

Aware

AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

In this issue

Welcome to edition 19 of *ACSSA Aware*, the quarterly report of the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault. *ACSSA Aware* provides news, reviews, articles and updates on the latest literature and research in the sexual assault field.

Our feature article in this edition is an interview with Dr Nicola Henry about her current research for a book about “mass rape” in contexts of war. She focuses particularly on processes of collective memory (or forgetting) of sexual violence that respectively acknowledge or omit women’s experience of sexual violence in war and conflict. She also discusses how this links with how we deal with sexual assault more generally as a community, and the role of formal systems of justice.

We also provide brief overviews of recent research and policy. The recently published *Preventing Violence Before it Occurs Framework* from VicHealth outlines a framework for the prevention of violence against women, emphasising the connections between different levels of prevention work and the need to hold a consistent approach across these levels. We review the research report on the Jacaranda Project, a therapeutic group work program for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse. We also look at a recently produced self-help resource for adult survivors, *Silent No More*, as well as the *Resource Manual on Violence Against Women With Disabilities* by Women With Disabilities Australia.

These resources highlight the excellent work being done in the sexual assault and violence against women field around Australia across a range of contexts.

As always, there is a list of new and recent publications in our library collection at the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

ACSSA staff have recently had the opportunity to visit a number of sexual assault services around Australia, particularly in Queensland and Tasmania. We are grateful to those who took time out from their busy schedules to share some of their work with us, and ACSSA looks forward to making some new editions to the Promising Practice Database (www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/ppd) following these visits, and to documenting further examples of promising practice over the coming months. We would love to hear from you with any suggestions for the Promising Practice Database, or for ideas you might have for newsletter articles in future editions.

ACSSA is always eager to hear feedback from our stakeholders on how we can remain relevant, useful and accessible. We welcome your comments on our publications and other online resources—if you haven’t already, please visit us at www.aifs.gov.au/acssa where you can also request copies of earlier publications and subscribe to our mailing list. You can also subscribe through the form at the back of this newsletter—subscription to ACSSA publications is free of charge.

We hope you find this edition of *ACSSA Aware* helpful, informative and inspiring in your work responding to, and preventing, sexual assault in Australia.

From the ACSSA Team



Australian Government

Australian Institute of Family Studies
Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault

The Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault aims to improve access to current information on sexual assault in order to assist policy makers, service providers, and others interested in this area to develop evidence-based strategies to prevent, respond to, and ultimately reduce the incidence of sexual assault.

The Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault is funded by the Office for Women, Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, through the Women's Safety Agenda. The Centre is hosted by the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

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Have you joined ACSSA-Alert? News alert email service

Would you like to receive fortnightly news and updates on what is happening in the field of sexual assault in Australia and around the world?

ACSSA-Alert is an email list for news and updates to subscribers, and is compiled by the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault. You will receive an e-newsletter with announcements about news in the field, updates on the ACSSA website, the release of publications and reports, new services and other information.

You can join *ACSSA-Alert* through our web page on:

www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/emaillist.html

Promising Practice Database

Many readers would be familiar with the ACSSA Promising Practice Database, the online database of Australian sexual assault projects and services. This has been a popular resource, recording more than 30,000 hits during 2007–08, and we hope this will continue to be a useful source of information.

ACSSA is continuing to build its Promising Practice Database, to document and publicise best practice projects and activities being undertaken in relation to sexual assault.

People who want to submit a project for the database have two options:

- download and complete the submission form, and return the completed form to ACSSA; or
- contact ACSSA and arrange for someone to go through the form with you over the phone.

We are always open to your suggestions about how the database could be improved—we would be happy to hear from you.

Visit www.aifs.gov.au/acssa and follow the links.

Western Australian alcohol-related harms study

Predicting alcohol-related harms from licensed outlet density: A feasibility study.

Chikritzhs, T., Catalano, P., Pascal, R., & Henrickson, N. (2008). (Monograph Series No. 28). National Drug Law Enforcement Research Fund.

This Western Australian study is investigating the correlation between the number of alcohol outlets and incidents of violence in Local Government Areas. The study is exploratory and investigates a range of “alcohol-related harms”. The researchers have found that the incidence of sexual assault is most strongly correlated with liquor stores, as opposed to other kinds of licensed venues.

The full report can be downloaded from www.ndlerf.gov.au/pub.php?type=mono

Preventing violence before it occurs

Preventing violence before it occurs: A framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria. (2007). VicHealth.

In December 2007 VicHealth, in partnership with the Victorian Government, published *Preventing Violence Before it Occurs*. The core concern of this publication is the development of a comprehensive, cross-sectorial and whole-of-government model for the prevention of violence against women. Starting from the premise that this is a “prevalent, serious, and preventable” problem, the document adopts an ecological model (following the World Health Organization) as the preferred framework for understanding, responding to and preventing violence against women. The ecological model consists of three levels of “nested” or embedded factors at which violence against women needs to be addressed:

- societal;
- community/organisational; and
- individual/relationship.

A major advantage of this model is the explicit inclusion of expertise and knowledge from a range of disciplines, and an awareness of the limitations of “single factor” models. The framework recognises that general interventions have a place in violence prevention, specifically those that target “risk factors” such as drug use or parenting problems. However, prevention must also specifically target men’s violence against women. For instance, the framework identifies culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities as sites of particularly high levels of violence against women. The report points out that members of these communities may experience multiple disadvantages that can

contribute to violence, such as poverty and social isolation, which are related to the migration experience rather than their “culture”.

Gender inequality and gender socialisation are identified as significant underlying factors contributing to violence against women. “Traditional” views about gender roles are identified as a factor involved in violence against women. Men’s controlling behaviour, for example, is identified as the strongest predictor of physical or sexual violence in intimate relationships. With this in mind, all prevention efforts should be guided by three themes:

1. promoting equal and respectful relationships between men and women;
2. promoting non-violent social norms and reducing the effects of prior exposure to violence (especially on children); and
3. improving access to resources and systems of support.

While adopting an emphasis on evidence for violence prevention, there is also the recognition that some strategies have more evaluations and research documentation from which to draw evidence. Therefore, prevention strategies that do not have any documented evidence of their impacts, but do articulate a sound theoretical rationale, are regarded as “promising” and still potentially useful. (This is consistent with the approach taken by ACSSA for our Promising Practice Database). Based on the evidence that is currently available, the framework highlights three priority strategies for Victoria:

- secondary schools programs;
- communications and marketing; and
- activities designed to mobilise and support communities to prevent violence against women.

