increasing (2.7%) rape patterns. No consistently high trajectory was found. Most men who perpetrated a rape before college were classified in the decreasing trajectory. During college, the increasing trajectory included 19 men (20.9%) who reported having perpetrated a rape, the decreasing trajectory included 25 men (27.5%), and the low or time-limited included 47 men (51.6%). No participant in the low or time-limited trajectory reported perpetrating a rape during more than 1 period. Most men (68 [74.7%]) who committed college rape only perpetrated rape during 1 academic year.

CONCLUSIONS AND RELEVANCE Although a small group of men perpetrated rape across multiple college years, they constituted a significant minority of those who committed college rape and did not compose the group at highest risk of perpetrating rape when entering college. Exclusive emphasis on serial predation to guide risk identification, judicial response, and rape-prevention programs is misguided. To deter college rape, prevention should be initiated before, and continue during, college. Child and adolescent health care professionals are well positioned to intervene during the early teenage years by informing parents about the early onset of nonconsensual sexual behavior.

← Editorial

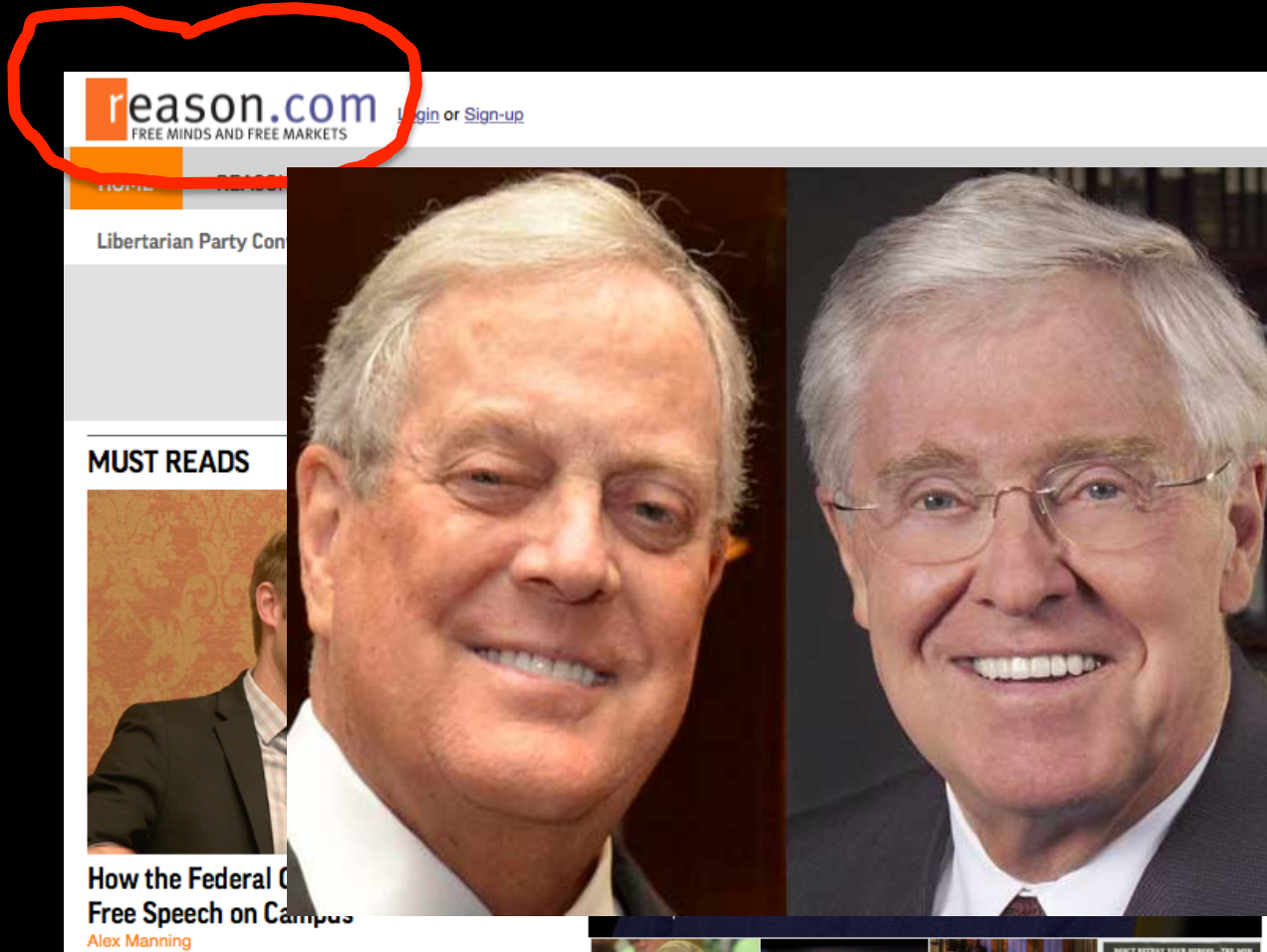
Journal Club Slides at
jamapediatrics.com

Author Affiliations: Department of Psychology, Georgia State University, Atlanta (Swartout, Bellis); Department of Health Promotion Sciences, Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health, University of

2015: “New” Research on Serial Offending



The Right Wing Media Jumps In



“Serial offending debunked!!”

