

## Original Studies

# Disclosure of Date/Acquaintance Rape: Who Reports and When

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**Abstract.** *Objective:* To estimate rates and correlates of disclosure of date/acquaintance rape or attempted rape and verbally coercive sex among a diverse sample of adolescent and young adult females.

*Design:* Secondary data analysis of cross sectional data.

*Setting:* Urban adolescent healthcare facility.

*Participants:* Adolescents who were identified as having experienced rape/attempted rape (n = 86) or verbally coerced sex (n = 68) in the last 12 months from study examining sexual violence.

*Main Outcome Measures:* Disclosure of forced sex (logistic regression) and the timing of disclosure (survival analysis).

*Interventions:* None.

*Results:* Almost 60% of victims who experienced rape/attempted rape disclosed this information to one or more individuals, whereas only 47% of those who experienced verbally coerced sex told another person. Multivariate analyses found that drinking by the partner (AOR = 4.6) and shorter dating history (AOR = 6.3) were associated with disclosure of rape/attempted rape; timing of this disclosure was facilitated by Caucasian ethnicity (RR = 3.5), having a dating partner who drank  $\geq 1$  drinks (RR = 2.5), and the perpetrator being someone other than the victim's boyfriend or partner (RR = 2.5). With regards to verbally coerced sex, reporting no pressure to use alcohol (AOR = 10.7) was the only factor associated with disclosure. No significant predictors of timing to disclosure were detected for this type of victimization.

*Conclusions:* Perpetrator's alcohol use and a shorter dating history are important variables associated with disclosure of rape/attempted rape as well as timing to disclosure. Factors affecting the disclosure of verbally coerced sex and the latency associated with disclosure are less well defined.

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**Key Words.** Sexual violence—Disclosure—Latency to disclosure—Adolescent and young adult females

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### Introduction

Adolescents and young adult females are four times more likely to be sexually assaulted than women in all other age groups; most are victimized by someone they know.<sup>1,2</sup> Disclosure has been identified as an important step in recovery<sup>3</sup> and disclosure of traumatic events has been associated with improved health.<sup>4,5</sup> Yet preliminary studies conducted among largely Caucasian, college-aged populations suggest that a significant proportion of young adult victims of sexual assault do not disclose this information, specifically because the perpetrator is a date or acquaintance.<sup>2,3,6-8</sup> Adolescent victims of sexual assault may be even more prone to silence because of past sexual intimacy with the perpetrator or date-specific behaviors such as the illegal use of alcohol. Thus, date/acquaintance rape has been called a silent epidemic among young females because of the high rates at which it occurs and its infrequent disclosure.<sup>7</sup>

Provider-initiated screening to detect violent experiences represents an important public health strategy to overcome the difficulty that some victims face with disclosing violent events. In fact, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Medical Association, among others, endorse universal screening for intimate partner violence (IPV). Unfortunately, fewer than half of providers routinely ask about IPV.<sup>9,10</sup>

Factors associated with timing to forced sex disclosure as well as to whom this information is disclosed are needed to develop interventions that maximize detection and therefore minimize sequelae associated with assault. Limited research is available that examines associations between timing of disclosure of

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forced sexual experiences and salient other characteristics such as demographic factors and date-specific behaviors.<sup>1,3,5,11-13</sup> For example, one study reported on the experiences of college freshmen, largely Caucasian, who were told about this type of sexual victimization from the victim.<sup>3</sup> Although some respondents indicated that they were told about the rape almost immediately after it occurred, about two thirds received this information three or more months later. Kogan<sup>5</sup> recently explored factors associated with unwanted sexual experiences among a nationally representative population of adolescents. His data suggests that age is a critical factor in the disclosure process. That is, adolescents as compared to children are more likely to disclose these experiences to a friend. Descriptive data on both disclosure and the timing of disclosure among minority women suggest these revelations are affected by a variety of factors, including the victim's belief in rape myths, attributions of blame, cultural beliefs and stereotypes.<sup>11-14</sup> In one study of African-American women, five of 12 victims disclosed their victimization immediately following or within 24 hours of experiencing sexual assault, all to a family member or friend.<sup>1</sup> In another study of African American women, the majority of participants (23 of 29) told, on average, three people about the assault within 2 months of its occurrence.<sup>12</sup> Those who disclosed immediately first told a female friend. Additional data on disclosure are needed, using larger and more diverse samples of minority women, particularly adolescents. However, prospective studies examining disclosure must screen many young women to first determine whether or not sexual assault occurred in order to generate a requisite sample to identify particular factors associated with telling others. Thus, studies examining disclosure with large sample sizes are not realistically feasible, due to this requirement.

