



STUDYING THE PREVALENCE OF PHYSICAL INJURIES AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF FEMALE VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT REFERRED TO THE FORENSICS IN AHVAZ CITY, 2013-2014

Fereshteh Alboebadi¹, Farkhondeh Jamshidi², Poorandokht Afshar*¹, Maria Cheraghi³ and Roya Mohammadi⁴

¹School of Nursing & Midwifery, Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences, Ahvaz, Iran

²Department of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology, Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences, Ahvaz, Iran

³Social Determinant of Health Research Center, Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences, Ahvaz, Iran

⁴General Physician, Ahvaz, Iran

Received for publication: March 28, 2015; Accepted: April 24, 2015

Abstract: Rape is a term used in legal medicine and criminology (1) and a form of rape (2), which means sexual intercourse with a person (child or adult) through vaginal, oral and anal sex without his/her consent. (1 and 3) Each year, millions of females and children around the world become the victim of rape and sexual abuse. In recent years, researchers have made efforts to investigate the issue of rape from different perspectives and explain it in specific areas (7) that one of these areas is checking physical condition and demographic characteristics. (8) Therefore this study has been done with the aim of evaluating the prevalence of physical injuries and demographic characteristics of female victims of rape, physical injuries referred to the forensics in Ahvaz.

In this descriptive-cross sectional study, 64 persons of rape victims referred to examinations of women section in forensics of the city of Ahvaz in the second half of 2013-2014 were selected as the sample of the research. For obtaining information, a two-part questionnaire including sexual assault and demographic characteristics was given to the cases and for recording the physical injuries inflicted upon the victims, some observation was done. Obtained information which was based on the objectives of the research was entered into the computer using software SPSS21 after coding and then descriptive statistics were analyzed. In this case, the majority of victims were single and the least of them had been divorced. Their highest level of education has been high school or diploma. In terms of economic status, most of them were in the medium level and a small population of them was in a good level of economic status. Most female victims had been raped by one man. In most female victims, defloration had been occurred.

In general, the results of this study shows that the injury to the hymen (Defloration) has the highest percentage among inflicted injuries that according to the social and cultural conditions of the society as well as individuals' attitude, this injury can greatly affect one's life.

Key words: Rape, physical injuries and forensics

INTRODUCTION

Rape is mostly based on the use of force and desecration and is an expression in legal medicine and sexual criminology (12 and 1) that is a form of sexual violence (2) and it means to perform sexual intercourse with a person (child or adult) through vaginal, oral and anal without her consent that has been performed by penis, finger or any other object. (1, 3) Annually, millions of women and children around the world become victim of sexual assault rape and sexual abuse. In recent years, official statistics have confirmed the increase of this kind of crimes in all countries. (4, 5) approximately, one quarter of people in the United States of America has been victims of sexual abuse. (12) According to the results of the first international and comprehensive study of kinds of violence performed by World Health Organization, only in 2002, 150 million females and 73 million men under the age of 18 have been sexually abused in the world. (3) In Iran, for some reasons including fear of social stigma and because it is a taboo and more importantly due to neglect and lack of training on how to register in the relevant agencies, there is no accurate and reliable statistics of rape, but lack of data does not mean such problem does not exist. Although no statistics associated with increase of rape has released, a few research has been pointed out

to this issue. For instance, the statistics of sexual assault in investigation about prostitution has been announced 22 to 25 percent and the percent of runaway girls varies from 12 to 36. (6) In recent years, researchers have attempted to assess the rape issue from different perspectives and explain it in specific areas. (7) One of these areas is physical status and demographic characteristics. (8) In a research performed by Ferrule and colleagues in 2004, titled "pathology after sexual assault", 40 young women who had been recognized as a victim of rape by court were studied. The results obtained from this study were that the average age of raped women was 33.7; 53% were married, 25% were single and 22% were divorced; 85% of women were raped by one man and 15% by two or more men. (9) In a study titled 'checking the rate of prevalence of post-traumatic disorder in rape victims' performed in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province in 2011-2013, the average age of the sample was recognized 13/20. Most of the victims were unemployed (50%), students (48%) and most of them were illiterate and under diploma (81%). Finally, 64 out of 68 people under study have had post-traumatic disorder and 4 people have not had. (10) In a study titled 'comparing searching methods of antigen

*Corresponding Author:

Poorandokht Afshar

School of Nursing & Midwifery,
Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences.
Ahvaz, Iran.