Overall, the framework document is an ambitious and progressive statement on the prevention of violence against women in Victoria. In accounting for both individual and societal factors that contribute to violence against women, and defining mid- to long-term benefits of good prevention work across these levels, *Preventing Violence Before it Occurs* provides the conceptual and theoretical apparatus to weave together a diverse range of activities—from school-based prevention programs to policy agendas—into a coherent movement.

The document can be downloaded from www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/preventingviolence/

Silent No More

A resource for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse

This beautifully presented self-help booklet for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse was collectively produced by the women involved with the WILMA Women's Health Centre in Campbelltown, NSW.

It might seem odd to begin with a comment on the presentation of a self-help book of this nature. However, the care and effort that has obviously gone into this resource speaks to the intent that it be a "companion on the journey of healing". The artwork, stories and design of the book are all the work of women directly involved in the project; the work of all the contributors has been treated respectfully. There is very much the sense that this is a document of the collective and individual journeys of the women involved in producing the book, as much as it is intended for other women to benefit from it.

There is a lot of information covered in the 80-plus pages, including a wealth of strategies and tips for getting through particularly difficult times, such as tips for finding the right counsellor. Readers are forewarned of potentially "triggering" material signified by barbed wire around the page. As the title suggests, the underlying theme is finding ways to speak about child sexual abuse and its effects.

Because the book contains the experiences of a diverse range of women, there is no prescriptive "path to healing" set out.

Each section includes text boxes headed "We now know ..." and "I wish someone had told me ..." with a series of messages related to the relevant theme for that section. These are very short and to the point statements, backed up by stories from individual women. An important feature of the book is the acknowledgement of a range of social and cultural factors, other than gender, which help shape each woman's experience, with sections devoted to deaf women, women with disabilities, lesbian women, older women, CALD women, and other specific groups.

Silent No More continues the tradition of survivor-led recovery for women who have experienced childhood sexual assault, with its deliberate emphasis on practical tips, jargon-free language, and a survivor-as-expert approach.

The production of *Silent No More* was funded through the Australian Government Office for Women. The book is available from WILMA Women's Health Centre: ph (02) 46 272 955.

Women With Disabilities Australia

Resource Manual on Violence Against Women With Disabilities

This publication consists of four booklets focused on a different aspect of the problem of violence against women with disabilities, targeted at specific audiences. Policy makers and researchers will be interested in the *Forgotten Sisters* booklet, a comprehensive review of global research and evidence, and effective responses to and prevention of violence against women with disabilities. Women's refuges are addressed in *More Than Just a Ramp*, a guide to developing a plan to eliminate discrimination against women with disabilities in service access and provision. *It's Not OK, It's Violence*, is addressed directly to women with disabilities experiencing violence and their support networks, containing information about seeking support and assistance about domestic violence. A

Life Like Mine, documents the courage and strength of women with disabilities who have experienced violence, through their personal narratives.

This will be an essential resource for anyone who works with women with disabilities, including service providers and policy makers. It will also be of great assistance to women with disabilities themselves as well as their friends, families and supporters.

The resource manual was funded by the Australian Government's Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Initiative through the Office for Women. For further details on the manual visit www.wwda.org.au/vrm2007.htm

The Jacaranda Project

Looking to a Future: A Research Report on the Jacaranda Project
Davidson, J. (2007). Northern Sydney Sexual Assault Service

REVIEW BY CAMERON BOYD

The Jacaranda Project, a group work program for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse, has been running at the Northern Sydney Sexual Assault Service, a NSW Health service, since 1997. This research, which was conducted between 2002–2004, makes an important contribution to the Australian evidence base for working with this client group.

The project

There were two facets to the Jacaranda Project. One was to provide effective, therapeutic group work for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse. The second to enhance the capacity of non-specialist workers to assist adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse, by teaming up an experienced specialist sexual assault counsellor with a generalist worker—who may be experienced in counselling or group work, but not specifically in working with this client group. This team then facilitated the group work program, with the assistance of regular clinical supervision.

The research

The *Looking to a Future* report adds to an earlier qualitative evaluation (McMaugh, 2001). Engaging a range of expertise in the evaluation of the project, this report uniquely provided both quantitative and in-depth qualitative data. One of the real strengths of the research was that it produced diverse kinds of evidence.

Community capacity building and practitioner development

The focus was not solely on the outcomes for group participants, but attention was also paid to the capacity-building aspects of the project. By introducing the perspectives of the workers involved in facilitating the groups, as well as their program managers, the research provides insight into the importance of attending to inter-facilitator dynamics and the crucial role of organisational support and effective supervision. As the group facilitators were recruited from their “host”

organisations, the commitment and support of their own managers was vital.

The group participants

Of course, the ultimate measure of the project was the service it delivered to group participants. As well as a qualitative component, the research team for *Looking to a Future* also included a rigorous quantitative study, utilising standardised psychological tests, repeat administrations, and a non-randomised treatment and wait-list control group. Psychological tests were administered at several points—before, during and after the group work program—measuring such constructs as shame and self-esteem, and symptoms of depression, anxiety, PTSD and general psychological symptoms. Analysis of these data demonstrated a marked (and statistically significant) improvement among group participants. These changes were generally sustained or improved at the 3-month follow-up. Comparison with the small control group (5 “controls” completed all the measures, compared to 39 of the group participants) suggested that the improvements for the participants were due to the group intervention. The small size of the control group was due to ethical and practical reasons (e.g., the ethical impossibility of placing potential clients on a “waiting list” after the point when it was known to the researcher that no further groups could be run because no further funding could be obtained).

The qualitative component of the research with group participants highlighted a number of benefits, such as their newfound knowledge and confidence in social, family, and occupational contexts. In some cases this led participants to active involvement in community education about child sexual abuse. Generally, the participants spoke about enjoying their lives more and feeling more connected.

Various factors identified as contributing to the success of the groups included:

- attention to safety from beginning to end—in the structure, content and process of the

groups, and in the stringent requirements for facilitators;

- assessment and selection of group members;
- availability of one-to-one counselling for group members who were finding it heavy going; and
- the inclusion of perpetrator tactics (“the grooming process”) as a discussion topic.

