

## ACQUAINTANCE RAPE: A REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

*The sex role socialization theory of rape suggests that the situational setting in which a rape is shown, as well as individual variations in sex role stereotypes, may influence rape responses. Even though the majority of rapes are acquaintance rapes, previous research on women's fear of rape has concentrated on women's concerns related to stranger rape. In this research, 139 college women filled out a questionnaire on their anxieties, protective practices, and attitudes about stranger and acquaintance rape. Women reported being more afraid of stranger rape than of rape by acquaintances, and they reported participating in more cautious actions as a result of their dread of stranger rape. They created more scenarios in which they feared stranger rape than acquaintance rape when asked to self-generate situations in which they feared rape. Surprisingly, they believe acquaintance rape is more frequent. Fear level was the greatest predictor of precautionary conduct. Women's reactions were unaffected by a history of acquaintance rape. There includes a discussion of the theoretical and pedagogical consequences.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Acquaintance Rapes, Precautionary, Self-Generated Fear, Pedagogical Impacts, Women.*

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

I have never been free of the fear of rape. From a very early age I, like most women, have thought of rape as part of my natural environment—something to be feared and prayed against like fire or lightning. I never asked why men raped; I simply thought it one of the many mysteries of human nature.

-Susall Griffin

Women limit their conduct in a variety of situations due to their fear of being abused. In a 1977 study of women in urban neighborhoods, 41% said they frequently used isolation tactics to avoid risk, such as not going out on the street at night, and 74% said they frequently used street-say tactics to reduce risk when they were exposed to danger, such as wearing shoes that allow them to run. The degree of fear among women was the greatest predictor of isolation and street-say tactics. In a 1981 postal poll of Seattle residents, 42 percent of women said they avoided going out alone, 67 percent said they avoided specific parts of town, and 27 percent said they refused to answer the door(1). Women who said they were afraid of being raped were more inclined to take such measures. Similarly, a survey of Greek women showed that 71 percent avoided going out

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late at night and 78 percent avoided specific parts of the city because they were afraid of being a victim of crime. They said they were more afraid of being raped than they were of becoming the victim of any other crime, even murder.

### *1.1 Fear of Acquaintance Rape:*

For the sake of this article, acquaintance forced penetration as when a woman is raped by someone she knows, which may be anybody from a stranger to a close friend or lover. Stranger rape, on the other hand, happens when a woman is raped by someone she has never met before (Bechhofer & Parrot, 1991). About 80% to 90% of all rapes are committed against someone you know(2,3).

Currently, cited research on women's rape concerns makes no difference between fears of rape by a friend and fears of rape by a stranger. Despite evidence indicating the overwhelming majority of rapes are acquaintance rapes, when researchers inquire about rape without explicitly mentioning friend or stranger rape, two-thirds of women who give information about being raped say they were raped by a stranger, not an acquaintance(4). Furthermore, research on women's fear of rape has concentrated on circumstances when the rapist is likely to be a stranger, such as going out late at night. As a result, the number of publications on rape fear is focused on stranger rape. However, there are distinctions between rape by a friend and rape by a stranger. Obviously, there is a difference in the rapist's and victim's relationships. A connection of some kind (e.g., a romantic relationship, friendship, or professional relationship) has already been formed in acquaintance rape, and the woman has often joined the relationship willingly. Stranger rape, on the other hand, is less likely to call into question the woman's conduct, judgment, or social skills since there is no previous contact with the rapist. Rapes by strangers and acquaintances occur in a variety of situations. "Date and acquaintance rape take place in a social setting where consensual sex is possible; stranger rape takes place in an environment where sex is usually out of context."

### *1.2 The Present Study:*

The current research looks at college women's worries of rape by acquaintances and strangers. We wanted to see how the following four factors were influenced by two variables: degree of familiarity (acquaintance rape or stranger rape, a within-subject variable) and history of acquaintance rape (if women had ever suffered acquaintance rape, a between-subjects variable):

1. The degree to which women are concerned about rape by strangers and acquaintances in different circumstances.
2. The degree to which women take preventive measures in the face of rape by acquaintances and strangers.
3. When women are asked to describe circumstances in which they are afraid of being raped, the majority of these instances are linked to rape by acquaintances and strangers.
4. Women's perceptions of acquaintance and stranger rape, including their perceptions of the likelihood that they will experience each type of rape in the future, the likelihood that the average college woman will experience each type of rape in the future, the percentages of all rapes that are acquaintance and stranger rapes, how much control they have over each type of rape, and the degree of trauma(5,6).

5. Fear of rape, beliefs about the likelihood of being raped, feelings of control regarding rape, beliefs about the trauma associated with rape, or a history of acquaintance rape are the best predictors of women engaging in precautionary behaviors to protect themselves from acquaintance rape and stranger rape?

Because we conducted five sets of 'analyses, we used a Bonferroni procedure to set alpha to  $.05/5 = .01$ .

