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Female Students' Perceptions of Sexual Victimization in the College Environment

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Providence College

A project based upon an independent investigation,  
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
For the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Social Work

2013

### Abstract

Research indicates that sexual victimization is a significant problem on college campuses in the United States. Ranging from unwanted sexual contact to rape, sexual victimization of female students is not only a pervasive issue in the college environment, but it also may lead to devastating short- and long-term consequences for survivors, including physical, psychological, and emotional implications. In an effort to better understand the scope of this issue, the researcher attempted to conduct a comprehensive study about female students' perceptions of sexual victimization at a mid-size, Northeastern, Catholic, liberal arts college. Participants' recommendations for ways in which colleges can educate students and provide better resources for survivors were a significant result of the study, along with findings concerning the role of alcohol and victimization myth beliefs. Implications for future research and policy include assessing the effectiveness of current sexual assault education and prevention initiatives, as well as further examining the contributing factors to incidences of sexual victimization in the college environment.

### **Female Students' Perceptions of Sexual Victimization in the College Environment**

Sexual victimization, defined as, “any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the explicit consent of the recipient” (U.S. Department of Justice, 2012), is a well-known, but sometimes taboo problem on college campuses in the United States. According to a study by Ochowski and Gidycz (2012), “college women are at especially high risk to experience various forms of sexual victimization, ranging from unwanted sexual contact to rape” (264). In fact, researchers estimate that 20 to 25 percent of women will experience some type of sexual victimization during their four years of undergraduate study (Vladutiu, Martin, & Macy, 2010, p. 67). Sexual victimization of female students is not only a pervasive issue in the college environment, but it also may lead to devastating short- and long-term consequences, including physical, psychological, and emotional implications.

Research on college sexual assault has often focused on aspects of peer culture that promote “rape-supportive beliefs and practices” (Sweeney, 2010, p. 3). These beliefs and practices contribute to what is known as “rape culture” (Sweeney, 2010, p. 3), and they are comprised of attitudes, values, and behaviors that normalize men’s sexual aggression towards women. Many of these attitudes, values and beliefs emerge from the college “party culture” in which sexual promiscuity and aggression are sanctioned. Because most sexual assaults that occur on college campuses across the U.S. often involve alcohol and happen during or soon after partying, the U.S. Department of Justice was prompted to define “party rape” as distinct from other kinds of rape (Sweeney, 2010, p. 3). “Party rapes” tend to occur on or near college campuses and entail targeting

intoxicated women, which might include “plying a woman with alcohol” (Sweeney, 2010, p. 3).

This study explores sexual victimization specific to the college environment. By integrating different methods used by researchers in the past, the researcher hopes to conduct a comprehensive study about sexual victimization at a mid-size, Northeastern, Catholic, liberal arts college. Prior methods used by researchers include examination of bystander intervention, victimization myth beliefs, and characteristics of perpetrators. Bystander intervention involves the role of fellow students in enabling or stopping instances of sexual victimization from happening, while victimization myth beliefs involve common misconceptions people have about sexual assault. By examining these factors, this study aims to investigate how females at a specific college perceive their risk for sexual victimization.

It is also important to examine why incidences of sexual victimization are not reported. According to the 2012 Annual Safety and Security Report issued by a mid-size, Northeastern, Catholic liberal arts college, there have been six total reported sexual assaults on campus, with five being defined as forcible rape and one being defined as non-forcible. These six sexual assaults occurred from 2009 to 2011. Of the five reported forcible rapes, two occurred in 2009, one occurred in 2010, and two occurred in 2011. The one reported non-forcible rape occurred in 2010. Each of these reported sexual assaults happened in on-campus residence facilities. Because literature identifies rates of sexual victimization as being much higher, this study aims to investigate why participants think instances of sexual victimization are not reported as often as they occur. Low reported rates of sexual assault conflict with literature, as well as with the perceptions of

campus experts who identify rates of sexual assault as much higher than officially reported.

Due to the prevalence of sexual victimization on college campuses, the researcher is also interested in students' recommendations for sexual victimization awareness and prevention. Literature has identified different characteristics of awareness and education programs that have been successful in the past, so it would be informative for the researcher to survey participants about their recommendations.

Social workers need to have knowledge about sexual victimization because it is widespread and not exclusive to certain client populations. It is especially important for social workers who work with college students to have knowledge about instances of sexual victimization on college campuses. On college campuses, the topic of sexual victimization is sometimes considered taboo, so it is important for social workers to provide support and advocacy for those who have survived incidences of sexual victimization. Social workers should be informed about how to effectively counsel students not just in the aftermath of sexual victimization, but should also be able to help provide information about sexual assault prevention. In order to discover how women at a mid-size, Northeastern, Catholic liberal arts college perceive their risk for sexual victimization, this study will explore their opinions in relation to alcohol abuse, risk perception, and consent. In addition, this study will investigate their opinions regarding how often incidences of sexual victimization are reported in comparison to how frequently incidences occur. Lastly, the study will delve into college women's perceptions of education on the subject at this particular college, as well as what else can be done to educate students about and prevent sexual victimization.

### **Literature Review**

Sexual victimization is a pervasive problem in the United States today. According to one source, there are 207,754 victims of sexual assault in the U.S. each year (RAINN, 2012). Moreover, fifty-four percent of women report experiencing some form of sexual assault after the age of 14 (Long & Voller, 2009, p. 548). According to the coordinator of a campus program that provides advocacy, support, and education for survivors of sexual victimization at the mid-size, Northeastern liberal arts college in this study, the demographic of 16 to 24 year-olds is at the highest risk for sexual victimization. Within this demographic, 18 to 21 year-olds, are at an even higher risk for experiencing some type of sexual victimization; and, among these 18 to 21 year-old women, those who are in college are more at risk than those who are not in college. In short, "going to college increases a woman's risk for sexual victimization" (Personal communication, October 24, 2012).

This claim is supported by published research. According to Sweeney (2011), sexual assault is "more common on college campuses than in all other social contexts in the United States" (1). In fact, it is estimated that one in five women will be sexually assaulted at some point during their college careers, and that nearly three percent of all college women will be assaulted in any nine-month academic year (1). Other researchers have identified similar rates. For example, according to Vladutiu, Martin, and Macy, "20 to 25 percent of female undergraduates experience attempted or completed rape during their college careers" (Vladutiu, Martin, & Macy, 2010, p. 67). Similarly, a study by Krebs et al. (2009) found that 20 percent of college women were victims of sexual assault

during college, with almost 20 percent of the women experiencing some type of completed sexual assault by the winter of their senior years (643).

It appears that first-year college women are at a higher risk for sexual victimization than those who are not in their first year of college. Sweeney (2011) found that “Women early on in college are the most likely victims of sexual assault, and the first few weeks of the year are the most dangerous” (1). Similar to Sweeney’s (2011) study, Mouilso, Fischer, and Calhoun (2012) found that freshman year is, “the year during which women have been found to be at the highest risk of experiencing a sexual assault” (91).

### **Contributing Factors to Sexual Victimization on College Campuses**

**Victimization Risk Perception.** But, why is it that college women, and first-year college women in particular, are so at risk? Several researchers have explored this question; following are their findings.

