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Unwanted Sex Versus Rape: How the Language Used to Describe Sexual Assault Impacts Perceptions of Perpetrator Guilt, Victim Blame and Reporting

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UNWANTED SEX VERSUS RAPE:
HOW THE LANGUAGE USED TO
DESCRIBE SEXUAL ASSAULT IMPACTS
PERCEPTIONS OF PERPETRATOR GUILT,
VICTIM BLAME AND REPORTING

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Title: Unwanted Sex Versus Rape: How the Language Used to Describe Sexual Assault Impacts Perceptions of Perpetrator Guilt, Victim Blame and Reporting

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A review of recent psychology and medical literature reveals that the term 'unwanted sex' has become commonly used in journals. Despite this, no universally held definition for the term could be found. Uses ranged from consensual, yet undesirable sexual intercourse, to rape. It was hypothesized that the term 'unwanted sex' may have different connotations than the word rape and impact perceptions of what occurred. It was also hypothesized that using the term 'unwanted sex' instead of rape would result in perceptions that a crime did not occur, and punishment for and reporting of the assault would not be warranted. It was further hypothesized that using 'unwanted sex' may increase victim blame.

To investigate these hypotheses, four scenarios were created. Two described a sexual assault committed by a stranger, and were identical other than term for assault ('unwanted sex' or 'rape.') The other two scenarios described a sexual assault committed by an acquaintance. These were also identical other than term ('unwanted sex' or 'rape'). One hundred sixty participants each read one scenario and answered questions indicating their perceptions of the appropriateness of reporting, punishment and victim blame.

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine if term, gender and type of assault were predictive of reporting, punishment and blame. Type of assault was predictive of behavioral blame. Gender was found to be predictive of character blame; when 'unwanted sex'

was used, women perceived higher levels of character blame than men. Term and type of assault were significant predictors of perception of appropriate punishment. When ‘unwanted sex’ was used participants perceived that less punishment was appropriate. Additionally, when ‘unwanted sex’ was used or the assault was committed by an acquaintance, participants were less likely to indicate that they would report the assault.

In this study, the terms ‘unwanted sex’ and ‘rape’ were not found to be interchangeable. Using the term ‘unwanted sex’ seemed to connote that either no crime or less of a crime had occurred and also increased reported character blame by female respondents. Researchers and practitioners should carefully choose the words that they use to describe sexual assault to avoid revictimization.

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CHAPTER 1

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

When conducting a literature review, the term 'unwanted sex' frequently appears in titles and text of articles about sexual assault (Basile, 1999; Frith & Kitzinger, 2001; Hamby & Koss, 2003; Hannon, Hall, & Van Laar, 1995; Impett & Peplau, 2002; Larimer, Lydum, Anderson & Turner, 1999; Oswald & Russell, 2006; Sprecher, Hatfield, Cortese, Potapova & Levitskaya, 1994; Schulhofer, 1998; Walker, 1997). The descriptor "unwanted sex" seems to be becoming a common trend in research literature and may connote a less violent event than victims actually experience. The term rape still appears with far more frequency, when searching PsychInfo, the term rape occurs in 5,027 citations dating back to 1925. When the term "unwanted sex" is entered into the PsychInfo database, 43 results appear. The earliest use of the term using this search method is 1989. One could infer from this many citations including the titles of articles appearing in APA published journals, that the term, "unwanted sex", has gained accepted status in the field of psychology.

The 1995 National Survey of Family Growth found that first time sexual experiences were often described by respondents as being both unwanted and voluntary (Abma, Driscoll & Moore, 1998). This finding indicates that the terms unwanted sex and rape are not interchangeable. Unwanted does not describe the degree to which the sex is unwanted and could include a range of scenarios from disinterested but willing to violent assault. Unwanted can connote many states of mind from not very enthusiastic but willing to have sex to sex physically forced on an individual.

Participants in the Hamby and Koss study (2003) felt that describing sex as "unwanted" may include those that are not sure if they are ready to have sex or if they feel right about having sex but decide to consent to sex when they are aroused by their partner's advances. This is very different from a woman who was physically or verbally coerced into sexual activity. In both situations, women may feel responsible for what occurred. When discussing situations in which a participant was willing and consenting to have sex but not entirely desirous or not sure about her readiness to engage in sex, the term unwanted sex seems fitting. However, using the same term for an act that was out of the control of the victim does not. By using the term unwanted sex, are we shifting the burden of responsibility from perpetrator to victim?

Despite increasing use of the term, "unwanted sex" no universal meaning for this term could be found. There were no studies found that considered the impact of using the term "unwanted sex" on reporting or help seeking behavior following an assault. Additionally, no studies were found in the literature that compared participants' reactions to victims and perpetrators as a function of specifically using the language "unwanted sex" as compared to rape to describe an assault. Thus, this study is designed to investigate the impact of language on perceptions of sexual assault.

Language and Reporting

Rape affects the lives of thousands of women and men in the United States each year. Despite this, reports of the actual number of rapes that occur vary widely depending on the source of such reports (Hamby & Koss, 2003). According to the Federal Bureau of Investigations' (FBI) Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program for 2004, 94,635 incidents of forcible rape occurred. This number alone may seem staggeringly large; however, it is estimated that as many as 85% of all rapes that occur remain unreported to law enforcement officials.

According to the Laura Neuman Foundation, an estimated 683,000 rapes occur each year (2006). Of the rapes that were reported in 1993, only 53% resulted in the arrest of the alleged perpetrator. In addition, the number provided by the FBI, 94,635, of forcible rapes includes only acts that fall into their circumscribed definition of rape defined as "carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will" and attempts that include force or threats of force. The specificity of this definition to one type of rape may not encompass the experience of all victims. The term "carnal knowledge", for example, is not a commonly used expression; therefore, the exact meaning is not entirely clear. The term *carnal knowledge* is defined only as "sexual intercourse." Does it follow that *carnal knowledge* means vaginal penetration only thereby excluding forced oral sex, anal sex or other acts that can occur during a sexual assault?

In a review of recent studies Fahrenthold, (2006) indicated that there is a substantial drop in the number of reported rapes in the Unites States since 1970. In fact, this review of the crime data showed a drop in reported rapes of more than 85 percent (Fahrenthold, 2006). While this decline has been occurring with seemingly regularity in recent years, there is controversy about the accuracy of such reports with direct care providers and researchers citing the underreporting of the crime of rape as a main contributing factor (Fahrenthold, 2006). Other factors may include the limitation of data collection to include only urban centers. For instance, law enforcement officials in the Washington DC area commenting on this finding stated that while rape reports in the city were down, such reports in surrounding suburbs had increased. They also noted a difference in victims, with many victims being very young and an increase in school-aged victims (Fahrenthold, 2006). Other possible difficulties with the findings are described as problems in the limitation of the definition of rape and a failure to include male rape victims (Fahrenthold, 2006). Reactions to this study also include frustration about the inconsistency of

views about the actual number of rapes that occur. Jennifer Pollitt Hill, head of the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault, was quoted as saying: "When the conversation gets bogged down around, 'How prevalent is the problem?' you can't even get to the next steps, of 'Now, what are we going to do about it?'" (Fahrenthold, 2006, p. 10)

There are many factors thought to be responsible for the discrepancy in the number of rapes and the number of reports made (Hamby & Koss, 2003). According to Koss (2000), rape victims who choose to not report the crime may fear having their name in a public record that includes such personal information, having to testify about details of the rape in front of other people in court and ineffectual rape shield laws which may fail to protect them and allow information about their sexual histories and other private information to be made public.

Baumer (2003) reviewed commonly cited reasons that rape victims decide to not report being assaulted including: misperceptions about what really constitutes sexual assault, the possibility of retribution in some form from the offender, stigma or embarrassment about disclosure, concerns that reports will not be believed and feeling that the legal system does not effectively deal with cases of rape. According to Koss (2000) women are aware that their credibility will be questioned when they report being assaulted. When the perpetrator of the assault is known by the victim, many of the above reasons may be more poignant, especially the fear of some form of retribution for involving the police (Baumer, 2003). Additionally, fear of not being believed or misunderstanding about what constitutes rape may actually be greater when the perpetrator is not a stranger.

Koss (2000) addressed the concern about the ineffectiveness of the legal system, reasoning that if women feel that the system does not work, they will be less likely to engage in the system by reporting rape. Koss examined the ability of law authorities to punish perpetrators

and also the resulting cost for victims. Koss also reviewed survey research from rape crisis centers and found that in 17 states victims were forced to take lie detector tests in order for charges to be filed. When faced with this, many victims decided not to pursue legal action and chose to withdraw their complaints. When complaints were withdrawn based on refusal to take a lie detector test, they were officially termed to be false allegations of rape or recantations of reports.

A review of several studies about law enforcement's response to rape allegations demonstrates that even when victims do come forward to report being raped, charges are only filed around half of the time (Koss, 2000; Campbell, 2005). Furthermore, women who do attempt to file charges often reported feeling additionally traumatized by the experience of dealing with medical and legal personnel (Campbell, 2005). This secondary trauma occurs when victims feel that law officers, doctors and nurses are blaming them for being assaulted.

In her 2005 study, Campbell's research team interviewed rape victims in the hospital after they had been interviewed by police and examined by medical staff. Police officers, nurses and doctors were also interviewed about what occurred during their contact with victims. Their responses were then correlated to test level of inter-rater reliability. Results demonstrated that of her sample of 45 cases, 48% of victims and 50% of police officers stated that the police officer involved took a report about the assault. Only 18% of victims and 27% of police officers stated that an investigation would occur. Their responses were significantly correlated indicating a high level of inter-rater reliability. Additionally when interviewed about questions asked by police officers, responses were also highly correlated, again indicating good inter-rater reliability, or that both parties were responding in a similar way about what had occurred. Interviewers found that 69% of victims and 60% of officers reported that the officers discouraged the victims from

filing a report. Around one third of victims and officers reported that officers refused to take a report. Victims and officers reported that victims were also asked questions about their own responsibility for the crime including: questions about their behaviors and choices (victims and officers 40%), prior sexual history (victims 40%, officers 38%), if they resisted being raped (victims 84%, officers 100%), if they had an orgasm or were aroused by the assault (victims 20%, officers 13%) and if they would take a lie detector test (victims and officers 13%). Finally both victims and officers were asked how the victims felt as a result of their interaction. While victims reported high levels of distress in the form of guilt, feeling badly about themselves, feeling violated and feeling reluctant to seek additional help in the future, inter-rater reliability for this question was not significant. Amazingly, police officers did not report that victims felt as distressed as they actually did after these interactions. This indicates that the police officers in this sample were unaware that their behaviors resulted in high levels of distress for rape victims.