The purpose of this investigation was to estimate the rates of disclosure of rape/attempted rape and verbally coercive sex among an ethnically diverse adolescent and young adult population and to evaluate factors associated with disclosure within this population. Because demographic characteristics have been associated with rape disclosure in adult women, we examined the association between demographic and reproductive characteristics and disclosure. In addition, we also examined whether date-specific factors including the use of alcohol affected disclosure patterns in this population. Separate survival analyses for each type of forced sexual experience were conducted to identify factors associated with the latency of disclosure up to 12 months from the point of assault.

## Methods

Data from adolescent and young adult females recruited in a larger study of sexual violence<sup>15</sup> and who

were identified as having experienced rape/attempted rape ( $n = 91$ ) or coerced sex in the last 12 months ( $n = 71$ ) by a date or acquaintance were eligible for these analyses. In this larger study, almost 30% ( $n = 203$ ) of young women reported having an unwanted sexual experience during the last year where 6% of young women reported unwanted touching, 10% reported verbal sexual coercion and 14% reported rape or attempted rape.<sup>15</sup> Among those sexually victimized 35% were between the ages of 14 to 19 years and 27.5% were young adults.<sup>15</sup> For the present study, five of the rape/attempted rape victims and three victims of verbally coerced sex did not report whether they disclosed this information, and were excluded. Thus, analyses were conducted with 86 rape/attempted rape victims and 68 victims of sexual coercion.

The methods and materials used to establish this sample has been described previously.<sup>15</sup> A bilingual research assistant approached subjects in the clinic waiting area of a primary care health facility to participate in a study of dating behaviors among adolescent and young adult women. After written informed consent was obtained, the subjects completed an anonymous questionnaire in English or Spanish that elicited demographic and reproductive health characteristics, ethnic identity or ethnic affiliation of each subject. The occurrence of rape/attempted (use of physical force, alcohol or drugs, or position of power to complete or attempt intercourse) or verbal sexual coercion (forced into having unwanted intercourse because of verbal pressure) in the last 12 months was determined from responses on the Sexual Experiences Survey.<sup>16,17</sup> In addition, each victim of sexual assault was asked detailed questions about date-specific behaviors and the social context. For example, each subject was asked to describe how many drinks she and/or her date ingested during this date, whether or not she went to her home or his apartment to be alone and how the subject felt as a result of using drugs. Subjects also completed a standardized measure of dating violence, including both physical and verbal abuse.<sup>18</sup> Finally, subjects completed four questions assessing disclosure. Each subject was asked whether she told someone about her unwanted sexual experience, the number of people who were told, who was told first (parent, girlfriend, other adult friend, or other person), how much time had lapsed between victimization and disclosure (never told anyone, <1 day, 1-2 days, 3-6 days, 1 week, 1 month, 2-5 months, 6 months, or 7-12 months), and whether she sought treatment from a mental health professional.

## Data Definitions

The following demographics variables were examined: age (adolescent: 14-19 yrs vs. young adult: 20-24 yrs),

race/ethnicity, enrollment in school, maternal education, and family structure. We evaluated several reproductive characteristics including gravidity, early menarche, and lifetime number of sexual partners. In addition, we examined the effects of characteristics associated with the victim including prior sexual victimization, age at first date, number of new dating and sexual partners within the last year. The subject's alcohol use prior to the date was dichotomized into present or absent, whereas alcohol use by either the victim or perpetrator during the date was categorized into none, 1, or  $\geq 2$  drinks. Finally, date-specific variables were examined and included length of relationship ( $\leq 3$  weeks, 1–6 months, 7–12 months, or  $>1$  year), number of prior dates ( $\leq 5$ , 6–10, or  $\geq 11$ ), whether she went to a house to be alone, or went "parking," whether dating expenses were incurred, and the level of romantic involvement. The discrepancy in age between the young woman and her dating partner was also identified, and the presence of any past verbal and/or physical violence from this dating partner was recorded. Finally, among those young women who reported on the survey that they had previously disclosed their sexual victimization, each category was converted to number of days using the higher end of the interval. For example, those who indicated that they disclosed this information between 2 and 5 months, the time to disclosure was changed to 150 days (5 months  $\times$  30 days per month).