The impact of the research

The research team was concerned to avoid over-testing but wanted to ensure the process produced quantitative data that were valid and objective. There were six testing points throughout the research process, a fairly demanding schedule for the participants, which the research team acknowledge. Interestingly, some of the participants stated that they found the questionnaires themselves helpful:

My understanding was improved by the questionnaires [psychological measures used in the quantitative evaluation], because that assisted in validating and expressing thoughts and feelings that I hadn't previously understood about the source of why I was feeling in such a way. But they also helped me to actually verbally express what was happening ... Reading the questionnaires ended up giving me words, as did the group. Gave me words to say what was happening, what had happened. (p. 77)

This is a fascinating comment for researchers—it reminds us that whatever purposes we might have in mind with our research methods (or indeed,

whatever criticisms we might make of particular research methods), participants will always engage actively and make their own meanings from their involvement in the research process. It is fitting that this outcome from the use of standardised questionnaires is revealed through qualitative interviews. It also illustrates that, when it is conducted sensitively and thoughtfully, participating in research can be beneficial rather than a burden. Viewed from another angle, this comment also demonstrates just how powerful therapeutic discourse can be in shaping people's understandings of themselves and their experiences, underscoring the depth of responsibility and trust that practitioners work with.

Overall, the research demonstrated the effectiveness of the group work program and the value to both the participants and the facilitators. The report will be of value to researchers, practitioners and managers, as it both demonstrates and reports on good practice in each of these areas. It is sadly ironic that having produced this valuable research evidence documenting the success of the project, at the time of writing, there was no funding for the continuation of the project itself to build on these findings.

The full report and executive summary are available from the Northern Sydney Sexual Assault Service. Phone (02) 9926 7580, or email jdavidso@nscchahs.health.nsw.gov.au

Reference

McMaugh, K. (2001). *The Jacaranda Project for survivors of child sexual abuse: Evaluation report*. Northern Sydney Health Sexual Assault Service.

CONFERENCES

For a full list of upcoming conferences, seminars and events, visit the Conferences and Events page on the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault website:

www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/conferences.html

Victorian Offender Treatment Association (VOTA) Conference. Melbourne, 28–30 November 2007

REVIEW BY CAMERON BOYD

This biennial conference is one of the key forums for practitioners, policy makers and researchers concerned with the treatment of sexual offenders to share emerging knowledge, trends and best practice in their field. Presentations ranged from best practice in case management within the correctional system, to the complexities of providing appropriate out-of-home care for young people who sexually abuse, to the role of sexual dysfunction in offending and the use of electroencephalography (EEG) feedback therapy. There was also increased attention in this conference to the intervention needs of children who display problematic sexualised behaviours.

This year's key theme was collaboration between victim/survivor services and offender treatment. Partnership between the offender treatment field and victim/survivor advocates is important but challenging. Such collaboration has historically not been evident in the offender treatment/therapy field (Chung, O'Leary, & Hand, 2006; Boyd, 2007), notwithstanding practices such as advocate participation in parole boards for sexual offenders. Indeed, many of the difficulties revolve around (sometimes contested) understandings of sexual violence as a crime, and simultaneously as a field of therapy. Presentations by staff from Victoria Corrections and Department for Correctional Services, South Australia demonstrated the complexities that practitioners engage with around these questions.

Barbara Biggs, keynote speaker, spoke about her personal experiences of sexual exploitation and her story of healing, and provided some insights into the abuse tactics of the man who abused her as a child and young woman. Dr Bruce Perry presented the findings from scientific research on the neurological impacts of childhood trauma. Speaking with several practitioner-delegates at the conference, there was a sense of eagerness to take on board this information, but the key question was "how do I use it with my clients?" Perry's presentation implicitly raised other crucial questions for the field, primarily: how to acknowledge the gendered dimensions of sexual violence (if violence, explained as impulsivity, is related to childhood trauma and its effects on the developing brain, why do men commit most sexual violence?); and the "evolutionary stories" that accompany the scientific findings (again, with some very problematic built-in assumptions about gender and human nature). The potential danger of neurobiological explanations, when not considered along with social and ethical factors, is that we are left with a picture of human behaviour as socio-biologically determined, leaving wide open questions of agency and personal responsibility, which are so important in this field. The challenge of the presentation for the delegates (openly acknowledged by Perry in response to a question about the issue of choice and responsibility), lies in the application of the research to the practice of offender treatment.

Perhaps the most comprehensive engagement with the intersection between victim/survivors and offender therapy was "Victim-led Therapy with Intrafamilial Sex Offenders: A Pathway to Healing" by Jenny Dwyer and Robyn Miller. Their progressive approach to offender therapy prioritised the healing of the victim/survivor, and emphasised the importance of justice in this process. This spoke to many complex problems, such as justice for victim/survivors when formal legal process are not an option or cannot deliver; the desire of some victim/survivors to maintain a connection of some kind with the offender; the importance of the offender "giving something up"—not for their own redemption but for the benefit of the victim/survivor; and the notion of the victim/survivor as the expert. This last point has huge implications for offender treatment—not just in specific cases of intra-familial sexual abuse, but in offender treatment generally, and as a framework for understanding and researching sexual offending.

For more information visit www.vota.org.au/news/07_Conf.html

References

- Boyd, C. (2007). Perspectives on the treatment of men and boys who sexually abuse. *ACSSA Aware*, 15. Melbourne: Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, Australian Institute of Family Studies. Available at <http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/pubs/newsletter/n15.html#perspectives>
- Chung, D., O'Leary, P. J., & Hand, T. (2006). *Sexual violence offenders: Prevention and intervention approaches* (ACSSA Issues, No. 5). Melbourne: Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, Australian Institute of Family Studies. Available at <http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/pubs/issue/i5.html>

At the time of writing, **Cameron Boyd** was a Research Officer at the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Wartime rape

Collective memory and the law

Interview with Dr Nicola Henry

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED VIA EMAIL WITH CAMERON BOYD

ACSSA: Can you describe the major themes of the book you are working on? What has prompted your research in this area?

Dr Nicola Henry (NH): My book examines the relationship between wartime rape, collective memory and the law. The book specifically explores the role of international criminal trials in not only prosecuting mass rape in the aftermath of genocide and armed conflict, but also in shaping collective memory—either by silence or by remembrance and recognition. The book will examine the ways in which mass rape, through criminal prosecution, has captured public attention (if at all); contributed to social solidarity through shared memory; and engendered social division between particular communities with contesting versions of the “truth”.