Enough with politics.

What do the data say?

2015: “New” Research on Serial Offending

Original Investigation

Trajectory Analysis of the Campus Serial Rapist Assumption

Kevin M. Swartout, PhD; Mary P. Koss, PhD; Jacquelyn W. White, PhD; Martie P. Thompson, PhD; Antonia Abbey, PhD; Alexandra L. Bellis, BS

IMPORTANCE Rape on college campuses has been addressed recently by a presidential proclamation, federal legislation, advocacy groups, and popular media. Many initiatives assume that most college men who perpetrate rape are serial rapists. The scientific foundation for this perspective is surprisingly limited.

OBJECTIVE To determine whether a group of serial rapists exists by identifying cohesive groups of young men, indicated by their trajectories of rape likelihood across high school and college.

DESIGN, SETTING, AND PARTICIPANTS Latent class growth analysis of the 2 largest longitudinal data sets of adolescent sexual violence on college campuses using 2 distinct groups of male college students. The first group was used for derivation modeling (n = 850; data collected from August 1990 through April 1995) and the second for validation modeling (n = 795; data collected from March 2008 through May 2011). Final data analyses were conducted from February 16, 2015, through February 20, 2015.

MAIN OUTCOMES AND MEASURES Rape perpetration assessed using the Sexual Experiences Survey.

RESULTS Across samples, 177 of 1645 participants (10.8%) reported having perpetrated at least 1 rape from 14 years of age through the end of college. A 3-trajectory model best fit both the derivation and validation data sets. Trajectories reflected low or time-limited (91.7% of participants), decreasing (5.6%), and increasing (2.7%) rape patterns. No consistently high trajectory was found. Most men who perpetrated a rape before college were classified in the decreasing trajectory. During college, the increasing trajectory included 19 men (20.9%) who reported having perpetrated a rape, the decreasing trajectory included 25 men (27.5%), and the low or time-limited included 47 men (51.6%). No participant in the low or time-limited trajectory reported perpetrating a rape during more than 1 period. Most men (68 [74.7%]) who committed college rape only perpetrated rape during 1 academic year.

CONCLUSIONS AND RELEVANCE Although a small group of men perpetrated rape across multiple college years, they constituted a significant minority of those who committed college rape and did not compose the group at highest risk of perpetrating rape when entering college. Exclusive emphasis on serial predation to guide risk identification, judicial response, and rape-prevention programs is misguided. To deter college rape, prevention should be initiated before, and continue during, college. Child and adolescent health care professionals are well positioned to intervene during the early teenage years by informing parents about the early onset of nonconsensual sexual behavior.

← Editorial

Journal Club Slides at
jamapediatrics.com

Author Affiliations: Department of Psychology, Georgia State University, Atlanta (Swartout, Bellis); Department of Health Promotion Sciences, Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health, University of

“Although a small group of men perpetrated rape across multiple college years, they constituted a significant minority of those who committed college rape and did not compose the group at highest risk of perpetrating rape...”

2015: “New” Research on Serial Offending

Original Investigation

Trajectory Analysis of the Campus Serial Rapist Assumption

Kevin M. Swartout, PhD; Mary P. Koss, PhD; Jacquelyn W. White, PhD; Martie P. Thompson, PhD; Antonia Abbey, PhD; Alexandra L. Bellis, BS

IMPORTANCE Rape on college campuses has been addressed recently by a presidential proclamation, federal legislation, advocacy groups, and popular media. Many initiatives assume that most college men who perpetrate rape are serial rapists. The scientific foundation for this perspective is surprisingly limited.

OBJECTIVE To determine whether a group of serial rapists exists by identifying cohesive groups of young men, indicated by their trajectories of rape likelihood across high school and college.

DESIGN, SETTING, AND PARTICIPANTS Latent class growth analysis of the 2 largest longitudinal data sets of adolescent sexual violence on college campuses using 2 distinct groups of male college students. The first group was used for derivation modeling (n = 850; data collected from August 1990 through April 1995) and the second for validation modeling (n = 795; data collected from March 2008 through May 2011). Final data analyses were conducted from February 16, 2015, through February 20, 2015.

MAIN OUTCOMES AND MEASURES Rape perpetration assessed using the Sexual Experiences Survey.