### Statistical Plan and Analysis

We compared specific demographic and reproductive characteristics, as well as date-specific factors associated with disclosure, between those who had previously disclosed versus with those who had not previously disclosed their victimization to someone else, using chi-square or Student's *t* test, depending on the level of measurement. Separate analyses were conducted to identify correlates of disclosure for each type of sexual assault. Variables significantly related at the  $P < 0.10$  level in univariate analyses were considered as candidates for entry into logistic regression analyses. Interaction terms were included in analyses, although none were significant. Proportions and multivariate odds ratios with associated 95% confidence intervals were computed and reported. To help identify individual factors that were associated with time to disclosure, Kaplan Meier analysis was used to estimate overall time to disclosure survival distribution. That is, these analyses take the latency to disclosure for those who told someone and generate a survival curve, which shows how many of the young women disclosed across time. Survival time was defined as the length of the interval between occurrence and when the young women told someone. In these analyses, the log rank statistic was used to assess significance of

the time to event distribution across strata. Those variables significant at the  $P < 0.10$  were included in a Cox proportion hazards regression analysis where a relative risk was computed along with the 95% confidence interval. This analysis is a multivariate form of the Kaplan Meier to control for all other entered variables. All data were analyzed using SPSS 11.0 for Windows 2000.

### Results

Approximately 58% (50 of 86) of young women who reported having experienced rape or attempted rape also reported that they had disclosed this information to one or more individuals in the 12 months following this episode; 58% (29 of 50) of these told only one individual. Half (31 of 50) first reported this episode to a girlfriend while 10% (5 of 50) reported first telling a parent. Only one subject reported disclosing this information to police and 8 (9%) reported seeking help from mental health professionals.

With regard to those who were identified as having experienced verbally coerced sex, 47% (32 of 68) disclosed this information across the next 12 months. Among those disclosing verbal sexual coercion, 50% (16 of 32) told one person and 37.5% (12 of 32) told three or more people. More than three quarters of these young women (25 of 32) first told a girlfriend while another 6% (2 of 32) first told a parent. Only four sexually coerced victims reported seeking help from a mental health professional.

Few differences in demographic and reproductive health characteristics were found when comparing those that did vs. did not disclose their sexual victimization of rape/attempted rape (Table 1). Mother's education level, regular church attendance, employment status, repeated one or more grades, being enrolled in school, and bilingual language abilities were not associated with disclosure of rape/attempted rape. Prior victimization as a child or adolescent and number of lifetime sexual partners did not predict disclosure of rape/attempted rape. Of interest, only one marginally significant difference was noted among those who reported verbally coerced sex: those who reported three or more sexual partners within the last 12 months were somewhat less likely to disclose the occurrence of sexual coercion (Table 1).

Substance use during the date and pressures to use substances are reported in Table 2. As shown, disclosure of rape/attempted rape was more likely to occur if the young woman reported her partner had ingested  $\geq 2$  drinks during the course of the date. Young women who reported experiencing pressure to use alcohol provided contrasting associations with disclosure depending on the type of victimization.