Some sub-themes include: (1) the impossibility of language for capturing the harm of sexual violence, particularly within international criminal jurisdictions; (2) the ethics of replicating post-conflict, victim narratives of rape within the public realm (e.g., the dangers of sensationalism and voyeurism); and (3) the relationship between silence and disclosure, and the efficacy of a therapeutic paradigm of western justice.

The book is in part based on my PhD research, which was on international rape trials and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (submitted 2005), as well as ideas that have developed subsequently.

ACSSA: Even in the most horrific and well-known instances of mass violence against a population, the perpetration of sexualised violence often seems to be overlooked or minimised. You mention the “open secret” of military rape, which recalls the silence surrounding rape in general. What are the specific dynamics of this silence in the context of war and conflict? What are the consequences of this for the survivors of rape in these situations, and in some cases their children?

NH: Since time immemorial, the “open secret” paradox has characterised the phenomenon of wartime sexual violence. The rape of women at various historical junctures has captured the attention of artists, writers, historians, human rights activists and politicians, each with their own agenda. Some famous historical examples include: the story of Helen of Troy in Homer’s Iliad; the rape of the Sabine women; the mass rapes of German women by advancing Russian soldiers, and the systematic sexual enslavement of so-called “comfort women” during the Second World War; and the mass rapes of women in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda during the 1990s. While wartime rape is often sensationalised and immortalised, at the same time there has been (and continues to be) a deafening silence on this issue, particularly in terms of survivors experiences, as well as post-conflict justice (e.g., international criminal tribunals).

Nationalism in part explains both the attention to and the denial of wartime sexual violence. On the one hand, rape has been used as propaganda to garner popular support for victimised nations. On the other hand, denial and silence minimises the accountability and responsibility for these crimes for both individuals and nations (one example is the Japanese Government’s response of denial in regards to the “comfort women” issue¹). The silence surrounding sexual violence in wartime is also personal and individualised. Victims of atrocities may keep their experiences to themselves for fear of shame, stigma and ostracism. Consider the following example. In response to allegations of rape in the former Yugoslavia, one of the accused wrote a fax to a journalist denying any involvement, saying “I take full responsibility that there were no rapes, least of all did I try to rape [X]. Why would I do that? She’s 45 and I’m only 26. Especially since the woman is unattractive. The way she was, I wouldn’t lean my bike against her, let alone rape her.” I think this quote sums up why many women would rather just remain quiet about their experiences.

On the one hand, rape has been used as propaganda to garner popular support for victimised nations. On the other hand, denial and silence minimises the accountability and responsibility for these crimes for both individuals and nations.

1 See *ACSSA Aware 15* for an interview with Anna Song of Friends of “Comfort Women” Australia. www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/pubs/newsletter/n15.html#friends

The critical distinction, however, is that there is a big difference between choosing silence and being silenced.

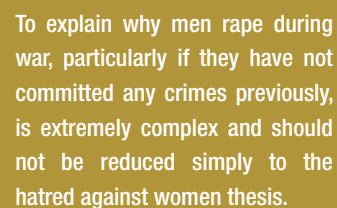
The consequences of silence for victims of wartime rape are varied. For some, it may serve as the ultimate coping mechanism—a chance to move on; to forget and possibly even forgive, or at least it may represent a way to avoid being labelled a rape victim, which is always an uncomfortable and stigmatising label. For others of course, silence, denial and the lack of recognition represents the ultimate injustice.

In addition to the problems faced by women in the aftermath of armed conflict, wartime rape often leads to serious intergenerational affects, including the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, the breakdown of community relationships and the impact of trauma on children, particularly those born of rape.

ACSSA: Susan Brownmiller famously declared that rape is always essentially an act of war, consciously committed by men as a group against women. To what extent do you think this analysis accounts for mass rape in war, and what are the limitations (if any) of this perspective?

NH: In 1975, Susan Brownmiller's book *Against Our Will* was groundbreaking. This was particularly the case in terms of wartime rape and for me personally, her chapter on this was invaluable for my PhD research. For example, when I was looking through the original transcripts of the Tokyo war crimes proceedings following the Second World War, I relied heavily on Brownmiller for finding the page numbers (a life saver considering the table of contents for the transcripts—compiled in the 1980s at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand—did not have any reference to women or rape, despite the extensive testimonies of rape and enslavement entered into evidence for these proceedings).

In relation to whether I agree with Brownmiller's statement, the answer is: to some extent. Rape during wartime (and indeed peacetime) is very gendered: it is predominantly perpetrated by men, and women are predominantly the victims of this crime. However, to explain why men rape during war, particularly if they have not committed any crimes previously, is extremely complex and should not be reduced simply to the hatred against women thesis. Men who rape in war are a heterogeneous group of offenders. Some men rape because they have an opportunity to get away with it (or think they might get away with it); some rape because others are doing it and there is a pressure for group solidarity; some men "hate" women; others use women as a way to vent their frustrations. Some are motivated by a perverse nationalistic drive. Others are forced to do it with a gun against their head. So there are crucial differences between offenders, but you can't discount the collective level either and war is a man's game and females (and other males) unfortunately are targeted because of their race, ethnicity, religion, age, and of course gender. Wartime rape can therefore be understood as an extension of the systemic gender inequalities that exist during peacetime, so Brownmiller was on to something, I just think her argument is overly simplistic. And of course, not all men rape in wartime! In fact, the majority don't.



To explain why men rape during war, particularly if they have not committed any crimes previously, is extremely complex and should not be reduced simply to the hatred against women thesis.

ACSSA: Although there have been some successes in prosecuting rape offenders in military situations, what are some of the major shortcomings of formal legal procedures in achieving justice for survivors?

NH: The prosecution of sexual violence as a crime of genocide, torture, crimes against humanity and grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions represents a monumental advance within international humanitarian law. This contributes to the preservation of collective memory through establishing a historical record of rape. It represents acknowledgement of the harms done, through prosecution and punishment. And the process has, to some extent, been inclusive of victims who have historically been denied a voice and a platform upon which to seek justice. Like the national apology given to the Stolen Generation in Australia recently, legal redress is just one step in the justice equation. Full justice goes beyond the prosecution of offenders. It also involves the identification of missing bodies, the return of property, reparations, apologies, economic security, safety, stability, community reconciliation and so on.

