

Fempower

A magazine published
by the WAVE office



Felice Drott, WAVE, Austria

X **Editorial**
by Felice Drott, Austria

X **Don't confuse perpetrators
with seducers!**
by Carina Ohlsson
and Olga Persson, Sweden

X **Sexual violence in Bulgaria**
by Rada Elenkova
and Albena Koycheva, Bulgaria

X **Women victims of sexual
violence continue to be
stigmatised in Montenegro**
by Nataša Međedović, Montenegro

X **Working with survivors of
sexual abuse from Medica
Zenica's point of view**
by Sabiha Husić, Bosnia
and Herzegovina

X **Disclosure through lan-
guage**
by Katinka Ingves
and Marie Pettersson, Sweden

X **Dealing with the effects of
sexual violence – a medical
perspective**
by Andrea Berzlanovich, Austria

X **Sexual violence in partnerships**
by Andrea Brem, Austria

X **Gender-based violence,
stalking and fear of crime –
an EU research project
2009-2011**
by Katrin List and Rosa Schneider, Germany

The second Fempower issue of 2011 is focusing on the topic of sexual violence. Sexual violence is a particularly severe form of gender-based violence. It is highly stigmatising for the survivors and can have serious and long lasting impacts on the overall health.

Women are over proportionally affected by all forms of sexual violence and men are the perpetrators in most cases. Sexual violence is a wide-spread violation of women's rights, in some parts of the world at least, one woman in every five has suffered an attempted or completed rape by an intimate partner during her lifetime (WHO 2003).

The stigmatization of survivors is strongly interconnected with the general perceptions of gender roles within a society. In many countries a victim-blaming attitude is widely spread. The public often plays cases of sexual violence down, failing to name the male perpetrators



Content

Imprint

Editorial

by Felice Drott, Austria
page 1,3

Don't confuse perpetrators with seducers!

by Carina Ohlsson and Olga Persson, Sweden
page 3-4

Sexual violence in Bulgaria

by Rada Elenkova and Albena Koycheva, Bulgaria
page 5-6

Women victims of sexual violence continue to be stigmatised in Montenegro

by Nataša Međedović, Montenegro
page 6-7

Working with survivors of sexual abuse from Medica Zenica's point of view

by Sabiha Husić, Bosnia and Herzegovina
page 8-9

Disclosure through language

by Katinka Ingves and Marie Pettersson, Sweden
page 9-10

Dealing with the effects of sexual violence – a medical perspective

by Andrea Berzlanovich, Austria
page 11-12

Sexual violence in partnerships

by Andrea Brem, Austria
page 12-14

Gender-based violence, stalking and fear of crime – an EU research project 2009-2011

by Katrin List and Rosa Schneider, Germany
page 14-16

Publisher

WAVE-Office /
European Information Centre Against Violence
Bacherplatz 10/4, A-1050 Vienna,
Phone: +43-1-5482720
E-mail: office@wave-network.org
Website: <http://www.wave-network.org>
ZVR: 187612774

Edit:

Felice Drott and Barbara Stelmaszek

Layout: Leocadia Rump

Photo on Cover:

"No Entry"- anti rape campaign by Home Office 2006,
provided by Violence against Women 365 International
Poster Exhibition, www.dvposters365.net/

Financier:

European Commission & the Daphne Program



Co Financier:

Federal Ministry for Women and Public service;
Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and
Consumer Protection & Women's Department
of the Municipality Vienna (MA57)



bmask.gv.at

BUNDESKANZLERAMT  ÖSTERREICH
BUNDESMINISTERIN
FÜR FRAUEN UND ÖFFENTLICHEN DIENST

Editorial-Prosecution

Felice Drott, WAVE, Austria



as such. Especially when male public and powerful figures are sexually assaulting women, it is common that the media is full of prejudices concerning the survivor and focuses on the question of her benefit to telling the story. The perpetrator on the other side will often be branded as no more than a seducer.

Even though the number of reported rape cases increases in most countries where regular data collection is provided, the conviction rate has not grown in the same way (Lovett, Kelly 2009). Until today, in many societies the male perpetrators of sexual violence will get away with it. This is also related to the often misleading assumptions of sexual violence, included in law or in practice, that a victim gives her consent when she does not physically resist the unwanted sexual conduct. It is also often ignored whether or not the perpetrator threatened to use or used physical violence. For that reason, *“Rape and other forms of sexual violence should be defined as sexual conduct in which the victim involved was coerced, by violent or non-violent means, and therefore her agreement to engage in sexual acts was not truly and freely given”* (Amnesty International 2010).

The legal framework as such must not discriminate against women or girls seeking justice and must not lead to further violations of their rights (Amnesty International 2010).

The articles of this Fempower edition shed light on the challenges women’s service centres in different countries face

Felice Drott

on behalf of the WAVE TEAM.

Felice Drott is editor of Fempower,

WAVE project coordinator and responsible for WAVE’s press releases

Email: felice.drott@wave-network.org

when working with survivors of sexual violence. Attention is given to the insufficiencies within the legal framework and the persistency of prejudices within societies. The issue will also present different research results and best practices regarding sexual violence.

Sources:

Amnesty International 2010, Six point checklist on justice for violence against women, p.3-4

Jo Lovett/Liz Kelly 2009, Different systems, similar outcomes? Tracking attrition in reported rape cases across Europe, p.5

WHO 2003, Guidelines for medico-legal care for victims of sexual violence, p.1

DON'T CONFUSE PERPETRATORS WITH SEDUCERS!

by Carina Ohlsson and Olga Persson

It seems we won’t find out the truth about what really happened when former IMF (International Monetary Fund) chief Dominique Strauss-Kahn met hotel maid and immigrant from Guinea Nafissatou Diallo in a New York hotel room. DNA-samples have confirmed traces of Strauss Kahn’s sperm on Diallo’s dress, and Strauss Kahn has been accused of attempted rape by another woman in France. In the Diallo case, the charges against him were dismissed in August after the prosecutors lost faith in the credibility of Diallo.

In the light of this dramatic development, we would like to recall what was discussed in the Swedish media when DSK was first charged with attempted rape in May 2011. The media focused on the theme of “men, power and sex”, where many people misunderstood the concepts and revealed their own undeveloped views and prejudices. Let’s start with “power”. More about the notion of “sex” later on.