**Table 1.** Selected Demographic and Reproductive Health Characteristics of Sample Stratified by Disclosure Status\*

Variable	Rape/attempted rape (n = 86)		Verbal sexual coercion (n = 68)	
	Yes n = 50 N (%)	No n = 36 N (%)	Yes n = 32 N (%)	No n = 36 N (%)
<b>Demographic</b>				
14–19 years	38 (76)	30 (83)	26 (81)	27 (75)
<b>Race ethnicity</b>				
African American	23 (46)	19(53)	14 (44)	16 (44)
Puerto Rican	12 (24)	12 (33)	9 (28)	9 (25)
Dominican	9 (18)	3 (8)	4 (13)	5 (14)
Caucasian	6 (12)	2 (6)	5 (16)	6 (17)
Lives independent of parent	3 (6)	11 (31) <sup>a</sup>	3 (9)	5 (14)
<b>Reproductive</b>				
Gravidity	15 (30)	17 (47) <sup>d</sup>	9 (28)	16 (44)
<b>Prior sexual victimization</b>				
None	24 (48)	23 (64)	14 (44)	13 (36)
Child (< 14 years)	7 (14)	2 (6)	1 (3)	2 (6)
Adolescent	19 (38)	11 (31)	17 (53)	21 (58)
<b>Number of sexual partners within last 12 months</b>				
≤ 1	20 (40)	9 (25)	11 (36)	11 (32)
2	12 (24)	13 (36)	12 (39)	6 (18)
≥ 3	18 (36)	14 (39)	8 (26)	17 (50) <sup>d</sup>

\*Comparisons between disclosure status for each victimization group. Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding and/or missing data.

<sup>a</sup>P < .001

<sup>b</sup>P < .01

<sup>c</sup>P < .05

<sup>d</sup>P < .10

Specifically, those who experienced pressure to use alcohol were somewhat more likely to disclose rape/attempted rape whereas those not pressured to use alcohol were somewhat more likely to disclose verbal sexual coercion. Surprisingly, only three variables within the social context of the date were associated with disclosure of any kind. For example, disclosing rape/attempted rape was associated with a shorter-term relationship wherein the couple experienced five or fewer dates; disclosure of verbal sexual coercion was less likely to occur if the couple had returned to a home/apartment to be alone together.

Specific variables associated with the date were related to disclosure of rape/attempted rape or verbal sexual coercion (Table 3). Young women were less likely to tell someone else about the rape/attempted rape if they had been parking in their perpetrator's car and if this person was their partner or boyfriend. However, shorter dating history was positively associated with disclosing this information. Only one variable was associated with disclosure among those who reported verbally coerced sex.

Logistic regression analyses were conducted to determine which variables were significantly associated with disclosing either rape/attempted rape or verbal sexual coercion. Among those identified as experiencing rape/attempted rape, partner drinking during the

date and number of prior dates, when controlling for age, gravidity and perpetrator being a boyfriend/partner, were associated with disclosing sexual assault (LRT = 77.437, *df* = 9, *P* < 0.005). Specifically, if a young woman reported that the perpetrator drank during the context of this date, she was 4.56 (1.12, 17.73) times more likely to disclose this forced sexual event, and 6.32 (1.71, 23.35) times as likely to disclose if she had had < 5 dates with person as compared to ≥ 11 dates. Logistic regression found only one variable associated with disclosing verbally coerced sex (LRT = 76.128, *df* = 8, *P* < 0.21). Those who reported no pressure to use alcohol were 10.7 (1.10, 104.41) times more likely to disclose this type of sexual victimization.

With regard to time to disclosure, 25% or fewer victims of either type of victimization disclosed this forced sexual experience within the first 24 hours following its occurrence (see Fig. 1). Among those who had disclosed sexual victimization, 90% of rape/attempted rape victims (*n* = 45/50) and 100% (*n* = 32) of sexual coerced women told someone within 6 months of the episode. Survival analyses were conducted to examine whether variables previously described affected the time to disclosure (Table 4). The most striking finding was that perpetrator drinking one or more drinks during the date context shortened