PSA' was performed in 2010-2011 on 350 cases suspected to be sexual abused with the result of positive acid phosphatase test, it was found that 73% of the people under study about sexual assault were female and 23% were male and 78% of the female were single and 22% were married. (11)

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study design and population

In this descriptive-cross sectional study, 64 victims of sexual assault, who were referred to women examinations section in forensic of Ahvaz city in the second half of 2013-2014, were selected as sample.

Inclusion criteria

Women and girls victims of sexual assault, who were referred to the women examinations section in forensic of Ahvaz city in the second half of 1392, had been raped within the last three months.

Exclusion criteria

Those people who were raped just one time.

Ethical considerations

For each of the cases under study, some explanation about the subject and research purposes was given. And then, interviews were conducted after that they accepted to have an interview and it was noted that the questionnaires will be completely anonymous and confidential. And the cases were allowed to leave the research at any stage.

Procedure

The victims of sexual assault, who were referred to women examinations section of forensic in the Ahvaz city, were selected with regard to the number of samples (64), who were available and had the inclusion criteria. In this study, for obtaining the information related to research purposes, a two-part questionnaire including sexual assault and demographic characteristics, which was prepared by the researcher previously, was given to the samples and with the aim of recording of inflicted physical injuries to the victims, some observation was performed. For each of the cases under study, some explanation about the subject and research purposes was given. And then, interviews were conducted after that they accepted to have an interview and it was noted that the questionnaires will be completely anonymous and confidential. And the cases were allowed to leave the research at any stage. The interview and observation were performed in a completely private room which had suitable physical condition. The average amount of time for an interview with each person was considered about 15 minutes. After completing the questionnaires by the research

samples, they were studied by the researcher. If there was a fault or if the responses were not complete, the research samples were explained and finally, the questionnaires were collected.

Data analysis

The obtained data were analyzed by software SPSS21.

RESULTS

Finally, this study was performed on 64 people with the average age of 22.6 ± 8.4 (13-63) that the obtained results are as follows :In this case, the majority of victims were single and a few of them had been divorced. The highest level of education of female victims has been high school and diploma. In terms of economical status, most of them were determined in medium level and a few of them in good level. The majority of female victims had been raped by one man. Defloration had occurred in most of female victims and Bakhtiari ethnicity was recorded in most of them. (Some sexual assault and demographic characteristics have been mentioned in Table 1 and 2). In terms of family feedback, the raped person was supposed as a victim by more than half of the families and other families have recognized the raped person guilty. Other obtained results have been shown in the related tables: hymen and pregnancy status in women referred to forensics in Ahwaz (Table 3), frequency of imposed clinical injuries to the female victims referred to the forensics in Ahwaz (Table 4), frequency of imposed injuries to the female victims referred to the Forensics in Ahwaz (Table 5), and frequency of the pattern of imposed injuries to the female victims referred to the Forensics in Ahwaz (Table 6).

Table 1: frequency distribution of demographic characteristics

Variable	Number (Percent)
Marriage status	Single (81.3)52
	Married 9(14.1)
	Divorced 3(4.7)
	Illiterate 1(1.6)
Level of education	Elementary school 12(18.8)
	Middle school 8(12.5)
	High school 16(25)
	Diploma 16(25)
	University 11(17.2)
	Student 18(28.1)
Occupational status	Employed 6(9.4)
	Housewife 31(48.4)
	Unemployed 7(10.9)
	student-employed 2(3.1)
Economic status	Weak 17(26.6)
	Medium 32(50)
	Good 15(23.4)
How many children she preceded	1 16(25)
	2 15 (23.4)
	3 and higher 33 (51.6)
Living with	Parents 56(87.5)
	Wife 6(9.4)
	Relatives 2(3.1)