Strauss-Kahn is a white male with immense power and high status. This is obvious in that when talking about the rape allegations instead he is described as both a womaniser and a “great seducer” in the same sentence where he is said to be unable to “keep his hands to himself”. His “touching up” is viewed with a kind of indulgence. It seems to confirm that he is not merely a seducer; he’s a “great seducer”. This indulgence is, of course, because he is seen as a nice guy with a sense of decency. It’s what we have seen in the Julian Assange case, among others.

A woman who falls victim to this kind of man is less likely to be believed than a woman who is the victim of a less popular person who is lower in the hierarchy. A woman who falls victim to this kind of man clearly runs the risk of seeing a whole nation turn against her and of being indirectly accused of risking the economy and stability of the entire world or, as

Fempower

in the Julian Assange case, freedom of expression. That is a huge burden to bear. And that is exactly why saying what happened and reporting it is so brave.

Being able to subject another person, for example a hotel maid, to acts of violence and cruelty and know that “absolutely no-one will believe her and she will be accused of being part of a conspiracy” is both the result and an expression of power. A discussion of how this power affects credibility has been noticeably absent from the media.

So to the question of sex - On the 15th of May, the Swedish paper Dagens Nyheter reported the allegations against Strauss-Kahn under the title “Emergency Euro meeting surrounded by sex scandal”, the same approach that Dagens Nyheter used in its reporting of Tiger Woods’ infidelity. On the same day, the business section of the Swedish paper Svenska Dagbladet wrote that a new biography makes “no secret of the fact that the top politician and IMF boss often hits on women”.

What are the writers of these articles actually saying? Is “hitting on” another term for “sexually harass”? If not, why is this information relevant when reporting on purported sexual assault, attempted rape and unlawful imprisonment?

A report in Swedish state radio’s programme Studio One on the Strauss-Kahn case was given the title “Men, power and sex”, despite the fact that we are talking about suspected attempted rape. “Men, power and violence” would have been more appropriate. The choice of words is, as we have pointed out, important. “He’s had a reputation as a ladies’ man, but now he’s accused of forcing himself on a woman,” says the Studio One presenter. What does it matter whether Strauss-Kahn is considered a ladies’ man or not? A large part of the report concerns the rumours surrounding Strauss-Kahn. The author and journalist Bim Clinell likens the fact that female journalists prefer not to meet him alone because they are afraid of being “touched up” with the alleged “romances” of other powerful men.

Exactly what is meant by “touched up” is not explained in detail but it can only be interpreted as sexual harassment or other forms of sexual molestation. Neither are we told what Clinell means by “romances”. She appears to be thinking of extra-marital activities. If that is the case, what has it got to do with Strauss-Kahn’s infamous sexual harassment? Or is “romances” another term for sexual harassment? Or sexual abuse? Use language we understand! Sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and rape are crimes and have nothing to do with being unfaithful, having several sexual partners or flirting, none of which is a crime.

Failing to differentiate between perpetrators and seducers is devastating. Insinuating in this way that an alleged molestation is an expression of some sort of misdirected attention or flattery serves only to totally humiliate the victim. Call things by their proper names and distinguish between sexual relations (or infidelity) and crime!



Olga Persson

Secretary-General, The Swedish Association of Women’s Shelters and Young Women’s Empowerment Centres, SKR



Carina Ohlsson

Chairperson, The Swedish Association of Women’s Shelters and Young Women’s Empowerment Centres, SKR

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN BULGARIA

by Rada Elenkova and Albena Koycheva, Bulgaria

Fempower

Sexual violence is a topic that is rarely discussed and often ignored. By staying silent about sexual violence and not addressing all that it encompasses, we disregard the seriousness of the act and do not acknowledge the feelings and experiences of the person whose integrity of mind and body becomes violated. The act is never forgotten and the silence is never broken, and is maintained by the victim and society alike. Sexual violence is gender-based violence which mostly affects women and results in grave violations of human rights. But what happens when there are no services or means by which to protect those rights, when sexual violence is understood by authorities in a narrow sense - only recognized in the event of rape, and when in general everyone is silent about the issue?

The problem of the crime of sexual violence in Bulgarian society is still very much underestimated and the crime itself is not often reported. Most people, including many victims, do not recognize the different forms and manifestations of this phenomenon and consequently, do not report them. One significant reason for this is the eventual frustration that some victims experience. The victims of sexual violence experience fear and suffer extreme isolation in their efforts to achieve justice and to re-establish their own lives free of violence, in addition to overcoming their fears. They fear the perpetrator, the common attitude of society, the reaction from the family, and the reactions of authorities. They are extremely scared about their own future, the future of their children and families. In Bulgaria, there are still no rape crisis centres, where the necessary care for survivors of rape and other sexual crimes could be provided. Furthermore, marital rape is still not explicitly criminalized. Rape is a crime indeed, but this provision has never been applied against spouses.

As recent research confirms, in the vast majority of rape cases, the perpetrator is a well known person to the victim, most often a close relative and member of the family. Thus, the victim stays in the same home with the abuser, and is at all times exposed to the risk and danger of another assault, especially when she is dependent on him or threatened by him. Sexual violence comprises a substantial part of the cases of domestic violence which is also not criminalized, and serves only as ground for civil protective orders, issued by civil courts.

The widespread belief is that sexual violence refers only to rape and trafficking in women, and sexual exploitation. The attitudes about the phenomenon are formed on the grounds of personal experience and the misconception that sexual violence is only present in the form of physical sexual abuse. Very often, the authorities dealing with crimes of sexual violence initially doubt the victim's story or feel that they must first prove the validity of the story prior to investigating the crime. As a result, they lose time and resources to first verify the victim's account and at the same time fail to deal with the perpetrator and protect the victim. Many of the women who

file complaints of sexual violence are faced with disdain and contempt. Their complaints are often neglected and quite often the authorities regard the problem of sexual violence as something unusual that could never happen to "normal" women, and in many cases even tend to transfer the guilt onto the victim. A lot of "efforts" are put into seeking physical evidence of resistance to substantiate "lack of consent" to verify whether the victim did oppose and resist the sexual violence. There are many examples of unnecessarily and unreasonably prolonged investigations and penal court proceedings, where the victims have been interrogated and/or examined by experts so many times that it leads to their re-victimization. In the end they may give up and refuse to assist with the pending proceedings any further. It is often considered that sexual crimes are "difficult to prove" because there is only one eye-witness who is also the victim of the crime and for that reason, not capable of being objective.

