This study explores the existence of a continuum of sexual aggression among males and a corresponding continuum of sexual victimization among females. A 12-question Sexual Experiences Survey written in parallel versions for men and women was administered to 3,862 university students. Three levels of sexual aggression/victimization ranging from consensual sexual intercourse to actual rape were reported by both sexes, supporting a dimensional approach. Factor analysis of the survey instrument revealed three stable factors accounting for 51% of the variance. The factors corresponded to the three levels of sexual aggression/victimization, suggesting a viable alternative approach to sample selection for future rape research. The number of females reporting victimization was several times larger than the number of males reporting aggression. Further research should determine if males fail to report aggression, if each aggressive male victimized more than one woman, or if males and females differ in their perceptions of a given experience. (The survey instruments, as well as response tables, are included.)
HIDDEN RAPE:
A Survey of the Incidence of Sexual Aggression and Victimization on a University Campus

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ABSTRACT

Many instances of rape are probably "hidden" from study by the failure of typical sample selection methods that rely on police or crisis center files to reflect the total population of aggressors and victims. In addition, these methods are "typological" and assume that people are either "rapists" and "victims" or they are neither. The goals of the present study were to develop a survey instrument capable of reflecting the "hidden" cases of rape not tapped by other procedures and to document the viability of a dimensional approach to sexual aggression/sexual victimization (i.e., the view that sexual aggression/victimization occur in varying degrees ranging from consensual sexual intercourse up to sexual intercourse obtained through the use of physical force).

The incidence of three levels of sexual aggression and three levels of sexual victimization was determined by administering an anonymous self-report "Sexual Experiences Survey" to a random sample of 3,862 university students. The results supported a dimensional view. In addition, the frequency with which highly aggressive/victimized experiences were reported suggested the extensiveness of the problem of sexual aggression and the degree to which "hidden rape" occurs.

The survey instrument itself was factor-analyzed and found to consist of three stable factors that accounted for 51% of the variance. The factors corresponded to the three levels of sexual aggression/victimization. Consequently, it seemed to be a viable alternative approach to sample selection for future rape research.

Paper presented at Midwestern Psychological Association, St. Louis, 1980. Copies of the survey can be obtained from Mary P. Koss, Department of Psychology, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio 44242.

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INTRODUCTION

Most previous studies in the rape literature have adopted a typological, all-or-none approach. A subject is either a rapist, a rape victim, or a control subject. Several writers (e.g., Weis & Borges, 1973) believe that the historical role of men as the protector of women has led to a close association between "manliness" and aggression. In this framework rape represents an extreme behavior but one that is on a continuum with normal male behavior within the culture. Presently, only one study supports the existence of various degrees of sexual aggression (Kirkpatrick & Kamin, 1957) and it is subject to a number of methodological flaws as well as being over twenty years old.

The data on rape under-reporting (Curtis, 1975) suggest that only one-in-three to one-in-ten of the rapes that occur every year are reported to the police. Furthermore, the conviction rate for rape is less than 1% of reported crimes. These observations suggest the existence of many "hidden" cases of rape and emphasize the need to move beyond crisis center and police files as sources of subjects for rape research.

The present study had two major goals. The first was to document the existence of a continuum of sexual aggression among males and a corresponding continuum of sexual victimization among females using a newly developed "Sexual Experiences Survey." The second goal was to demonstrate that a sufficient number of individuals could be identified at each of the levels of sexual aggression/victimization to make the survey a feasible alternative sampling strategy for future rape research.

*These continua are represented schematically in Figure 1.
METHOD

A Sexual Experiences Survey was written in parallel version for men and women. The survey consisted of 12 yes-no questions referring explicitly to the subject's experiences with sexual intercourse. The text of the female survey is shown in Figure 2. The male version is shown in Figure 3. The survey was presented anonymously to 3,862 university students in randomly selected classes representing all colleges, majors and levels of a large, midwestern university (2,016 females, 1,846 males, mean age 21, range 18-45, 91% white, 7% black, 2% Hispanic and Native American).