As previously suggested, one of the primary factors that increases the risk for sexual victimization of college women is the abuse of alcohol. A clinician with sexual assault response training at the Counseling Center at a mid-size, Northeastern, Catholic liberal arts college stated that, from her observation, first-year students are at a higher risk for uninformed drinking, which might be why the numbers of sexual assault incidences are higher for first-year college women (Personal communication, October 23, 2012). The correlation between uninformed and excessive drinking might account for why first-year students are often focused on within the literature on sexual victimization in the college environment. Krebs et al. (2009) corroborated this clinician’s observation, as the authors state, “women new to the college experience such as freshmen and sophomores

tend to be at a particularly high risk for sexual assault compared to those who had more college experience (i.e. juniors and seniors)” (643). In addition, the authors indicate that an overwhelming majority of sexual assaults on college women occurred while, “the victim was incapacitated, with this incapacitation typically being due to the woman’s voluntary use of alcohol” (Krebs et al., 2009, p. 645).

In addition to the abuse of alcohol, researchers have also identified that a history of victimization is a contributing factor to incidences of sexual victimization. A clear link has not been found as to why students with a prior history of sexual victimization are at an increased risk for later victimization. Rothman and Silverman (2007) offer one possible explanation for the relatively high rate of revictimization among sexual assault survivors: “some individuals have poor sexual risk recognition skills, which could be a function of their level of cognitive processing or a trauma disorder” (287). Much like Rothman and Silverman (2007), Messman-Moore and Brown (2006) state, “revictimized women may have deficits in their abilities to perceive or act upon threat in potentially dangerous situations” (159). Further, revictimized women might have difficulty recognizing potentially dangerous situations, which might increase the risk for victimization if they cannot perceive the danger until it is too late to escape (Messman-Moore & Brown, 2006, p. 159). Rothman and Silverman (2007) also state the possibility that perpetrators disproportionately target those who have been previously victimized due to their increased vulnerability (Rothman and Silverman, 2007, p. 287-288).

Prior research has suggested that certain college women, such as those who have been previously victimized or those who are first-year students, are more likely to be victimized. The abuse of alcohol among underclassmen less familiar to the college

environment, as well as low risk perception among college women who have been previously victimized, are contributing factors to the sexual victimization of college women.

**Victimization Myth Beliefs and Bystander Attitudes.** Studies indicate that victimization myth beliefs and bystander attitudes play a significant role in sexual victimization, whether they justify the act of sexual assault or prevent women from reporting sexual assaults. Mouilso, Fischer, and Calhoun (2012) found, “women who have been drinking are perceived as more sexually uninhibited and available than sober women, and this expectation may put women who are drinking at risk for unwanted sexual advances and misperception of refusal cues” (90). Further, men are less likely to think that forced or coerced sex is rape if the woman is intoxicated (Mouilso, Fischer, and Calhoun, 2012, p. 90). The aforementioned campus coordinator of a program that provides advocacy, support, and education for survivors of sexual assault shared how college men often do not understand that sexual consent cannot be given if either party is intoxicated. During a training she was giving for freshman males on the subject of consent, many freshman males asked her, “So, this means no more drunk sex?” She said, “Guys don’t want to hear that when alcohol is involved, nobody can give consent” (Personal communication, October 24, 2012).

Research has suggested that victimization myth beliefs lead to the justification of sexual aggression among males. Rape myths are defined as, “prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists,” as well as, “attitudes and beliefs that are generally false yet widely and persistently held and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women” (McMahon, 2010, p. 4). Also referred to as

“rape culture” (Sweeney, 2011, p. 3), these attitudes, values, and behaviors normalize men’s sexual aggression against women. Common rape myths range from saying a woman “asked for it” because of the way she dressed or acted to saying that rape occurs because men cannot control their sexual impulses.

Rape myths among college students sometimes aid in “blaming the victim” of sexual assault, rather than solely holding the perpetrator accountable. Sweeney (2011) states, “Research on college sexual assault has focused on the aspects of peer culture that promote rape-supportive beliefs and practices” (3). Victimization myth beliefs are complex among college students, since many received at least some sexual assault prevention education during high school. Many college students are aware of the unacceptability of traditional victimization myths due to their education on the subject in high school. However, these myths also exist in more subtle forms, especially concerning “victim-blaming.” For instance, the researchers found that while many participants would not directly blame a victim of sexual assault, they expressed the belief that a woman could put herself in an unsafe situation by dressing a certain way, drinking alcohol, or flirting with the perpetrator. Additionally, “some respondents indicated a belief that rape could happen accidentally or unintentionally, and that there are certain situations where men should not be held entirely accountable for sexual assault” (McMahon, 2010, p. 5). Sweeney (2011) identified college students’ perceptions of different situations that would involve victimization myth beliefs. One college-aged man stated, “If a woman’s so wasted she doesn’t know where she is, can’t barely walk straight, she’s not really showing a lot of respect for herself” (Sweeney, 2011, p. 9). Another college-aged man said, “if you’re going to get sh\*t faced and take your panties

off and dance with your skirt up around your waist, that's not showing a lot of class or respect for yourself. And guys will get certain ideas about you" (Sweeney, 2011, p. 9).

One study in particular illustrated how rape myths play a significant role in feelings toward college women who are sexually victimized. Crawford, Wright, and Birchmeier (2008) identified college students' reactions to vignettes in which the participant was asked to imagine attending a party on a weekend night with friends, drinking a beer and beginning to feel strange and nauseous, accepting a ride with a male acquaintance, having the male acquaintance walk them to their room and offering to help them into their bedroom, and experiencing sexual intercourse without physical injury (263). While some participants in the study acknowledged that rape had occurred ("He took advantage. He knew you were incoherent but still proceeded to be forceful"), others seemed unclear as to whether the situation would be considered rape ("There is no consent. I'm not sure I'd call it rape because it was 'stupid' on 'my' part to go home alone with some random guy alone and then not fight"), (268). Some of the participants' descriptions of the sexual assault depicted in the vignette suggest that women who drink alcohol may be perceived as responsible or even to blame for having been sexually assaulted. The researchers suggest, "some college women may continue to support rape myths that involve blaming the victim to maintain their belief in a just world" (Crawford, Wright, and Birchmeier, 2008, p. 270).

In addition to victimization myth beliefs, bystander attitudes are also involved in the sexual victimization of college women. According to McMahon (2010), "an increasingly popular and promising approach for rape prevention is a focus on bystander intervention" (3). The bystander approach is also suggested by Krebs et al. (2009), who

found that supportive peers can serve as a protective factor to victimization (645). The idea of bystander intervention reflects a move from a focus on victims and perpetrators to an emphasis on the role of community members in sexual assault prevention. The bystander approach suggests that, “individuals in a community can intervene when faced with situations involving sexual violence” (McMahon, 2010, p. 3). This approach is promising for addressing rape on college campuses in particular, since most assaults on college campuses are committed by a person who is somehow acquainted with the victim, often involve the consumption of alcohol, and often occur in social settings where other students are present, such as residence halls. McMahon (2010) suggests that bystanders are often present in the “preassault phase” (3), where risk markers appear. If bystanders recognize these risk factors, they might be able to help stop an incidence of sexual victimization from occurring. The same author (2010) also suggests that, “beliefs in rape myths are negatively related to students’ intentions to intervene as bystanders” (9). In addition, students who endorse victimization myths are less likely to intervene as bystanders. For instance, over 53 percent of students strongly agreed or agreed with the following statement: “If a girl acts like a slut, she is eventually going to get into trouble” (McMahon, 2010, p. 9).

In sum, victimization myth beliefs and bystander attitudes play a major role in the sexual victimization of college women. Victimization myth beliefs foster the attitude that women are “asking for it” if they are dressed provocatively or intoxicated. Bystander attitudes can determine whether or not people will intervene if they notice women in potentially dangerous situations. Sexual victimization is not limited to the perpetrator

and the survivor; instead, widely held beliefs and attitudes are also major factors in the acceptance or rejection of myths that perpetuate sexual victimization.