There is a lot of information on grave sexual violence crimes in Bulgaria, presented with all the horrifying details in the media, but statistically only in less than 5 % of the cases the perpetrators are convicted and there is a deficiency of information on what the actual punishments are in such cases. This is the reason for the high level of mistrust in the institutions and their capacity to protect victims and to achieve justice. Both the victims and the perpetrators are quite aware of this reality, which amplifies the fear of the victims so that they keep silent about the sexual violence they suffered. On the other side the perpetrators feel confident that they will never be punished in case the crime is investigated, that is if the victim dares to report the crime in the first place.

Many other "minor" acts of sexual violence are considered to be "innocent jokes", as if not intended to violate anybody's rights and not capable of causing any damage. However, such acts also deserve the attention of law enforcement and the judiciary. Not treating such acts with seriousness results in a high level of tolerance of the other forms of sexual violence and results in failure to address the issue despite its graveness, in compliance with the established legal standards (international, regional, national). Many complaints regarding such non-physical acts of sexual violence have been disregarded by the institutions using a variety of inadequate, illogical and even absurd arguments.

The "innocent jokes" can also be in form of the widely disseminated advertisements containing sexist images and clips. They are still considered as a form of gender based violence and degrading treatment of women in the form of sexual violence - a fact that authorities still fail to consider. A very recent example of this is a case, initially brought before the Commission on Protection against Discrimination (one of the applicants to be recognized as the National Body on Human Rights) and later brought on appeal before the Supreme Administrative Court. Both judicial bodies ignored the arguments based on the provisions of the ECHR, CEDAW, ICCPR

Fempower

and regulations from the national legislation and concluded that the 13 female plaintiffs were overeducated and therefore hypersensitive towards the advertisements and there would be found no consensus in society that such advertisements are humiliating to women and discriminating against women as a whole. The observations of the Media Self-Regulating Body on the sexist nature of some advertisements were not taken into consideration and the respective instructions to change or stop them were not fulfilled.

Only one in five victims of rape reports it to the police. 90 % of those, who turn to specialized NGOs that provide help and assistance to victims of sexual violence, do report the crime.

The Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation's (BGRF) experience in litigating such cases confirms the vital necessity to improve the system to supply the necessary resources to respond adequately to these crimes and provide effective remedies for access to justice for victims.

Part of BGRF's efforts to stop sexual violence is the management of consultation centres for victims of domestic violence in four cities in Bulgaria. In this way, we raise the issue of rapes within marriage. These centres introduce a complex and innovative (for our country) social services aiming at provision of free of charge services. These include legal counselling, psychological assistance, and labour mediation. The innovative element consists of family/couple consultations and work with perpetrators of domestic violence. In our direct work with victims of domestic violence, we notice that the victims themselves do not recognize different types of domestic violence. We also find that sexual violence within marriage often occurs. Very often a woman who comes to seek our help does not have the financial means to afford

Rada Elenkova

is a philologist and part of the BGRF team in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. As such, she coordinates a consultation office for victims of domestic violence and conducts youth trainings in the rural areas on the topics of violence, discrimination and human rights. She also takes part in various campaigns which promote gender equality, sexual and reproductive health and rights, HIV/AIDS protection and prevention.



claiming her rights in court, so our lawyers step in to initiate court proceedings and represent her. This is a primary prerequisite to empower victims to break down years of silence.

The statistical data are taken from the research "Sexual Violence against Women in Bulgaria" - January 22nd, 2011, "Alpha Research"

Albena Koycheva

is a practicing lawyer specialized in Women's Human Rights, International Protection of Human Rights and EU Law; constantly involved in BGRF projects for legislative changes; monitoring missions and reports on the implementation of laws in Bulgaria and Croatia; researches on VAW; consulting on the draft Law against VAW in Morocco; training sessions for law enforcement personnel in Bulgaria



WOMEN VICTIMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE CONTINUE TO BE STIGMATIZED IN MONTENEGRO

Nataša Mededović, Montenegro

For many years Kungsbacka Women's Shelter has had financial problems due to the fact that local politicians have not understood that it was their responsibility to support the work that must be carried out as a consequence of domestic violence.

Although Kungsbacka's leading politicians have spoken about the importance of this problem, they have provided no concrete solution.

Kungsbacka on the Westcoast of Sweden, with 75,000 inhabitants, is a conservatively ruled community that stands for freedom of choice, except when it comes to supporting the voluntary Women's Shelter. But where is freedom if one is not protected from violence? I, as many other female politicians, have for many years been engaged with fighting for our shelter's survival in Kungsbacka. Unfortunately, we have not had any success when it comes to receiving economic support. The most remarkable thing is that violence in close relationships is seen as a women's political issue.

In the autumn of 2008, the situation became so severe that those of us, who ran the Women's Shelter, could not continue with such a large deficit. Previously, we had a loosely organized network for women politicians and organizations in Kungsbacka, which called for a meeting in November 2008. At this meeting, it was made clear to me that a person with strong marketing background was needed. As I am a politician for a local party and have experience as an entrepreneur and have a large network within our community, I assumed the leading position and got other female politicians to join. We decided to put everything on one card; it was either win or lose.

We continued with a meeting at the beginning of December and then decided that the roll-call to the budget team should be signed by two female politicians from each party. We decided to write an open letter to the Chairman of the Council and also a letter to Social Services, where we urged them to allocate more money to our shelter in the budget for 2010. We were determined to keep pressure throughout the budgeting-process.

While reaching out to our large network, I had come into contact with business people who work with event planning and they wanted to plan a fund raising event for the benefit of the Women's Shelter. I presented this idea at the next meeting with the network and all were keen on the idea. We decided that a day around the International Women's Day would be ideal.

It was now time to call the Press. Previously, I had very good working relations with the different media in Kungsbacka and surrounding districts. The local press has always been generous when it came to publishing articles about the shelter and our problems. I did know, however, that it was not enough to just send out a press release, it would be drowned in all the other materials going out, so it was back to making personal phone calls. I called every journalist I knew of and asked them kindly to help us spread the word. The difference this time, from the previous times, was that all the political parties signed on, and that we had our open letter to the Chairman and the Committee along with the fund-raising show at a theatre.

When the time arrived for signing our open letter, early on a cold winter morning in December, all the media were present, Local Radio, Television, local and regional press. I was well prepared with copies for everyone and of course with morning coffee. We promised to provide the media with information on which artists would perform at our charity show and to keep them informed on how our letter was being received and how the budget work was proceeding.

Not only did the published articles send shock-waves to the established politicians, they had a similar effect on the readers who started writing to the press and to the Mayor's office.

