

# Men's Sexual Victimization by Women: A Neglected Problem

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## *I. Introduction*

Sexual aggression, defined as behavior carried out with the intent or result of making the person engage in sexual activity despite his or her unwillingness to do so,<sup>1</sup> has long been recognized as a gendered problem in which women account for the majority of victims and men for the majority of perpetrators. The #MeToo movement has further increased awareness of the scale of women's sexual victimization. At the same time, evidence has been accumulating about men's sexual victimization by women, but the scale, nature, and consequences of men's experiences of sexual aggression by women remains a neglected issue. A comprehensive review of European studies revealed a substantially higher number of studies on female than on male victimization and for male as compared with female perpetration of sexual aggression<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, public responses to male victimization by women have been found to question victims' masculinity, downplay adverse effects of sexual assault on male victims, or deny the possibility of female-on-male sexual assault altogether.<sup>3</sup>

Whether or not women's sexual aggression needs to, and should be, investigated, given the predominance of men's perpetration, has been a controversial issue. A balanced argument was offered by Muehlenhard<sup>4</sup>, who sees the study of women's sexual aggression as important for three main reasons: (1) to avoid research bias, (2) to challenge gender stereotypes, and (3) to acknowledge the reality of men's victimization experiences. At the

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1 *Krahé/Tomaszewska/Kuyper/Vanwesenbeek*, Prevalence of sexual aggression among young people in Europe: A review of the evidence from 27 EU countries, *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 2014, p. 545 (cited as: *Krahé/Tomaszewska/Kuyper/Vanwesenbeek*, *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 2014).

2 *Krahé/Tomaszewska/Kuyper/Vanwesenbeek*, *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 2014.

3 *Loxton/Groves*, Adult male victims of female-perpetrated sexual violence: Australian social media responses, myths and flipped expectations, *International Review of Victimology*, 2022, p. 191.

4 *Muehlenhard*, The importance and danger of studying sexually aggressive women, in: *Anderson/Struckman-Johnson* (Eds.), *Sexually aggressive women*, 1998, p. 19.

same time, she warns about taking a gender-neutral approach as victim and perpetrator roles are not evenly distributed between men and women.

This chapter presents a summary of past research into men's sexual victimization by women and women's sexual aggression perpetration against men. This is followed by the presentation of findings from several studies on women's and men's sexual victimization obtained by parallel methods from a range of countries in Europe, Asia, and Latin America to identify similarities and differences between the two gender groups in the prevalence and vulnerability factors of sexual victimization. The analysis shows that although men's victimization rates tend to be lower than women's, the gender difference in prevalence rates is smaller than assumed in the public discussion about sexual aggression. Moreover, longitudinal studies from different countries reveal more similarities than differences in the vulnerability factors of men's and women's sexual victimization. The findings are discussed in relation to stereotypes about male rape and the need to adopt a broader understanding of sexual victimization beyond female victims, while recognizing the gendered nature of sexual aggression.

## *II. Prevalence of men's sexual victimization by women*

Following a small number of earlier studies<sup>5</sup>, recent years have seen an increase in attention to women as perpetrators of sexual aggression in sexual relationships with men. In our brief review, we focus on findings from general population or college student samples, excluding analyses of women's sexual aggression against other women and studies of female sex offenders in a forensic context.<sup>6</sup> A review of the evidence showed that a substantial proportion of men are made to engage in nonconsensual sexual activities by women.<sup>7</sup> Analyzing prevalence data from four large-scale

5 E.g., *Krahé/Waizenhöfer/Möller*, Women's sexual aggression against men, *Sex Roles*, 2003, 219, C. *Struckman-Johnson*, Forced sex on dates, *The Journal of Sex Research*, 1988, p. 234 (cited as: C. *Struckman-Johnson*, *The Journal of Sex Research*, 1988), *Struckman-Johnson/Struckman-Johnson/Anderson*, Tactics of sexual coercion: when men and women won't take no for an answer, *The Journal of Sex Research*, 2003, p. 76.

6 *Blake/Gannon*, Females who sexually offend, in: *Ireland/Birch/Ireland* (Eds.), *The Routledge international handbook of human aggression*, 2018, p. 278.