RESULTS Across samples, 177 of 1645 participants (10.8%) reported having perpetrated at least 1 rape from 14 years of age through the end of college. A 3-trajectory model best fit both the derivation and validation data sets. Trajectories reflected low or time-limited (91.7% of participants), decreasing (5.6%), and increasing (2.7%) rape patterns. No consistently high trajectory was found. Most men who perpetrated a rape before college were classified in the decreasing trajectory. During college, the increasing trajectory included 19 men (20.9%) who reported having perpetrated a rape, the decreasing trajectory included 25 men (27.5%), and the low or time-limited included 47 men (51.6%). No participant in the low or time-limited trajectory reported perpetrating a rape during more than 1 period. Most men (68 [74.7%]) who committed college rape only perpetrated rape during 1 academic year.

CONCLUSIONS AND RELEVANCE Although a small group of men perpetrated rape across multiple college years, they constituted a significant minority of those who committed college rape and did not compose the group at highest risk of perpetrating rape when entering college. Exclusive emphasis on serial predation to guide risk identification, judicial response, and rape-prevention programs is misguided. To deter college rape, prevention should be initiated before, and continue during, college. Child and adolescent health care professionals are well positioned to intervene during the early teenage years by informing parents about the early onset of nonconsensual sexual behavior.

Editorial

Journal Club Slides at
jamapediatrics.com

Author Affiliations: Department of Psychology, Georgia State University, Atlanta (Swartout, Bellis); Department of Health Promotion Sciences, Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health, University of

How do you get the percentage of serial rapists down to 22%?

2015: “New” Research on Serial Offending Serial Rapists Re-defined

- Arbitrarily exclude attempted rape from analyses
- Arbitrarily define “rape by force” and “rape by incapacitation” as only 1 rape
- Ignore subjects who admit multiple rapes in a single year

Original Investigation
Trajectory Analysis of the Campus Serial Rapist Assumption
Kevin M. Swartout, PhD; Mary P. Koss, PhD; Jacquelyn W. White, PhD; Martie P. Thompson, PhD; Antonia Abbey, PhD; Alexandra L. Belle, BS

Editorial
Journal Club Slides at jamanpediatrics.com

IMPORTANCE Rape on college campuses has been addressed recently by a presidential proclamation, federal legislation, advocacy groups, and popular media. Many initiatives assume that most college men who perpetrate rape are serial rapists. The scientific foundation for this perspective is surprisingly limited.

OBJECTIVE To determine whether a group of serial rapists exists by identifying cohesive groups of young men, indicated by their trajectories of rape likelihood across high school and college.

DESIGN, SETTING, AND PARTICIPANTS Latent class growth analysis of the 2 largest longitudinal data sets of adolescent sexual violence on college campuses using 2 distinct groups of male college students. The first group was used for derivation modeling (n = 850; data collected from August 1990 through April 1995) and the second for validation modeling (n = 795; data collected from March 2008 through May 2011). Final data analyses were conducted from February 16, 2015, through February 20, 2015.

MAIN OUTCOMES AND MEASURES Rape perpetration assessed using the Sexual Experiences Survey.

RESULTS Across samples, 177 of 1645 participants (10.8%) reported having perpetrated at least 1 rape from 14 years of age through the end of college. A 3-trajectory model best fit both the derivation and validation data sets. Trajectories reflected low or time-limited (91.7% of participants), decreasing (5.6%), and increasing (2.7%) rape patterns. No consistently high trajectory was found. Most men who perpetrated a rape before college were classified in the decreasing trajectory. During college, the increasing trajectory included 19 men (20.9%) who reported having perpetrated a rape, the decreasing trajectory included 25 men (27.5%), and the low or time-limited included 47 men (51.6%). No participant in the low or time-limited trajectory reported perpetrating a rape during more than 1 period. Most men (68 [74.7%]) who committed college rape only perpetrated rape during 1 academic year.

CONCLUSIONS AND RELEVANCE Although a small group of men perpetrated rape across multiple college years, they constituted a significant minority of those who committed college rape and did not compose the group at highest risk of perpetrating rape when entering college. Exclusive emphasis on serial predation to guide risk identification, judicial response, and rape-prevention programs is misguided. To deter college rape, prevention should be initiated before, and continue during, college. Child and adolescent health care professionals are well positioned to intervene during the early teenage years by informing parents about the early onset of nonconsensual sexual behavior.

Author Affiliations: Department of Psychology, Georgia State University, Atlanta (Swartout, Belle); Department of Health Promotion Sciences, Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health, University of

Enough with politics.

What do the data say?

What percentage of all rapists are serial offenders?

What percentage of all rapes are perpetrated by serial offenders?

What percentage of all rapists are serial offenders?