Misunderstandings about what rape is and what it isn't may often result from another theorized cause of reporting discrepancies: the language used to describe rape. Specifically, the wording of the questions asking participants if they have been assaulted has been one consideration under the microscope. A review of previous studies has found that when there are fewer than four questions asked, respondents are less likely to report having been sexually assaulted. (Hamby & Koss, 2003) Conversely, more detailed questions that describe the explicit behaviors that may be involved in an assault elicit increased reporting of assault. This was the case when the Department of Justice revised their 1992 National Crime Survey (NCS) to include wording that was more specific to sexual assault. After revising questions to describe specific behaviors that might be associated with sexual assault instead of merely asking respondents if

they had been raped, the rate of reported assaults increased by 250% on the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) (Baumer, 2003).

Survey research has indicated that victims of sexual assault often do not describe their experiences as "rape." When asked about assaults using precise terms to describe the behaviors of being attacked, many respondents who indicated that they have had experiences that legal standards would define as sexual assault, later went on to answer 'no' when asked if they have ever been raped (Hamby & Koss, 2003; Kahn, 2004). According to Kahn (2004) many researchers of sexual assault use the Sexual Experiences Survey (SES) which includes questions that describe different acts that meet the legal definition of rape. A number of studies have indicated that even when a woman responds affirmatively to having had many of these experiences, she is unlikely to indicate that she has been raped. Kahn reported the number of women fitting this pattern in most research as being over 50%.

Additionally, in date rape situations, both victims and perpetrators may be unlikely to think that a rape actually occurred (McDonald, 2004). This is a problem especially prevalent on college campuses and influences the underreporting of the crime. For overall rape research this underreporting has serious implications because so much psychological research is conducted using college student populations. While date rape is thought to occur more often than rape perpetrated by a stranger, it is reported with far less frequency (Baumer, 2003; McDonald, 2004). In college populations, men may display tolerant attitudes towards date rape more often than their female counterparts (McDonald, 2004).

These types of findings have lead researchers to the conclusion that women often do not self-describe sexual assaults as rape. For this reason, many surveys have changed their wording

to include terminology that reflects specific behaviors involved in an assault (Hamby & Koss, 2003).

When surveys only describe rape as intercourse they also produce lower estimates of rapes that have occurred than those that include broader definitions (Hamby & Koss, 2003). This seems somewhat self evident. Operationally defining sexual assault based on only one physical act restricts the range of all possible types of assaults that may have occurred.

Evidence supporting the idea that operationally defining sexual assault based only on one act limits reporting comes from the results of 2 large studies. A Canadian national survey of sexual assault prevalence found that when the word rape was removed, reports greatly increased (Hamby & Koss, 2003). The wording of the survey was theorized to be a major reason for the discrepancy. The second study took place in the United Kingdom. This survey contained questions that described behaviors which occur in sexual assault. Only one third of participants who responded yes to these questions went on to answer a later question that blatantly used the word rape affirmatively. This indicates that respondents may not define their own experiences that meet the legal definition of rape as rape.

The above findings have lead many researchers to the assumption that because victims of sexual violence may not describe their assaults as rape, researchers should follow suit and that doing so will increase the reporting of rape on surveys that are attempting to determine the prevalence of rape (Hamby & Koss, 2003; Kahn, 2004). While this finding has been substantiated by the above studies, no consideration seems to have been given to the impact of using other terms to describe a rape on perceptions of self blame that victims may have. And while avoiding the term rape may increase survey reporting, there is no evidence that doing so increases the reporting of rape to the police or seeking medical or psychological care.

Additionally, using language that mitigates responsibility for an assault has been shown to lessen perceptions of perpetrator guilt (McDonald, 2004).

A number of studies have attempted to discover reasons why women do not describe their experiences of being assaulted as rape (Kahn, 2004). While no overall demographic or personality variables have been discovered which account for this, three predictors have been found. First, relationship to the assailant was shown to predict that women would not describe the experience as rape (Koss, 1985). When the woman knew her assailant well or had a romantic relationship with him, she was less likely to think of herself as the victim of rape. Secondly, women who do not define their experiences as rape often have a script of what rape means that includes being violently attacked by a stranger and their own experience may not fall into this definition (Kahn, Mathie, & Torgler, 1994). Third, emotional reactions in women who do not call their experiences rape have been found to be less intense than those that do think of their experiences as rape (Kahn et al., 1994).

After examining the reasons why women do not define their own experiences as rape, one might ask why researchers may choose to follow suit and not use the word rape in their studies of sexual assault. According to Koss, (1988) using the word rape only connotes violent stranger rape for many women and is not perceptually associated with acquaintance or non-violent rape. In light of this, questions about what language researchers are using to describe sexual assault may arise.

It appears that the term "unwanted sex" is meant to be a catchall of a broader array of types of assault. However, encompassing a wider array of sexual assault and increasing the survey reporting of these behaviors are not the only consideration and may result in unintended consequences for victims. Using the term "unwanted sex" instead of rape may mitigate the

seriousness of this crime. The finding that many victims do not consider what happened to them to be rape may be reinforced by using watered-down language to describe the act of rape. While calling rape unwanted sex may increase reporting on a paper and pencil survey, it may not actually result in criminal complaints to authorities or help seeking behavior.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Power and Language Used to Describe Rape

In their 1992 work, Muehlenhard, Powch, Phelps, and Giusti (1992) discussed how language is created by those in power and how it influences the way behavior is perceived. Muehlenhard et al. contend that language is a powerful tool that creates meaning and can shape the connotation of events. Language also contributes to maintaining the power position that men have in our culture (Worell & Remar, 1992). In this context language can be used to devalue women or ignore their experience. For example by use of the masculine pronoun to mean all humans, the experience of women is treated as nonexistent in everyday language. For this reason, the terms used in research are particularly important because the defining constructs can have an impact on social policy. In particular, the choice of terminology to describe rape influences the perception of appropriateness of such behavior, shapes feelings of victim blame and alters beliefs about perpetrator guilt. Muehlenhard et al. point out that in the case of sexual assault, our choice of terminology can be influenced by the political culture and therefore by the dominate groups in the culture. Additionally, words used to describe those involved in rape can have an impact on how they are perceived (Muehlenhard et al., 1992).

In their review of the sexual assault literature, Muehlenhard et al., (1992) examined definitions commonly used for rape. Some authors define rape narrowly as penile-vaginal intercourse, while others include any coercive sexual activity. Overall they found that: ". . . definitions vary along several dimensions. Those dimensions include: a) sexual behaviors

specified, b) criteria for establishing non-consent, c) the individual specified and d) whose perspective is specified – that is, who decides whether sexual assault has occurred." (p. 24-25)

Findings by McDonald (2004) emphasize the importance of choosing words carefully when describing rape. In a study of how language impacts the perceptions of appropriate punishment for perpetrators of date rape, the author used scenarios that contained language which was either active, passive or diffused responsibility. In the active language category, the perpetrator was described as doing things to the victim in the active voice, (an example might be, he hit her.) In the passive voice, the acts were described in a passive way, (she was hit). And in the diffused responsibility category, the phrasing was less direct, (they became engaged in a violent situation even after she said no). Participants in this study read scenarios that used the above types of description and were then asked to recommend an appropriate punishment. The punishments ranged from short term training in sensitivity to a jail sentence of three years. The results indicated a main effect for both language used and for gender. Recommended punishments were less severe in the language diffused responsibility groups than in either the passive or active categories and as a group, men recommended less severe punishments than did their female counterparts. The authors concluded that using language that diffuses responsibility leads to the perception that a less severe punishment is appropriate for perpetuators. A glaring problem with this study was that participants did not have an option to choose no punishment as appropriate for the assailant. To assess the extent to which language impacted the response choices in this study, it would have been helpful to know whether no punishment as an option was ever chosen; thus suggesting the extreme to which language exonerates assailants from culpability in sexual assault. The author goes on to make the following point:

> . . . use of language that diffuses responsibility for the crime of date rape may both make college men more tolerant of this crime, but may also implicitly convey to them that committing this offense themselves is less objectionable. Further, being exposed to media reports which use diffused responsibility language may deter women from reporting the crime of date rape if they themselves are victims. (p. 49)

Providers that work with survivors of assault should carefully consider their own definitions of rape (Worell & Remer, 1992). Language used when working with survivors conveys beliefs and attitudes regarding sexual assault. Both therapists and victims of assault may have internalized culturally held ideas about rape, including myths about what constitutes sexual assault and victim blame.

Unwanted sex. Choice of language used to describe rape appears to be extremely important because it may directly influence perpetrator punishment, victim blaming and victim reporting (McDonald 2004; Muehlenhard et al., 1992). The terms that we use to describe rape can defuse responsibility for the crime. In order to clarify which terms have this effect additional research needs to be conducted. Specifically, does the use of the term unwanted sex to describe sexually violent behavior attenuate the perceived seriousness of rape? Considering the potential impact of word choice used by those having social power to describe a sexual assault, a look at the terminology used by research psychologists is critically important. A review of the professional literature regarding rape reveals that the term *unwanted sex* has become common in psychology writings (Basile, 1999; Frith & Kitzinger, 2001; Hamby & Koss, 2003; Hannon, Hall, & Van Laar, 1995; Impett & Peplau, 2002; Larimer, Lydum, Anderson & Turner, 1999; Oswald &

Russell, 2006; Sprecher, Hatfield, Cortese, Potapova & Levitskaya, 1994; Walker, 1997). The impetus for use of this language is largely unknown and may have stemmed from researchers desires to improve low survey response rates rather than political pressure. When reviewing specific articles, that use the term *unwanted sex*; however, it quickly becomes clear that the term is used in a variety of ways. *Unwanted sex* describes a range of experiences from consensual sex to forced violent sexual assault so that its use is ambiguously meaningful.

In the article entitled, "*Why Some Women Consent to Unwanted Sex with a Dating Partner: Insights from Attachment Theory* (Impett & Peplau 2000)*",* the authors use the term to define situations that would not be likely to meet legal definitions of rape. As clearly stated in the title of this article the authors suggest that it is possible to provide consent for sexual activity that is not wanted. According to these writers, "Freely and willingly engaging in unwanted sexual activity has been referred to as consensual unwanted sex or compliant sexual behavior." (p. 360) According to this definition, a wide range of consensual sexual activity can be considered unwanted. Previous studies (McDonald, 2004) have demonstrated that both men and women may engage in this type of behavior for a variety of reasons such as pressure to appear sexually active or fear of loosing an important relationship. Moreover, women may engage in this type of sexual activity because of the unwarranted yet not uncommon belief that men have insatiable sexual appetites and should not have to stop sexual activity once they have been aroused (McDonald, 2004).

A broader use of the term is employed in the 1999 article by Basile, "*Rape by Acquiescence: The Ways in Which Women "Give In" to Unwanted Sex with Their Husbands.*" In the title of this article the term *unwanted sex* is clearly used in a parallel way with the word rape.

The clear connotation of this title is that one can acquiesce to be raped. In other words, the title of this article suggests a rape by consent is possible.