7 *Fisher/Pina*, An overview of the literature on female-perpetrated adult male sexual victimization, *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 2013, 54 (cited as: *Fisher/Pina*, *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 2013).

victimization surveys conducted between 2008 and 2013, Stemple et al. concluded that women's sexual aggression perpetration is more widespread than previously known.<sup>8</sup> In one of the surveys, two-thirds of nonconsensual sexual experiences categorized as "non-rape" (i.e., being "made to penetrate" someone else, "sexual coercion," "unwanted sexual contact," and "non-contact unwanted sexual experiences") involved a female perpetrator. In a large-scale representative survey in Germany, 12.3% of male participants reported at least one experience of sexual victimization, with 52% of the incidents involving a female perpetrator.<sup>9</sup> A review of 67 studies comparing men's and women's rates of sexual victimization identified 22 samples in eight studies in which higher victimization rates were reported by men than by women.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, recent studies highlighted that being forced to penetrate another person may be a specific form of sexual victimization encountered especially by heterosexual men.<sup>11</sup>

In an extensive program of research conducted in Germany, Poland, Brazil, Chile, Turkey, and Iran, we examined prevalence rates of sexual victimization and sexual aggression perpetration since the age of consent in the respective country for women and men in a parallel fashion. The Sexual Aggression and Victimization Scale (SAV-S) by Krahé and Berger was used in these studies.<sup>12</sup> The only exception was the study conducted

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- 8 *Stemple/Flores/Meyer*, Sexual victimization perpetrated by women: Federal data reveal surprising prevalence, *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 2017, p. 302.
  - 9 *Tozdan/Brunner/Pietras/Wiessner/Briken*, Sexual aggression against males: Differences between acts by males and females - Results from the German Health and Sexuality Survey (GeSiD), *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 2021, p. 105071.
  - 10 *Depraetere/Vandeviver/Beken/Keygnaert*, Big boys don't cry: A critical interpretive synthesis of male sexual victimization, *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, 2020, p. 991.
  - 11 *R. E. Anderson/Goodman/Thimm*, The assessment of forced penetration: A necessary and further step toward understanding men's sexual victimization and women's perpetration, *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 2020, 480-498, *Smith/Chen/Lowe/Basile*, Sexual violence victimization of U.S. males: Negative health conditions associated with rape and being made to penetrate, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 2022, p. NP20953 (cited as: *Smith/Chen/Lowe/Basile*, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 2022).
  - 12 *Krahé/Berger*, Men and women as perpetrators and victims of sexual aggression in heterosexual and same-sex encounters: a study of first-year college students in Germany, *Aggressive Behavior*, 2013, p. 391 (cited as: *Krahé/Berger*, *Aggressive Behavior*, 2013).

in Brazil,<sup>13</sup> which used the Sexual Experiences Survey (SES).<sup>14</sup> The SAV-S measures sexual experiences without consent from the perspective of victims and perpetrators covering different kinds of victim-perpetrator relationships (stranger, acquaintance, current or former partner), coercive strategies (verbal pressure, exploitation of the victim's inability to resist, threat or use of physical force) and sexual acts (sexual touch, attempted and completed intercourse, and other sexual acts (e.g., oral sex)). The use of behaviorally specific items rather than broad questions, such as "Have you ever experienced a sexual assault", represents the gold standard in sexual aggression research to minimize the rate of unacknowledged rape.<sup>15,16</sup> The SAV-S was shown to be less susceptible to unacknowledged sexual assault than other research instruments.<sup>17</sup> In total, the SAV-S contains 36 perpetration items and a parallel set of 36 victimization items.<sup>18</sup> For each item, participants indicate whether or not they ever engaged in, or experienced, the respective behavior since the age of consent (specified according to the legal regulation in their country). Participants who endorsed at least one of the perpetration questions were counted into the perpetration rate, participants who endorsed at least one of the victimization items were counted into the victimization rate. Table 1 presents the total victimization rates reported by university student samples from ten studies conducted in six countries on three continents.