Together with an entrepreneur and a restaurant-manager, I started to organize the charity show. We set the date for 12th of March 2009. There had already been a big response from local artists, so there was no problem with finding par-

ticipants. We submitted new articles to the press at the beginning of February with the names of the artists and we had additional articles published each week, either about the shelter, the show or the budget, to keep everyone focused on the problem.

The Fund-raising Show was a great success and an enormous benefit for the Women's Shelter. It was a fantastic evening and the show resulted in a profit of nearly 80,000 SEK. We also received many donations from businesses and private individuals and received collections from churches, so the total turned out to be 100,000 SEK for the six months of work. This meant that the economy for 2009 was ok, even if it was tight.

At the end of April, we were informed that the budget committee had agreed to allocate 200,000 SEK extra for 2010 to the Women's Shelter in Kungsbacka. This budget was agreed to at the meeting on the 13th of May. Fantastic, the extra money is now in the framework of the next budget and it is unlikely that they would remove it due to political repercussions. It is no longer possible for Social Services to refuse the finances we need to continue our work bearing in mind all the press and attention it has received during 2009. We had an election in September 2010 and the issue of Women's Shelter was again on the agenda.

We continue to focus on our work with "violence in close relationships." It has been difficult work but worth the effort, and we are looking forward to the future with confidence. We now know how to operate and influence the political establishment. One should never give up but put forward targets and firmly work towards them. Even if we sometimes despaired, it went well in the end. We did not lose, we won.

Nataša Međedović

is a women's rights activist based in Niksic, Montenegro. Nataša Međedović is one of the founding members of SOS Center for Women and Children Victims of Violence Niksic, a women's NGO. The NGO was founded in 1998. Over the past 12 years she has become one of the major women's right activists in Montenegro and she is recognised as a leader in combating domestic violence in the country. She created and coordinated more than 50 projects. Additionally she was a volunteer of a hotline for 9 years. She is CoCo (Coordination Committee) delegate of WAVE for Montenegro, Macedonia, Albania and Kosovo. Currently she lives and works in Niksic, where she studied at the Faculty of Philosophy.



WORKING WITH SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ABUSE FROM MEDICA ZENICA'S POINT OF VIEW

by Sabiha Husić, Bosnia and Herzegovina



Medica Zenica is an expert women's non-governmental organisation that continuously offers integrated psycho-social and medical support to women and children survivors of war and also post war violence, including survivors of war rapes and sexual violence in peace time, domestic violence survivors, as well as survivors of trafficking in human beings.

Our approach to women and children, survivors of violence, is based on humanistic values and it includes provision of following services: safe house and psychological counselling office, medical and psychological support to beneficiaries, women and children in psychological counselling centre, during the period of recovery from trauma and violence. Our program further includes occupational therapy and economic empowerment within vocational training programs in Medica Zenica and in rural areas.

Along with direct work with survivors of trauma and violence, Medica Zenica implements a variety of educational, research, advocacy, and publishing projects focused on promotion and protection of human rights, prevention and rehabilitation from sexual and domestic violence and combating trafficking in human beings.

In working with survivors of war rape and other forms of sexual violence such as: forced pregnancy, incest, rape in marriage, undertaking and prostitution of the partners, forced prostitution and pornography, trafficking in women for the purpose of sexual exploitation, sexual harassment and abuse at work and the like, it is evident that these forms of violence affect physical, psychological and social integrity of a woman, girl who survived it. This is not connected with sexuality. Sexual sphere was selected as the most intimate in order to hurt and humiliate women. It is primarily aimed at women, girls and children. The consequences of survived experiences are short and long-term, explained in shortest. Basic elements of rape are: physical, psychological and moral injury of a person. Apart from that, rape and other forms of sexualized violence represent serious violation of human rights and dignity of a survivor. This is an approach based on which Medica Zenica works and which is reflected through the aspect of understanding and protection of human rights, influencing development of positive legal documents including protection of survivors witnesses (survivors of sexual violence) in court proceedings against perpetrators. In comparison to other trauma, rape and other forms of sexual violence contain specific elements that determine the influence of traumatic experience on a survivor. Rape goes into physical integrity in sexual sphere which is the highest level of one's privacy. On the other hand, the sphere of sexual has in almost all societies sociological and political importance for the process of establishing relation of power between sexes, and therefore it has been additionally supported through tradition by preserving taboo, restrictions,

Sabiha Husić

M.Sc., is a psychotherapist and holds a Master's degree in State Management and Humanitarian affairs. She specialized in working with traumatized persons and psychosocial conflict transformation. She has been an employee of Medica Zenica since 1994 and became the director in 2007. As a therapist she gained experience in working with survivors of war trauma, war rapes and other types of sexual abuse-through. She provided direct psychological assistance and support to women and girls survivors of war torture and violence. This also included individual and group therapy for people who are missing family members as well as giving emotional support to survivors at court hearings in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 2009, Sabiha Husić, was awarded the European "Active Citizens Award" for her voluntary activism and professional work performed in Medica Zenica.

common rules, labelling and stigmatizations. Rape is an act of violence which emerges from the perpetrator's feeling of power, wish to dominate and demonstrate power, frighten, humiliate, embarrass and harm the survivor and to imply a feeling of complete powerlessness over her. Rape as well as other forms of sexual violence represents serious neglecting of survivor's right to make her own decisions. Everything together affects the survivors but also on the attitude of the society towards her. The survivor deals with injuries of her physical and psychological boundaries or more precisely with injuries of her most intimate sphere, her sexuality. On the other hand the survivor is being labelled and stigmatized by the community which very often imposes to a survivor a feeling of being guilty. According to data from „Medica“ Zenica it is evident that survivors of sexual abuse are from different areas, different age and level of education. However, the experiences show that the perpetrators demonstrate the power and control over survivor more easily when her socio-economic status is bad or over persons of limited intellectual capacities which is completely evident when it comes to forced prostitution, trafficking in women and girls for the purpose of sexual service provision, forced pornography, incest. The perpetrators of mentioned cases very often know the survivors from before, apart from that sexual violence is significantly present in marriage and common-law marriage. However, there is a small number of women who identify that kind of sexual abuse and they actually report physical and psychological violence while they consider sexual intercours as their obligation towards a partner/husband. This way these forms of violence are very difficult to prove

and they are rarely prosecuted. When it comes to committing sexual actions over children and underage children, constant interrogations by experts and parents impose on children a feeling of guilt and fear. Severe kinds of sexual violence survived by survivors of trafficking always leave serious consequences and not being familiar with the issue leads to judgment and non-acceptance of survivors, when they need a long-term support by the community.