In relation to victims who testify at international criminal courts, we know very little about their experiences and whether giving testimony provides them with a measure of comfort or whether it contributes to further harm. As with offenders, victims constitute a diverse and heterogeneous group of people so some will have positive experiences, while others may find the legal process upsetting due to hostile cross-examination, indifferent and insensitive judges, a limited space to tell one's "story", light sentences, overturned verdicts, and acquittals. It is important to acknowledge that victims and witnesses of wartime atrocities may experience intense fear due to the large numbers of perpetrators during conflict and the associated fear of reprisal from individuals, their friends and family members. During armed conflict, displacement and the deaths of large numbers of people within the community often means that the usual support structures are not in place to help victims through the process of grief, trauma and recovery.

ACSSA: Following on from that, there seems to be a growing interest in non-legal means of recognition and some form of social justice for rape survivors, including public memorials and community projects. Can you describe some examples of these and the impact they can have for remembering “mass rape”? (I am thinking for example of the recent public campaigns for the Japanese Government to recognise the sexual enslavement of the “comfort women”).

NH: The law inevitably falls short in providing justice to numerous victims of warfare and genocide. For victims of rape, testifying at a criminal trial is probably a very challenging experience because to talk about rape, regardless of context, is never easy—it forces you to refer explicitly to your body parts and frequently closes off language that reframes the abuse in psychological or emotional terms. Other post-conflict mechanisms, such as apologies, truth commissions, and memorials, have different priorities and thus it may be much easier for victims to seek recognition and redress through these alternative avenues. Of course, they are not without their associated costs, harms and dangers. For example, in September 2004, Bosnian Muslim women were pelted with eggs, stones and insults when they attempted to erect a memorial plaque to honour the memory of Foča women who were raped, tortured and sexually enslaved during the 1992–95 conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This is a stark reminder of how contested collective memories of rape can ignite ethnic or national hostilities, generate collective guilt and engender the ostracism of victims. At the same time, collective memories of rape are potent markers of trauma and injustice, validating the experiences of victims, and contributing to conceptions of national identity.

I interviewed an incredible woman who had been sexually enslaved by the Japanese during the Second World War. She told me that a journalist who interviewed her said, “oh well, what can you expect? It was war.”

For my PhD research, I interviewed an incredible woman who had been sexually enslaved by the Japanese during the Second World War. She told me that a journalist who interviewed her said, “oh well, what can you expect? It was war.” Another former “comfort woman” (please note that the term “comfort woman” is a euphemism and I personally do not like using it hence the quotation marks) was accused of trying to make money when she first told her story in the Philippines, and her granddaughter was teased by neighbours. So even after fifty years, women are still fighting to have their stories believed, recognised and taken seriously. In some ways a criminal trial is more able to provide official recognition than many social justice projects, but obviously a range of mechanisms are vital. I would imagine that none of these strategies are easy for the women involved, but at least there is hope that doing something will help to ease the pain.

ACSSA: Anything else you would like to say about the book?

NH: There are very few books that actually examine wartime rape and those that do are limited by the age of publication, narrow focus, and in some instances, a sensationalist approach that some have argued exploits the testimonies of survivors. I am hoping to write a book that examines the way mass rape through criminal prosecution has captured public attention, and to look at the ways in which memory ignites vigorous debate and controversy. But I also want to be reflexive and ethical in presenting victim narratives, and to raise some of the issues I have grappled with during my research. I hope that the book will be accessible to both an academic and non-academic audience. I realise that this is an ambitious goal, but I think the distinction between these two audiences does not always have to be so rigid. I hope to have the book published in 2009.

Dr Nicola Henry is a Lecturer in Legal Studies at LaTrobe University, Melbourne.

Publish in ACSSA *Aware!*

There are so few forums in which those working in the sexual assault field can share information with one another. ACSSA provides one of these forums through the document you are reading—*ACSSA Aware*. We are keen to publish articles written by you within this newsletter on the topic of sexual assault. We are particularly keen on publishing articles that will be of interest to those working in the sector, and to any and all interested in preventing sexual assault.

We accept article contributions of up to 5,000 words. We also accept film and book reviews, and news of conferences, training and research projects of up to 1,500 words.

If you would like to contribute an article or review to *ACSSA Aware*, please email a Microsoft Word document to acssa@aifs.gov.au, or post to ACSSA, Level 20, 485 La Trobe Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000.

You should also view our “contributor’s guidelines” on the ACSSA website www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/pubs/pubsmenu.html

LITERATURE HIGHLIGHTS

COMPILED BY JOAN KELLEHER, LIBRARIAN

The following are a selection of resources recently received by the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault (ACSSA) Library. Print resources are available via the interlibrary loan system. Contact your local library for details. Electronic resources are available directly via the web address. The inclusion of a publication in this list does not necessarily mean that it is endorsed by ACSSA.

Adult survivors of child abuse

Exploring the relationship between poverty, childhood adversity and child abuse from the perspective of adulthood. (2007). Frederick, J., & Goddard, C. *Child Abuse Review*, 16(5), 323–341.

This article discusses the relationship between early childhood abuse or other adversity and later poverty in adulthood. It reviews risk and protective factors, and family poverty as a risk factor for child abuse, and features results from a study of emergency relief recipients in regional Victoria on their life circumstances, including experience of child abuse, bereavement, family breakdown, foster care, and mental health. The study findings support the ideas of negative chain effects, or pathways into poverty caused by accumulated adversity.

Behaviour change programs

Men's behaviour change programs in a regional and rural context. (2007). Laming, C., & Fontana, M. *New Community Quarterly*, 5(4), 36–39.

Drawing on the operations and practices of two Gippsland men's behaviour change programs (MBCPs), this article discusses the role MBCPs can play in a rural context, including aspects of community development. It covers the establishment of MBCPs and the importance of integration with the aims of other family violence programs, safety of victims, links to the justice system, components and process of the MBCP.

Child sexual abuse

It's my body: Calls to ChildLine Scotland about sexual health and wellbeing. (2007). Newall, E., & Lewis, R. (Research Briefing, No. 34). Edinburgh: Centre for Research on Families and Relationships. Online only. <http://www.cfr.ac.uk/Reports/rb34.pdf>

ChildLine Scotland is an anonymous support hotline for children aged 5–18 years. This paper summarises findings from a research study on sexual health and wellbeing calls to the hotline, including the nature, range, and content of caller concerns, and support strategies the callers may have employed. A wide range of concerns were reported, including "facts of life", sexual abuse, pregnancy, sexual and romantic relationships, and sexuality.