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- 13 D'Abreu/Krahé/Bazon, Sexual aggression among Brazilian college students: prevalence of victimization and perpetration in men and women, *The Journal of Sex Research* 2013, p. 795 (cited as: D'Abreu/Krahé/Bazon, *The Journal of Sex Research*, 2013).
  - 14 Koss/Abbey/Campbell/Cook/Norris/Testa/Ullman/West/White, Revising the SES: A collaborative process to improve assessment of sexual aggression and victimization, *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 2007, p. 357.
  - 15 Cook/Gidycz/Koss/Murphy, Emerging issues in the measurement of rape victimization, *Violence against Women*, 2011, p. 201.
  - 16 Krahé/Vanwesenbeeck, Mapping an agenda for the study of youth sexual aggression in Europe: assessment, principles of good practice, and the multilevel analysis of risk factors, *Journal of Sexual Aggression*, 2016, p. 161.
  - 17 Marchewka/Tomaszewska/Schuster/Krahé, Unacknowledged and missed cases of sexual victimization: A comparison of responses to broad versus behaviorally specific questions, *Aggressive Behavior*, 2022, p. 573 (cited as: Marchewka/Tomaszewska/Schuster/Krahé, *Aggressive Behavior*, 2022).
  - 18 For more information see Krahé/Berger, *Aggressive Behavior*, 2013, p. 391.

Table 1. Percentage of participants endorsing at least one SAV-S victimization item.

Country		Men %	Women %	Total N
Germany	Krahé and Berger (2013) <sup>19</sup>	19.4*	35.9	2.149
	Krahé et al. (2021) <sup>20</sup>	37.5*	62.1	1.172
	Schuster et al. (2021) <sup>21</sup>	46.6*	80.5	1.253
	Marchewka et al. (2022) <sup>22</sup>	49.8*	85.7	593
Brazil	Tomaszewska et al. (2022) <sup>23</sup>	55.3*	80.4	856
	D'Abreu et al. (2013) <sup>24</sup>	27.0	29.0	742
Chile	Schuster, Krahé, Ilabaca Baeza, and Muñoz-Reyes (2016) <sup>25</sup>	48.0	51.9	1.135
Iran	Malayeri et al. (2022b) <sup>26</sup>	51.0*	63.0	530
Poland	Tomaszewska and Krahé (2018b) <sup>27</sup>	28.4	34.3	565
Turkey	Schuster, Krahé, and Toplu-Demirtaş (2016) <sup>28</sup>	65.6*	77.6	1.376

\* Significant gender difference.

- 19 Krahé/Berger, Aggressive Behavior, 2013.
- 20 Krahé/Schuster/Tomaszewska, Prevalence of sexual aggression victimization and perpetration in a German university student sample, Archives of Sexual Behavior, 2021, p. 2109 (cited as: Krahé/Schuster/Tomaszewska, Archives of Sexual Behavior, 2021).
- 21 Schuster/Tomaszewska/Marchewka/Krahé, Does question format matter in assessing the prevalence of sexual aggression? A methodological study, The Journal of Sex Research, 2021, p. 502 (cited as: Schuster/Tomaszewska/Marchewka/Krahé, The Journal of Sex Research, 2021).
- 22 Marchewka/Tomaszewska/Schuster/Krahé, Aggressive Behavior, 2022.
- 23 Tomaszewska/Schuster/Marchewka/Krahé, Order effects of presenting coercive tactics on young adults' reports of sexual victimization, Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 2022, p. NP17081.
- 24 D'Abreu/Krahé/Bazon, The Journal of Sex Research, 2013.
- 25 Schuster/Krahé/Ilabaca Baeza/Muñoz-Reyes, Sexual aggression victimization and perpetration among male and female college students in Chile, Frontiers in Psychology, 2016, p. 1354 (cited as: Schuster/Krahé/Ilabaca Baeza/Muñoz-Reyes, Frontiers in Psychology, 2016).
- 26 Malayeri/Nater/Krahé/Sczesny, Sexual aggression among women and men in an Iranian sample: prevalence and correlates, Sex Roles, 2022, p. 139 (cited as: Malayeri/Nater/Krahé/Sczesny, Sex Roles, 2022).
- 27 Tomaszewska/Krahé, Sexual aggression victimization and perpetration among female and male university students in Poland, Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 2018, p. 571 (cited as: Tomaszewska/Krahé, Journal of Interpersonal Violence 2018).
- 28 Schuster/Krahé/Toplu-Demirtaş, Prevalence of sexual aggression victimization and perpetration in a sample of female and male college students in Turkey, The Journal of Sex Research, 2016, p. 1139 (cited as: Schuster/Krahé/Toplu-Demirtaş, The Journal of Sex Research 2016).