**Table 2.** Substance Use Behaviors of Sample (n = Stratified by Disclosure Status\*)

Variable	Rape/attempted rape (n = 86)		Verbal sexual coercion (n = 68)	
	Yes n = 50 N (%)	No n = 36 N (%)	Yes n = 32 N (%)	No n = 36 N (%)
Prior to date				
Alcohol	13 (27)	12 (34)	3 (9)	6 (17)
Marijuana	7 (14)	5 (18)	2 (6)	5 (14)
During date				
Alcohol				
None	35 (71)	24 (86)	31 (97)	32 (91)
1	3 (6)	0 (0)	1 (3)	1 (3)
≥ 2	11 (22)	4 (14)	0 (0)	2 (6)
Marijuana	6 (12)	2 (7)	3 (9)	3 (9)
Perpetrator				
During date				
Alcohol				
None	28 (56)	23 (82)	24 (75)	27 (77)
1 drink	4 (8)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
≥2 drinks	18 (36) <sup>c</sup>	5 (18)	8 (25)	8 (23)
Marijuana	11 (22)	8 (30)	8 (25)	8 (23)
Victim reported experiencing pressure to use				
Alcohol	9 (18) <sup>d</sup>	2 (6)	1 (3)	6 (17) <sup>d</sup>
Marijuana	3 (6)	2 (6)	2 (7)	1 (3)

\*Comparisons between disclosure status for each victimization group. Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding and/or missing data.

<sup>a</sup>P < .001

<sup>b</sup>P < .01

<sup>c</sup>P < .05

<sup>d</sup>P < .10

the time to disclosure of rape/attempted rape. Victim's drinking also affected the time to disclosure when not controlling for other factors. When controlling for all factors, Cox regression analysis identified three variables that were independently related to time to disclosure (LRT  $\chi^2 = 27.5$ ,  $df = 16$ ,  $P < 0.036$ ). Specifically, Caucasian young women as compared to African Americans were 3.52 (1.03, 10.3) times more likely to disclose sooner; those who reported that the perpetrator date drank  $\geq 1$  drinks (RR = 2.46, CI = 1.03, 5.71) and those who described their relationship with the perpetrator as not being their current boyfriend or partner (RR = 2.46, CI = 1.13, 5.34) were more likely to disclose earlier.

A similar survival analyses was conducted among those disclosing verbally coerced sex and only two variables were marginally associated with time to disclosure. Specifically, those that reported pressure to use alcohol and who did not return to their own home or apartment to be alone with the perpetrator were more likely to disclose this sexual victimization sooner (Log Rank = 3.63,  $df = 1$ ,  $P < 0.06$ ). A further analysis to construct a multivariate model using Cox regression analysis was not conducted because no significant individual associations were detected.

## Discussion

We found that about half of those identified as having experienced rape/attempted rape and slightly less than half of those experiencing verbally coerced intercourse disclosed this victimization to another person. These findings are similar to other studies conducted among college-aged women.<sup>2,7</sup> However, the samples in both of these prior studies were comprised largely of Caucasian women. Within studies conducted among African American adult women, our data are consistent with one study that found about half of women disclosed within 24 hours,<sup>11</sup> and inconsistent with the other study in which almost all women disclosed within 2 months of the assault.<sup>12</sup> Of most importance in this largely minority adolescent and young adult population, less than 1% reported this event to authorities, a finding that is substantially lower than prior reports.<sup>6,12</sup>

Alcohol use by the male perpetrator appears to affect disclosure of rape or attempted rape. Young women who reported that their dating partners consumed one or more drinks of alcohol during the context of their date were significantly more likely to disclose this type of sexual victimization to a friend or family member than those whose partners did not consume alcohol.