**Traits of Perpetrators.** Research has shown that a number of individual traits and experiences are associated with perpetration (Long & Voller, 2009). Men who are more likely to perpetrate tend to be hypermasculine and “have a higher need for power and dominance” (Long & Voller, 2009, p. 458). In addition, they also “demonstrate traits that have been associated with a psychopathic personality, such as impulsivity, aggressiveness, and manipulateness” (Long and Voller, 2009, p. 458). Sexual assault perpetrators tend to lack social consciousness and are less mature and less responsible in comparison to nonperpetrators (Long & Voller, 2009, p. 458).

The findings of one study in particular both corroborated and contradicted previous literature. Long and Voller (2009) found that, “perpetrators of sexual aggression are no more dominant or forceful than nonperpetrators” (473), and that they, “may feel little need for excitement and stimulation in their lives” (473). These findings appear to contradict previous research, which suggested that perpetrators are more aggressive and outgoing than nonperpetrators” (473). However, they also found that, “rape perpetrators revealed lower levels of agreeableness when compared to both sexual assault perpetrators and nonperpetrators” (473). This particular finding is consistent with previous research, since low levels of agreeableness tend to be a hallmark of perpetrators.

**Role of Alcohol in Sexual Victimization.** Perhaps the major contributing factor to sexual victimization on college campuses is excessive alcohol consumption. One team of researchers remarked that the relationship between alcohol and sexual assault is especially troubling because of the prevalence of drinking among college students

(Benson, Gohm, & Gross, 2007). Recent college student surveys indicate that 43 percent of students indicate moderate alcohol use (“drink one time per week at least one week per month”), 24 percent report frequent alcohol use (“drink from three times per week to daily alcohol use”), 18 percent use alcohol infrequently (“drink from one to six times per year”), and only 16 percent report that they do use alcohol at all (Benson, Gohm, & Gross, 2007, p. 341).

An overwhelming amount of sexual assaults on college campuses involve the abuse of alcohol. Orchowski and Gidycz (2012) indicate that, “campus-based assaults frequently involve alcohol use” (279). According to Mouilso, Fischer, and Calhoun (2012), “numerous studies with both college and community samples have examined the link between alcohol use and sexual assault cross-sectionally, and these studies overwhelmingly demonstrate that women who report using alcohol are more likely to report a history of sexual assault” (78). Krebs et al. (2009) report, “Eighty-two percent of students who experienced unwanted sexual intercourse during the current academic year were under the influence of AOD (alcohol and other drugs) when they were victimized” (639). Most incidences of sexual victimization in college involve alcohol and occur during or soon after “partying” (Sweeney, 2011, p. 3).

Frequenting the “party scene” in college increases a woman’s risk for sexual victimization. “Women who consume alcohol frequently and heavily are more likely to be friends with perpetrators” (Mouilso, Fischer, & Calhoun, 2012, p. 79). These women are also more likely to be viewed as perpetrators’ targets for sexual victimization. Women who have been drinking are perceived as more vulnerable because of the “cognitive and physiological” effects of alcohol (Mouilso, Fischer, & Calhoun, 2012, p.

79). Drinking might place some women at risk for sexual victimization due to its ability to distort risk perceptions in potentially dangerous situations (Crawford, Wright, & Birchmeier, 2008, p. 262). Alcohol is often used to justify acts of sexual victimization, as “college men tend to believe that college women who drink alcohol are more interested than other women in having sex” (Crawford, Wright, & Birchmeier, 2008, p. 262).

According to literature and campus experts at a mid-size Northeastern liberal arts college, alcohol is perhaps the major contributing factor to sexual victimization in the college environment (Personal communication, October 24, 2012). The majority of sexual assaults in the college environment occur when alcohol is involved. Uninformed drinking, as well as the rape myth that a woman is “asking for it” if she is intoxicated, increase a college woman’s risk for sexual victimization.

### **Reasons Why Incidences of Sexual Victimization are not Reported**

Research has demonstrated that incidences of sexual victimization are often unreported. “Despite the devastatingly high rates of sexual assault among women, sexual victimization is consistently documented to be one of the most underreported of all violent crimes” (Orchowski & Gidycz, 2012, p. 265). Negative social reactions to sexual assault disclosure might inhibit women from disclosing their experiences of sexual victimization. “It is likely that college women who fear that the police will respond in a negative way to disclosure are hesitant to discuss sexual victimization to the police” (Orchowski & Gidycz, 2012, p. 278). In an interview, the director of Safety and Security at a mid-size, Northeastern, Catholic liberal arts college called sexual assault, “the most underreported crime in society today” (Personal communication, October 18, 2012). He wonders if students are afraid to report incidences of sexual victimization because they

are “scared to go through what they see on TV. They think they’ll be berated by a defense attorney in court” (Personal communication, October 18, 2012). His statement echoes a study by Orchowski and Gidycz (2012), which states that, “Reporting sexual assault to the police is associated with...levels of fear that the police will respond in a negative way.” Women may also be unaware of the potential reasons for seeking formal assistance following sexual victimization (Orchowski & Gidycz, 2012, p. 279). The authors found, “the presence of victim and perpetrator use at the time of the assault was associated with disclosure of sexual victimization” (Orchowski & Gidycz, 2012, p. 281).

Incidences of sexual victimization are overwhelmingly underreported. College women are often reluctant to report incidences of sexual victimization due in part to negative social reactions on the part of peers, as well as on the part of the police or campus security. In addition, women who are survivors of sexual victimization might feel as though they are at fault, especially if they were under the influence of alcohol or other drugs at the time of the assault.

### **Recommendations for Sexual Victimization Prevention and Education**

Further work is needed to address victim-blaming and excusing perpetrator behavior as “innocent or accidental” (McMahon, 2010, p. 9). Administrators should consider focusing educational workshops regarding sexual victimization on single-gender audiences. Literature states that programs tend to be more effective if they are focused on either male or female audiences (Vladutiu, Martin, & Macy, 2010, p. 80). In addition, targeting specific student organizations, such as fraternities or sororities, for sexual victimization education is recommended (Vladutiu, Martin, & Macy, 2010, p. 80). College administrators should also develop programs that have multiple sessions with

long session lengths (Vladutiu, Martin, & Macy, 2010, p. 80). Depending on the desired outcomes, programs should focus on, “risk reduction strategies, gender-role socialization, sexual assault education, human sexuality, rape myths, rape deterrence, rape awareness, and/or self-defense” (Vladutiu, Martin, & Macy, 2010, p. 80).

Since certain personality traits are associated with perpetrators of sexual assault, “identifying personality traits is one way to target subsets of men who would benefit from special education on the prevention of sexual violence” (Long & Voller, 2009, 476). For example, men who have been involved with college judiciary systems due to other kinds of infractions or student conduct problems, or those who display certain personality traits might be targeted for additional interventions and programs on the part of the college.

### **The Need for Further Research Regarding Sexual Victimization in College**

Research has indicated that female college students' risk for sexual victimization is an important issue to study. Different approaches have been utilized when studying this particular subject, including solely focusing on first-year female college students or female college students with a history of sexual victimization. Previous studies have focused on one area of sexual victimization, such as identifying victimization myth beliefs or bystander attitudes. This study is building on previous studies conducted on the topic by examining female college students' risk perception at a mid-size, Northeastern, Catholic liberal arts college.