The following criteria were used to operationalize the levels of sexual aggression/sexual victimization:

1. Non-sexually aggressive/non-sexually victimized S responds "yes" to questions 1, 2 and/or 3 only.

2. Low sexually aggressive/low sexually victimized S responds "yes" to questions 4, 5 and/or 6.

3. Moderately sexually aggressive/moderately sexually victimized S responds "yes" to questions 7, 8 and/or 9.

4. Highly sexually aggressive/highly sexually victimized S responds "yes" to questions 10, 11 and/or 12.

A factor-analysis with Veri-Max rotation was performed on the responses of the men and women separately. Since no differences in factor structure emerged between the sexes, the samples were collapsed and the factor analysis was completed for the total 3,862 subjects.
RESULTS: DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographic variables of the survey sample were compared to the characteristics of the university population as a whole. There were no significant differences between the survey sample and the total population in terms of sex and race. The sample did differ significantly from the total population in age. The sample contained 14% of persons 25 years old and older whereas 30.4% of the university as a whole are over 25. Efforts were made to sample more evening and graduate courses to obtain more older persons but they were not successful in completely eliminating the age differences.
RESULTS: SURVEY RESPONSES

The text of the survey questions and the number and percentage of males and females who responded "yes" to each item are presented in Table 1.

When the scoring criteria previously described were applied to the responses it was found that the male and female respondents were classified as follows:

**Females**

- 11.5% Highly Sexually Victimized
- 25% Moderately Sexually Victimized
- 17.9% Low Sexually Victimized
- 36.5% Not Sexually Victimized

**Males**

- 4% Highly Sexually Aggressive
- 4.7% Moderately Sexually Aggressive
- 23.6% Low Sexually Aggressive
- 67% Not Sexually Aggressive
RESULTS: FACTOR ANALYSIS

The results of the factor analysis revealed that three orthogonal factors account for 51% of the variance in the Sexual Experiences Survey. All of these factors have eigenvalues greater than one. All the survey items except question two loaded at a level higher than .30 on their respective factor. The items that compose each factor and the factor loadings are presented in Table 2.

The first factor, labeled High Sexual Aggression/Victimization, accounted for 29% of the total variance. The items that loaded on this factor reflect behaviors that are legally considered rape.

The second factor, labeled Moderate Sexual Aggression/Victimization, accounted for 12% of the variance. The items that loaded on this factor describe behaviors that would be considered attempted rape.

The third factor, labeled Low Sexual Aggression/Victimization, accounted for 10% of the variance. The items that loaded on this factor reflect consensual sexual activity and sexual activity involving verbal coercion.
CONCLUSIONS

The data revealed that experiences with sexual aggression/victimization ranging from consensual sexual intercourse up to actual rape are reported by both male and female university students on the Sexual Experiences Survey. Thus, a dimensional approach is supported by the data. Additionally, the survey could be used as an alternative approach to sampling in future rape research that may result in greater understanding of unreported or hidden rape.

The frequency of males who reported engaging in various degrees of sexually aggressive behavior was high but the number of females who reported being victimized was several times larger. One could speculate that many more males who engaged in sexual aggression failed to report it, or each aggressive male victimized more than one woman, or males and females differed in their perception of a given experience. Further research is needed to examine these possibilities.

The factor analysis suggested that both high and moderate sexual aggression/victimization are conceptually as well as statistically different from "normal" consensual sexual activity. The behaviors involving verbal coercion, however, were not found to be separate from consensual sexual activity. This finding may suggest that the idea of truly non-aggressive/non-victimized people does not exist among this college population and that many of their typical sexual relationships include coercive elements. This finding certainly has relevance for sexual education and rape prevention programs.
FIGURE 1

THE SEXUAL AGGRESSION/SEXUAL VICTIMIZATION CONTINUUM

"REPORTS ENGAGING IN MUTUAL SEXUAL INTERCOURSE ONLY"
"REPORTS USING VERBAL COERCION TO OBTAIN INTERCOURSE"
"USES FORCE OR THREAT OF FORCE TO OBTAIN INTERCOURSE BUT PENETRATION DID NOT OCCUR"
"USES FORCE OR THREAT OF FORCE TO OBTAIN INTERCOURSE AND PENETRATION OCCURRED"