Costs of violence

Why assess the health impacts of domestic violence policy? Making the case for the application of health impact assessment to domestic violence policy development. (2008). Potter, J. L. *Just Policy*, 47, 46–52.

Recent Australian research has highlighted the extensive health costs of domestic violence; in Victoria, domestic violence has been identified as having a greater impact on the health of women under the age of 45 than any other risk factor. Policy decision-making in non-health sectors is clearly influential in determining health outcomes of pervasive social problems such as domestic violence. Health impact assessment (HIA) is a tool that can be used to assess how a specified policy or practice might affect the health of a population. This paper draws on examples of domestic violence policy development where potential and actual impacts on health have been identified, and on case studies where HIA has been applied within the domestic violence policy context. The discussion of the role of HIA does not suggest that domestic violence should be viewed only as a health issue; rather, it seeks to show that HIA can contribute to addressing the issue of domestic violence by providing a consistent focus on the health of the women and families experiencing the violence across all relevant policy sectors.

Counselling

Becoming respectful: Approaches to relationship counselling in situations of domestic violence and abuse. (2007). Jenkins, A. In E. Shaw & J. Crawley (Eds.), *Couple therapy in Australia: Issues emerging from practice*. (pp. 231–263). Kew, Vic: PsychOz Publications.

The use of couple counselling approaches in situations of abuse and domestic violence is controversial because of concern about the abused partner's safety. This chapter argues that relationship counselling can be conducted in ways that are safe and respectful to women. It explains how this can be achieved, discussing invitational practice, assessing readiness for engagement in a couple context, preparation for couple counselling, individual information forums, couple information forums, couple counselling meetings, clarification of readiness in a couple meeting, reflecting on individual responsibilities, acknowledging the effects of abuse, establishing a relationship focus, challenging interactional restraints and becoming respectful of difference.

Cultural issues

Adult sexual violence in Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Australia. (2007). Taylor, N., & Putt, J. Canberra, ACT: Australian Institute of Criminology. Available at: <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi2/tandi345t.html>

Knowledge about sexual violence against women from Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds is scant. While many of the reasons for not reporting sexual violence to police are likely to be similar to those for mainstream women, women from diverse backgrounds can face additional cultural and related factors affecting their ability and/or willingness to report violence. This paper reports on findings from a multi dimensional study investigating these issues. Participants indicated the need for appropriate interpreters when reporting sexual violence, a preference for female police officers to handle the case, protection of complainants, and more effective dissemination of information on how the criminal justice system processes sexual assault cases. There is a clear need to address fundamental attitudes and beliefs within particular communities about sexual violence and this will require strong community leadership and the support of local community members. (Author abstract, edited)

Date rape

Victim credibility in acquaintance rape cases: The influence of complainant intoxication and expectations about alcohol-involved sexual behaviour. (2007). O'Brien, K., & Goodman-Delahunty, J. Melbourne, Vic: Australian Psychological Society.

Victim credibility is the most influential factor in police and prosecutorial decisions to litigate a sexual assault claim. Perceived credibility is influenced by situational factors and social perceptions about what constitutes "real rape". Victim intoxication influences perceptions of sexual assault through general expectations about one's own behaviour and that of others. This study investigated the influence of complainant intoxication (sober v moderately intoxicated) on attributions of blame, responsibility, credibility, likelihood of charging and conviction in an acquaintance rape case. Participants were 197 university students and community volunteers who read controverted "he said, she said" police statements about an alleged sexual assault. The complainant was perceived as more credible and less responsible and blameworthy than the defendant. However, complainant intoxication did not directly influence perceptions of complainant or defendant credibility, responsibility or blame. (Author abstract, edited)

Dating violence

Making meaning of relationships: Young women's experiences and understandings of dating violence. (2007). Chung, D. *Violence Against Women*, 13(12), 1274–1295.

This article explores young women's attitudes towards dating violence, based on a survey of 14–18 year old teenagers in Adelaide, South Australia. The survey investigated dating behaviour, social pressures, power,

sense of equality, dating expectations, and the young women's understandings and experiences of dating violence. The participants describe the positive and negative aspects of dating, and the pressure to be in a dating relationship. Most had experienced harassment, coercion, violence, or abuse. Concepts of equality, identity, and peer relations influence the women's understandings of dating violence, and are particularly important for prevention strategies.

Disabled women

WWDA violence against women with disabilities resource manual. (2007). Women with Disabilities Australia. Rosny Park, Tasmania: Author (4 booklets, 1 CD-ROM).

This resource kit brings together 4 booklets on understanding and preventing violence against women with disabilities, and supporting women who have experienced violence.

1. *A life like mine! Narratives from women with disabilities who experience violence*, features stories and poetry of resilience and hope by women who have experienced violence.
2. *Forgotten sisters: A global review of violence against women with disabilities*, examines the incidence and prevalence of violence against women with disabilities, and advocacy and policy issues. It includes an annotated bibliography of resources.
3. *It's not ok, it's violence: Information about domestic violence and women with disabilities*, is written for women with disabilities and provides information on domestic violence and support services in Australia.
4. *More than just a ramp: A guide for women's refuges to develop Disability Discrimination Act action plans*, is a guide for women's refuges and services on how to develop and implement a *Disability Discrimination Act* Action Plan.

Domestic violence

The scale and nature of family violence in New Zealand: A review and evaluation of knowledge. (2007). Lievore, D., & Mayhew, P. Wellington, NZ: Ministry of Social Development. Online only. <http://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/work-areas/families-whanau/scale-and-nature.doc>

Research data about the nature and scale of family violence in New Zealand are collected in this report. The quality of the evidence is assessed and a need for more research into areas such as elder abuse and neglect, and violence in same sex relationships is identified. The report covers five main types of family violence: intimate partner violence, dating violence, child abuse and neglect, elder abuse and neglect, and sibling abuse. A separate section covers family violence among Maori and Pacific peoples.

Evaluating services

Evaluating domestic and family violence programs and services. (2008). Braaf, R. *Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse Newsletter*, 31, 5–8.

The evaluation of domestic and family violence interventions is essential to ensure that relevant and effective programs and services are offered. This article focuses on key issues for good practice in evaluating domestic and family violence programs and services. It discusses: the need for evaluators to have an understanding of domestic and family violence; conducting participatory evaluation; adopting an action research approach; timing the evaluation; identifying performance measures; collecting baseline data; promoting data quality; making use of findings; ethical practice and safety of participants.

