

Sexual assault characteristics among male victims seeking care at a sexual assault centre in Stockholm, Sweden

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Objective: This study aims to a) describe the characteristics of sexual violence, in terms of the type of sexual assault, the severity of violence, victims' relationship to the assailant, and physical injuries, among male victims who sought care at a sexual assault centre in Stockholm, Sweden and b) examine whether the occurrence of injuries and the severity of violence differ according to sociodemographic factors, psychiatric and neuropsychiatric diagnosis, and the relationship of the victim to the perpetrator.

Design and Method: This retrospective study is based on information from anonymized medical and forensic records of male patients who sought care at a sexual assault centre in Stockholm between 2015-2022. In total, 296 records were reviewed, and preliminary results were received by using descriptive and inferential statistics. The NorVold Abuse Questionnaire was used to assess the assault's severity level.

Results: The mean age of the victims was 28.8 years, almost half had a psychiatric diagnosis (49.8%) and almost one-third had a neuropsychiatric diagnosis (26.6%). The most prevalent type of sexual assault was anal penetration and most of the participants had been subjected to physical violence during the sexual assault (54.3%), of which 27% were classified as severe physical violence. Most assailants were men (75.7%) and new/casual acquaintances of the victim (34.5%). Additionally, almost a quarter of assaults was perpetrated by a group (two persons or more) (24%).

Conclusions: By understanding the characteristics of males who seek care after sexual assault victimization, evidence-based and quality healthcare for male sexual assault victims can be enabled.