**Table 3.** Selected Variables Within Social Context Domain Stratified by Disclosure Status\*

Variable	Rape/attempted rape (n = 86)		Verbal sexual coercion (n = 68)	
	Yes n = 50 N (%)	No n = 36 N (%)	Yes n = 32 N (%)	No n = 36 N (%)
Single date	27 (54)	17 (65)	22 (73)	28 (82)
Incurred date expenses	13 (28)	3 (12)	5 (19)	11 (34)
Went to house to be alone				
Date's	22 (44)	11 (42)	15 (47)	18 (51)
Victim's	7 (14)	5 (14)	2 (7)	9 (27) <sup>c</sup>
Parking in car	2 (4)	6 (23) <sup>b</sup>	6 (19)	5 (15)
Level of romantic involvement	4.2 (3.3)	5.0 (3.0)	6.5 (3.3)	4.9 (5.8)
Age discrepancy (mean, sd)	3.4 (3.3)	3.9 (3.3)	3.4 (3.1)	3.1 (2.7)
How long know date				
≤ 3 weeks	10 (20)	6 (17)	2 (6)	5 (14)
1 to 6 months	12 (24)	6 (6)	13 (41)	9 (25)
7 to 12 months	7 (14)	4 (11)	6 (19)	1 (3)
≥ 1 year	21 (42)	20 (56)	11 (34)	21 (58) <sup>c</sup>
Number of prior dates with this person				
≤ 5	28 (57) <sup>c</sup>	12 (33)	14 (45)	11 (31)
6 to 10	6 (12)	4 (11)	8 (26)	9 (25)
≥ 11	15 (31)	20 (56)	9 (29)	16 (44)
Perpetrator your partner/boyfriend	16 (32)	15 (54) <sup>d</sup>	20(67)	18 (51)
Any past violence experienced from this date				
Verbal	30 (61)	17 (53)	25 (81)	27 (77)
Physical	24 (49)	17 (53)	19 (61)	25 (71)

\*Comparisons between each victimization group and no victimization. Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding and/or missing data.

<sup>a</sup>P < .001

<sup>b</sup>P < .01

<sup>c</sup>P < .05

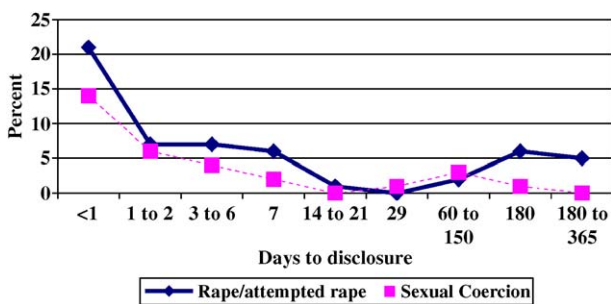
<sup>d</sup>P < .10

Moreover, among teens who disclosed rape/attempted rape, those who reported that their date had drank one or more drinks were almost three times more likely to have told someone sooner rather than later. Further qualitative and quantitative research is needed to better understand the role of alcohol use during the context of the date and why perpetrator drinking may assist in promoting more rapid disclosure.

Disclosure of rape was associated with a shorter-term relationship between perpetrator and the female victim. Specifically, young women who reported having fewer than five dates with the perpetrator of

the rape/attempted rape were six times more likely to tell another person. This finding is consistent with other research examining disclosure of date and acquaintance rape among women attending college.<sup>7</sup> Koss et al found that the closer the relationship between the victim and perpetrator, the less likely the young woman was to report this victimization to anyone.<sup>7</sup> Thus, clinicians and other providers may experience difficulty promoting disclosure of sexual victimization among their teenage patients, particularly when the perpetrator of the sexual assault is someone who they have been dating regularly.

Although race/ethnicity was unrelated to whether the sexual victimization was disclosed for either type of sexual assault, among those who reported rape/attempted rape it was related to latency of disclosure. That is, Caucasian as compared to African American adolescent and young adult women were more likely to disclose this information sooner. Prior work by Neville and Pugh<sup>12</sup> found that almost all African American adult survivors of rape or attempted rape disclosed the sexual assault to a friend or significant other, with many doing so within 2 months of the assault. Other work among African American women suggest that many African American women are silent about their



**Fig. 1.** Time to disclosure in days stratified by type of sexual victimization.

**Table 4.** Summary of Selected Kaplan Meier Estimates for Disclosure of Rape/Attempted Rape

Variable	Median Time to Disclosure (days)	P-Value
Race		.10
African American	150.00	
Puerto Rican	365.00	
Dominican	6.00	
Caucasian	1.00	
Ethnic identity		.06
Low	1.00	
Adequate to high	180.00	
Family Structure		.06
Lives with one parent	150.00	
Lives independent of parent <sup>§</sup>		
Lives in two parent family	2.00	
Lives with other adult	21.00	
Repeated grades		.09
Never	7.00	
≥ 1	365.00	
Employed		.08
No	7.00	
Yes	365.00	
Victim drinking during date		.054
None	150.00	
1 drink	1.00	
≥ 2drinks	6.00	
Perpetrator drinking during date		.002
None	180.00	
1 drink	1.00	
≥ 2 drinks	2.00	
How victim felt as result of taking substances		.065
Didn't use anything	150.00	
Loose, easy feeling	2.00	
Moderately to really wasted	2.00	
Perpetrator's relationship to victim		.10
Not boyfriend/current partner	6.00	
Boyfriend or current partner	180.00	
Pressure to use marijuana		.04
None	7.00	
A little to a lot <sup>§</sup>		