Having in mind the aforementioned it is necessary that the cases of sexual violence are prosecuted at higher pace and more effectively and perpetrators to be punished. The practice shows that survivors give up on court proceedings due to long duration of the process and frequent interrogations of the survivor, and re-traumatization, fear of revenge by the perpetrator as well as due to a feeling that others do not believe in their story.

The pre-condition for re-establishment of a sense of life meaning and justice order in the world where we live or establishing order and justice is that survivor is supported not only by its closest community but also by wider community. A response by the society significantly affects final trauma recovery. The community in this process has two tasks: public acknowledgement that the traumatic event has happened through addressing direct perpetrators for the damage, and to take adequate actions in order to fix the damage that survivor has suffered. Acknowledgment and fixing the damage

can be formally treated through legal system or legislation. The survivor cannot make objective assessments of her condition as long as she is not aware that none of her actions free the perpetrator from responsibility in any way.

Survivors of rape and other forms of sexual abuse place the blame on themselves; because they believe that it was them who have put themselves in that dangerous situation or because they did not succeed in defending themselves, these are the arguments that the perpetrators use for imposing a feeling of guilt on a survivor or to justify violence.

There is no situation due to which one should be exposed to rape or other kinds of sexual abuse no matter whether it happens within the armed conflict, in family and community. Let's encourage the survivors through support and understanding for survivors of sexual abuse to speak up about their painful and difficult experiences in order to be able to help themselves but also other women not only in Bosnia and Herzegovina but worldwide because the consequences for every woman are the same, injury, pain, suffering... no matter where they live.

Medica Zenica advocates for and empirically works on holistic and multidisciplinary approach in provision of support and assistance to survivors of war rape with the purpose of re-socialization and re-integration of survivors but also prevention of trans-generational transfer of traumatic experiences.

DISCLOSURE THROUGH LANGUAGE

by Katinka Ingves and Marie Pettersson, Sweden

The Swedish Government declares that one of the most important aspects of gender equality work is combating men's violence against women, violence and oppression in the name of honour and violence in same-sex relationships. The wording in the government text is a manifestation of a deliberate political aim, and points to a conscious choosing of terms to describe the problem. These words were intentionally chosen to be included in the official proclamation of the Swedish government's work against violence. Thanks to the persistent work and lobbying of the women's shelter movement we have official language that does not conceal the gender of the perpetrator and the victim.

By talking about violence as men's violence against women, the point is clearly made that violence in close relations is gendered. To all of us who work with this problem, this is no news, but if we step out of our feminist arenas, we face a society that either does not care or prefers not to know. Speaking of violence as

"family violence" or "domestic violence" hides the fact that in a majority of "family violence" cases, it is a male partner or ex-(male) partner abusing an adult female. Furthermore, the word "domestic" suggests that this is something occurring within the walls of home. In terms of other forms of violence, if we take on a holistic perspective on sexualized violence, we must include all forms of men's violence against women and see how it manifests itself throughout society in various forms, like physical, psychological and sexual abuse, assault, rape, harassment, pornography and prostitution and female genital mutilation.

Highlight all forms of men's violence

The Women's shelter Ellinor, and many other women shelters in Sweden, prefer to describe our aim as acting against all forms of oppression of women. The violence that women experience from partners or ex-partners exists in a wider societal context and reflects, impacts and is affected by, gender based structures. That

Fempower

is why our shelter wants to highlight that domestic violence is part of other forms of violence and vice versa, and we want a concept that describes the whole continuum of men's violence against women. We have secured our freedom to take up any issue for review that might have bearing on women's lives. All forms of oppression oblige us to take a proactive stance against gender discriminating advertising, sexual harassments in the workplace and the public, as well as against pornography and prostitution, all of which are forms of degradation and oppression of women because they are women. Prostitution is only another way of violating women's bodies and minds, as are physical, psychological and economic abuses.

Gendered violence takes place in a patriarchal social structure and it must be studied, analyzed and opposed with a focus on gender based power, control and prevailing structures in which men are perceived to be superior and women to be subordinate. So let us use the right words to describe facts. As said earlier, men's violence against women comes in many forms. Two phenomena that need to be included in the work for gender equality and fighting men's violence against women are prostitution and pornography.

Prostitution and pornography

Prostitution and pornography are forms of men's violence against women that are often left out in discussions on men's violence against women. In Sweden it is illegal to purchase women's bodies. In 1999, a law on sex trade was introduced, which prohibits the purchase of sexual services. The purpose of the law is to declare that Swedish society does not accept prostitution or the view that women (or men) are goods to be bought or sold. It is an ethical as well as criminal and legislative measure to combat a phenomenon that does not belong in a gender equal society. There are often other major crimes involved in connection with prostitution, such as assault, drug trafficking, procuring and sex trafficking.

The vast majority of persons 'working' in prostitution are in a very difficult social situation and have no opportunity to enjoy their human rights, or social and gender equality. If given a choice, prostitution would not be something that girls and women would choose to do as means of making a living, e.g. to raise money to food, clothes, education, housing or if in a substance abuse, to get drugs and alcohol. Another purpose of the law is to serve as a deterrent for sex buyers, so that the demand for prostitution will decrease. The evaluation of the law's effectiveness ten years after its creation has been debated on many aspects, but results indicate that the ban on the purchase of sexual services has had the intended effect. It is an important instrument for preventing and combating prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes.

As long as prostitution is accepted by society, it enables trafficked girls to be used as sex slaves. Without demand, there is no prostitution and no trafficking. To end trafficking we need to focus on the buyers, the men, to make them understand that buying sex is not a right they are entitled to. European Women's Lobby (EWL) is working hard for a Europe free from prostitution, and we all have to contribute to reach that goal.



Katinka Ingves

born in 1970, works at the Women's Shelter Ellinor, Linköping, Sweden. Before her employment she was an active volunteer and board member of her local shelter. She is a board member of Roks, National organization for women and young women's shelters in Sweden. Katinka has a Master degree in Social Anthropology.

Marie Pettersson

born in 1970, works at the Women's Shelter Ellinor, Linköping, Sweden. She started out in 2003 as an active volunteer and board member and has been employed at the shelter for six years. She is mostly working in the area of supportive counseling. Marie has a Bachelor of Science in Social Work.