Basile's study was a qualitative one which sought to better define the ways in which women acquiesce to unwanted sexual activity. The study used a telephone survey methodology to ask women about their experiences of unwanted sex in their marriages or committed relationships. Findings included styles or types of acquiescing behavior that ranged from women having sex with their husbands or partners not because they want to but because they consider it their wifely duty to women having sex with their husbands because they knew that if they did not, they would have been beaten or forcibly raped. Basile went on to write that, "Rape by acquiescence is defined as any unwanted sexual contact that a woman gives into with a husband or partner." (p. 1040) Basile concedes that her work is based in feminist theory which postulates that a power differential which favors the man in a relationship is always present. If we believe that there is always a power differential that favors men and that to 'give in' to having sex is always coercive, is it possible for a woman to have consensual sex? Basile herself states that ". . . the difference between acquiescence and consent becomes unclear." (p. 1054) and that sexual assault experiences can be "constructed" (p.1055) as rape after they occur. This suggests that women have not been raped until they decide after the attack that the assault was a rape and that rape is not really a crime, but rather a gradient in a continuum of thought about sexual activity. The author concluded that her findings should not "dilute what is understood to be rape." (p. 1055), that only the more severe categories of acquiescence – those involving the threat of on-going or repeating physical violence should be considered rape. Basile concluded that she had found a continuum based on the types of coercion present and that this continuum can help us better understand rape. The danger in Basile's statements is that calling rape a continuum of

perception, mitigates the experiences of rape victims and using the term rape by acquiescence implies that one can consent to being raped.

Another article, "Coping with Unwanted Sex," (Muren, Perot & Byrne, 1989) seems to use the term interchangeably with 'rape.' The following quotation from this article provides an example, "Research has shown that many college students experience unwanted sexual activity. For example, Koss and Oros (1982) found that about 25% of their sample of college males admitted to one or more forcible attempts at intercourse." Here Muren, Perot and Byrne first use the term 'unwanted sexual activity' and in the next sentence, provide 'forcible attempts at intercourse' as an example.

Another example of how the term is used in this article comes from a description of the methods used to gather information about participants "unwanted sexual activity." Muren, Perot and Byrne go on to say that this "can be described as a continuum from voluntary activity, to altruistic, to verbally coerced, to physically coerced."

Finally this article clearly uses the term "unwanted sexual activity" to describe an array of experiences from attempted kissing to strong physically forces coercion when describing the results:

> Over half of the women wrote a description of unwanted sexual activity . . . The most frequent attempts were intercourse, then kissing or touching the woman, and forcing her to perform oral sex. Overall, coercion most often involved mild physical means; persuasion and strong physical means were also used. (Muren, Perot & Byrne, 1989)

Zweig, J. M., Crockett, L. J., Sayer, A., & Vicary, J R., (1999) also seem to use the term 'unwanted sex' in this way, describing a wide array of experiences from unpleasant to rape. This is indicated in the following description of their methods:

> Controlling for earlier psychological adjustment, women who had unwanted sex because of either violent coercion or external psychological manipulation reported lower levels of psychological adjustment than women who had unwanted sex because of internal psychological pressure or substance-related coercion. (Zweig, et al. 1999)

In this article, the following definition is provided: "We employed a broad definition of sexual victimization: Any instance of unwanted intercourse was regarded as an instance of coercion and sexual victimization." Here the authors are providing another clear example of how terms for sexual assault are used to describe a wide variety of experiences. The authors go on to say that their intention in writing this article was not to define terms used for sexual assault. An explanation that the terms 'rape' and 'sexual assault' are not used because research has indicated that women do not always define their own experience this way.

Media. The media is instrumental in indirectly shaping and influencing public perception and government policy through the language they use to describe news events. This can be a function of decisions about which cases to report and which to leave out of the news, which aspects of an alleged rape to cover and the language used to describe rape victims, perpetrators and their actions. A recent Washington Post story, (Fahrenthold), paraphrased Dean Kilpatrick who heads the National Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center as follows: ". . . recent high-profile rape cases such as those involving Duke University lacrosse players and basketball star Kobe Bryant may have persuaded rape victims to stay silent because of public scrutiny of the accusers' private lives and sexual history." (2006, p. 8)

When women do decide to come forward and report rape, they are often portrayed negatively by the media (Ardovini-Brooker & Caringella-McDonald, 2002; Haddad, 2004).

News media may choose to release the names of the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator, and recent stories have included explicit details about rape cases yet to be tried (Fahrenthold, 2006, Haddad, 2004). These accounts can include graphic language about the sexual acts that occur as well as details about the alleged victim's sexual history.

This may be particularly true of high profile cases that involve well known defendants. In 2003 in Colorado, basketball celebrity, Kobe Bryant, was accused and indicted on counts of raping a nineteen year old hotel worker (Haddad, 2004). In the Kobe Bryant case, the accuser's name was revealed on a radio talk show program. In addition to having her name revealed, her address, phone number and email address were made public. The accuser in this case received several death threats. Her privacy and dignity were further violated to an extreme degree when details of her sexual history were reported by people claiming to be her friends on television talk shows. The alleged victim was said to have DNA from three different men in her underwear when she reported the assault. Products with her name and image were marketed on the internet, including underwear and other memorabilia which contained her photograph and a photograph of Bryant which were doctored to look as if they were in engaged in sexual activity. All of this occurred despite existing rape shield laws which existed in the state of Colorado where the alleged assault took place. The victim was affected to such an extreme degree by the publicity that she moved to several different states in order to try and avoid the negative publicity.

A look at recent popular press articles written about the rape case against Duke Lacrosse players reveals that victim blaming is rampant in the American media. Take for example the following quote from an Ann Coulter article (2006) about the case: ". . . you can severely reduce your chances of being raped if you do not go to strange men's houses and take your clothes off for money." Coulter additionally describes female victims of violent crime including

rape as " . . . these girls go out alone, late at night, drunk off their butts, and there's nary a peep about the dangers of drunk women on their own in public." (Coulter, 2006, p.5)

Other conservative icons, like Rush Limbaugh have recounted details of the 1980's Tawana Brawley incident when commenting about the Duke case (Meadows & Thomas, 2006). In the Duke case, defending attorneys released evidence before the trial started. Additionally, direct attacks on the character of the alleged victim as well as the prosecutor have been frequent and intense. For example, a defense attorney for the defendants in this case requested a motion to acquire the victim's prior mental health treatment stating;

> This request is based on the fact that the complaining witness has a history of criminal activity and behavior, which includes alcohol abuse, drug abuse and dishonesty, all conduct which indicates mental, emotional or physical problems, which affect her credibility as a witness. (MSNBC, 2006)

A recent news story reported that the number of rape cases has dropped in the United States since the 1970's (Fahrenthold, 2006). The author hypothesizes that factors contributing to this outcome may include a growing sensitivity by the media demonstrated by their protection of alleged rape victims and policy to keep personal information of these victims out of the news. However, Fahrenthold concedes that limitations to the extent of sexual history have been imposed in trial settings by the American courts. Unfortunately, this sensitivity policy does not seem to be equally applied to all victims of sexual assault such as during the Kobe Bryant case when the alleged victim's name was released as were graphic details about her sex life which went on to become headline news.

Victim blame and self blame. Social psychology has long theorized and researched the idea of a Belief in a Just World (Lipkus Dalbert & Siegler, 1996; Rubin & Peplau, 1975). According to this theory, people who believe that the world is just suppose that our life experiences are the result of our behaviors and that we merit both the good and bad things that happen to us (Lipkus et at., 1996; Rubin & Peplau, 1975). In this view, the world is a fair place where punishments and rewards are meted out based on moral character. Individuals who believe in a just world are therefore, more likely to judge that a behavior or behaviors of rape victims *caused* their rape to occur.

In their work on believing in a just world, Lipkus et al., (1996) found that there are two types of Just World beliefs, those that focus on the self and those that focus on others. To test this hypothesis the authors gave participants a scale for Belief in a Just World for the Self and for Others and also had them complete the NEO PIR. Their findings indicated that there were differences in personality traits between subjects demonstrating low and high levels of belief in a just world for the self. Those with higher belief in a just world for themselves reported different self views which included higher reported emotional stability, openness and extroversion and less neurosis. This study (Lipkus et al., 1996) indicated that individuals with a greater belief in a just world were less depressed suggesting that a Belief in a Just World can be thought of to some degree as protective. Those with greater just world beliefs were also found to report higher satisfaction with their lives, less neuroticism, were more religious and had more negative attributions about the poor and disabled (Rubin & Peplau, 1975). However, those with high just world beliefs can become the victims of violent crimes such as sexual assault as frequently as those not holding such beliefs.

In their 1988 work, Taylor and Brown found that there are three types of positive illusions that people have about themselves. These are: having control over events that happen, viewing the self in an enhancing way and having positive expectations about what will occur in the future. Lipkus et al. (1996) contended that a Belief in a Just World has been thought of as being another type of positive illusion that provides structure to events and circumstances that might otherwise be seen as meaningless and without order. When the world functions in a way that is based on this kind of justice – then people can believe that events are predictable and that negative consequences are avoidable.

On the contrary, some research has indicated that feelings of self blame in some crime victims may actually lead to more positive mental health outcomes (Ullman, 1996). Although, some crimes victims who believed they could do something differently in the future to avoid being attacked felt empowered, self blame for rape victims did not have the same adaptive function. A study by Nario-Redmond, & Barascome, (1996) using a process of counterfactual thinking and hypothesizing a "worse" rape scenario than the one that had actually happened mitigated the seriousness of the actual rape. Conversely, imagining a better outcome made the rape that had actually occurred seem less awful by comparison. Their hypotheses extended to perceptions of both victims and assailants. In terms of the victim, in prior studies when participants were asked to image that the victim could have behaved differently and avoided being raped, victim blaming behavior increase. However, when participants imagined that the victim could have behaved differently, but there was no different outcome (the victim was raped despite behavior), victim blame was not as apt to occur. In terms of the perpetrator, when crimes of a more heinous nature are described, perpetrators of less brutal crimes are seen as less corrupt

and may receive a more lenient sentence. Language can be used which evokes counterfactual thinking and changes perceptions of both victims and perpetrators.

Counterfactual thinking may have dangerous implications for rape trials as well. For example, the process of conveying counterfactual comparisons in the courtroom is found when attorneys use of terms such as: "if only she had" or "she might have" (Nario-Redmond & Barascome, 1996) thereby allowing them to use short-hand, victim blame techniques by linking the possible behavior of the victim or lack of a behavior to the cause of the assault Nario-Redmond & Barascome, (1996) found empirical support that when counterfactual thinking is used to imply that the victim could have acted to better her situation but did not, victim blame increased. Moreover, if the assault scenario could have been worse for the assailant, it points out to participants that the assailant attacked another person and was unharmed which demonstrated the unfairness of the situation and participants are more likely to believe that the assailant should be punished. Here the counterfactual thinking has to be tied to the behavior of the victim or the assailant specifically for this effect to occur. When participants were asked to imagine a worse scenario, (such as the death of the victim), the perpetrator was seen as less guilty. The authors speculate that this is because participants believe the perpetrator is less brutal than he could have been.