By encompassing different research strategies used by authors in the past, this study aimed to provide a more comprehensive examination of female college students' risk for sexual victimization in a particular college environment. For instance, this study examined victimization myth beliefs and bystander attitudes, perceptions of the risk for

victimization, reasons why instances of sexual victimization are unreported, and recommendations for education and prevention programs particular to this college. This study was being measured through a mixed descriptive method in order to thoroughly examine female college students' risk for sexual victimization in the college environment.

### **Methodology**

The objective of this exploratory, mixed-method study was to examine female college students' risk for sexual victimization in the college environment. Data was gathered using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

### **Participants**

Any female student at the mid-size, Northeastern, Catholic, liberal arts college at which the study is taking place was eligible to participate in this study. A convenience sample was used to recruit students to participate in this study. The researcher surveyed female students in introductory level Social Work classes, as well as in Social Work elective classes. Female students from each grade were represented, albeit not equally. Most participants in the study were either freshmen or seniors at "the college."

### **Data Gathering**

The data for this study was collected using both qualitative and quantitative methods. A consent form (see Appendix A), which notified the participant about the purpose and confidentiality of the study, was distributed to female students before they participated in the study. Students who signed the consent form acknowledged their voluntary participation in the study, as well as the confidential nature of the study. Participants were able to withdraw from the study at any time if they chose to do so.

After obtaining the student's consent, she was asked to complete a questionnaire (see Appendix B) pertaining to female college students' risk for sexual victimization in the college environment. The questionnaires asked participants to share demographic information. Participants were also asked two open-ended questions, which were to define sexual victimization, as well as provide recommendations to "the college" regarding its handling of incidences of sexual victimization. Participants were also to rate statements about the subject of sexual victimization on Likert scales and then asked to explain their responses to each statement.

### **Data Analysis**

The researcher examined the quantitative data derived from the completed questionnaires in order to identify themes and common responses among students who participated in the study. Quantitative data from completed surveys was analyzed using tables and charts created by the SPSS computer program. SPSS was used to determine how women at a mid-size, Northeastern, Catholic liberal arts college perceived their risk for sexual victimization in the college environment.

Quantitative data was analyzed by each question; for instance, do the findings correspond to previously reviewed literature, which states that women who have a previous experience of sexual victimization are more likely to be revictimized? Qualitative data was analyzed in order to supplement and possibly corroborate quantitative data, while also identifying themes and differences among participants' responses. Other questions for the qualitative piece of the study aimed to inquire about whether "the college" is doing enough to educate its students about sexual victimization,

as well as inquire about specific recommendations for the college in terms of how to prevent sexual victimization.

### **Findings**

This study intended to explore female students' perceptions of sexual victimization in the college environment. Additionally, this study sought to examine the factor of victimization myth beliefs and the role of alcohol in occurrences of sexual victimization. Due to the prevalence of sexual victimization in college environments, this study took into account participants' recommendations for ways in which colleges can educate students on the matter, as well as how to provide better resources for survivors.

Demographic information, including participants' age, religion, race, class year, and previous victimization experience, was collected. The study utilized a mixed-method approach. Ten questions were answered using Likert scales, and participants could then explain their answers following each question. Two open-ended questions concerning the definition of sexual victimization, as well as recommendations for the ways in which sexual victimization should be prevented and dealt with at a mid-size, Catholic liberal arts college in New England, were also included in this survey.

### **Demographics**

A total of 87 female students at the college were surveyed for this study. Most of the participants identified as Caucasian (88.5 percent), while 8 percent identified as Hispanic, 2.3 percent identified as African American, and 1.1 percent identified as Asian. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 22 years old. The majority of participants in this study identified their religion as Catholic (78.2 percent), while 4.6 percent identified as Protestant, 2.3 percent identified as another denomination of Christian, 2.3 percent

identified as Other, and 12.6 percent identified as None. Students from all class years at this mid-size, Catholic, liberal arts college in New England participated in this study, but the participation was not equal among class years: 40.2 percent were freshmen, 4.6 percent were sophomores, 18.4 percent were juniors, and 36.8 percent were seniors.

### **Participants' Victimization Experiences**

Of the 87 participants in the study, 21.8 percent responded "Yes" when asked if they had a previous victimization experience, 74.7 percent responded "No," and 3.4 percent responded "Prefer not to answer." When the participants who responded "Yes" to this question were asked to specify a type of victimization, 9.2 percent specified "bullying," 5.7 percent specified "harassment," 8 percent specified "sexual assault," and 1.1 percent specified "other." Participants were asked about other types of victimization in order to examine how prevalent sexual victimization is with regard to other experiences such as bullying and harassment. In addition, the participants had the choice of specifying types of victimization other than sexual assault because bullying and harassment are sometimes part of a sexual assault survivor's victimization experience.

### **Defining Sexual Victimization**

Participants in this study were asked the open-ended question, "How do you define sexual victimization?" Common themes among the 87 responses included the following: "lack of consent," "unwanted sexual behavior," "being harassed against your will," "being taken advantage of," and "being harmed in a sexually degrading way." One participant defined sexual victimization as, "Any sexual action (physical, mental, or emotional) in which consent is not given and harm (physical, mental, or emotional) is done." This response seems to indicate that the respondent had received some type of

education regarding sexual victimization, since it takes into account physical, mental, and emotional factors. Another participant further elaborated her response to include a person's state of mind: "When someone is put in a situation where they are being touched or abused, when they say no, or are not in the right state of mind to say yes or no." This response seems to indicate that the respondent is recognizing the influence that drugs and alcohol may have in instances of sexual victimization. One unique response took into account the aggressor's power, defining sexual victimization as, "Someone else exerting their power over you in a way that makes you feel worthless and that specifically relates to your sexuality. This can encompass harassment and rape/sexual assault." This participant explained the perpetrator's and the survivor's contrasting feelings about incidences of sexual victimization. Many participants' responses focused on the survivor of sexual victimization by integrating terms such as, "lack of consent" and "being taken advantage of." In addition, participants seemed to express knowledge regarding the defining factors of sexual victimization, as their definitions included terms that are often taught when discussing types of sexual victimization.

**The Significance of Sexual Victimization in the College Environment**

The researcher aimed to discover how significant of a problem sexual victimization is on college campuses in the United States, as well as at the particular college that the participants attend.

Figure 1: Sexual victimization, including sexual assault and rape, is a major problem on college campuses in the United States.

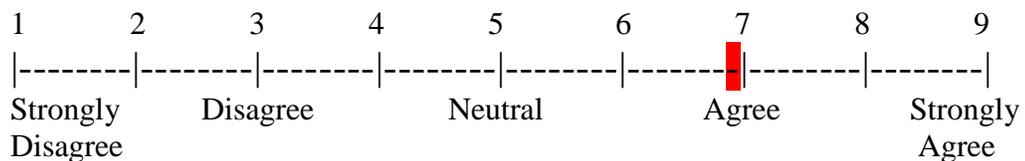
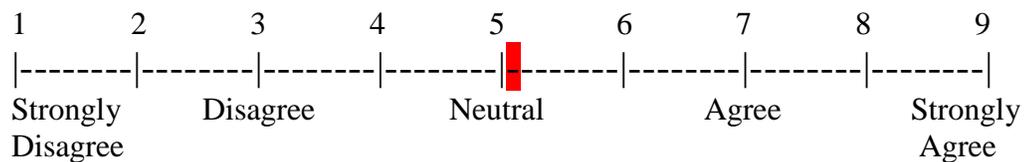


Figure 1 demonstrates the average score among participants responding to a question regarding how extreme of a problem sexual victimization is on college campuses in the U.S. The mean score for this question was 6.93, which is closest to “Agree.” Most participants agree that sexual victimization is a major problem on college campuses in the United States. When participants were asked to explain their responses, they gave a wide range of answers. Some students said they felt that sexual victimization is prevalent in the college community and needs to be stopped, while others said that sexual victimization is a problem, but is not extremely common. One participant wrote, “It happens all the time when everyone is out having fun but no one wants to be that girl who reports it.” This participant notes how many survivors of sexual victimization experience shame and anxiety about the incidence.