<sup>§</sup>Median value not estimable because more than half of the category remained event free by survey date.

victimization and that disclosure is affected by various factors such as prior consensual sexual relations with the assailant and the nature of the assault.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the adolescents in our sample may be unwilling to tell others about forced sexual experiences because the perpetrator of their attack was someone with whom they were romantically familiar.

We found only one variable related to disclosing verbally coercive sexual experiences in this population. Further, we did not find any variables that, when controlling for other factors, resulted in decreased latency to disclosure. There may be several reasons for these results. First, for a young woman to disclose a verbally forced sexual act, she must first perceive herself as a victim. We identified young women as

experiencing a verbally coercive sexual act based on the reports of specific behaviors that were described as being pressured into having sex. It is possible that young women, in general, do not perceive these events as forced sex, especially because of prior consensual intimate acts with these partners. Thus, in their frame of reference there is nothing to disclose. Alternatively, it may be that women who are identified as experiencing verbally coercive sexual experiences are a diverse group with exposure to a variety of factors; our relatively small sample size may have made it difficult to detect any commonalities in this group. Future research with minority adolescent and young adult women who experience verbally coercive sexual episodes is needed to clarify these relationships by asking additional questions about perceptions of assaultive events and related mitigating circumstances.

Three limitations of this study deserve comment. First, the purpose of the larger study was to investigate the rates and the contributing role of alcohol use in date and acquaintance rape among an ethnically diverse adolescent and young adult population. As a result, concerns about response burden restricted the number and scope of questions we could incorporate to ask about disclosure. Second, despite the fact that the number of young women in our study is larger than previous studies examining minority women and sexual assault,<sup>11,12</sup> a limited number of young women were identified as having experienced rape/attempted rape or verbally coerced intercourse. Further, it is possible that some young women completing the anonymous questionnaire did not disclose their victimization and therefore, we are not positive we identified all those who experience sexual victimization. Taken together, these issues constrained our power to detect statistically significant differences. Among rape victims (50 of whom disclosed, 36 who did not), we had 80% power to detect an odds ratios as small as 3.5, assuming a 50% risk among "cases" in the antecedent, so that smaller odds ratios could be detected as the observed rates departed from 50%. Most of the observed odds ratios were well below this level. However, we discussed observed effects that were moderately significant (i.e.  $P < 0.10$ ), and focused on the magnitude as well as the significance of the associations. Finally, we sampled adolescent and young adult women who were seeking care from an adolescent-specific health care center and who resided in a large metropolitan area. Our findings may not generalize to teens who reside in other geographic locations and who present to other health care settings.

The effects of sexual victimization can be long lasting and may include maladaptive coping strategies and intense, negative self-evaluations.<sup>19</sup> It is hoped that the information gained from this investigation will assist practitioners in understanding factors that may

promote disclosure when clinicians screen their adolescent and young adult patients for date/acquaintance rape and other coercive sexual experiences. Our data suggest that health care providers cannot assume that their female patients will disclose sexual victimization to them or to individuals within their social support network, even when asked directly. While other research has established that disclosure of victimization is affected by the patient's belief in rape myths, attributions of blame, and cultural beliefs and stereotypes,<sup>11-14</sup> we found that disclosure is also affected by the perpetrator's use of alcohol, number of prior dates with the perpetrator, and whether or not the perpetrator was the victim's current boyfriend or partner. Thus, it may be important during the process of screening for sexual victimization that providers also inquire about the young woman's current dating practices and relationship status as well as the use of alcohol by both the young woman and her dating partners. In addition, screening for sexual violence must be ongoing in order to maximize opportunities for disclosure.

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