Pornography is another form of oppression of women. In pornography, women are devalued and degraded, and made into objects whose only purpose is to satisfy men's sexual needs. What is important to emphasize is that pornography involves real women and men, instead of objects, that they are perceived to be. Very often in pornography, the men are expected to be turned on by humiliating the women, while the women are expected to be turned on by being humiliated. Based on the experience of women's shelters in Sweden, there is a clear link between pornography and men's violence against women. Today's easy access to Internet pornography has made pornography available to anyone, anywhere. As a result pornography today has been normalized and is part of young people's lives. It is affecting expectations and pushing limits concerning sex.

The way to address the problem of all these forms of sexual violence is to raise awareness and knowledge of the different ways of oppression of women in the structures of our society.

Not only victims, but also perpetrators

Our shelter welcomes women regardless of the form of abuse they have been exposed to. We offer supportive counselling and practical assistance, and of course in cases when needed, we refer them to other experts and professionals if that is what they wish and we assess it in their best interest. Naturally, women who have been abused by a female partner are welcome to our shelter as well. This violence is best named for what it is, violence in same-sex relationships. If ever we are to make progress and eliminate, or at least reduce, men's violence against women, we must face the unpleasant fact that there are not only victims, but also perpetrators, who are mostly male. With that clear in mind, we stand a better chance to work preventively.

Links:

<http://regeringen.se/content/1/c6/13/59/05/9f725c69.pdf>

<http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/10/33/66/63f1d5ca.pdf>

DEALING WITH THE EFFECTS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE – A MEDICAL PERSPECTIVE

by Andrea Berzlanovich, Austria



One in four women experiences physical or sexual violence in a partnership. Continuous physical violence can cause multiple injuries resulting in acute and chronic, mental or physical pain. In some cases, the sustained injuries can even be fatal. Many victims, who seek treatment for injuries or conditions resulting from injuries, often remain silent about how the injuries were sustained due to a sense of shame. Since medical doctors are often the first and only contact persons for these victims, the recognition and documentation of domestic violence is not only imperative in providing support in such emergency situations, but may also be necessary for any future legal proceedings.

In order to raise awareness of this problem among medical professionals, a group of experts developed a manual titled „Medical Treatment for Women subjected to Violence“, which was published under the patronage of the Federal Ministry of Economics, Family and Youth in March 2010. The manual provides medical specialists in Austria with uniform up-to-date information for the detection, documentation and way to conduct conversations with victims of violence.

For the purposes of investigation and criminal proceedings, detailed and comprehensible documentation of all recognisable injuries to the victim's body as proof of the violence suffered is crucial. The collection of data in form of a checklist and photographs has proven to be extremely helpful. The contained standardized examination forms for the purpose of detailed injury documentation,

and for the examination of victims after sexual violence, facilitate a step-by-step approach. The recognition and collection of biological traces/samples on the victim's body and clothing is essential. To facilitate forensic sample collection, special evidence security kits are available.

The Department of Forensic Medicine Vienna is responsible for the forensic-medical service for the city of Vienna, which has a population of 1.7 million people. Additionally, the Institute covers the area of Burgenland and Lower Austria, in which a further 1.8 million persons reside. In this region the Department carries out an average of 200 DNA-analysis annually for reported cases of sexual assault. In 99% of these cases, women are the victims.

To provide guidance to medical staff and ensure the proper recognition, collection, and packaging of physical and biological evidence during such physical examination, a special "Sexual Assault Care Kit" has been designed at the Department.

The kit includes an information sheet for the patient, swaps, various containers for the collection of a variety of evidence from the victim, as well as tags, and the sexual assault examination form. This examination form is a 4-page checklist with 8 steps for the examination and evidence collection process:

Andrea Berzlanovich is the Head of the Unit Forensic Gerontology at the Department of Forensic Medicine, Medical University Vienna.

Her main research interests lie in the areas of deaths due to domestic violence: intervention, forensic examination, documentation of injuries and sexual assault of women and children. She is a Board member of the Austrian Society for Gender-specific Medicine and Fellow of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences and has received numerous awards for her work.

1. Collection of biological evidence on cotton swabs
2. Collection of clothing
3. Evidence on patient's body
4. Physical examination
5. Anal examination and evidence collection
6. Genital examination and evidence collection
7. Blood and urine samples
8. Diagnostic tests, treatment, follow-up

The physician performing the examination should follow the instructions and do the examination step by step as directed. This will benefit the patient and provide law enforcement with the greatest amount of information.

Before starting, it is necessary that the patient completely understands and consents to the examination process. Using the drawings, the physician describes to the patient the nature of the examination and the evidence collection procedure. Further, the physician needs to obtain authorisation for the medical and forensic examination, the treatment, and the collection and release of forensic evidence and information.

Biological fluids recovered on cotton swabs are among the most important pieces of evidence in sexual assault cases. The collection procedure is performed by either transferring the evidence onto a dry cotton swab or onto a cotton swab lightly moistened with sterile water. Two swabs are placed into perforations of the foldable drying racks in the box. The box ensures contact-free drying, protection against contamination, sample switch and optimal preservation of this critical evidence in a labelled, safe environment. Swabs collected in this manner will completely air dry in a few hours at room temperature without any further attention. Swabs taken from different locations must always be placed into separate boxes. After evidence collection the boxes are returned to the kit.

Fempower

The purpose of steps 1, 5 and 6 is to obtain seminal fluid, if present in the oral, anal and vaginal cavity, for DNA analysis.

The purpose of step 2 is to collect and preserve any physical or biological evidence that may be found on the patient's clothing, worn at the time of the assault. The examiner should look briefly at the clothing and describe it. A more detailed examination will be done in the forensic laboratory.

Each item of clothing, underpants, or shoes should be labelled with the patient's name, date of collection, and should be placed in a separate paper bag.

The purpose of step 3 is to collect and preserve any physical or biological evidence that might be present on the patient's hair, skin, or fingernails.

The purpose of step 4 is to perform an optimal head-to-toe body examination to identify and record the presence of any trauma such as redness, abrasions, petechial haemorrhages, cuts, bite marks.

If possible, the physician should obtain photo documentation of any trauma.

The purpose of step 7 is the collection of blood samples for DNA typing and potential toxicological analysis. A urine sample may be obtained for toxicology.

The purpose of step 8 is to evaluate the patient for appropriate diagnostic tests, prophylactic treatment and follow-up information. Pregnancy and antibiotic prophylaxes should also be taken into consideration.

With the implementation of standardized examination forms and evidence collection kits in cases of sexual or physical violence, an even higher quality standard will be achieved in the Austrian health care system. This offers a great chance for the reduction and prevention of violence.