How rape victims are perceived by others. Reactions to rape victims differ along many variables with type of rape being one of the most salient. McDonald, (2004) noted that men are more likely to engage in blaming rape victims in general but both men and women blame the victims of date rape more readily than victims of stranger rape. This may contribute to the serious underreporting of the crime of date rape. Date rape is thought to occur at least as frequently as rape committed by strangers (Koss, Seibel, Dinero & Cox, 1988).

Date rape appears to be associated with the most victim blaming however, all types of rape are associated with negative consequences for victims that extends beyond the crime itself. According to Ullman, (1996) "Sexual assault is a form of victimization that is particularly stigmatizing in American society." p. 506. Research has indicated that when victims of rape receive negative responses from others to the news that they have been assaulted, there can be serious negative outcomes for victims, including increased psychological symptoms (Ullman, 1996). Unfortunately, positive reactions may have very little effect on future adjustment. Negative reactions from others may increase victims' feelings of self blame. Reactions to victims may depend on the crime committed against them, and can take the form of behaving differently toward the victim or distancing oneself from the victim.

Ullman (1996) used a sample of women who had been sexual victimized to study how others' reactions to their experience impacted future well being. Participants were recruited using signs and radio announcements. To qualify for participation, the assault had to have occurred more than one year prior to the study. All participants completed measures that included demographic information, information about the assault, types of social reactions that occurred in response to the assault and the victims' psychological well being.

Both positive and negative reactions were reported by victims. Positive reactions included: being believed, being listened to and instrumental aid. Of the positive reactions indicated, being listened to was the only one shown to be related to both better self reports of recovery and fewer psychological symptoms. Aid was actually demonstrated to negatively impact psychological symptoms.

Negative reactions included: being treated differently, having someone else take control, victim blame and distraction. Surprisingly victim blame was the only negative reaction that was

not related to worse self reported adjustment and symptomatology. When the timing of the social reaction was controlled, blame was shown to be a positive predictor of worse outcomes. Additionally, being believed was shown to be protective when timing was controlled. Timing in this study included the amount of time that had passed since the assault and the amount of time that had passed between the assault and the disclosure.

The study hypothesized that both self blame and coping would mediate the relationship between social support and psychological adjustment. The hypothesis about self blame was not demonstrated. Negative reactions had a strong influence on poorer adjustment and more psychological symptoms, and this relationship was not mediated by self blame. Using path analysis, models of negative reactions were created. Negative reactions were shown to influence characterological blame and also to have a detrimental effect on self reports of recovery and psychological symptoms, but not to have an impact on behavioral self blame. Characterological self blame would include making negative attributions about the self and behavioral self blame would include believing that different actions could have resulted in a different outcome. In other words, when victims were reacted to negatively, they reported self blame in the form of negative attributions about who they were and not what they had done.

This study has implications for future clinical work with rape victims and research investigating the emotional needs of rape victims. The importance of choosing a positive supportive reaction to the news of rape has lasting effects on the psychological health and adjustment of victims. Simply believing victims when they report rape can increase positive outcomes. Negative reactions like blaming the victim can have long term negative effects on the mental health of victims. Again choosing the right language when responding to sexual assault victims was demonstrated to be highly important. Words used by responders to victims can

increase feelings of self blame, and can leave victims feeling badly about themselves (Campbell, 2005).

*Devastating effects of sexual assault. W*omen that have been victims of sexual assault may suffer from medical and psychological conditions for years after they are attacked. Psychological and social consequence of rape can include fear of being sexually revictimized or being blamed for the assault which can result in avoidant behavior (Ullman, 1996). Women may avoid disclosing the details of the attack to others for fear of being blamed for the assault (Ullman, 1996). In addition, previous research reviewed by Ullman & Brecklin (2003) has demonstrated that victims of rape display life-long, poorer health than do non-victims. The same review also demonstrated that Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is also frequently diagnosed in rape victims and variables that have been shown to contribute to higher rates of PTSD in rape victims include: lower socioeconomic status, lower education levels, severity and duration of abuse and race, with better outcomes for European American victims. Ullman & Brecklin (2003) found that when women were victimized at more than one time in their lives (as children and again as adults) they were more likely to suffer from chronic medical conditions and were more likely to seek help and that those victims who developed PTSD symptomology were more likely to suffer from serious, long term health problems.

Despite the lasting medical and mental health problems noted in rape victims, research has demonstrated that victims of violent crime are not likely to seek medical or mental health services (Norris, Kaniasty, & Scheer**,** 1990). In addition to this, when victims sought and utilized mental health services, they often reported that these services were not helpful (Norris et al. 1990).

Norris, Kaniasty, & Scheer (1990) concluded that only 1 in 8 violent crime victims in their sample sought mental health services a few months post victimization and 1 in 6 within a year of being attacked. The authors argue that victims may look to social support networks to determine what resources are necessary, which is contingent upon how support people view the crime committed and its seriousness. Finally results indicated that mental health services needed to start soon after the crime and be continuous to have a positive effect on outcomes.

Clinical and research implications. The studies discussed have important clinical and research implications. The words used to describe rape can have an impact on the way an assault is viewed by clients, students and those who read the professional literature. As Nario-Redmond & Barascome (1996) demonstrated, when comparisons are made that produce counterfactual thinking, and worse scenarios can be imagined, the crime of rape is seen as less serious, perpetrators are seen as being less guilty and severe punishment is less likely. Additionally, Ullman's work (1996) demonstrated the importance of reactions to rape victims. Being believed and listened to is associated with better mental health outcomes for victims. Conversely, negative reactions to victims, including victim blame can result in increased psychological symptoms and worse outcomes for victims.

The way that we write about and define sexual assault can have an impact on the way clinicians talk to the victims of rape. Terms used and accepted in current research influence the terms used in future research, become acceptable descriptors and are used in psychological texts read by students. For all of these reasons, the language that we use when we talk about rape needs to be chosen carefully. The choices that we make should be based on empirically demonstrated findings and not on current trends.

As demonstrated in recent news articles, media accounts of rape can create additional stigma and promote victim blaming. Accounts of rape actually reported vary but are often disturbingly low, (only 2% of the participants in Ullman's 1996 study reported the crime). Language used by the media in high profile cases of rape might be hypothesized to be a contributing factor. After reading or hearing accounts of victims that have come forward only to have their privacy compromised through the release of details about their sexual, medical and psychological histories would be cause for victims of rape to weigh the costs and benefits of reporting that they had been assaulted.

Hypotheses. *Hypothesis 1.* It is hypothesized that victim blame will be more strongly correlated with language used than with type of attack. That is, for both of the scenarios presented to participants (stranger rape and acquaintance rape), participants will judge the victim to be more responsible when the term "unwanted sex" is used than when the term "rape" is used. It is believed that using the term "unwanted sex" will characterize the victim as more of a participant in a sexual activity than the victim of a violent crime. Additionally, the language used to describe the sexual assault will account for more variance than any of the other variables being examined including: for the Self, Gender, Age and Ethnicity.

This hypothesis is based on findings that language used can influence perceptions of events and trigger responses of victim blame (Muehlenhard et al., 1992; Nario-Redmond & Barascome, 1996).

Hypothesis 2. Additionally, for both of the scenarios (stranger rape and acquaintance rape), participants will feel that the perpetrator is more responsible and deserving of more severe punishment when the term "rape" is used instead of "unwanted sex." Following from hypothesis 1 it is hypothesized that language (rape vs. unwanted sex) will be predictive of judgments of

punishment for perpetrators. Because the use of the term unwanted sex will connote that the sexual assault victim is a partner in sexual activity rather than a crime victim, no punishment or very lenient punishment will be thought to be appropriate for the perpetrator of "unwanted sex", but not for "rape." Again, it is hypothesized that use of descriptive terminology will account for more of the variance in punishment than any of the other variables to be examined.

This hypothesis is based on findings that indicate that type of language used influences perceptions of the guilt of the perpetrator and that when language diffuses responsibility, perpetrators are found to be less responsible for their crimes (McDonald, 2004).

Hypothesis 3. The third hypothesis to be examined is as follows: it is predicted that for both scenarios (stranger rape and acquaintance rape) participants will judge that the victim reporting of the assault is more appropriate when the term "rape" is used but less so when "unwanted sex" is used to describe the assault. This hypothesis is derived from the fact that the word rape has meaning as a crime and unwanted sex does not. To the extent that it is an illegal activity, the word rape has a shared universal meaning which makes it appropriate to report activities that are described using the word rape. Following the reasoning of the previous two hypotheses, if participants believe that victims who are described as having unwanted sex are more responsible for the assault, they are more likely to conclude that reporting the assault is less appropriate. Again it is believed that the language used to describe the assault will account for more of the variance in appropriate of reporting than any of the other variables to be examined.

This hypothesis stems from findings that one reason why rape is underreported is because what constitutes rape is often not understood (Baumer, 2004). It is thought that using the term unwanted sex will increase this confusion over how participants perceive the scenarios that they are reading.

Hypothesis 4. Finally, it is hypothesized that for both scenarios (stranger rape and acquaintance rape), participants will feel that they themselves would be more likely to report the assault when the term "rape" is used instead of "unwanted sex." The same arguments that are used in the third hypothesis apply to the fourth. Participants will be less likely to report an assault to the police if it is described as unwanted sex because unwanted sex does not have a universal definition of being an illegal activity. Again for this final scenario, the use of terminology is hypothesized to account for more of the variance in self reporting than any of the other variables that are to be examined.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Participants. Participants were 160 randomly selected University students from the Psychology Department enrolled in general psychology at IUP who selected either subject pool participation or read and review assignments to satisfy course requirements. Male and female students therefore had an equal chance of being selected to participate and participation was not limited based on age or any other demographic characteristic. A copy of the informed consent letter is found as Appendix A.

Instruments

*Demographic questionnaire***.** A brief questionnaire was created by the experimenter to assess the influence of demographic characteristics on the responses to questions. (Appendix B). Participants were asked to provide information about their gender, age and ethnicity. Gender was included in the analyses to determine if it was associated with victim blame, perpetrator guilt, perpetrator punishment or appropriateness of reporting beliefs. As previously indicated, gender has been demonstrated to have a significant impact on perceptions of sexual assault as a crime (McDonald, 2004).

*Scenarios***.** Four scenarios were created by the experimenter to serve as measures of the dependent variables (Appendix C). Theses scenarios were all intentionally written to be brief, and describe only the behaviors of the victim and the participant so as not to decrease emotional responses from participants. A college campus was the settings for both scenarios, chosen so that the participants could relate to the events and characters being described. This was also chosen

because a number of sexual assaults occur on college campuses (Koss, Gidycz & Wisniewski, 1987).