Although men's victimization rates were significantly lower than women's in seven of the ten countries, they ranged from 19.4 to 65.6%, indicating that men experience sexual aggression at a substantial level. Further data using the same instrument were assembled in a study including ten countries from the European Union, as shown in Table 2.<sup>29</sup>

Table 2. *Percentage of participants endorsing at least one SAV-S victimization item in ten EU countries.<sup>30</sup>*

Country	Men %	Women %	Total N
Austria	19.9	-	302
Belgium	10.1*	20.4	393
Cyprus	49.0*	31.7	291
Greece	55.8	45.5	292
Lithuania	33.3*	19.7	298
Netherlands	15.2*	52.2	328
Poland	35.4	30.1	352
Portugal	28.6	24.2	245
Slovakia	29.2	35.8	371
Spain	21.9	30.8	608
Overall	27.1	32.2	3.480

\* Significant gender difference.

In four of the countries, significant gender differences were found, with two countries (Belgium and the Netherlands) showing higher rates for women than for men, and two countries (Cyprus and Lithuania) showing higher

- 29 Krahé/Berger/Vanwesenbeeck/Bianchi/Chliaoutakis/Fernández-Fuertes/Fuertes/Matos/Hadjigeorgiou/Haller/Hellemans/Izdebski/Kouta/Meijnckens/Murauskienė/Papadakaki/Ramiro/Reis/Symons/Tomaszewska/Vicario-Molina/Zygadło, Prevalence and correlates of young people's sexual aggression perpetration and victimisation in 10 European countries: a multi-level analysis, *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 2015, p. 682 (cited as: Krahé/Berger/Vanwesenbeeck/Bianchi/Chliaoutakis/Fernández-Fuertes/Fuertes/Matos/Hadjigeorgiou/Haller/Hellemans/Izdebski/Kouta/Meijnckens/Murauskienė/Papadakaki/Ramiro/Reis/Symons/Tomaszewska/Vicario-Molina/Zygadło, *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 2015).
- 30 Krahé/Berger/Vanwesenbeeck/Bianchi/Chliaoutakis/Fernández-Fuertes/Fuertes/Matos/Hadjigeorgiou/Haller/Hellemans/Izdebski/Kouta/Meijnckens/Murauskienė/Papadakaki/Ramiro/Reis/Symons/Tomaszewska/Vicario-Molina/Zygadło, *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 2015.

rates for men.<sup>31</sup> To rule out potential methodological reasons, a qualitative follow-up study was conducted to examine the understanding of the items in the respective countries. This analysis revealed no systematic differences in the interpretation of the SAV-S questions.<sup>32</sup>

### *III. Prevalence of women's sexual aggression towards men*

Compared to both men's sexual victimization and sexual aggression perpetration, far fewer studies have collected perpetration reports from women. Because female-on-male sexual assaults violate traditional gender roles for both women and men, they are even less likely to be reported than male-on-female sexual aggression. Women are likely to be more reluctant than men to report perpetration, and men may feel their masculinity questioned by not having been able to resist an assault by a woman.<sup>33</sup> The finding that men are less likely to acknowledge a nonconsensual sexual activity as a sexual assault if it involves a female rather than a male perpetrator underlines this point.<sup>34</sup> Regarding gender differences in sexual aggression, a comparative study of perpetration in different generation cohorts by P. B. Anderson et al. found that the gender difference in perpetration reports was nonsignificant in the youngest cohorts (Millennium), whereas men had higher perpetration rates than women in the cohorts of Baby-Boomers and Generation Z.<sup>35</sup> They attribute this "millennium shift" to a change in the traditional sexual script that assigns men the role of initiators and women the role of gatekeepers of sexual contact. To the extent that these roles are loosened, with women taking a more active role in initiating sexual contact

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31 *Lowe/Rogers*, The scope of male rape: A selective review of research, policy and practice, *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 2017, p. 38 (cited as: *M. Lowe/Rogers*, *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 2017).

32 *Krahé/Haas/Vanwesenbeeck/Bianchi/Chliaoutakis/Fuertes/Matos/Hadjigeorgiou/Hellemans/Kouta/Meijncvens/Murauskienė/Papadakaki/Ramiro/Reis/Symons/Tomaszewska/Vicario-Molina/Zygadło*, Interpreting survey questions about sexual aggression in cross-cultural research: A qualitative study with young adults from nine European countries, *Sexuality & Culture*, 2016, p. 1.

33 *Fisher/Pina*, *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 2013, *Lowe/Rogers*, *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 2017.

34 *Artime/McCallum/Peterson*, Men's acknowledgment of their sexual victimization experiences, *Psychology of Men & Masculinities*, 2014, p. 313.