Literature

1. Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft, Familie und Jugend, 2010. Gesundheitliche Versorgung gewaltbetroffener Frauen. Ein Leitfaden für Krankenhaus und medizinische Praxis, Wien
2. Glammeier S, Müller U, Schröttle M, 2004. Unterstützungs- und Hilfsbedarf aus der Sicht gewaltbetroffener Frauen, Berlin
3. Gloor D, Meier H, 2004. Frauen, Gesundheit und Gewalt im sozialen Nahraum. Repräsentativbefragung bei Patientinnen der Maternité Inselhof Triemli, Klinik für Geburtshilfe und Gynäkologie, Bern
4. Schröttle M, Müller U, 2004. Lebenssituation, Sicherheit und Gesundheit von Frauen in Deutschland. Eine repräsentative Untersuchung zu Gewalt gegen Frauen in Deutschland, Berlin



Andrea Brem

is certified social worker and supervisor. After completion of the Academy for Social Work, she was employed at the Austrian pension insurance institution working in the department for rehabilitation in the fields of disabled care. After this for many years she worked in Vienna's 2nd women's shelter. Since 2001 she is managing director of the Vienna women's shelters network.

petrators“, give a false picture about sexual violence, since many women are subjected to such acts by their own partners. What is needed is continuous public relations work and awareness-raising in order to refute the stereotype that attacks and rapes are carried out by non-familiar persons.

Experience shows that affected women are more willing to discuss instances of physical and psychological violence by the (ex-) partner rather than instances of sexual violence. One can therefore assume that many women, affected by sexual violence, do not dare to turn to support organisations out of shame and fear. It is therefore important to focus publicly on the issue of sexual violence in order to encourage women to turn to professional support organisations and institutions. The public perception of the issue is currently shaped by

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN PARTNERSHIPS

by Andrea Brem, translated by Maria Jonas, Austria

Sexual violence against women in marriage or partnership – from our point of view – has been given insufficient attention. With this study, we would like to give an impetus for increased public attention. The study was carried out by the Verein Wiener Frauenhäuser, (Viennese Women's Shelters), in cooperation with Elfriede Fröschl, MA.

Below a short overview of the contents and conclusions of the study is presented.

Make sexual violence an issue, since those affected by it keep silent

The association 'Viennese Women's Shelters' for the past 30 years has concentrated on the support of women victims of violence and their children. The area of sexual violence against women and specifically the area of sexual violence against women in partnerships is one of the areas still considered a taboo in society. Prejudices such as „rape and sexual attacks are mainly carried out by non-familiar per-

press coverage of rape and rape trials. With this study, an attempt is made to approach the issue in a sensitive manner.

The framework of the study

Since the study was not primarily about data collection, but to record the dynamics and forms of sexual violence, 16 qualitative interviews of one to two hours with women affected by sexual violence by their partner were carried out.

In addition, in the framework of the study, a short quantitative poll among women in the shelters was done. During one month, 63 women who stayed at a shelter for at least a few days were asked to fill out a questionnaire to confirm whether they have experienced different forms of sexual violence.

Women affected by physical and psychological violence are often also subjected to sexual violence

In the quantitative part, more than half, (i.e. 39 women) reported having been subjected to sexual violence, while 6 women did not want to speak about it, and one woman could not (she started to cry). The women were affected by different forms of violence over a longer period and they reported having been forced to perform sexual acts, including sexual intercourse, either on a daily basis or frequently. This clearly shows, that a significant number of women living in a shelter have been at some point affected by sexual violence. Therefore we must focus increasingly on sexual violence in the various fields and professions, including counselling, health, law enforcement and legal counselling.

The woman cooperates so that he stops

The issue of sexual violence in partnerships is also scarcely researched. Representative surveys in various European countries arrived at the conclusion that 13% of all women have experienced sexual violence in a partnership. (Müller/Schrötte, 2004, Lebenssituation, Sicherheit und Gesundheit von Frauen in Deutschland). From interviews conducted with affected women, it was clearly evident why it is so rarely talked about and consequently the rate of reports to the police is so low.

An important reason is the feeling of being involved, which develops in women when they give in for too long to the sexual demands of their partners and do not perceive or articulate their own needs. Consequently their individual limits are stretched even further, so that it became more difficult to define an act as violence. The questionnaire also pointed to the fact that women found setting limits in the area of sexuality difficult and that a woman rarely considered - even at the beginning of the partnership - sexual acts as something enjoyable, but instead just described it as ‚normal‘.

Furthermore it became clear that sex acts not wanted by women were accepted and women cooperated as long as the relationship with a man was bearable and other forms of violence did not occur. It became a way to maintain peace.

The woman expects insults, bad temper or violence if she refuses sex, therefore she puts up no resistance and becomes

submissive in order to „have peace for one or two days“.

This submission corresponds absolutely with current gender role stereotypes.

The relationship is marked by control and dependence

It was clearly visible that the prevailing pattern of relations was changeable and marked by the periodical control rules of the man. The control was achieved by repeatedly changing demands, which women try to meet, by sharp depreciations and by deliberate monopolisation. The independence of woman cannot be tolerated by violent men. Dependence again leads to violence.

Forms of sexual violence

In the qualitative study, the various forms of sexual violence were addressed; all women reported of having been forced to vaginal intercourse; 14 of them repeatedly, 10 also repeatedly to oral sex and 2 to anal intercourse. 10 women were forced again and again to touching his body, 12 were touched against their will. 7 women had to look at pornographic pictures against their will. Many of the women experienced different forms of sexual violence over a longer period.

Sexual violence is only acknowledged when physical violence is exerted

In the course of the research, it became clear that some women considered themselves as having been raped when vaginal penetration took place and was combined with physical violence by their male partner. The numerous sex acts which were perceived as humiliating and defiling were tolerated so as to prevent worse attacks.

Children are also affected

As with physical and psychological violence, children are also affected in cases of sexual violence, as they become repeat witnesses. The women interviewed felt that their children witnessing the sexual violence, was more horrifying to the women than the actual violent act itself. They said that they tried everything to protect children from such experience. Although some women took refuge in their children's rooms, because they thought that it would be a safe place from further violence. In so doing, the probability of the children becoming witnesses increased. It is therefore also important not to forget the children in the context of sexual violence against the mother and to provide professional help for them as well.

Isolation and dependence prevent women from escaping violence

An ever recurring phenomenon in connection with violence against women is the isolation of the women. On the one hand, women withdraw from public life out of shame; on the other hand, the perpetrators forbid them any contact with the outside world. The study further proved this by finding that women rarely received any support prior to visiting a shelter.