Lisak 2002

63%
Repeat
Offenders

McWhorter 2009

71%
Repeat
Offenders

Swartout 2015
Dataset

75%
Repeat
Offenders

Foubert 2019

57%
Repeat
Offenders

What percentage of all rapes are perpetrated by serial offenders?

Lisak 2002

91%
of rapes

McWhorter 2009

95%
of rapes

Swartout 2015
Dataset

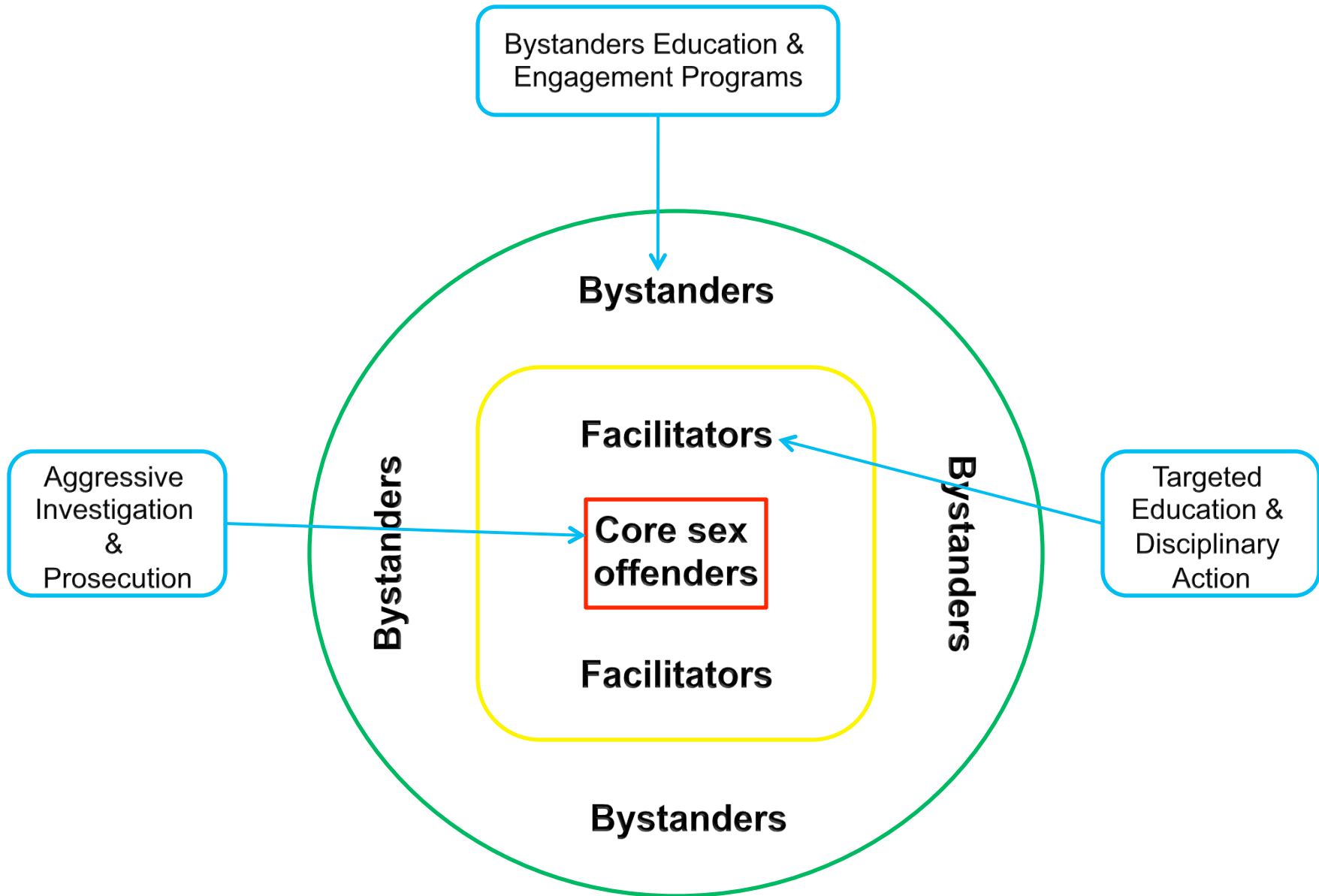
95%
of rapes

Foubert 2019

87%
of rapes

A Few Final Thoughts

- **Serial sexual offending, both on and off college campuses, is a reality.**
- **Creating alternatives to the criminal justice system, such as restorative justice, can enhance options for survivors.**
- **But, alternatives must reckon with the fact of serial offending.**
- **Reckoning with the fact of serial offending does not lesson the need for comprehensive rape prevention efforts.**



Multi-Layered Sexual Assault Prevention Program