

Experience of sexual coercion and risky sexual behavior among Ugandan university students

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Authors:

Agardh, A.
Odberg-Pettersson, K.
Ostergren, P. O.

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Description:

The aim of this study was to assess the association between the experience of sexual coercion and risky sexual behavior among university students of both sexes in Uganda. In 2005, 980 (80%) out of a total of 1,220 students enrolled in Mbarara University of Science and Technology in Uganda participated in a self-administered questionnaire covering sociodemographic and religious factors, social capital, mental health, alcohol use, and sexual behavior. A validated scale of six items was used to assess the experience of sexual coercion. Logistic regression analyses were applied to control for confounders. Potential buffering factors were analyzed by testing for effect modification. Fifty-nine percent of those who responded had previously had sexual intercourse. Among the male students, 29.0%, and among the female students 33.1% reported having had some experience of sexual coercion. After the authors controlled for age, gender, educational level of household of origin, role of religion, and trust in others, they found that sexual coercion was statistically significantly associated with previously had sex (OR 1.6, 95% CI; 1.12.3), early sexual debut (OR 2.4, 95% CI; 1.53.7), as well as with having had a great number of sexual partners (OR 1.9, 95% CI; 1.23.0), but not with inconsistent condom use. Scoring low on an assessment of mental health problems, reporting high trust in others, or stating that religion played a major role in one's family of origin seemed to buffer the negative effect that the experience of sexual coercion had on the likelihood of having many sexual partners. The findings of this study suggest that the experience of sexual coercion is common among youth/young adults in Uganda and is subsequently associated with risky sexual behavior in both sexes. The existence of individual and contextual factors that buffer the effects mentioned was also demonstrated.

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