Many participants recognized that sexual victimization is part of the college environment. One participant wrote, “College culture in general is a culture of rape. It happens on a regular basis and victims are generally blamed.” While noting the frequency of sexual assault, this participant also recognizes the prevalence of “victim-blaming.” Another participant wrote, “The college culture increases the possibility and likelihood of finding yourself in a situation where you could end up being sexually assaulted.” Some participants noted how it is wrong to blame survivors of sexual assaults, but this particular participant’s choice of words—“finding yourself in a situation where you could end up being sexually assaulted”—indicates that many people still “blame the victim.”

Figure 2 displays the average response among participants regarding how they felt about sexual victimization being a major problem at the mid-size, Catholic, liberal arts college in New England they attend.

Figure 2: Sexual victimization is a major problem at “the college.”



The mean score for this question was 5.139, which is closest to “Neutral.” Most participants were not sure if sexual victimization was a major problem at “the college.” Most participants’ responses echoed the following, “At ‘the college,’ I never hear of anything happening. I feel removed from it and therefore don’t perceive it to be a MAJOR problem.” Many participants indicated they have never heard of fellow students being sexually victimized. Other participants believe incidences of sexual victimization happen often on campus, but that students are afraid to report them: “It happens on campus but no one does anything about it/wants to cause all the stuff that comes with reporting it.” This participant notes how, although she believes many students at this particular college experience instances of sexual victimization, they do not know what to do in the aftermath. Some students thought the college’s Catholic affiliation might impede the reporting of instances of sexual victimization, “Because this is a Catholic school, incidences are often hushed and adequate support is not publically discussed so victims do not know where to go or are scared to seek help.” Perhaps this particular college’s Catholic affiliation gives the illusion that instances of sexual victimization do not occur, as well as prevents students from feeling as though they can report incidents.

On the contrary, some responses seemed to express the belief that sexual victimization at “the college” was not a major problem. One participant wrote, “We seem to have a respectable student body and I have not heard of any issues.” Again, this participant echoes the majority response, stating that she is not aware of incidences of sexual victimization occurring in this particular college environment. Another participant attributed sexual victimization at “the college” to the party environment, “I feel like a lot of girls get in to situations they normally wouldn’t, because of the party atmosphere here on weekend nights.” While this participant takes into account the “party atmosphere” as a contributing factor to sexual victimization at this particular college, she also uses language indicating that the survivor is responsible for putting herself into the situation. Yet another participant acknowledged the party atmosphere, but minimized the problem of sexual victimization, “I’ve heard stories but nothing too crazy or scary. Drugs and drinking are a big part.” This response indicates that some students on this college campus might minimize the impact of sexual victimization.

Significant differences were found between groups of participants who identified previous victimization experiences versus those who wrote that they had not had a previous victimization experience. Among the 19 participants who identified previous victimization experiences, such as bullying, harassment, or sexual assault, the mean score was higher (6.31) than the 65 participants who answered “no” when asked if they had previous victimization experiences (4.79) regarding the statement, “Sexual victimization is a major problem at ‘the college.’” A t-test revealed a significant difference between the mean number of participants who identified previous victimization,  $t(30) = 3.87, p < .05$ .

Participants who had previous victimization experiences were more likely to agree that sexual victimization is a major problem at “the college,” while those who had not had previous victimization experiences were more likely to be close to neutral on the subject. In addition, those who reported previous victimization experiences, on average, strongly disagreed (1.52) with the statement, “Incidences of sexual victimization are reported as often as they occur,” while those who did not have previous victimization experiences did not disagree as strongly (2.153). This finding approached statistical significance ( $t(50) = -2.61, p < .012$

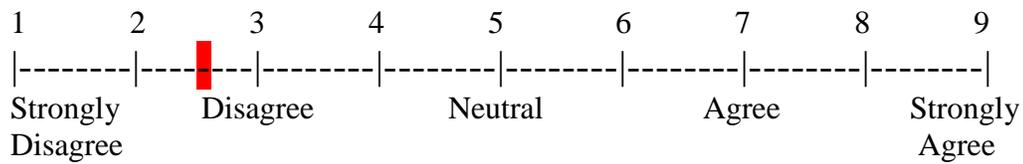
) using One-Way ANOVA.

Overall, students seemed to agree that sexual victimization is a major problem on college campuses in the United States. When given the same statement about “the college” participants attend, the response was closer to neutral. Many students reported that they felt safe on their college campus and that the student body of “the college” seemed too respectful in order for sexual victimization to be a major problem. On the other hand, several participants indicated that they have heard stories about fellow female students experiencing sexual victimization on campus at “the college.”

### **Victimization Myth Beliefs and Bystander Attitudes**

This study aimed to examine myths that participants might subscribe to regarding the subject of sexual victimization, as well as attitudes that bystanders have toward survivors of sexual victimization, and women in general. Figure 3 examines the average response among participants to the question, “Does a woman’s dress indicate she is ‘asking for it?’”:

Figure 3: It is acceptable to believe that women who dress provocatively are “asking for it.”



The mean response for the question was 2.63, which is close to both “Slightly Disagree” and “Disagree.” Some participants expressed the belief that no woman is ever “asking for it” or “wants that to happen to them.” One participant wrote, “Dress is how people express themselves. It is not an invitation to do anything.” This participant echoes the belief of the majority of responses, expressing that how a woman dresses cannot be seen in society as an invitation to any types of sexual assault.

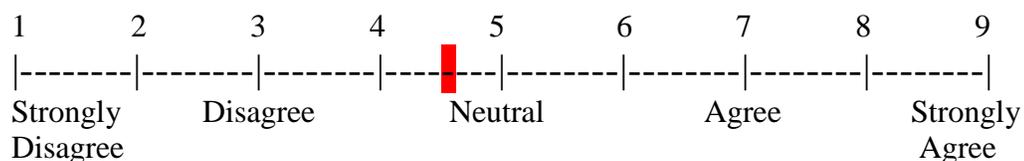
Another participant thought college-aged men might think women are “asking for it,” depending on how they dress, “I disagree but realize that to guys, that is what it seems like when you show a lot of skin/wear tight clothes.” This participant emphasizes a common perception in society—that men are the people who hold power. The response indicates that a man has a right to assume a woman is “asking for it” due to her appearance. Another participant said, “People must monitor their appearance but I wouldn’t necessarily think about pressuring a guy if he was wearing tighter pants!” This response seems to indicate the contrast between how men and women view each other—men are perhaps more presumptuous in how they view women.

Two responses in particular echoed the belief that some women are indeed “asking for it.” One participant wrote, “Some girls dress like that for attention, while others are indeed ‘asking for it.’” This response indicates how some women are apt to

take part in “blaming the victim.” Another participant echoed similar sentiments, “In some sense they are. Why else do you dress like that? To gain attention.” Both of these responses seemed to indicate that seeking attention is synonymous with “asking for it.” Contrary to those two particular responses, one participant wrote, “Women are allowed, just like men, to dress in whatever way they would like to. Simply because a person shows skin does not mean they would like to engage in sexual activity.” Again, the majority of responses did not “blame the victim,” but the participants who seem to think that belief is acceptable had striking responses to this question.