35 *P. B. Anderson/C. Struckman-Johnson/Smeaton*, Generation by gender differences in use of sexual aggression: A replication of the millennial shift, *The Journal of Sex Research*, 2021, p. 383.

and men's use of sexual coercion becoming more socially sanctioned, the gender gap in sexual aggression perpetration should be reduced. Several studies from our lab obtained perpetration reports from both men and women in different countries. The overall rates are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. Percentage of participants endorsing at least one SAV-S perpetration item.

Country		Men %	Women %	Total N
Germany	Krahé and Berger (2013) <sup>36</sup>	13.2*	7.6	2.149
	Krahé et al. (2021) <sup>37</sup>	17.7*	9.4	1.172
	Schuster et al. (2021) <sup>38</sup>	19.3*	12.0	1.253
Brazil	D'Abreu et al. (2013) <sup>39</sup>	33.7*	12.3	742
Chile	Schuster, Krahé, Ilabaca Baeza, and Muñoz-Reyes (2016) <sup>40</sup>	26.8*	16.5	1.135
Iran	Malayeri et al. (2022a) <sup>41</sup>	37.0*	13.4	530
Poland	Tomaszewska and Krahé (2018b) <sup>42</sup>	11.7*	6.5	565
Turkey	Schuster, Krahé, and Toplu-Demirtaş (2016) <sup>43</sup>	28.9*	14.2	1.376

\* Significant gender difference.

Across all studies, perpetration rates were significantly higher for male than for female participants. However, the range of women's perpetration rates from 6.5 to 16.5% indicate that women also engage in sexual aggression against men at a level that should not be ignored. This conclusion is further supported by data from the study of ten EU countries mentioned earlier, which found self-reported rates of women's sexual aggression against a man to range from 2.6% (Belgium) to 14.8% (Greece). By comparison, perpetration reports by men against a woman ranged from 5.5% (Belgium) to 48.7% (Greece). The full range of prevalence rates of perpetration for men and women is shown in Table 4.

36 Krahé/Berger, Aggressive Behavior, 2013.

37 Krahé/Schuster/Tomaszewska, Archives of Sexual Behavior, 2021.

38 Schuster/Tomaszewska/Marchewka/Krahé, The Journal of Sex Research, 2021.

39 D'Abreu/Krahé/Bazon, The Journal of Sex Research, 2013.

40 Schuster/Krahé/Ilabaca Baeza/Muñoz-Reyes, Frontiers in Psychology, 2016.

41 Malayeri/Nater/Krahé/Szczesny, Sex Roles, 2022.

42 Tomaszewska/Krahé, Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 2018.

43 Schuster/Krahé/Toplu-Demirtaş, The Journal of Sex Research, 2016.

*Table 4. Percentage of participants endorsing at least one SAV-S perpetration item in ten EU countries.<sup>44</sup>*

Country	Men %	Women %	Total N
Austria	21.5	-	302
Belgium	5.5	2.6	393
Cyprus	11.8*	3.3	291
Greece	48.7*	14.8	292
Lithuania	15.2*	4.1	298
Netherlands	11.4	6.4	328
Poland	7.3	6.3	352
Portugal	9.5	3.3	245
Slovakia	6.9	5.0	371
Spain	9.5*	3.0	608
Overall	16.3	5.0*	3,480

\* Significant gender difference.

The picture from this study is less clear-cut than the findings from the studies presented in Table 3. Although the percentage of men reporting at least one act of sexual aggression is consistently below the percentage of women, the difference reaches significance in only three of the nine countries for which comparative data were available.

In combination, the findings from this program of research suggest two main conclusions. The first is that men experience sexual victimization by women at a substantial rate, although in most countries rates were lower than those for women. The second conclusion is that despite using a unified methodology, including the same measure of sexual victimization and sexual aggression perpetration, prevalence rates as well as the magnitude of gender differences varied substantially between countries. Because methodological differences were minimized between the samples, there is reason to assume that cultural factors may account for the observed variation. Future research should therefore attempt to link prevalence rates of sexual aggression perpetration and victimization to culture-level variables, such as gender equality or dating as well as drinking culture.

44 Krahé/Berger/Vanwesenbeek/Bianchi/Chliaoutakis/Fernández-Fuertes/Fuertes/Matos/Hadjigeorgiou/Haller/Helleman/Izdebski/Kouta/Meijncvens/Murauskienė/Papadakaki/Ramiro/Reis/Symons/Tomaszewska/Vicario-Molina/Zygałdo, Culture, Health & Sexuality, 2015.