Intimate partner abuse

Intimate partner abuse among Australian students: Prevalence and attitudes. (2007). Grant, C., Xenos, S., Smith, D., et al. In K. Moore (Ed.), *Psychology making an impact: Proceedings of the Australian Psychological Society 42nd Annual Conference, 25–29 September 2007, Brisbane, Qld.* (pp. 169–174). Melbourne, Vic: Australian Psychological Society.

Intimate partner abuse (IPA) may be defined as a pattern of deliberate physical, sexual or psychological abuse within a married, de facto, dating or courting relationship. Previous research demonstrates that such abuse is a significant problem in dating relationships among young people. The aim of this paper was to investigate IPA attitudes and behaviours in an Australian university and TAFE student sample. Findings about the prevalence of IPA and levels of victim blaming attitudes among Australian students are presented. The importance of attitudes towards women for understanding IPA attitudes was demonstrated. There were no significant relationships found between attitudinal variables and behavioural variables. The implications of these findings for the development of IPA prevention programs are discussed. (Author abstract)

Juror attitudes

Juror attitudes and biases in sexual assault cases. (2007). Taylor, N. Canberra, ACT: Australian Institute of Criminology. Available at: <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi2/tandi344.html>

A large majority of sexual assaults are not reported to police and only about 10% of reported incidents result in a guilty finding. This article examines findings from two recent studies that show that judgements in rape trials are influenced more by jurors' attitudes, beliefs and biases about rape than by the facts presented. It discusses the existence of stereotypical beliefs within the community about rape and victims of rape, and what needs to be done if conviction rates are to improve.

Law reform

Understandings of the criminal justice system and domestic violence. (2007). Felus, J., Kaye, P., & Lloyd, E. Elizabeth South, SA: Northern Domestic Violence Service. Online only. http://www.courts.sa.gov.au/courts/magistrates/Documents/CJS_Manual.pdf

This manual is a resource for domestic violence workers and organisations that interact with the criminal justice

system in South Australia. It covers: documenting a domestic violence incident, domestic violence legislation, risk assessment and safety planning framework, risk and safety reports and updates, victims of crime compensation, accessing court outcomes, bail and bond conditions, the parole board, victim register, promoting criminal justice system intervention, and statistics.

Code of practice for family violence court based (applicant) programs. (2007). Plunkett, C. Carlton South, Vic: Federation of Community Legal Centres (Vic). Online only. http://www.communitylaw.org.au/fedclc/cb_pages/casework_family_violence.php

The code of practice is intended for lawyers and other program staff in community legal centres who provide court-based duty lawyer services in family violence intervention order matters. It is solely concerned with court-based practice for intervention order matters, providing guidelines to legal practitioners for the provision of assistance in family violence matters. It includes a set of tools to inform practice and the management and operation of court-based family violence programs, and outlines the approach, processes and procedures used by staff to provide high quality services.

Mental health

Women, catastrophe and mental health. (2008). Raphael, B., Taylor, M., & McAndrew, V. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 42(1), 13–23.

This paper examines the concept of catastrophic experience, its relationship to the range of acute and prolonged stressors to which women may be exposed and the broad impacts on their mental health and wellbeing. Catastrophic experiences include intimate partner abuse, sexual assault and child physical and sexual abuse. Women's experiences of loss through the violent deaths of children and loved ones may also have such enduring impacts. The catastrophes of war, conflict, genocide, sexual exploitation and refugee status differentially affect large numbers of women, directly and through their concerns for the care of their children and loved ones. There is recognition of the large numbers of women currently experiencing catastrophe in ongoing ways that may be silent and unacknowledged. This is significant for clinical care and population impacts, and in the losses for women across such contexts. (Journal abstract, edited)

Mother–child relationship

Tackling domestic and family violence: Strengthening the mother–child relationship as a key intervention strategy. (2007). Humphreys, C. In *CROCCS International Conference: Overcoming violence and poverty, August 2007*. Mackay, Qld: Mackay Centre for Research on Community and Children's Services. Online only. <http://www.croccs.org.au>

The need to attend to both the adult and child victim where there is family violence provides challenging territory for child protection workers and services providing support for families with vulnerable children. Traditionally, the focus on the child, particularly in statutory child protection intervention, has created a practice that has had a tendency towards "mother

blaming” where there is family violence. This paper argues that family violence needs to be reconceptualised to acknowledge that perpetrator violence and abuse is also an attack on the mother–child relationship when the adult victim is the child’s mother. Intervention therefore needs to acknowledge this dynamic and explore the potential to strengthen this relationship in the aftermath of violence. A project, “Talking to My Mum”, is discussed to illustrate the potential to intervene to strengthen this relationship and the requirement of workers to understand this dynamic in work where children are living with family violence. (Author abstract)

“Talking to My Mum”: Strengthening relationships between mothers and children in the aftermath of family violence. (2007). Humphreys, C. *Social Work Now*, 37, 9–11. Online only. http://www.cyf.govt.nz/SocialWorkNow_4616.htm

The article reports on an action research project that worked with women, children and refuge workers, developed from collaboration between researchers at the University of Warwick and Tendering Women’s Aid in the UK. The 3-year project developed activities that could address the attack represented by domestic violence on the relationship between children and mothers through strengthening this relationship.

Out-of-home care

Out-of-home care as a response to family violence: Some lessons from a cross-national study. (2007). Thobun, J. In *CROCCS International Conference: Overcoming violence and poverty, August 2007*. Mackay, Qld: Mackay Centre for Research on Community and Children’s Services. Online only. <http://www.croccs.org.au>

There are some circumstances in which it is necessary for children to be removed from the damaging effects of family violence, either temporarily or permanently. However, in recent years there has been increasing concern about the inability of care systems in English speaking countries to meet the needs of these children. Although data sets collated from national administrative sources can be useful in providing a context for effective policies and practice interventions, comparisons between successful interventions in different countries may result in misleading conclusions. This paper discusses a research project that analysed similarities and differences between in care statistics in apparently similar countries, and offers possible explanations for the differences. The countries included in the research represented a range of different approaches to child welfare. The countries and states were: New South Wales, Queensland, Alberta, Ontario, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Illinois, North Carolina and Washington.