Students seemed to be divided on the subject of re-victimization. The reviewed literature indicates that women who have been sexually victimized previously have a higher chance of being victimized again. Figure 4 shows that participants were, on average, neutral, but slightly disagreed on the issue of re-victimization.

Figure 4: College women who have experienced sexual victimization are more likely to be re-victimized than college women who have no history of sexual victimization.

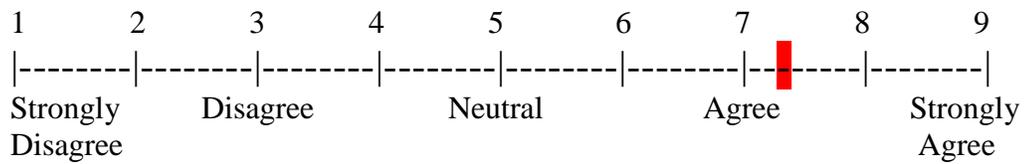


The mean score for this question was 4.60, which is close to both “Neutral” and “Slightly Disagree.” Students’ responses varied, from “It could go either way, but if it had happened to me once, I think I would be more careful that it doesn’t happen again,” to, “People tend to fall into patterns, especially if they don’t ask for help.” Many students

thought, “Anyone can be a victim.” For the most part, participants did not believe that a previous victimization experience heightens one’s risk for re-victimization.

Figure 5 displays that, the average female college student surveyed agreed that college women are more at risk for sexual victimization by an acquaintance or a friend than by a stranger.

Figure 5: College women are more at risk for sexual victimization by an acquaintance or a friend than by a stranger.

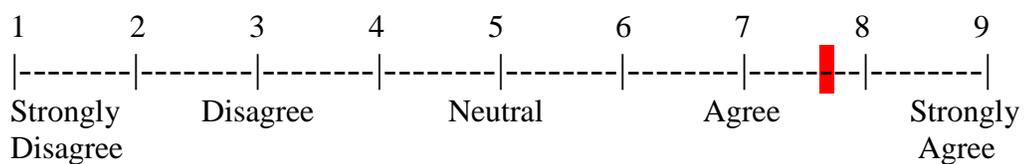


One student expressed the sentiment of the majority of students surveyed, “Many times sexual assault and rape happens with the person you know and think you trust.” For the most part, students agreed that an acquaintance or a friend is more likely to be the aggressor than a stranger.

**The Role of Alcohol in Sexual Victimization**

Many participants believed that partying and alcohol played roles in increasing the likelihood of instances of sexual victimization. Figure 6 indicates that, on average, students agree that drinking and partying contribute to an increased risk of sexual victimization for female college students:

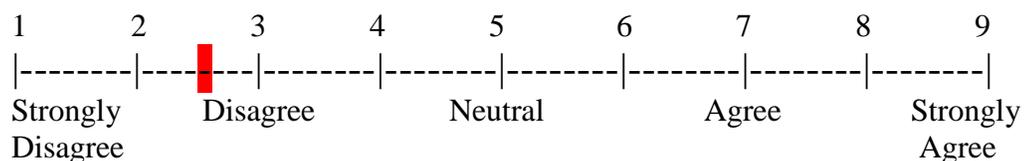
Figure 6: Drinking and partying contribute to an increased risk of sexual victimization for female college students.



The mean response to this question was 7.74, which leaned toward, “Moderately Agree.” Mostly, participants agreed that alcohol and drugs have an influence on the prevalence of sexual victimization, but their responses as to why alcohol and drugs have an influence varied. A majority of participants agreed that people lack control of themselves when they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol. For instance, one participant said, “Drinking impairs a person’s ability to make decisions.” This response indicates that a person cannot make the decision to give sexual consent under the influence of alcohol. Another person wrote, “Alcohol makes you do dumb things and not give consent.” This response indicates the inclination to “blame the victim,” referring to the survivor’s actions as “dumb.” On the other hand, another participant wrote, “Alcohol lowers inhibitions and one may feel it’s their fault because they are more vulnerable.” This response acknowledges the impact of alcohol, but does not place blame on the survivor. One participant brought up the influence drugs and alcohol have on sexual victimization, “Female students who are intoxicated with drugs and alcohol are often taken advantage of or make improper decisions when under the influence.” This sentiment seems to be a combination of the previous two responses—she indicates how women can either be taken advantage of or make reckless decisions under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

The average participant disagreed with the following statement, labeled Figure 7, indicating that women are not able to give sexual consent if they are intoxicated.

Figure 7: Women who are intoxicated are able to give sexual consent.



The mean response to this question was 2.58, meaning that it was closest to “Disagree.” Most respondents agreed that women who are intoxicated are unable to give sexual consent. One participant explained, “Not if they are intoxicated because judgment and behavior is altered under the influence and they may not even be conscious to say ‘no.’” This participant indicates how a woman might not be in any condition to say “no” while she is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

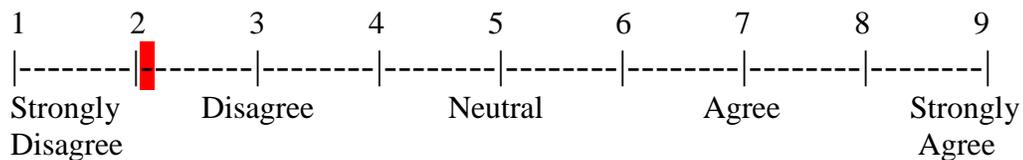
Several other responses stated that there were variations to the rule that women cannot give consent if intoxicated. One participant wrote, “Depends on the level of intoxication.” Further, one participant thought consent would depend on how many drinks a woman consumed, “It depends on how intoxicated. In the case of one or two drinks, yes. Any more, probably not.” These two responses indicate that the number of drinks a woman consumes plays a role in whether or not she can give sexual consent. Another elaborated on the response and wrote, “It depends on how intoxicated and who they are giving consent to – boyfriend versus stranger.” This participant does not seem to acknowledge that sexual victimization can indeed entail a boyfriend sexually assaulting his girlfriend. Another participant wrote, “Unless they have had sex with the person on several occasions, when they’re drunk they are more likely to make impulsive decisions.” Again, it is possible that a woman will not give consent to a person with whom she has had a previous sexual experience. One participant thought, “I think boys assault girls sometimes without even realizing it.” This participant seems to indicate the possibility of college males also making decisions they would not normally make had they not been under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Another wrote, “Girls don’t have good judgment when they’re drunk so whether they say yes or no, it doesn’t always mean what they

want.” This participant seems to indicate that she agrees with the rule that women, or men for that matter, cannot give sexual consent while intoxicated.

### Reporting Incidences of Sexual Victimization

Most participants agreed that incidences of sexual victimization are not reported nearly as often as they occur. The following statement, labeled Figure 8, displays that the college women surveyed disagreed that incidences of sexual victimization are often reported.

Figure 8: Incidences of sexual victimization are reported as often as they occur.



The mean response for this question was 2.05, which is closest to “Moderately Disagree.”

The responses as to why this crime is not reported as often as it occurs varied: “Many people do not report it because they don’t know they’ve been sexually victimized.” This respondent perhaps indicates that women who were under the influence while they were sexually victimized would not be aware of the details in order to report the incident.