Participants read one of four scenarios. Two of the scenarios described a stranger rape situation and two described an acquaintance rape situation. The stranger rape scenarios were identical except that one group received scenarios that used the term "unwanted sex" and another group read a scenario that used the word "rape" to describe the assault. Similarly, the acquaintance rape scenarios were identical with the exception of the term used – either 'rape' or 'unwanted sex.' Each participant read one of the four scenarios (stranger/rape; stranger/unwanted sex; acquaintance/rape or acquaintance/unwanted sex). Keeping all of the other details of the scenarios exactly the same was done to determine the influences of language and perpetrator type on the participants' responses. All four scenarios used the same character names.

Two of these scenarios described a sexual assault being committed by a stranger. These scenarios were written to conform to what has been described in the literature as a 'rape script' (Kahn et al., 1994). Violent sexual assaults committed by strangers may be thought of by subjects as being 'true' incidents of rape that were less provoked by victims. Conversely, scenarios described as a sexual assault committed by an acquaintance is theorized to cause readers to assign more responsibly to the victim for her assault. Of particular interest, was the influence of the specific language used in the scenarios and whether descriptive words induced greater victim blaming.

Measure statistics for current sample. Each scenario was followed by 15 questions (the criterion scores) arranged on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Higher scores on questions measuring victim blaming, indicated higher participants blame of the victim. Higher scores on reporting questions indicated that participants believe that the crime

should be reported. Higher scores on punishment questions indicated stronger perceptions of perpetrator guilt.

Five scales were created: Behavioral Blame (BB), Character Blame (CB), Victim Reporting (VR), Punishment (P), and Reporting (R). Each scale consisted of three questions and responses were obtained on a 7- point likert scale (1 = strongly disagree – 7 strongly agree). Thus, each scale had a possible range of values from 3 through 21.

Questions for the BB and CB scales were created to assess the degree that respondents would feel the character described in the scenarios was at fault for what had occurred based on the victim's behavior or on her personal characteristics.

The BB scale consisted of the following questions:

1. If Kristen had walked home with friends the rape (unwanted sex) wouldn't have occurred.
2. Kristen could have done some things differently that would have prevented the rape (unwanted sex).
3. If Kristen had behaved differently, the rape (unwanted sex) wouldn't have occurred.

The Coefficient Alpha value computed for the BB scale was .65. The scale mean was 14.19 with a standard deviation of 3.86. Each respondent in this sample responded to each item on this scale.

The CB scale consisted of the following questions:

1. Kristen seems like the kind of person who is always in trouble.
2. People like Kristen are at a higher risk for rape (unwanted sex).
3. If Kristen doesn't change, she may be raped again. (If Kristen doesn't change, she may have unwanted sex again).

The Coefficient Alpha value computed for the CB scale was .63. The scale mean was 8.70 with a standard deviation of 3.40. Each respondent in this sample responded to each item on this scale.

The VR Scale was created to investigate the degree to which respondents felt that the female character described in the scenarios should report what happened to her. This scale consisted of the following items:

1. Kristen should seek medical attention.
2. Kristen should report the rape (unwanted sex).
3. Kristen should go to the police.

The Coefficient Alpha value computed for the VR scale was .78. The scale mean was 18.69 with a standard deviation of 3.25.

The P scale was created to assess the degree to which respondents felt that the male character in the story should be punished for his actions. This scale consisted of the following items:

1. Paul should be punished in some way because of the rape (unwanted sex).
2. Paul should be expelled from school because of the rape (unwanted sex).
3. Paul should go to jail because of the rape (unwanted sex).

The Coefficient Alpha value computed for the P scale was .83. The scale mean was 17.89 with a standard deviation of 3.69. Each respondent in this sample responded to each item on this scale.

Finally, the R scale was created to assess the degree to which respondents in this sample believed that they would report a similar event if it happened to them. The questions on this scale were as follows:

1. If this happened to you, you would report the rape (unwanted sex).
2. If this happened to you, you would seek medical attention.
3. If this happened to you, you would go to the police.

The Coefficient Alpha value computed for the R scale was .91. The scale mean was 17.88 with a standard deviation of 4.42. Each respondent in this sample responded to each item on this scale.

Design and procedures. Participants were selected from the Psychology Department's subject pool.

Informed consent. All students who were chosen to participate in this study were assigned to one of four experimental groups; stranger/rape; stranger/unwanted sex; acquaintance/rape and acquaintance/unwanted sex, and required to sign an informed consent (Appendix D) prior to their participation. Included in the written consent was an explanation that participants would be exposed to materials of a violent and a sexual nature, that participation in the study was voluntary and that students could withdraw at any time without suffering negative consequences.

Administration of instruments. Following explanation and completion of the informed consent procedure, each participant was asked to read one of four scenarios describing a sexual assault and to respond to 15 questions. These questions assessed each of the following: the degree to which participants feel that the victim was responsible for the rape, the degree to which the perpetrator should be punished, the appropriateness of reporting the rape for the victim, and

finally, if in the same situation, the degree to which they feel they themselves would report the assault (the dependent variables.)

After reading the scenarios and answering the questions associated with them, participants were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire. Demographic information included self reports of age, gender and ethnicity.

Debriefing. Finally, all participants were given a written debriefing paragraph explaining the purpose of the study and including a list of local mental health resources should they wish to seek counseling services (Appendix E).

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSES

Multiple Regression Analyses

Responses were analyzed using four multiple regression analyses. Regressions are described below and correspond to the hypotheses listed earlier in this document.

Analysis 1. Responses to questions on the BB, represented the criterion score with higher scores on this item indicating greater victim blaming based on the behavior of the victim. Predictor Variables for this analysis were entered into the equation in the following order: Use of term (Unwanted Sex or Rape), Type of assault (Acquaintance Rape or Rape by a Stranger), Gender of participant, and Age of participant.

It was anticipated that term used to describe sexual assault would account for a greater percentage of the variance in victim blaming agreement followed by, Gender, Type of Assault, Age and Ethnicity.

Analysis 2. Responses to questions on the CB, represented the criterion score with higher scores on this item indicating greater victim blaming based on the perceived character of the victim. Predictor Variables for this analysis were entered into the equation in the following order: Use of term (Unwanted Sex or Rape), Type of assault (Acquaintance Rape or Rape by a Stranger), Gender of participant, and Age of participant.

It was anticipated that term used to describe sexual assault would account for a greater percentage of the variance in victim blaming agreement followed by, Gender, Type of Assault, Age and Ethnicity.

Analysis 3. Responses to questions on the P scale were the criterion scores in this analysis with combined higher scores on these items indicating agreement with harsher punishments for perpetrators. Predictor Variables for this analysis were entered into the equation in the following order; Use of term (Unwanted Sex or Rape), Type of assault (Acquaintance Rape or Rape by a Stranger), Gender of participant, Age of participant.

It was anticipated that term used for sexual assault would account for most of the variance in perpetrator punishment beliefs and the predictor variables.

Analysis 4. Responses to scenario questions on the VR scale represented the criterion score measuring degree of appropriateness in sexual assault victim reporting. Higher scores on these questions indicated greater agreement that rape victims should report a sexual assault. Predictor Variables for this analysis were entered into this equation in the following order: Use of term (Unwanted Sex or Rape), Type of assault (Acquaintance Rape or Rape by a Stranger), Gender of participant, and Age of participant.

It was anticipated that the term used to describe sexual assault would again account for more of the variance in victim reporting beliefs than the other predictor variables.

Analysis 5. Responses to scenario questions on the R scale represented the criterion score measuring participants' belief in the appropriateness of self reporting a sexual assault. Predictor Variables for this analysis were entered in the following order; Use of term (Unwanted Sex or Rape), Type of assault (Acquaintance Rape or Rape by a Stranger), Gender of participant, and Age of participant.

It was anticipated that term used for sexual assault would account for most of the variance in self report judgments followed by, Gender, Type of Assault, and Age.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

Demographics. One hundred and sixty undergraduate students, ranging in age from 17 through 28 participated in this study. Mean age was, 19.33 years. Of the participants 54.4 % were male (n=87) and 45.6% were female (n=73). Table 1 displays the ethic composition of this sample showing that 84.4% (n = 135) of the sample identified as European American or Caucasian and 6.3% (n = 10) did not identify membership in a particular ethnic group.

Table 1

Descriptive Data: Reported Ethnicity

		Frequency	Percent
Valid			
	European American	135	84.4
	African American	10	6.3
	Asian American	1	.6
	Latin American	1	.6
	Biracial	2	1.3
	Arab American	1	.6
	Total	150	93.8
Missing		10	6.3
Total		160	100.0

Participants were also asked to provide information about their participation in the University's Greek system and in Sports activities. Responses indicated that the majority of

respondents in this study did not participate in either the Greek System or Sports activities. One participant left the sports question blank. Table 2 reveals the distribution of subjects' responses.

Table 2

Descriptive Data: Participation in Greek System and Athletics

	Greek System	*Percent*	*Sports*	*Percent*
Participates	22	13.8	17	10.7
Does not Participate	138	86.3	142	89.3
Total	160		159	

Regression results. Variables were coded in the same way for each of the regressions that follow. In each regression, for the Gender variable, men were coded 1 and women were coded 2. For the Term variable, rape was coded 1 and unwanted sex was coded 2.

Regression 1: Behavioral blame. A standard multiple regression analysis was calculated using the Enter Method to test the hypothesis that participants would find the victim described in the scenario to be more responsible for what happened to her based on her behavior when the term unwanted sex was used instead of rape, when participants were younger or male and when the assault was committed by an acquaintance versus a stranger. For this analysis the Behavioral Blame scale was used as the dependent variable. Type of Assault (stranger vs. acquaintance) was demonstrated to be a significant predictor of victim blame. Participants were more likely to respond that the victim could have behaved differently to prevent the assault when the type of assault described was committed by an acquaintance, than when the assault was committed by a stranger. (Model: $R^2 = .131$, Adjusted $R^2 = .108$ $F(4, 155) = 5.820$, $p = .000$). The hypothesis

that participants would assign a greater amount of victim blame when the assailant was an acquaintance was demonstrated by these results. Neither gender, term, nor age accounted for significant variance in this model and thus were not significant predictors of Behavioral Blame as hypothesized. Tables 3, 4 and 5 display the results of this analysis.

Table 3

Correlation Matrix for Term, Behavioral Blame, Gender, Age and Type of Assault

Subscale	1	2	3	4	5
1. Term	--	.038	-.026	.079	-.013
2. Behavioral Blame		--	-.056	.066	-.346(**)
3. Gender			--	-.225(**)	-.063
4. Age				--	.042
5. Assault					--

** p< 0.01.

Table 4

Behavioral Blame Model

Summary	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
.361(a)	.131	.108	3.65682

Table 5

Summary of Regression Analysis for Behavioral Blame

Variables	*B*	*SE B*	*Beta*
Term	.207	.579	.027

Gender	-.485	.595	-.063
Age	.167	.200	.065
Assault	-2.711	.578	-.352**

$p < 0.01$.