Police role

Arresting practices: Exploring issues of dual arrest for domestic violence. (2007). Braaf, R., & Sneddon, C. Sydney, NSW: Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse. Available at: http://www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au/PDF%20files/Stakeholder%20paper_%203.pdf

www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au/PDF%20files/Stakeholder%20paper_%203.pdf

Since the 1980s, western nations have sought to improve police response to the crime of domestic violence. One strategy is the immediate arrest of perpetrators, which protects victims and deters future violence. However, pro-arrest policies have led to a rise in the number of dual arrests, due to such factors as gender neutral arrest policies, lack of training, and difficulty in determining who the primary aggressor is. Drawing largely upon American and Australian research, this article discusses the use of violence in relationships; the impact of arrest on a victim’s safety, wellbeing, and legal opportunities; pro-arrest and mandatory arrest policies; and situational factors in arrest decision making, such as credibility and alcohol. The article concludes with recommendations on police protocols and training, and integrated policing and prosecution, that could reduce dual arrests.

Power and violence

Power and control in family violence. (2007). Hann, S. *Social Work Now*, 37, 17–25. Online only. http://www.cyf.govt.nz/SocialWorkNow_4616.htm

This article seeks to assist conversations and learning about one aspect of family violence, by outlining the power and control analysis of partner abuse that is used by the National Collective of Independent Women’s Refuges in New Zealand. The “power and control wheel” is the main practice tool used, and it is described. Both analysis and the wheel have been adapted by those considering the intersections of gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and disability in the lives of women, and the overlap of partner and child abuse.

Prevention programs

Domestic and dating violence peer education program: A pilot project. Final report. (2007). Davies, D. Perth, WA: Women’s Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services (WA). Available at: <http://womenscouncil.vividcluster.crox.net.au/getfile.aspx?Type=document&ID=274&ObjectType=3&ObjectID=257>

A pilot peer education program designed to raise awareness about domestic and dating violence among teachers and students was conducted in two Western Australian secondary schools during 2007. This evaluation report provides information about the background of the project and what it achieved. The report comments on understandings of family and domestic violence and dating violence before the project, increased knowledge and awareness about domestic and dating violence, improved attitudes about domestic and dating violence and healthy relationships, increased help seeking behaviours, peer educator and peer educator support, links and partnerships between schools and service providers, and feedback from school staff.

Youth “at risk”? Young people, sexual health and consent. (2007). Powell, A. *Youth Studies Australia*, 26(4), 21–28.

In Australia, there is a growing expectation that sexuality education should reduce the risks associated with youth sex by providing young people with information on protecting their sexual health. However, this information may be insufficient to ensure that young people make choices that support their sexual safety and autonomy. This paper considers the adverse implications of the problematisation of youth sexuality for young people's sexual health and autonomy. It draws on interviews and focus group data from 117 young people to explore the varying degrees of opportunity that youth have to actively negotiate and promote safe and consensual sex. Finally, implications for sexuality education and violence prevention are briefly considered. (Journal abstract)

Preventing violence before it occurs: A framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria. (2007). Victorian Health Promotion Foundation. Carlton South, Vic: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation. Available at: <http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/preventingviolence/>

In 2004, VicHealth research showed that violence was the most significant risk factor for the health of Australian women aged 15–45 years. This report, commissioned by the Victorian Government in 2006, reviews international evidence regarding the factors causing violence against women, and models of good practice designed to prevent it. The report is particularly concerned with building the evidence and knowledge base for primary prevention. Evidence suggests that most violence against women is perpetrated by men known to them; the primary focus of the report is therefore on preventing, or reducing the impact of, relationship violence. However, elements of the

framework developed in the report may be transferable to prevention activity that addresses other forms of interpersonal violence against women.

Sex offenders

The shaming of sexual offenders: Risk, retribution and reintegration. (2007). McAlinden, A. M. Oxford: Hart.

Sex offenders, particularly those who offend against children, feature prominently in contemporary law and order debates. This book argues that retributive responses have failed and that the justice system needs to explore alternative forms of justice in order to improve the outcome for victims, offenders and communities affected by sexual offences.

Sexual offences

Investigating and detecting recorded offences of rape. (2007). Feist, A., Ashe, J., Lawrence, J., et al. London: Home Office. Online only. <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs07/rdsolr1807.pdf>

This report summarises the findings of a study of attrition in reported offences of rape of a female in England and Wales in 2003–04. It was designed to explore several aspects around the detection and conviction of rape cases. The report examines the reasons behind the decline in recorded detection rates for rape since 1997 and why marked variations in detection rates exist in different forces. It also explores what factors best predict whether a recorded offence gets to court and results in a conviction.



We welcome your feedback

Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault

Help to shape the work of the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault. We are interested in hearing your views on the best way to meet the needs of our stakeholders. If you have any comments on services that could be offered, possible topics for publications or areas of research, please fill in the section below and return it to the Institute. Comments can also be provided on-line via the ACSSA website, or email us at: acssa@aifs.gov.au

What other services would you find useful for your work?

What topics would you liked covered in ACSSA's publications, or considered for research projects?

ACSSA services

The Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault is funded by the Office for Women, Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, through the National Initiative to Combat Sexual Assault in Australia. ACSSA provides stakeholders with a variety of services (see below) and is located at the Australian Institute of Family Studies in Melbourne.

Resources

ACSSA is building a collection of publications and best practice literature, reports, and training resources to inform initiatives and programs directed at improving the understanding of, and response to, sexual assault. These materials are available for browsing at the Australian Institute of Family Studies Information Centre, or may be borrowed through the interlibrary loan system. Bibliographic information on these resources may be searched online via the Institute's catalogue.

Research and advisory service

ACSSA's research staff can provide specialist advice and information on current issues that impact on the response to sexual assault. Email research queries to acssa@aifs.gov.au

Policy advice

ACSSA offers policy advice to the Australian Government and other government agencies on matters relating to sexual assault, intervention and pathways to prevention.

Publications

ACSSA produces *Issues* papers, the *ACSSA Wrap* (short resource papers) and newsletters, which are mailed free of charge to members of the mailing list. Publications can also be received electronically.

Promising Practice database

ACSSA is continuing to build its Promising Practice database, to document and publicise best practice projects and activities being undertaken in relation to sexual assault.

Research

ACSSA staff undertake primary and secondary research projects, commissioned by government and non-government agencies.

Email alert list

ACSSA-Alert keeps members posted on what's new at the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault and in the sexual assault field generally.

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