### *1.3 Sex Roles and Acquaintance Rape:*

Sex role socialization processes are more likely to affect behavior in the "date-" or acquaintance-rape scenario, as opposed to the stranger-rape situation, according to the sex role socialization study of rape. Many of our societal ideas about dating (e.g., a woman does not mean it when she says no) have been claimed to be a result of sex role stereotypes, which may lead to misunderstandings in the dating scenario or even rape(7).

**Stereotyping of Male and Female Roles** Despite the theoretical importance of sex role stereotypes in understanding the causes of rape, little empirical study has been done on the subject. Burt (1980) found some empirical evidence in one research. Burt found that both men's and women's sex role generalization beliefs were positively correlated with sentiments symptomatic of rape-myth acceptance, acknowledgement of violence (mainly against women), and the belief that sex relations are corrosive in nature, using a large representative group of Minnesota residents(8). Although these findings support the idea that sex role stereotyping and rape-supportive attitudes are linked, additional research is needed to confirm the sex role socialization hypothesis using measures that are more directly connected to rape than attitudes. As a result, a secondary goal of this study was to look at the relationship between sex role stereotyping and a variety of variables previously linked to rape.(9,10)

### *1.4 The Measurement of Rape:*

Although the ideal criterion variable in rape research would involve actual observations of rapes, such research is not feasible. Consequently, rape researchers must rely on indirect measures. Three such measures that have received attention in the literature are sexual arousal to rape depictions, perceptions of rape victims, and men's self-reported likelihood of raping. Evidence for the validity of each measure is briefly reviewed.

### *1.5 Questions About Precautionary Behaviors:*

These questions were about women's rape fear-related preventative actions(11). There were two sets of questions, one for behaviors related to acquaintance rape and the other for stranger rape. The participants were asked these two sets of questions in reverse order. The stem for the set of questions on acquaintance rape was "Because I am frightened of acquaintance rape." This stem was followed by a list of 29 actions. "I avoid flirting with men I know," and "I say something if a man I know comes on too strong," were among the responses(12). The stranger rape questions were similar to the acquaintance rape questions; for example, the items above were reworded to read, "I avoid flirting with men I don't know," and "I say something if a man I don't know comes on too hard." On a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = not at all to 5 = a lot/always, respondents were asked to rate how often they participated in these activities for both sets of questions. Each set of questions contained a validity check directing women to respond with a

particular number to verify that they were reading the items attentively and not replying arbitrarily(12). Those that gave erroneous answers were removed from the research.(13,14)

### *1.6 Questions About Worry in Various Situations:*

There were two sets of questions, one for acquaintance rape and the other for stranger rape, regarding circumstances in which women may be concerned about rape. The sequence of these sets was randomized among the participants. In each group, women were given 24 questions on their fears of being raped by a stranger or acquaintance in various scenarios(15). If they had never been in that scenario before, they were instructed to picture themselves in it and respond accordingly. "When you are being followed by a man you know; how much do you fear about being raped by him?" they were asked in the acquaintance rape question set(16). They used a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 equaling not at all and 5 equaling a lot. A validity check was included in each set of questions, with the ladies being told to respond with a particular number.

### *1.7 Rape-History Questions:*

"Have you ever had consensual sex (oral, anal, or vaginal) with a man when you didn't want to because you were incapable of maintaining permission or refusing due to drink, drugs, or other factors?" women were asked. and "Have you ever had sexual intercourse (oral, anal, or vaginal) when you didn't want to because a man threatened or forced you to (twisting your arm, holding you down, etc.)?" These two questions, which are variations of questions from the Sexual Experiences Survey, were used to assess whether or not women had been raped. We did not provide a temporal range for these events, as Russell (1984) did(17). Women who said "no" to these questions were told to go on to the next part. Women who said yes to one or both of the questions were asked how many "boys" were engaged in the incident (s). Those who answered "one" were asked if he was a friend or a stranger. how well they knew him and whether or not they had a connection with him If there were several "men" engaged, they were asked comparable questions about all of them.(18,19)

## **2. DISCUSSION**

The current results showed the significance of incorporating both situational context and individual difference factors in analyzing people's responses to rape, which are consistent with assumptions obtained from the sex role socialization analysis of rape. Each of the three dependent variables, sexual arousal, perceptions, and perceived probability of raping, will be addressed individually(20).

### *2.1 Arousal in the Bedroom:*

There were two results in terms of sexual arousal. The most significant result was that sex role stereotyping influenced arousal to rape (particularly acquaintance rape), but not to the consenting-intercourse portrayal, as anticipated. Individuals with strong sex role stereotyping exhibited high degrees of attraction to rape (particularly acquaintance rape), and their sexual arousal patterns were indistinguishable from perpetrators' (i.e., equal levels of arousal to both rape and consenting depictions). Low sex role stereotyping people, on the other hand, exhibited lower levels of attraction to rape, with arousal patterns more similar to those seen in non-rapist's group(21). Thus, it seems that sex role theorists' claim that there are many "normal" people in

society who have response characteristics comparable to those of recognized rapists has some truth, at least in terms of sexual desire.