A post-hoc analysis was conducted to determine if an interaction between term and gender existed. An ANOVA analysis using Behavioral Blame as the dependent variable and term and gender as independent variables was conducted. The results did not demonstrate that there was a significant interaction.

Regression 2: Character blame. A second standard multiple regression analysis was conducted using the Enter Method to test the hypothesis that participants would be more likely to indicate that the victim was responsible for the assault because of perceived deficits in her character when the participants were younger or male, when the term 'unwanted sex' or rape was used and when the assault was committed by either an acquaintance or a stranger. Higher scores on the Character Blame scale indicated that participants found the victim described in the scenario to be more responsible for being assaulted based on her character or personality. This regression was calculated using the Character Blame scale as the dependent variable. As hypothesized, male participants were more likely than female participants to respond that something about the victim's character caused her to be assaulted. (Model: $R^2 = .076$, Adjusted $R^2 = .052$, $F(4, 155) = 3.167$, $p = .016$).) Neither term, age nor type of assault significantly contributed to Character blame in this analysis. Table 6, 7 and 8 illustrate the results of this analysis.

Table 6

Correlation Matrix for Term, Character Blame, Gender, Age and Type of Assault

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Term	--	.078	-.013	.079	-.026
2. Character Blame		--	-.101	-.019	-.227(**)
3. Assault			--	.042	-.063
4. Age				--	-.225(**)
5. Gender					--

** p< 0.01.

Table 7

Character Blame Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
.361(a)	.131	.108	3.65682

Table 8

Summary of Regression Analysis for Character Blame

Variables	*B*	*SE B*	*Beta*
Term	.517	.526	.076
Gender	-1.702	.541	-.250**
Age	-.174	.182	-.076
Assault	-.766	-.113	-1.456

** p< 0.01.

a R Squared = .094 (Adjusted R Squared = .076)

A post-hoc analysis was conducted to determine if an interaction between term and gender existed. An ANOVA using Character Blame as the dependent variable and term and gender as independent variables was conducted. The results demonstrated that there was a significant interaction between term and gender (p. = .013). Male respondents indicated high levels of Character Blame when the term 'rape' was used than when the term 'unwanted sex' was used. Female respondents, however, indicated higher levels of Character Blame when the term 'unwanted sex was used than when the term 'rape' was used. Results of this ANOVA are shown below. A graph of this interaction in also included as Figure 1.

Table 9

Analysis of Variance for Character Blame

Source	df	F	p
Term	1	1.355	.246
Gender	1	8.895**	.004
Term X Gender	1	6.294*	.013
error	156	(10.722)	

Note: Values enclosed in parentheses represent mean square errors.

p<.05. ** p<.01.

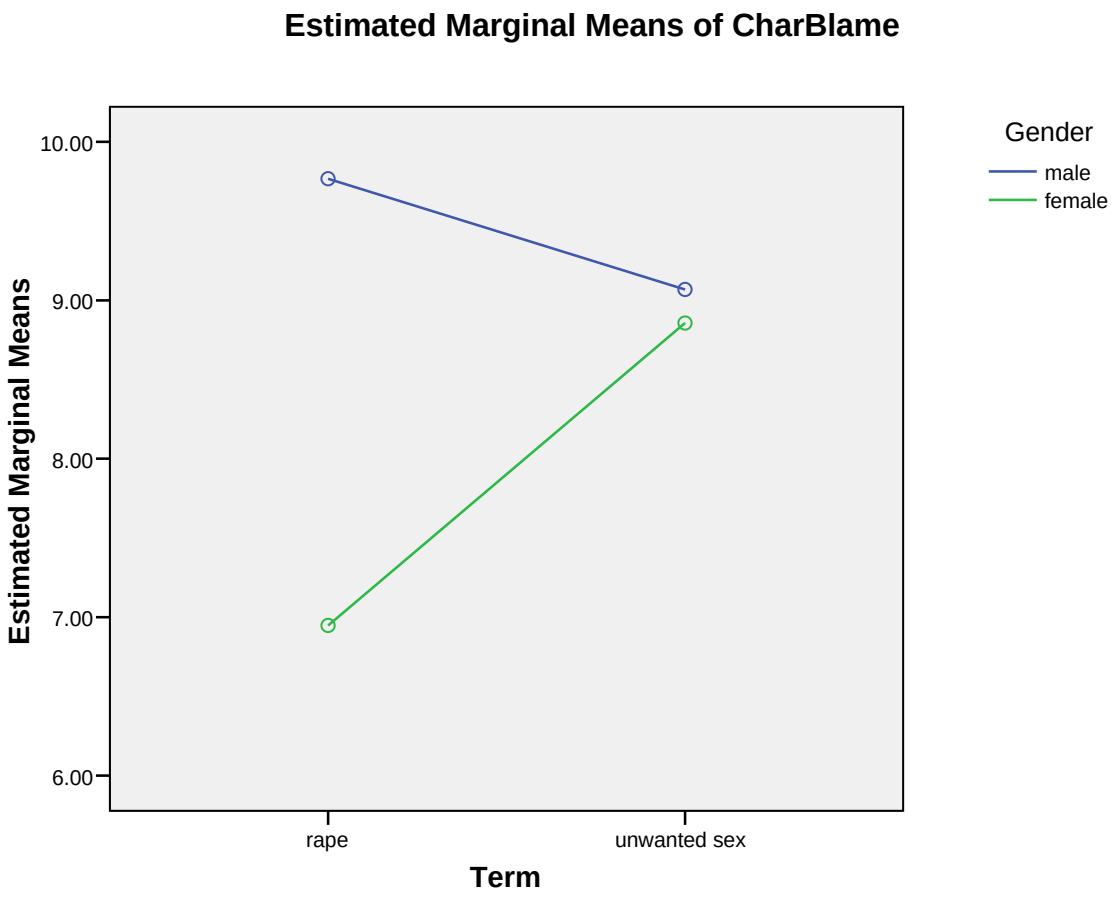

Figure 1. Interaction between gender and term on the character blame scale are shown.

Regression 3: Punishment. A hierarchical multiple regression was conducted using the Punishment scale as the dependent variable to test the hypothesis that term used for sexual assault will impact perceptions of appropriate punishment. It was hypothesized that when the term 'unwanted sex' was used, participants would perceive less punishment as appropriate for the assault. It was also predicted that the Type of Assault (stranger of acquaintance) would impact perceptions of appropriate punishment (i.e., participants would perceive that less punishment was appropriate when the assault was committed by an acquaintance). As predicted, both Type of Assault (stranger or acquaintance) and Term ('rape' or 'unwanted sex') were found

to be significant predictors of responses on the Punishment Scale. Results indicated that when the assault was committed by a stranger, participants endorsed higher levels of punishment as appropriate for the crime than when the assault was committed by an acquaintance. Additionally, participants were more likely to endorse higher levels of punishment for the assailant when the term 'rape' was used than when the term 'unwanted sex' described the assault in the scenarios presented to them.

It was also hypothesized that term would account for a greater portion of variance, above and beyond type of assault in perceptions of appropriateness of punishment. Specifically, it was hypothesized that when the term, 'rape' was used, participants would perceive that punishment was appropriate more so than when the term 'unwanted sex' was used. It was also hypothesized that this would be more predictive of punishment being appropriate than type of assault (stranger or acquaintance.) To test this hypothesis a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted using SPSS; the Type of Assault was entered first in block one and Term was entered second in block two. This procedure was used to clarify the impact of term on participants' perceptions of appropriate punishment above and beyond the influence of type of assault alone. When type of assault was controlled in the analysis in this way, term accounted for an additional 3.5 percent of the variance.

(Model 1: $R^2 = .068$, Adjusted $R^2 = .050$, $F(3, 156) = 3.789$, $p = .012$).

(Model 2: $R^2 = .106$, Adjusted $R^2 = .082$, $F(4, 155) = 4.574$, $p = .002$).)

a Predictors: (Constant), Age, Assault, Gender
b Predictors: (Constant), Age, Assault, Gender, Term

Tables 10, 11, 12 and 13 display the details of these analyses.

Table 10

Correlation Matrix for Term, Punishment, Gender, Age and Type of Assault

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Term	--	-.189(*)	-.013	.079	-.026
2. Punishment		--	.226(**)	.093	-.130
3. Assault			--	.042	-.063
4. Age				--	-.225(**)
5. Gender					--

*p<.05. ** p< 0.01.

Table 11

Punishment Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error	Sig. F Change	R Square Change
1	.261(a)	.068	.050	3.60340	.068	3.789
2	.325	.106	.082	3.54125	.038	6.524

Table 12

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Punishment Model 1(n =160)

Variable	B	SE B	Beta
Step 1			
Gender	-.762	.588	-.103
Age	.151	.197	.061
Assault	1.596	.571	-.217**
Step 2			

Term	-1.435	.526	-.195*
Gender	-.776	.578	-.105
Age	.188	.194	.076
Assault	1.573	.561	.213**

*p<.05. ** p< 0.01. ΔR^2 = 6.52 for Step 2 (ps <.05).

Regression 4: Reporting. A hierarchical multiple regression was conducted using the Reporting scale as the dependent variable. It was also hypothesized that respondents would indicate that they would be more inclined to report the assault if it were committed by a stranger than by an acquaintance. It was additionally hypothesized that when the term 'unwanted sex' was used to describe the assault, participants would be less likely to indicate that they would report an assault if it happened to them. Both Type of Assault and Term were found to be significant predictors of responses on the Reporting scale. Results indicated that when the assault was committed by a stranger, participants were more likely to report the crime if it happened to them. Similarly, participants were more likely to endorse higher levels of reporting when the term 'rape' was used than when the term 'unwanted sex' was used in the scenarios they read.

It was also hypothesized that term, would account for the most variance, above and beyond type of assault in this analysis. To test this hypothesis, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted in SPSS; type of Assault was entered first in block one and Term was entered second in block two to clarify the impact term would have on willingness to report above and beyond the effects of type of assault alone. When type of assault was controlled in the analysis, term accounted for an additional 8.1 percent of the variance.

(Model 1: R^2 = .051, Adjusted R^2 = .033, F (3, 156) = 2.815, p = .041).

(Model 2: R^2 = .134, Adjusted R^2 = .112, F (4, 155) = 6.012, p = .000).

Tables 13, 14 and 15 report the details of these analyses.