No Sexual Aggression
No Aggression
Low Sexual Aggression
Moderate Sexual Aggression
High Sexual Aggression
Very High Sexual Aggression

No Sexual Victimization
No Victimization
Low Sexual Victimization
Moderate Sexual Victimization
High Sexual Victimization
Very High Sexual Victimization

"REPORTS EXPERIENCING MUTUAL SEXUAL INTERCOURSE ONLY"
"EXPERIENCED SEXUAL INTERCOURSE SUBSEQUENT TO VERBAL COERCION"
"EXPERIENCED FORCE OR THREAT OF FORCE BUT FOR VARIOUS REASONS PENETRATION DID NOT OCCUR"
"EXPERIENCED SEXUAL INTERCOURSE AGAINST WILL UNDER FORCE OR THREAT OF FORCE"
FIGURE 2

FEMALE SEXUAL EXPERIENCES SURVEY

NOTE: FOR PURPOSES OF THIS RESEARCH "SEXUAL INTERCOURSE" IS
DEFINED AS PENETRATION, NO MATTER HOW SLIGHT, OF THE WOMAN
BY THE MAN. EJACULATION IS NOT REQUIRED. WHENEVER YOU
SEE THE WORDS "SEXUAL INTERCOURSE," PLEASE USE THIS
DEFINITION.

HAVE YOU EVER:

1. HAD SEXUAL INTERCOURSE WITH A MAN WHEN YOU BOTH WANTED TO?
2. HAD A MAN MISINTERPRET THE LEVEL OF SEXUAL INTIMACY YOU DESIRED?
3. BEEN IN A SITUATION WHERE A MAN BECAME SO SEXUALLY AROUSED THAT
YOU FELT IT WAS USELESS TO STOP HIM EVEN THOUGH YOU DID NOT WANT
TO HAVE SEXUAL INTERCOURSE?
4. HAD SEXUAL INTERCOURSE WITH A MAN EVEN THOUGH YOU DIDN'T WANT
TO BECAUSE HE THREATENED TO END YOUR RELATIONSHIP OTHERWISE?
5. HAD SEXUAL INTERCOURSE WITH A MAN WHEN YOU DIDN'T REALLY WANT
TO BECAUSE YOU FELT PRESSURED BY HIS CONTINUAL ARGUMENTS?
6. FOUND OUT THAT A MAN HAD OBTAINED SEXUAL INTERCOURSE WITH YOU
BY SAYING THINGS HE DIDN'T REALLY MEAN?
7. BEEN IN A SITUATION WHERE A MAN USED SOME DEGREE OF PHYSICAL
FORCE (TWISTING YOUR ARM, HOLDING YOU DOWN, ETC.) TO MAKE YOU
ENGAGE IN KISSING OR PETTING WHEN YOU DIDN'T WANT TO?
8. BEEN IN A SITUATION WHERE A MAN USED SOME DEGREE OF PHYSICAL
FORCE (TWISTING YOUR ARM, HOLDING YOU DOWN, ETC.) TO TRY TO GET
YOU TO HAVE SEXUAL INTERCOURSE WITH HIM WHEN YOU DIDN'T WANT TO,
BUT FOR VARIOUS REASONS INTERCOURSE DID NOT OCCUR?
9. BEEN IN A SITUATION WHERE A MAN TRIED TO GET SEXUAL INTERCOURSE
WITH YOU WHEN YOU DIDN'T WANT TO BY THREATENING TO USE PHYSICAL
FORCE (TWISTING YOUR ARM, HOLDING YOU DOWN, ETC.) IF YOU DIDN'T
COOPERATE BUT FOR VARIOUS REASONS INTERCOURSE DID NOT OCCUR?
10. HAD SEXUAL INTERCOURSE WITH A MAN WHEN YOU DIDN'T WANT TO BECAUSE
HE THREATENED TO USE PHYSICAL FORCE (TWISTING YOUR ARM, HOLDING
YOU DOWN, ETC.) IF YOU DID NOT COOPERATE?
11. HAD SEXUAL INTERCOURSE WITH A MAN WHEN YOU DIDN'T WANT TO BECAUSE
HE USED SOME DEGREE OF PHYSICAL FORCE (TWISTING YOUR ARM, HOLDING
YOU DOWN, ETC.)?
12. BEEN IN A SITUATION WHERE A MAN OBTAINED SEXUAL ACTS WITH YOU
SUCH AS ANAL OR ORAL INTERCOURSE WHEN YOU DIDN'T WANT TO BY USING
THREATS OR PHYSICAL FORCE (TWISTING YOUR ARM, HOLDING YOU DOWN,
ETC.)?
13. HAVE YOU EVER BEEN RAPED?
NOTE: For purposes of this research, "sexual intercourse" is defined as penetration, no matter how slight, of the woman by the man. Ejaculation is not required. Whenever you see the words "sexual intercourse," please use this definition.