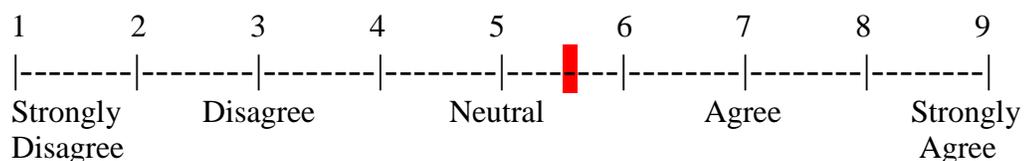
Another participant said, “A lot of times people do not come forward, possibly because they are embarrassed or ashamed.” People who have been sexually victimized sometimes feel as though they could have prevented the attack from occurring. The aggressor might also play a role in the reason why incidences of sexual victimization are sometimes not reported, “Most cases go unreported especially if it is done by someone the victim knows.” A survivor might feel uncomfortable reporting that an acquaintance, friend, or boyfriend sexually victimized her. In addition, “Many girls don’t feel

comfortable reporting or confronting their attacker.” This response seems to indicate that a woman might fear repercussions if she reports the incidence. One respondent was concerned about false rumors spreading, “No one wants to admit they have been raped because they don’t want rumors to spread.” Some people might fear others will judge them following an incidence of sexual victimization. A recurring response was along the lines of the following: “Some victims tend to find was to blame themselves and are too ashamed to report it.” Multiple respondents demonstrated the belief that survivors of sexual victimization often find ways to blame themselves.

### **Sexual Victimization Education and Resources at “the College”**

When asked specifically about the college that the female students participating in the survey attend, students were neutral but leaning toward agreeing that their college does a good job of educating the entire student body about sexual victimization in the college environment. Figure 9 demonstrates the average response:

Figure 9: “The college” does a good job of educating both male and female student about sexual victimization.



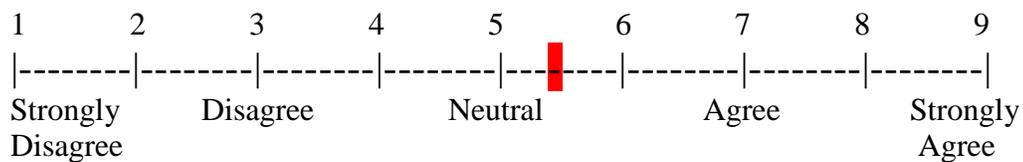
The mean response for this question was 5.52, which is closest to “Neutral” and “Slightly Agree.” The following noteworthy responses were recorded: “Orientation is the only time I have been educated. I think they disregard it after because we are a Catholic institution.” Many students agreed that the subject is still very “taboo” on campus. One participant was optimistic for future education of students, “While I don’t feel like I got a lot of education, ‘the college’ has been stepping up the education of incoming classes.”

This student referred to the mandatory follow-up educational sessions on sexual victimization that current freshman and sophomores at the college have had to attend.

One response was particularly striking concerning the college's resources, "If I got raped tomorrow, I wouldn't know where to go or who to talk to." This response indicates that many students are not aware of resources available for survivors on this college campus.

Further concerning the resources available for survivors of sexual victimization on this particular college campus, on the whole, students were neutral and leaning towards agreeing that sufficient resources are available.

Figure 10: Sufficient resources are available for survivors of sexual victimization at "the college."



The mean response for this question was 5.49, which is closest to "Neutral" and "Slightly Agree." Many participants were unaware of the resources available, including one participant, who wrote, "I don't have enough information to answer. The college may and I just don't know about it." This response indicates that the college needs to make more information readily available about the resources that it does have. One participant wrote, "I honestly have no idea – this is a problem! I know we get those pamphlets in our mailboxes about awareness and education but everyone throws them out!" Although the college has attempted to promote awareness, perhaps it needs to do so in a different way. Two participants made statements about the college's Catholic affiliation, "Since it is a Catholic school, sexual activity in general is often hushed," and "I think because it is a

Catholic college this issue is not talked about as much as it should be.” The college’s Catholic affiliation might indicate a reluctance to promote awareness and education on the issue. Further, “Because of abstinence, they ignore that sexual acts do occur and will not deal with the ramifications of sexual victimization of students.” This response seems to indicate that the college perhaps needs to adapt their policies regarding sexual victimization. One participant wrote, “I do not know of any resources aside from the Security office and I have heard that they encourage victims to drop the issue.” This response was particularly striking because many students reported that Safety and Security was one of the few resources they were aware of for reporting incidences of sexual victimization. It is significant to note that only one student reported this sentiment about “the college’s” Safety and Security department.

### **Recommendations for Sexual Victimization Prevention and Education**

The researcher was interested in participants’ recommendations to their college in terms of sexual victimization prevention and education. Many participants stressed that open discussion forums would be beneficial to students. One student suggested that having survivors of sexual victimization share their experiences would be helpful for other students to hear. Students stressed that freshman orientation activities should continue to integrate sexual violence prevention meetings and assemblies. One student thought that students of every class year should have to attend presentations on sexual victimization in college. A participant wrote, “Allow health and wellness clubs to talk about these issues!” The college should perhaps allow campus clubs to talk more openly about sexual victimization. One student advocated for more education regarding the definition of sexual victimization, as well as a more comfortable environment to discuss

the issue. In addition, one student wrote that the college should, "Continue to strongly address that one is impaired when intoxicated. Teach chivalry to the men better." This response was striking because it indicated that the college should teach men not to sexually victimize women, rather than teaching women not to be sexually victimized. Overall, participants agreed that "the college" should make some changes in order to educate about and prevent sexual victimization on campus.

### **Summary and Implications**

This study aimed to determine female students' perceptions of their risk for sexual victimization in the college environment. Additionally, this study sought to examine the factor of victimization myth beliefs and the role of alcohol in occurrences of sexual victimization. This study also took into account students' awareness level of the resources available for survivors of sexual victimization at "the college," as well as whether participants believed that "the college" provided sufficient education aimed to prevent instances of sexual victimization. Further, the researcher conducting this study was interested in learning about participants' recommendations for "the college" regarding the topic of sexual victimization.

The reviewed literature reports, "20 to 25 percent of female undergraduates experience attempted or completed rape during their college careers" (Vladutiu, Martin, & Macy, 2010, p. 67). Among the participants of this study, eight percent identified a previous victimization experience involving sexual assault. This statistic is much lower than the percentage of female college students who experience sexual assault during their college careers that has been identified in the reviewed literature. If the sample size had

been larger, perhaps the researcher would have gathered a sample that reflected the statistic of 20 to 25 percent in the reviewed literature.

Perhaps the major contributing factor to sexual victimization on college campuses is excessive alcohol consumption. Krebs et al. (2009) report, "Eighty-two percent of students who experienced unwanted sexual intercourse during the current academic year were under the influence of AOD (alcohol and other drugs) when they were victimized" (639). The findings of this study indicate that students agree that consuming alcohol heightens one's risk for an incidence of sexual victimization, which is consistent with the previously reviewed literature (Krebs et al., 2009). The statement, "drinking and partying contribute to an increased risk of sexual victimization for female college students" garnered some of the strongest responses—the majority of participants indicated that drinking and partying increases the risk of sexual victimization for female college students.

Limitations of this study include a small sample size. Only 87 female students participated in the study, which does not allow the researcher to generalize the findings. In addition, it would have been ideal to gather a sample that was more evenly distributed among class years. In this study, freshmen and seniors had a higher level of representation than sophomores and juniors. Had the sample been representative of the college and more evenly distributed among the four class years, the results of this study could be potentially more useful to "the college." In addition, this sample is not representative of the United States as a whole, since the researcher only surveyed participants from a mid-size, Northeastern, Catholic, liberal arts college.