#### IV. Vulnerability factors and consequences of men's sexual victimization

Vulnerability factors of men's victimization by women show similarity to those identified for women's victimization by men. For example, alcohol consumption and engaging in casual sex were linked to male sexual victimization in the same way as it was shown to increase the vulnerability to sexual victimization for women.<sup>45</sup> In a series of longitudinal studies in different countries, we found that sexual scripts for consensual sexual interactions, defined as cognitive representations of the characteristic features of sexual encounters, were predictive of sexual victimization in men as well as women. Sexual scripts for consensual scripts may be considered "risky" to the extent that they include established vulnerability factors for sexual victimization, such as alcohol consumption, engaging in casual sex with partners whom one does not know well, and the ambiguous communication of sexual intentions. Sexual scripts have been found to guide sexual behavior, thereby increasing the likelihood of sexual victimization. Parallel paths from risky sexual scripts to sexual victimization via risky sexual behavior were found in several longitudinal studies conducted in Brazil, Chile, Germany, Poland, and Turkey.<sup>46</sup>

Regarding the consequences of men's sexual victimization by women, there is some evidence to suggest that men may be less adversely affected than women. In the sample studied by Struckman-Johnson, 27% of the male victims said that they had felt "bad" or "very bad" about the experience, while the corresponding figure for female victims was 88%.<sup>47</sup> Further

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- 45 *Larimer/Lydum/Anderson/Turner*, Male and female recipients of unwanted sexual contact in a college student sample, *Sex Roles*, 1999, p. 295, *Mellins/Walsh/Sarvet/Wall/Gilbert/Santelli/Thompson/Wilson/Khan/Benson/Bah/Kaufman/Reardon/Hirsch*, Sexual assault incidents among college undergraduates: Prevalence and factors associated with risk, *PLOS ONE*, 2017, e0186471.
- 46 *D'Abreu/Krahé*, Vulnerability to sexual victimization in female and male college students in Brazil: Cross-sectional and prospective evidence, *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 2016, 1101, *Krahé/Berger*, Pathways from college students' cognitive scripts for consensual sex to sexual victimization: A three-wave longitudinal study, *The Journal of Sex Research*, 2021, p. 1130, *Schuster/Krahé*, Predicting sexual victimization among college students in Chile and Turkey: A cross-cultural analysis, *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 2019, p. 2565, *Tomaszewska/Krahé*, Predictors of sexual aggression victimization and perpetration among Polish university students: A longitudinal study, *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 2018, p. 493 (cited as: *Tomaszewska/Krahé*, *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 2018).
- 47 *C. Struckman-Johnson*, *The Journal of Sex Research*, 1988.

studies also found that men do not report strong negative reactions following sexual coercion by a woman.<sup>48</sup> However, the awareness that men can also become sexually victimized and male victims' willingness to acknowledge a sexual assault by a female perpetrator have increased since these studies were conducted. In a study with men who were coerced by women to engage in penetrative sex, participants rated the negative emotional impact of the experience at an average score of 6.9 on a 10-point scale. Qualitative follow-up questions confirmed the distressing nature of the experience for most participants.<sup>49</sup>

A comprehensive review of the literature concluded that male victims may show adverse consequences similar to those identified for female victims.<sup>50</sup> This conclusion is corroborated by later studies.<sup>51</sup> Other studies also found elevated levels of mental health problems in male victims of sexual victimization.<sup>52</sup> Qualitative interviews have shown that many men are left severely traumatized by the experience of sexual victimization.<sup>53</sup> Hence, measures used in quantitative studies may not be sufficiently sensitive to detect the psychological impact of men's nonconsensual sexual contact with women. Moreover, the possibility must be considered that men may be reluctant to acknowledge a negative impact of being sexually assaulted by a woman, as it would undermine their sense of masculinity. Current evidence on the adverse effects of sexual victimization on men rests entirely on self-reports of the extent to which they rated the experience as distressing. In order to clarify whether these responses genuinely reflect a low impact or a reluctance to acknowledge distress, self-reports need to be complemented by other indicators, such as a clinical assessment of physical and psychological symptoms.