Table 13

Correlation Matrix for Term, Reporting, Gender, Age and Type of Assault

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Term	--	-.288(**)	-.013	.079	-.026
2. Self Report		--	.220(**)	.036	.028
3. Assault			--	.042	-.063
4. Age				--	-.225(**)
5. Gender					--

** p< 0.01.

Table 14

Model Summary for Reporting

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error	Sig. F Change	R Square Change
1	.227(a)	.051	.033	4.34793	.051	2.815
2	.366(b)	.134	.112	4.16686	.083	14.852

Table 15

Summary of Regression Analysis for Reporting

Variables	*B*	*SE B*	*Beta*
Step 1			
Gender	.441	.709	.050
Age	.111	.237	.038

Assault	1.951	.689	.221**
Step 2			
Term	-2.548	.661	-.289**
Gender	-.416	.680	.047
Age	.177	.227	.060
Assault	1.909	.661	.217**

** p< 0.01. $\Delta R^2 = 14.85$ for Step 2 (ps <.01).

To determine the relationship, if any, between dependent variables, correlations between the variables were calculated. A moderate correlation was found between Character Blame and Behavioral Blame. A moderate relationship was also found between Reporting and Punishment. Table 18 displays these correlations and indicates that the constructs of behavioral blame (blame for the victim described in the scenarios based on her actions) and Character Blame (blame for the victim described in each of the scenarios based on character) were perceptually related by the participants in this study. Moreover, the measures of self report and appropriateness of punishment used in this study are also conceptually related by respondents in this study.

Table 16

Correlations Matrix for Dependent Variables, Behavioral Blame, Character Blame, Punishment and Reporting

	1	2	3	4
1. Behavioral Blame	--	.403(**)	-.040	.076
2. Character Blame		--	.003	-.013
3. Punishment			--	.564(**)

4. Reporting		--

** p< 0.01.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

The term unwanted sex is repeatedly found in the current psychological literature (Basile, 1999; Frith & Kitzinger, 2001; Hamby & Koss, 2003; Hannon, Hall, & Van Laar, 1995; Impett & Peplau, 2002; Larimer, Lydum, Anderson & Turner, 1999; Oswald & Russell, 2006; Sprecher, Hatfield, Cortese, Potapova & Levitskaya, 1994; Schulhofer, 1998; Walker, 1997). That this term is so frequently used in professional psychology publications signifies it's acceptance by peer reviewed research journals, and by association, the psychological community. By extension, the term may also be used in psychology classroom and in therapeutic settings. A search of the psychological literature, however, failed to find a single study that examined the implications of the term as a universal definition of sexual assault. The current study was an examination of this issue.

Language use. Muehlenhard et al., (1992) offered a discussion of how language is chosen by those in power positions and how choices about language shape our perceptions of people and events. This suggests that the language we use in our roles as researchers, care providers, educators, writers, and consultants have a powerful impact on how other psychologists, students, and the general public view crime, mental illness, and perhaps how we ourselves understand and interpret the events that happen to us. The psychological literature has a history of introducing new terms to the public that have potential influences on the forming of public perceptions of people and events. In

particular, the specific origins of the term 'unwanted sex' while unknown, may be impacting how sexual assault is understood by researchers, clinicians and the public.

In the case of the term 'unwanted sex', a review of the literature shows that this term is currently being used in disciplines other than psychology as well. An example of this is the title of a 2006 nursing journal, *Sexual Assertiveness in Low-Income African American Women: **Unwanted Sex**, Survival, and HIV Risk (Whyte, 2006).* Other examples include an article from an obstetrics journal entitled: *Talk with teens about sex: **unwanted sex** common? More effective communication cuts risks (eds., 2006)* and from a pediatric medical journal titled: *Incidence and correlates of **unwanted sex** in relationships of middle and late adolescent women* (Blythe, Fortenberry, Temkit, Tu W, & Orr, 206) was found.

Thus, the uses of the term 'unwanted sex' in the more recent professional literature suggests that this language has now become an accepted term in both the psychology and medical communities The danger is that readers of these journals are expected to be researchers who may continue to use of the term 'unwanted sex' or they may be care providers for men and women who have experienced sexual trauma. *Origins of the term 'unwanted sex' contrasted with study results.* While no published explanation could be found for the use of the term unwanted sex, anecdotal information suggests that use of the term may stem from research findings suggesting that some women victims do not view their own experience of sexual assault as a rape (Hamby & Koss, 2003; Kahn, 2004.) The intent, then, behind the term appears to be advocacy for victims so that the term 'unwanted sex' might have been used by some writers as a way to encourage victims to seek help and/or to report their assault.

Likewise, the psychological literature reports that women who are sexually assaulted often engage in self-blaming behaviors or may be judged by others to be responsible for the crime committed upon them (Campbell, 2005; McDonald, 204; Ullman, 1996.) Anecdotally, the term 'unwanted sex' may also be used with the intention of reducing this stigma and reducing the self-blame by the victims of a sexual assault.

This study hypothesized that using the term 'unwanted sex', which is not a legal term, will not effectively increase help-seeking or reporting by assault victims. In fact, the study predicted that since the term 'unwanted sex' does not appear to have a universal meaning, and is not synonymous with a crime in the way the term rape is, use of the term, 'unwanted sex' would actually lead to lower rates of reporting, help-seeking and a decrease the view of sexual assault as a punishable offense.

Consistently, this study hypothesized that using the term 'unwanted sex' would result in an increase of victim blame due again to a lack of universal meaning for the term 'unwanted sex.' Since 'unwanted sex' lacks a meaningfully legal definition, blame may not be attributed to the perpetrator of an assault when the term is used. Instead, using the term 'unwanted sex' may connote that a crime did not take place and that both perpetrator and victim were in some way responsible for what occurred.

While the term 'unwanted sex' may have been used with the intention of increasing victim reporting, participants in this study who were presented with two scenarios which were equivalent in every way except for term used to describe the assault, indicated that they would be *less likely* to report being sexually assaulted when the assault was described as 'unwanted sex' as opposed to being described as a 'rape.' In the case of reporting ones own assault, the term used in the scenario accounted for more

of the variance than any other variable examined in this study including type of assault. This finding is contrary to the notion that the term 'unwanted sex' would encourage reporting or help seeking by victims of sexual assault and, in fact, the results of this study demonstrated that using the term 'unwanted sex' instead of rape actually might discourage reporting.

Another second theorized explanation for the use of the term 'unwanted sex' is that the term should be used to reduce the stigma that can be associated with being the victim of a sexual assault and to decrease feelings of blame experienced by some victims. In this study, however, term did not contribute significantly to participants' perception of the influence of the behavior of the victim in question or blame based on perceived character deficits of the victim.

Campbell's (2005) research showed that the language used by the responders to the victims of sexual assault can contribute to their feelings of being revictimized. The term 'unwanted sex' may be an intended attempt to minimize feelings of revictimization but results of this study indicate that when the term 'unwanted sex' is used, participants are actually *less likely* to think that perpetrators should be punished for the assault. Again, this may be due to the fact that 'unwanted sex' is not a legal term currently in use by the legal system responsible for prosecution and sentencing perpetrators of sexual assault. In fact, respondents in the current study indicated that perpetrators are deserving of less punishment when the term 'unwanted sex' is used suggesting that use of this term could increase the feelings in victims that their reports are not being taken seriously by responders and may therefore, intensify their feelings of revictimization.

Summary. This study clearly adds to earlier findings that found that choice of terminology for describing a sexual assault can strongly influence perceptions of this act (Baumer, 2003; Hamby & Koss, 2003; McDonald, 2004.) In this case, results indicated that 'unwanted sex' is not an equivalent term for 'rape' even though such languaging has been used in this way in both the psychological and medical literature. Most important, is that the results of this study demonstrate that using the term 'unwanted sex' may not connote that a crime has occurred.

Hamby & Koss (2003) found that when the language used in questionnaires about sexual assault was detailed about specific behaviors involved in an assault, reporting increased and when less specific language such as 'unwanted sex' was used, participants indicated that they would be less willing to report the assault.

Similarly, Nario-Redmond & Barascome, (1996) found that victim blame can be induced with use of language that implies that victims and perpetrators could have behaved differently (i.e., perpetrators could have committed more 'serious' crimes or been more violent.) In their study, perpetrators were deemed to be less responsible and viewed differently based on the language used to describe the assault. Thus, the findings of the current study, support previous findings showing that using language that *clearly* defines that a crime was committed, (i.e., "rape") results in increasing the perception that perpetrators of sexual assault deserve more severe punishments.

Limitations. A major limitation of this study was the demographic composition of the sample used in the study. Participants were all similar in age (18-22), all attended a moderate sized university and a majority primarily identified themselves as European American (Caucasian) ethnicity. Findings may not be generalizable if completed by a

more diverse group of participants with regard to age, educational experiences or belonging to a more ethically diverse population. Since participants were recruited for this study from their Introduction to Psychology class, they may have consisted of primarily first or second year college students. Participants with less or with higher levels of education may have responded differently to the stimuli used in this study. Increasing the diversity of this sample would increase generalizability of the results to a larger population and help to illuminate the influence of cultural norms on perceptions of sexual assault blame.

Analog research also represents a limitation because university students are less likely to be seated on juries who make decisions about the guilt or innocence and degree of punishment given to sexual assault perpetrators. Because this study has forensic implications, the question of how potential jurors might respond to issues of appropriate punishment for sexual assault is an important one that may not be assumed by responses generated by this sample.

A final limitation of this study is that its results relied on printed material to convey language and measure participants' reactions to terminology. Conclusions based on this method of study may therefore not translate into critical situations such as courtrooms, classrooms, hospitals or therapists' offices where communication of these terms would occur verbally, non-verbally and in an emotional context. Other methods such as videotaped verbal conversations paired with printed accounts of sexual assault terms might produce a different outcome.

Directions for future research. Future research using a population with a broad range of ages, ethnically diverse respondents and varied educational backgrounds is

recommended to improve the generalizability of findings and to clarity age, ethnic and educational differences in perceptions of sexual assault. Likewise, language including colloquialisms varies widely based on geographic locations, replication of this research in a broader geographical spectrum would also increase generalizability.

Future research using a similar design and a broader array of language might also prove useful. Other terms including 'sexual assault' and 'nonconsensual sex' which are commonly used could provide a clearer picture of how the language used to describe sexual assault impacts perceptions of blame, reporting and punishment.

Additionally, future research examining auditory presentation of the material may be beneficial since real-world implications of this research involve verbal as well as written communication in real world settings.

Recommendations based on this study. While there may be confusion around the exact legal definition of the term 'rape' (Muehlenhard et al., 1992), there is no argument that 'rape' is indeed a legal term and is currently seen as constituting a crime. 'Unwanted sex,' on the other hand, is not universally defined as a legal term and thus, a crime. Introducing a term ('unwanted sex') that does not imply a clear meaning to substitute for the limitations of a term ('rape') which is an accepted and meaningful legal term, is counterintuitive.