Table 2: the frequency distribution of characteristics of rape

Variable	Number (Percent)	
The interval between the occurrence of the rape and referring to the legal centers	Under 72 Hours	5 (7.8)
	72 Hours And 7 Days	21 (32.8)
	From 7 Days To One Month	15 (23.4)
	Over One Month	223 (35.9)
	House Of Victim	77 (10.9)
Place of occurrence of rape	House Of Other Person	14(21.9)
	Outside	17 (26.6)
	Car	8 (14.1)
Doer of rape	Stranger	18 (28.1)
	Acquaintance	28 (43.8)
Kind of threat	Friend	11 (17.2)
	Relatives	7 (10.9)
	Just Verbally	8 (12.5)
	Physical Threat	12 (18.8)
Method of intercourse	Different Methods	44 (68.8)
	Vaginal	15 (23.4)
	Anal	12 (18.8)
Use of condom	Different Methods	34 (53.1)
	Move To Rape	3 (4.7)
Time of occurrence of rape	Yes	4 (6.3)
	No	60 (93.8)
	Morning	9 (14.1)
	Noon	22 (34.4)
	Afternoon	16 (25)
Number of rapists	Night	17 (26.6)
	One Person	44 (68.8)
	Two Persons	7 (10.9)
	Three Persons	5 (7.8)
Use of psychoactive drugs	More Than Three Persons	8 (12.5)
	Yes	7 (10.9)
	Victim No	53 (82.8)
	I Don't Know	4 (6.3)
	Yes	22 (34.4)
Behavior of family	Rapist No	335 (54.7)
	I Don't Know	7 (10.9)
	Victim	37 (57.8)
	Guilty	27 (42.2)

Table 3: hymen and pregnancy status in women referred to forensics in Ahwaz

Variable	Number (Percent)		
Hymen Status	Sound	28 (43.8)	
	Torn	Rupture After Rape	(40.6) 26
		Rupture After Marriage	(15.6) 10
Pregnancy Status	Yes	4 (6.3)	
	No	60 (93.8)	

Table 4: frequency of imposed clinical injuries to the female victims referred to the Forensics in Ahwaz

Variable	Number (Percent)	
Injuries	No Injury	24 (37.5)
	Physical Injuries	(21.9) 14
	Genital Tract Injuries	(35.9) 23
	Physical And Genital Tract Injuries	(4.7) 3

Table 5: frequency of imposed injuries to the female victims referred to the Forensics in Ahwaz

Variable	Number (Percent)	
Kind Of Injury	No Injury	24 (37.5)
	Bruise / Abrasion / Hematoma	13 (20.3)
	Defloration	23 (35.9)
	Bruise / Defloration	3 (4.7)
	Rupture	1 (1.6)

Table 6 frequency of the pattern of imposed injuries to the female victims referred to the Forensics in Ahwaz

Variable	Number (Percent)	
Pattern Of Injuries	No Injury	24 (37.5)
	Head/Face/Neck	3 (4.7)
	Organs	4 (6.3)
	Body	0
	Vagina And Perineum	23 (35.9)
	Different Parts Of	10 (15.6)
	Body	

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In a study which was performed by to fight, (13) most of the people who were victims of rape were unemployed that this issue has been found in this study too. In the Ferrule's study, 85% of women had been raped by one man. In his study, the majority of victims were married, but in this study, most victims were single. Findings of this study indicate that the average age of sexual assault victims was $22/6 \pm 8/4$. Findings also indicate that youth period is very critical in each person's life that can have many effects on personal character formation. Less than half of all families with one raped person, recognized her guilty. In acute cases (the raped person was completely recognized guilty), this issue can have negative effects on person's character. According to the results of this study, most of the victims are also raped by someone familiar that is consistent with obtained data from other articles and studies. Therefore this issue could potentially cause psychological trauma in person. The results also show that the injury to the hymen (Defloration) has the highest percentage among imposed injuries to a raped person that considering the social and cultural conditions of the society and personal attitude, this injury can severely affect on person's life and in addition to the imposed psychological trauma, life and personal relationships of the raped person have been impressed too. The other important point is the risk of pregnancy in sexual assault victims due to non-use of contraceptive methods. As it was found in this study, four of the victims got pregnant. This study also showed that rape has serious harmful effects on victim's physical health and the rape victim may be under violent behavior that it can impose severe physical injuries to her and also women who are in their