We also discovered that respondents' attraction to stranger rape was lower on average than excitement to a sexually explicit consenting-intercourse portrayal. In contrast, both the acquaintance-rape and consenting-sex representations elicited the same degree of excitement in the participants. Males exhibit greater penile tumescence after acquaintance rape than stranger rape, according to a recent laboratory experiment by Malamuth, Check, and Briere (Note 6), bolstering the current results(22). The Rape Victim's Reactions as Perceived Despite the fact that there was no evidence of a positive response from the victim in any of these two rape representations, both high and low sex role stereotyping people viewed the acquaintance-rape victim as responding more favorably to the attack than the stranger-rape victim. Furthermore, individuals with more stereotypical sex role views thought the rape victim responded positively to a larger extent, particularly in the acquaintance-rape scenario. This result adds to the sex role interpretation of rape, indicating that the acquaintance-rape scenario is more common.

## *2.2 Fears and Precautionary Behaviors:*

The dread of being raped is common, and it limits women's choices. AU of the women in this research stated they are afraid of stranger and acquaintance rape in certain circumstances, and that they take at least some measures to protect oneself from both kinds of rape. Even if they had a history of acquaintance rape but not stranger rape, women were more afraid of being raped by a stranger than by an acquaintance. Women also said they would take more measures to avoid being raped by a stranger than by a friend, and they were more inclined to create circumstances in which they dreaded stranger rape. This is particularly remarkable given the fact that acquaintance rapes account for the overwhelming majority of rapes, with women estimating that over 65 percent of all rapes occur between acquaintances. Their understanding of rape did not match their fears or cautious actions in the face of rape.

## *2.3 Relationship Between Fears and Precautionary Behaviors:*

Women engage in cautious actions because they are afraid of being raped, according to many studies. Surprisingly, they did not ask women about the measures they took because of their fear of rape. Women were questioned about their cautious behaviors and their dread of different crimes, including rape, by Riger and Gordon (1981) and Warr (1985), but they were not asked what precautionary actions they participated in because of their fear of rape. We asked women how frequently they participate in different precautionary actions "Because I am frightened of acquaintance rape" or "Because I am terrified of stranger rape" in this research. This connection was also supported by statistical evidence: Women's fear of rape predicted their degree of cautious conduct better than their acquaintance rape history, evaluations of rape trauma, emotions of control over rape, or perceptions about the probability of being raped in a multiple regression study. However, it's likely that the connection between concerns and precautions is complicated; it may be bidirectional and vary across women. Fear may lead some women to take more cautious measures, while fear may lead others to avoid thinking about rape and therefore take less preventative measures. As a result, taking preventive measures may raise or reduce fear levels. Furthermore, feelings of control over rape may influence the connection between dread and cautious action. In this area, further study is required.



#### *2.4 Educational Implications:*

The problem with developing instructional programming for women in this area is that there is no "optimal" degree of fear to suggest to them. We don't want to pass any judgements on how fearful women should be, nor do we want to advise that they take any specific measures to protect themselves. Fear, like precautions, is limiting. However, advocating that women have no fear of rape or that they take no measures to avoid rape may put women in danger. Clearly, women are in a lose-lose scenario. We can only infer that the answer rests in concentrating educational efforts on the individuals who have the ability to prevent rape: males. They must be educated from an early age that acquaintance rape is both unacceptable and illegal. Although women should be taught about rape and preventive strategies so that they can identify and respond to such circumstances if they occur, rape educators must also include males in their efforts to stop rape. Furthermore, we must fight concepts and attitudes that promote rape at every level, from individual views to the media and the law.

#### *2.5 Directions for Future Study:*

We adopted a wide definition of "acquaintance" because of the exploratory character of this research, ranging from someone a woman recently met to a close friend or lover. We have no idea who the respondents were thinking of when they responded to our questions concerning acquaintance rape. Women are likely to respond differently to the questions if they are thinking about their partner than if they are thinking of someone they have recently met. More research is required to see whether women fear acquaintances differently than males and how this fear impacts their cautious actions. A between-subjects design might be helpful for assessing women's concerns of acquaintance rape without making the implied connection to stranger rape and vice versa. It's also uncertain if women's stated cautious activity matches their real preventative behavior. To answer these issues, further research is required.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

Although the women in this research expressed more concern about stranger rape and took more measures as a result of their fear of sexual assault and rape, it is essential to note that they also expressed concern about acquaintance rape and took safeguards against acquaintance rape. Rape, whether committed by a stranger or a friend, is oppressive. We must strive for a world in which rape is no longer a threat to women. Only then should women feel secure among friends and strangers, and have complete freedom to live their lives as they want.

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