48 *Krahé/Scheinberger-Olwig/Bieneck*, Men's reports of nonconsensual sexual interactions with women, *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 2003, p. 165, *C. Struckman-Johnson/D. Struckman-Johnson*, Men pressured and forced into sexual experience, *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 1994, p. 93.

49 *Weare*, "I feel permanently traumatized by it": Physical and emotional impacts reported by men forced to penetrate women in the United Kingdom, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 2021, p. 6621.

50 *Peterson/Voller/Polusny/Murdoch*, Prevalence and consequences of adult sexual assault of men, *Clinical Psychology Review*, 2011, p. 1.

51 E.g., *Gambardella/Benz/Hines/Palm Reed*, A descriptive analysis of college students' experiences of female-perpetrated sexual assault, *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 2020, p. 520.

52 E.g., *Smith/Chen/Lowe/Basile*, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 2022.

53 E.g., *Littleton/Downs/Rudolph*, The sexual victimization experiences of men attending college: A mixed methods investigation, *Sex Roles*, 2020, p. 595.

## V. Risk factors of women's sexual aggression perpetration against men

Most theoretical explanations of sexual aggression perpetration have addressed male perpetrators. The need and potential of applying theories of men's sexual aggression against women to the understanding of women's sexual aggression towards men has been highlighted by Turchik et al.<sup>54</sup> Evidence on risk factors for women's sexual aggression remains scarce, but the available studies show parallels to the risk factors identified for men's perpetration.<sup>55</sup> A broad research literature has established a path from childhood sexual abuse to sexual aggression perpetration, which includes evidence that the association also applied to women.<sup>56</sup> A high level of sexual activity was also identified as a predictor of women's use of force.<sup>57</sup> Risky sexual scripts for consensual sex predicted women's sexual aggression against men via risky sexual behavior in longitudinal studies in different countries.<sup>58</sup>

## VI. Summary and Perspectives for Future Research

Men's sexual aggression against women has long been recognized as a serious social problem and has been studied in an extensive research literature. By contrast, recognizing that men may experience sexual victimization by women and women may act as perpetrators of sexual aggression has been a recent development in both research and the legal treatment of male

54 *Turchik/Hebenstreit/Judson*, An examination of the gender inclusiveness of current theories of sexual violence in adulthood: Recognizing male victims, female perpetrators, and same-sex violence, *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, 2016, p. 133.

55 *J. A. Bouffard/L. A. Bouffard/Miller*, Examining the correlates of women's use of sexual coercion: Proposing an explanatory model, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 2016, p. 2360.

56 *Krahé*, Rape and coercion: Victimization history, in: *Shackelford/Vance* (Eds.), *The Springer Nature encyclopedia of sexual psychology and behavior* 2023), *Palpa/Luebbers/Ogloff*. Child sexual abuse and the propensity to engage in criminal behaviour: A critical review and examination of moderating factors, *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 2018, p. 71.

57 *P. B. Anderson/Kontos/Tanigoshi/Struckman-Johnson*, An examination of sexual strategies used by urban Southern and rural Midwestern university women, *The Journal of Sex Research*, 2005, p. 335.

58 *Schuster/Krahé*, Predictors of sexual aggression perpetration among male and female college students: Cross-cultural evidence from Chile and Turkey, *Sexual Abuse*, 2019, pp. 318-343, *Tomaszewska/Krahé*, *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 2018.

rape. For example, in Germany it was not until 1997 that the limitation of the legal definition of rape to female victims was removed to acknowledge male victims. The current chapter provided an overview of recent research on the prevalence of men's victimization by women, drawing on two data sources: men's reports of victimization experiences and women's reports of perpetration behavior. Whereas the data base on men's victimization reports is substantially larger than that on women's perpetration reports, both sources converge on the conclusion that men experience sexual aggression by women at a rate that requires closer attention. Future research needs to recognize that the forms of sexual aggression by women against men may differ from those of men's sexual aggression against women, which may require changes and additions to instruments designed for studying men's sexual aggression against women. For example, being made to penetrate may be a specific form of sexual aggression in the constellation of male victims and female perpetrators that should be included in survey instruments assessing prevalence rates. Furthermore, parallels and differences in vulnerability factors of men's victimization and risk factors of women's perpetration require more systematic analysis. Finally, against the backdrop of stereotypes trivializing or negating adverse consequences of men's victimization experiences, more research is needed to examine how men are affected by sexual victimization, using prospective and longitudinal designs.