The findings of this study and previous studies of language and sexual assault (Baumer, 2003; Campbell, 2005; Hamby & Koss, 2003; Kahn, 2004; Koss, 2000), are highly suggestive to writers, care providers, researchers, and responders to sexual trauma to carefully choose the language they use when describing sexual assault. This line of

research has clearly indicated that language can significantly influence the perceptions of occurrences and even of the people involved in them.

In the case of sexual assault, the language used can impact perceptions of what events should take place following an assault (Campbell, 2005). The ramifications of this have been shown in this study to impact decisions about appropriate legal and medical consequences. Victims who seek psychological, medical or legal help do so based on their perception that they have experienced a crime. When this crime is referred to as 'unwanted sex', victims may feel that their experience has been invalidated and may choose to not continue to seek support.

Choice of language can occur in a wide variety of settings and for a number of purposes. University Counseling Professionals providing outreach services in a campus setting make a choice of how to market events to the college community. A flyer or other advertising materials describing a seminar about 'unwanted sex' has a different connotation than marketing materials describing 'rape' or 'sexual assault'. In the same way, a victim describing his or her own experience as 'rape' may be harmed if their experience is referred to as 'unwanted sex'.

Additionally, in medical settings, nurses or doctors asking patients if they have 'participated in unwanted sex' may evoke a very different response from victims than asking patients if they have been forced to engage in any type of sexual activity against their will.

In therapeutic settings, providing a setting that consumers of mental health services perceive to be safe is a commonly shared goal. Using language such as

'unwanted sex' may result in consumers feeling that their experience has been minimized and may cause future avoidance of discussing sexual assault.

In their work Worell and Remer (1992) discuss the importance of helping victims of sexual assault by validating their experience. Language is an important aspect of validating victims of assault. These authors also discuss helping survivors of assault understand ways in which they have come to internalize culturally damaging ideas such as rape myths. Language helps us to define our experience and provide meaning about what occurred. Using precise language that does not increase feelings of blame can help therapists in their work with survivors of sexual assault. Additionally, Remer and Worell incorporate the idea of making the personal political. In terms of working with rape victims they share the idea that not defining one's experience as rape after an assault can lead to increased feelings of guilt and self blame. This is consistent with results found in this study, that women are more likely then men to indicate higher levels of character blame when the term 'unwanted sex' is used. Part of the role of the therapist may be to help women who have been victims to define what happen to them as rape to empower them to seek help and not blame themselves for their assault.

As researchers and educators, the language that we choose has an impact on our readers and students. Researchers cite peer reviewed journals and may chose to use similar language as the authors they are reading. For this reason, the more often that the term 'unwanted sex' is used as a synonym for sexual assault, the more likely such use will be repeated.

The writer of this dissertation is in no way advocating for censorship. Instead the recommendation is as in all research that writers carefully define the constructs that they

are describing. If ‘unwanted sex’ is used as a research term or as a topic of classroom discussion, it is hoped that writers and educators will explain their meaning and reasons for using this term as opposed to using a more universally understood or legal term for sexual assault.

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Appendix A

Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study about the appropriate responses to certain scenarios. All of these scenarios are of a sexual nature and some describe situations that are also violent. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have ***before agreeing*** to be in the study. This study is being conducted by Charity Wilkinson, M.S..

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to assess students' opinions about appropriate responses to certain scenarios.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, you will be given a number of scenarios to read with corresponding questions that will ask you for your opinions regarding appropriate responses to the corresponding scenario. The total time required to complete the study will be approximately 10 to 15 minutes.

Benefits and Risks of Being in the Study:
Potential benefits include considering your views about each of the scenarios. Risks may include any discomfort you may feel while reading the scenarios and responding to the questionnaires. ***Please consider this before you sign below***, and remember that you are entitled to discontinue this study at any point if you wish with no negative consequences for such.

Confidentiality:
The records of this study will be kept private. Your name will never be connected to your responses on the questionnaire; instead a number will be used for identification purposes. In any sort of published report, no information will be included that would make it possible to identify you or any other participant. Only researchers will have access to the research records, and researchers may only view the data in a group format, not individually. In accordance with Federal regulations, the records will be kept for three years.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with IUP, your psychology class or the researchers in any way. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting you.

Contacts and Questions:
If you have any questions regarding this study, you may contact any of the researchers at: vcbm@iup.edu.

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This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724/357-7730).

Statement of Consent:
I have read the above information. I consent to participate in this study.

_____	_____
Participant signature	Date

Appendix B

Questions for participants after reading the scenarios

1. Age _____

2. Gender

Female____
Male ____

3. Ethnic Background _____

4. Most rapists are punished.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree — Strongly Agree

5. Estimate the percent of sexual assaults that go unreported each year.

0-20% 20-40% 40-60% 60-80% 80-100%

6. I am a member of a Greek organization

Yes _____
No _____

7. I play intramural sports.

Yes _____
No _____

Appendix C

Scenario A

Kristen met Paul at a party. They had both been drinking and Paul offered to walk Kristen back to her dorm room. He seemed like a nice person, and she knew some of his friends so she decided that it was okay. On the way to her dorm, Paul and Kristen kissed each other a few times.

She invited him to her room. Her roommates were still at the party, so Paul and Kristen were alone. She kissed Paul again for a few minutes while sitting on her bed. Paul started to unbutton Kristen's shirt and she decided that she did not want to go any farther with him. She said, "stop." Paul did not stop. He continued to unbutton her shirt. Kristen continued to ask him to stop and said no, but Paul did not stop. Paul raped Kristen. Kristen had to decide if she would report the rape.

Questions for Scenario A

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
4. If Kristen had walked home with friends the rape wouldn't have occurred.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Kristen could have done some things differently that would have prevented the rape.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. If Kristen had behaved differently, the rape wouldn't have occurred.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Kristen seems like the kind of person who is always in trouble.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. People like Kristen are at a higher risk for rape.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. If Kristen doesn't change, she may be raped again.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Kristen should seek medical attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Kristen should report the rape.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Kristen should go to the police.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Paul should be punished in some way because of the rape.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Paul should be expelled from school because of the rape.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Paul should go to jail because of the rape.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. If this happened to you, you would report the rape.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. If this happened to you, you would seek medical attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. If this happened to you, you would go to the police.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Scenario B

Kristen met Paul at a party. They had both been drinking and Paul offered to walk Kristen back to her dorm room. He seemed like a nice person, and she knew some of his friends so she decided that it was okay. On the way to her dorm, Paul and Kristen kissed each other a few times.

She invited him to her room. Her roommates were still at the party, so Paul and Kristen were alone. She kissed Paul again for a few minutes while sitting on her bed. Paul started to unbutton Kristen's shirt and she decided that she did not want to go any farther with him. She said, "stop." Paul did not stop. He continued to unbutton her shirt. Kristen continued to ask him to stop and said no, but Paul did not stop. Kristen had unwanted sex with Paul. Kristen had to decide if she would report the unwanted sex.

Questions for Scenario B

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
9. If Kristen had walked home with friends the unwanted sex wouldn't have occurred.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Kristen could have done some things differently that would have prevented the unwanted sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. If Kristen had behaved differently, the unwanted sex wouldn't have occurred.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Kristen seems like the kind of person who is always in trouble.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. People like Kristen are at a higher risk for unwanted sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. If Kristen doesn't change, she may have unwanted sex again.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Kristen should seek medical attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Kristen should report the unwanted sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Kristen should go to the police.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Paul should be punished in some way because of the unwanted sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Paul should be expelled from school because of the unwanted sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Paul should go to jail because of the unwanted sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. If this happened to you, you would report the unwanted sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. If this happened to you, you would seek medical attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. If this happened to you, you would go to the police.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Scenario C

Kristen decided to walk home alone late at night after attending a party on campus. She had been drinking and her dorm room was less than a half mile from where the party had been. When she got back to her room, she found that the door was unlocked. When she entered the room, Paul, a student she had never met before was already there. Paul started to unbutton Kristen's shirt and she decided that she did not want to go any farther with him. She said, "stop." Paul did not stop. He continued to unbutton her shirt. Kristen continued to ask him to stop and said no, but Paul did not stop. Paul raped Kristen. Kristen had to decide if she would report the rape.

Questions for Scenario C

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
14. If Kristen had walked home with friends the rape wouldn't have occurred.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Kristen could have done some things differently that would have prevented the rape.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. If Kristen had behaved differently, the rape wouldn't have occurred.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. Kristen seems like the kind of person who is always in trouble.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. People like Kristen are at a higher risk for rape.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. If Kristen doesn't change, she may be raped again.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Kristen should seek medical attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Kristen should report the rape.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Kristen should go to the police.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Paul should be punished in some way because of the rape.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Paul should be expelled from school because of the rape.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Paul should go to jail because of the rape.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. If this happened to you, you would report the rape.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. If this happened to you, you would seek medical attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. If this happened to you, you would go to the police.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Scenario D

Kristen decided to walk home alone late at night after attending a party on campus. She had been drinking and her dorm room was less than a half mile from where the party had been. When she got back to her room, she found that the door was unlocked. When she entered the room, Paul, a student she had never met before was already there. Paul started to unbutton Kristen's shirt and she decided that she did not want to go any farther with him. She said, "stop." Paul did not stop. He continued to unbutton her shirt. Kristen continued to ask him to stop and said no, but Paul did not stop. Kristen had unwanted sex with Paul. Kristen had to decide if she would report the unwanted sex.

Questions for Scenario D

		Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1.	If Kristen had walked home with friends the unwanted sex wouldn't have occurred.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	Kristen could have done some things differently that would have prevented the unwanted sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	If Kristen had behaved differently, the unwanted sex wouldn't have occurred.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	Kristen seems like the kind of person who is always in trouble.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	People like Kristen are at a higher risk for unwanted sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	If Kristen doesn't change, she may have unwanted sex again.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	Kristen should seek medical attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	Kristen should report the unwanted sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	Kristen should go to the police.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	Paul should be punished in some way because of the unwanted sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	Paul should be expelled from school because of the unwanted sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	Paul should go to jail because of the unwanted sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	If this happened to you, you would report the unwanted sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.	If this happened to you, you would seek medical attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.	If this happened to you, you would go to the police.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix D

Debriefing

Thank you for your participation in our study. We value your contribution to our work. The information that you provided today will help us to investigate the impact of using different language for sexual assault. Your responses will also help us determine if certain characteristics of the victim of an assault influence perceptions of what occurred.

We would be happy to provide you with a copy of any published materials that result from our work. If you would be interested in receiving these materials, please email us at: vcbm@iup.edu.

Additionally, because of the nature of the study, we would like to provide you with a list of resources should you feel the need for support.

Following is a list of mental health providers available in the Indiana area:

Center for Counseling and Psychological Services 307 Pratt Hall, IUP	(724) 357-2621
Center for applied Psychology Uhler Hall, IUP	(724) 357-6228
Indiana County Guidance Center 793 Old Route 119 N. Hwy	(724) 465-5576