Have you ever:

1. Had sexual intercourse with a woman when you both wanted to?

2. Discovered that you had misunderstood the level of sexual intimacy a woman desired?

3. Became so sexually aroused that you felt you had to have sexual intercourse and felt you could not stop yourself even though the woman did not want to?

4. Obtained sexual intercourse with a woman when she didn't really want to by telling her you would end the relationship if she didn't agree?

5. Obtained sexual intercourse with a woman when she didn't really want to after continual discussions and arguments about it?

6. Obtained sexual intercourse with a woman when she didn't really want to by saying things you didn't really mean (false promises of love, etc.)?

7. Used some degree of physical force (twisting her arm, holding her down, etc.) to make a woman engage in kissing or petting when she didn't want to?

8. Told a woman who did not want to have intercourse that you would use some degree of physical force (twisting her arm, holding her down, etc.) if she didn't have sexual intercourse with you, but for various reasons intercourse did not occur?

9. Used some degree of physical force (twisting her arm, holding her down, etc.) to try to obtain sexual intercourse with a woman who didn't want it, but for various reasons intercourse did not occur?

10. Obtained sexual intercourse with a woman who didn't want to by suggesting that you would use some degree of physical force (twisting her arm, holding her down, etc.) if she didn't cooperate?

11. Obtained sexual intercourse with a woman who didn't want to by using some degree of physical force (twisting her arm, holding her down, etc.)?

12. Obtained sexual acts such as oral or anal intercourse with a woman who didn't want to through the use of threats or force (twisting her arm, holding her down, etc.)?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>WOMEN (N = 2016)</th>
<th>MEN (N = 1846)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Had sexual intercourse with a man (woman) when you both wanted to?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAVE YOU EVER:</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Had sexual intercourse with a man (woman) when you both wanted to?</td>
<td>1520</td>
<td>75.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Had a man (woman) misinterpret the level of sexual intimacy you desired?</td>
<td>1421</td>
<td>70.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Been in a situation where a man (you) became so sexually aroused that you felt it was useless to stop him even though you did not want to have sexual intercourse? (Could not stop yourself even though the woman didn't want to?)</td>
<td>661</td>
<td>32.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Had sexual intercourse with a man (woman) even though you (she) didn't really want to because he (you) threatened to end your relationship otherwise?</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Had sexual intercourse with a man (woman) when you (she) didn't really want to because you (she) felt pressured by his (your) continual arguments?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Found out that a man had obtained sexual intercourse with you by saying things he didn't really mean? (Obtained sexual intercourse by saying things you didn't really mean?)</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Been in a situation where a man (you) used some degree of physical force (twisting your (her) arm, holding you (her) down, etc.) to try to make you (a woman) engage in kissing or petting when you (she) didn't want to?</td>
<td>609</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Been in a situation where a man (you) used some degree of physical force (twisting your (her) arm, holding you (her) down, etc.) to try to get you (a woman) to have sexual intercourse with him (you) when you (she) didn't want to, but for various reasons sexual intercourse did not occur?</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. Been in a situation where a man (you) tried to get sexual intercourse with you (a woman) when you (she) didn't want to by threatening to use physical force (twisting your (her) arm, holding you (her) down, etc.) if you (she) didn't cooperate, but for various reasons sexual intercourse did not occur?