This study could provide insight to social work practitioners who work with college students, especially those who have experienced incidences of sexual victimization. Practitioners could utilize this study to learn about the prevalence of sexual victimization in the college environment, as well as students' opinions about the factors that influence sexual victimization. For instance, students felt very strongly about the influence of alcohol regarding instances of sexual victimization. Practitioners might center some of their sessions with students specifically about sexual victimization when alcohol and the party environment are factors. For practitioners who practice at "the college's" Counseling Center, it would be helpful to learn from this study students' level of awareness about services provided on this specific college campus. This study could provide insight as to how resources can be better advertised or improved for students.

Further research needs to be conducted regarding the topic of female students' risk for sexual victimization in the college environment. In the future, researchers could expand upon this study by examining the factors that impact sexual victimization on college campuses. For example, how do students' beliefs about the consumption of alcohol increase their risk for sexual victimization? In addition, more research needs to be conducted regarding the issue of ways to educate students about and prevent incidences of sexual victimization in the college environment. It would be interesting to research which strategies are effective for educating students about the topic of sexual victimization.

In terms of this study's implications for policy, it is clear that the issue of sexual victimization in the college environment is significant. Much of the education regarding the subject is centered on teaching women how not to be sexually victimized, rather than

teaching men not to sexually victimize women. Comprehensive changes need to be made in terms of the policies regarding sexual victimization on college campuses, as well as nationwide. In addition to educating people about sexual victimization in a way that does not place blame on the survivor, it is important to change the “victim-blaming” mindset that many people have.

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<http://www.ovw.usdoj.gov/sexassault.htm#sa>.

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## Appendix A

Dear Potential Participant:

I am a social work major inviting you to participate in a study that will examine female students' perceptions of sexual victimization in college. Data gathered in this study will be reported in a thesis paper in a social work capstone course at Providence College. It will also be added to the Providence College digital commons database.

At this time, female college students are being recruited to participate in this study. Participation will involve answering questions about perceptions of sexual victimization in the college environment. The questionnaire should take five to ten minutes to complete.

There are no anticipated significant risks associated with involvement in this research. There is always the possibility that uncomfortable or stressful memories or emotions may arise while thinking about these past experiences. Participants are free to stop participation in the study at any time until identifying information is removed from the responses. The researcher, if necessary, will also provide referral resources for psychological support.

Benefits of participating in this study include helping researchers to formulate a better understanding of the perceptions of female college students regarding sexual victimization in the college environment.

Confidentiality will be protected by storing signed consent forms separately from data obtained in the study. Once the data are obtained, all identifying information linking the participant to his or her response will be destroyed so that responses can no longer be identified with individuals. Data will be reported by making generalizations of all of the data that has been gathered. Brief excerpts of individual responses may be quoted without any personal identifying information.

Participation in this study is voluntary. A decision to decline to participate will not have any negative effects for you. You may withdraw from the study at any time up until Thursday, March 21<sup>th</sup> when the researchers will finalize the data.

**YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE ABOVE INFORMATION AND THAT YOU HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, YOUR PARTICIPATION, AND YOUR RIGHTS AND THAT YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.**

Thank you for participating in this study.

Nicole Sadoski, Social Work Student, [nsadoski@friars.providence.edu](mailto:nsadoski@friars.providence.edu)

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(Name)

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(Date)

PLEASE KEEP A COPY OF THIS FORM FOR YOUR RECORDS

**Appendix B**

**Female College Students and Sexual Victimization Questionnaire**

*Please complete the following:*

**Age:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Religion:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Race:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Class Year (circle one):** Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

**Previous Victimization Experience? (circle one):** Yes No Prefer Not to Answer

**Type? (circle one):** Bullying Harassment Assault Sexual Assault Other \_\_\_\_\_

**How do you define sexual victimization?:**

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**Directions:** *Read the following statements and circle the number (1 - 9) that best fits your perceptions.*

- Sexual victimization, including sexual assault and rape, is a major problem on college campuses in the United States.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Strongly Disagree	Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

Explain your response:

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- Sexual victimization is a major problem at "the college."

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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Strongly Disagree	Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	

Explain your response:

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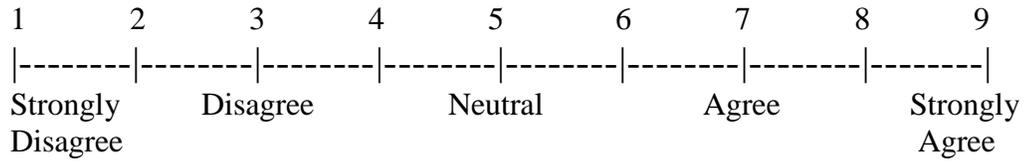


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3. It is acceptable to believe that women who dress provocatively are “asking for it.”



Explain your response:

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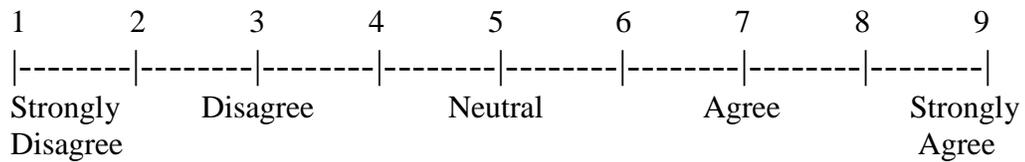


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4. College women who have experienced sexual victimization are more likely to be revictimized than college women who have no history of sexual victimization.



Explain your response:

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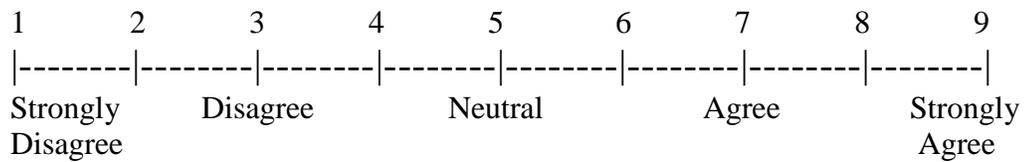


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5. Drinking and partying contribute to an increased risk of sexual victimization for female college students.



Explain your response:

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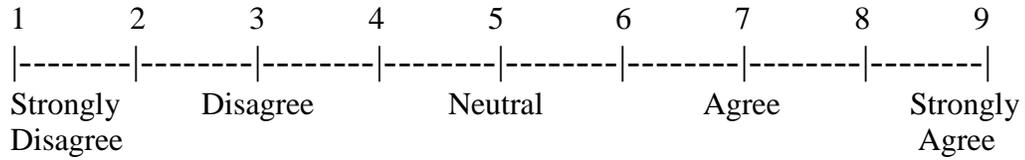
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9. "The college" does a good job of educating both male and female students about sexual victimization.



Explain your response:

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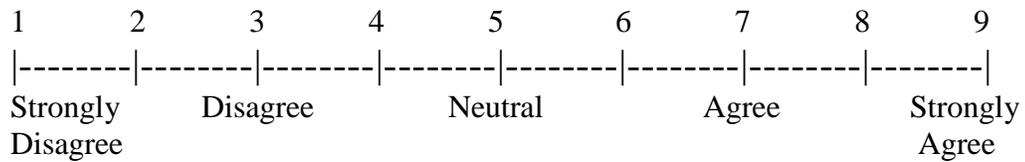


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10. Sufficient resources are available for survivors of sexual victimization at "the college."



Explain your response:

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11. Do you have any suggestions as to what "the college", and colleges in general, can do to provide better education about sexual victimization and better resources for survivors?

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**Thank you for participating in this study.**