reproductive years may be at risk of pregnancy. This study also showed that 94% of rapists did not use condom at the time of rape that this issue can expose women and girls, who are in their reproductive years, to getting sexually transmitted diseases that can have negative effects either on women or on the society. The results of this study remind the necessity of more research and more attention to women as vulnerable class of society. As a result, the need to find a solution for prevention of this social problem is made clear.

REFERENCES

- Goudarzi F, Kiani M. legal Medicine. Sixth edition. Tehran, SAMT Publication; 2009-2010: 280- 291.
- Abroosh H. Abortion in pregnancy resulting from sexual crimes in the light of Therapeutic abortion. Medical Law Quarterly 2011-2012; (17) 172-144:5(17).
- Pinheiro P. United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children. World report on violence against children. Geneva: 2007.
- Attorney P. Criminal psychology. Thran, SAMT Publication; 2003-2004: 33-16.
- Taghikhani sh. Study of familial, economical-social, psychological characteristics and the ways of opposing with stress of child abuser parents. MA thesis, Alzahra uiversity Tehran, 2002-2003.
- Malju M. incest: backgrounds, aggressive strategies and responses of the victim. Scientific periodical - Social Welfare Research 2010-2011; (34) 9: 113-83.
- haghighatmanesh A, Aghamohammedian H, Hashemabadi B, Mahram B. Study of adult attachment styles and dimensions in sexual offenders in comparison with normal subjects. Educational and Psychological Studies, 2010-2011, 11 (1): 279-296.
- Qhureishi A. Psychological profile of girls who have been sexually abused. Quarterly of Psychology - Applied. summer of 2007-2008; (4) 1: 29- 23.
- Faravelli C, Giugni A, Salvatori S, Ricca V. Psychopathology after Rape. Am J Psychiatry 2004;161:1483-148
- Shir Ali Kharamin, RaziyeH Gorji. Study of prevalence rate of post-traumatic stress disorder (PSTD) in victims of rape who referred to the forensics in Kohgiluyeh Boyer Ahmad in 1391-1390. Journal of Legal Medicine Sciences / Volume 18, number 3-2, summer and fall of 2012-2013, 105-99.
- Mohammad Kazemian, Amir Bashian. Comparing the search methods of PSA on 350 suspected cases to sexual abuse by positive acid phosphatase test. Scientific Journal of Legal Medicine / Volume 16, Number 4, Winter of 2010-2011, 265-259.
- Azam Noferesti, Asiye Anari. Early maladaptive schemas in sexual and non-sexual offenders. Psychiatry and Clinical Psychology Journal, nineteenth year, number 2, Summer of 2013-2014, 148-139.
- Hasan Twfighi, Fariba Mousavi Poor, Zahra Nematollahi. Study of prevalence and characteristics of sexual offenses in females who were referred to the Legal Medicine Organization of country (Tehran branch-center) in the second half of 1999-2000. Scientific Journal of Legal Medicine, seventh year, number 25, Winter of 2001-2002.

CITE THIS ARTICLE AS:

Fereshteh Alebadi, Farkhondeh Jamshidi, Poorandokht Afshar, Maria Cheraghi, Roya Mohammadi and Aref Mobasher, Studying The Prevalence Of Physical Injuries And Demographic Characteristics Of Female Victims Of Sexual Assault Referred To The Forensics In Ahvaz City, 2013-2014, International Journal of Bioassays, 2015, 4 (05), 3922-3925.

Source of support: Nil

Conflict of interest: None Declared