   175  8.7  45  2.4

10. Had sexual intercourse with a man (woman) when you (she) didn't want to because he (you) threatened to use physical force (twisting your (her) arm, holding you (her) down, etc.) if you (she) didn't cooperate?

   62   3.1  35  1.9

11. Had sexual intercourse with a man (woman) when you (she) didn't want to because he (you) used some degree of physical force (twisting your (her) arm, holding you (her) down, etc.)?

   165  8.2  49  2.7

12. Been in a situation where a man (you) obtained sexual acts with you (a woman) such as anal or oral intercourse when you (she) didn't want to by using threats or physical force (twisting your (her) arm, holding you (her) down, etc.)?

   129  6.4  45  2.4

13. Have you ever been raped? (women only.)

   120  6.0
TABLE 2

FACTOR ANALYSIS OF THE SEXUAL EXPERIENCES SURVEY
(N = 3,862)

ITEM COMPOSITION OF FACTORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factor 1: High Sexual Aggression/Victimization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Factor 2: Moderate Sexual Aggression/Victimization |
| Item | Item Description |
| 7. | HAVE YOU EVER BEEN IN A SITUATION WHERE A MAN (YOU) USED SOME DEGREE OF PHYSICAL FORCE (TWISTING YOUR (HER) ARM, HOLDING YOU (HER) DOWN, ETC.) TO TRY TO MAKE YOU (A WOMAN) ENGAGE IN KISSING OR PETTING WHEN YOU (SHE) DIDN'T WANT TO? |
| 8. | HAVE YOU EVER BEEN IN A SITUATION WHERE A MAN (YOU) USED SOME DEGREE OF PHYSICAL FORCE (TWISTING YOUR (HER) ARM, HOLDING YOU (HER) DOWN, ETC.) TO TRY TO GET YOU (A WOMAN) TO HAVE SEXUAL INTERCOURSE WITH HIM (YOU) WHEN YOU (SHE) DIDN'T WANT TO, BUT FOR VARIOUS REASONS SEXUAL INTERCOURSE DID NOT OCCUR? |
| 9. | HAVE YOU EVER BEEN IN A SITUATION WHERE A MAN (YOU) TRIED TO GET SEXUAL INTERCOURSE WITH YOU (A WOMAN) WHEN YOU (SHE) DIDN'T WANT TO BY THREATENING TO USE PHYSICAL FORCE (TWISTING YOUR (HER) ARM, HOLDING YOU (HER) DOWN, ETC.) IF YOU (SHE) DIDN'T COOPERATE, BUT FOR VARIOUS REASONS SEXUAL INTERCOURSE DID NOT OCCUR? |
FACTOR 3: Low Sexual Aggression/Victimization

1. **Have you ever had sexual intercourse with a man (woman) when you both wanted to?**

2. **Have you ever been in a situation where a man (you) became so sexually aroused that you felt it was useless to stop him even though you did not want to have sexual intercourse? (Could not stop yourself even though the woman didn’t want to?)**

3. **Have you ever had sexual intercourse with a man (woman) even though you (she) didn’t really want to because he (you) threatened to end your relationship otherwise?**

4. **Have you ever had sexual intercourse with a man (woman) even though you (she) didn’t really want to because you (she) felt pressured by his (your) continual arguments?**

5. **Have you ever found out that a man had obtained sexual intercourse with you by saying things he didn’t really mean? (Obtained sexual intercourse by saying things you didn’t really mean?)**

6. **Have you ever found out that a man had obtained sexual intercourse with you by saying things he didn’t really mean? (Obtained sexual intercourse by saying things you didn’t really mean?)**