When women do not work outside of the home and lose the contact to their social environment, they are even more 'handed over' to the perpetrator. It is therefore particularly important that women do have a job, in order to be financially independent and by having regular contact with others, they can receive support from colleagues at work, which will make getting away from violence easier.

Counselling women victims of sexual violence

However, even in the protected setting of counselling, it is very difficult for women to speak about sexual violence which they experienced. Immense feelings of shame and guilt, or not acknowledging that sexual violence took place, prevent affected women from openly and seriously dealing with the trauma they suffered. Therefore clearly targeted questioning by the counsellor is needed in order to find out if and which form of sexual violence the man is perpetrating.

During the planning stages of this study, it was difficult to find interview partners. Surprisingly, many women who agreed to the interview were able to openly deal with the issue, while answering questions from the survey. We assume that the questionnaire, formulated in an objective-medical language somehow 'normalised' speaking about sexual violence. We therefore have to think of good ways to approach this taboo because if women are unable to open up during a counselling session, they may never be able to overcome the trauma caused by the experiences. Undigested experiences of violence can lead to serious health problems or make a new relationship more difficult or even impossible. The study also shows that women who accept therapeutic help in order to deal with experiences of sexual violence were able to speak about the past situation in a clearer and more detailed manner but without being captivated in those experiences in such a way that their current life is still strongly influenced by them.

The number of unreported cases is high; reports to the police are rare

Sexual violence is still influenced by stereotypes and misinterpretations by society; when rape by the partner is often not considered as rape it makes it difficult or impossible for those affected to speak about it or get support and consequently bring charges against the perpetrator. The reasons for all that are manifold.

But also the experiences after having made a report to the police were not encouraging. Frighteningly late, but still, in 2004 rape inside and outside marriage or co-habitation were put on the same legal level: as a public offence. However, in court trials for sexual violence against women in partnerships the issue of proof and its recognition are very difficult issues. Our experience shows that – especially in cases of violence against women in partnerships – very often an acquittal based on doubt or a discontinuation of proceedings occurs. A German survey of 2004 shows that only 16% of women who suffered physical violence with subsequent injuries reported to the police, in the case of sexual violence – with punishable acts – only 5% did so (Müller/Schröttle, 2004, Lebenssituation, Sicherheit und Gesundheit von Frauen in Deutschland). In our research only one woman reported to the police on the grounds of sexual violence.

Many women are not prepared to volunteer reporting sexual violence in the relationship. In cases where domestic violence is tried (according to the respective section in the law on continued violence), when a woman was exposed to continued violence over a longer period, it would be important – also in the context of legal counselling – to ask careful questions about sexual violence and thus support women to overcome the high barrier of shame.

The study (in German) can be ordered from the Viennese Women's Shelters:

verein@frauenhaeuser-wien.at

Tel: +43 | (0)1 / 485 30 30

Spain, Poland and Britain to which some 22,000 students in all responded. An evaluation of these quantitative data was undertaken along with additional material gathered through interviews with both female students and with experts in support services and the criminal justice system.

The resulting insights will be used to formulate recommendations for strategic prevention and intervention to counter victimisation from sexual violence. The aim is to reduce young women's fear of crime and to find ways of guaranteeing them improved support and greater security and safety at their places of study.

X "GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, STALKING AND FEAR OF CRIME" – AN EU RESEARCH PROJECT 2009-2011

by Katrin List and Rosa Schneider, Germany

Due to their age and lifestyle, female students as a group are especially at risk of various forms of sexual violence – the aim of a three-year European-wide research project is to verify this hypothesis and to collect, analyse and compare relevant data in five European countries. The results and recommendations emerging from the project are due to be presented at the end of 2011.

The victimisation of young women through sexual harassment, stalking and sexual violence, their fear of crime, and their need for support were the subject of an online questionnaire made available at universities in Germany, Italy,

The EU project, which has been funded through the programme "Prevention of and Fight Against Crime" initiated by the EU Commission on General Justice, Freedom And Security, is being coordinated at the Department of Criminology at Ruhr University Bochum in Germany.

The survey was conducted in winter 2010/11 at 30 higher education institutions in the five European partner countries which were selected on the basis of their representativeness. The students were asked about their sense of safety at the university, the ways and the extent to which they have been affected by sexual harassment, stalking or sexual violence, the consequences this has had for them, whether they told anyone about the incident and, if so, whom, as well as their awareness of support services and what kinds of support they would ideally want. It soon became apparent that the survey itself had served as a means of generating greater awareness among the young women of the everyday nature of violent sexual assaults:

"I was surprised that I had so much to say. I had already virtually forgotten about my experiences or suppressed them and thought I'd have to put a tick next to "no" all the time. Now I've become aware of the fact that it's almost normal for a woman to have experienced this or that negative incident." (Female student in online questionnaire)

The results themselves have filled a gap in relevant research on violence by confirming the introductory statement above, namely, that female students are affected to a higher than average extent by incidents of sexual violence, based on their age and their life circumstances. At the same time, an evaluation of the quantitative and qualitative data clearly shows that, contrary to the facts, the myth of the anonymous male perpetrator attacking women in public spaces in the dark stubbornly persists. The reality – that serious sexual assaults are carried out principally by individuals well known to the victim from their close circle of friends – is thus ignored by the women at the expense of their own safety. This may account for the result that, when assaulted by someone they know, female students often feel partly responsible for it and therefore tend to be reticent to tell anyone about what happened.

The following results provide some examples from the German data set:

Sexual harassment

Some 70% of the female students who filled in the questionnaire indicated that they had experienced sexual harassment at some point in their lives. With reference to those assaults that had taken place while they were at university, around 20% of them felt threatened when they occurred. Compared with the results of the 2003 Representative Study on Violence against Women in Germany (Müller/ Schröttle) these figures are extremely high: in the latter study just under 60% of the women surveyed said that they had experienced sexual harassment at some point in their lives to date. >Young women are affected to a higher than average extent by sexual harassment.

Stalking

In the case of stalking, too, the results can be said to be comparatively high. Whereas the only German representative study undertaken thus far (Dressing, 2004) showed that 10% of the women surveyed had experienced incidents of stalking at some point in their life, the same percentage of students who responded to our survey indicated that they had been affected by stalking during their period of study alone. >In relation to stalking as well, female students – most of whom are young women – belong to a higher than average risk group.

Sexual violence

In relation to their time at university, only just fewer than 4% of those surveyed said that they had experienced incidents of sexual coercion or (attempted) rape. In relation to their lifetime as a whole, however, 17% of the students indicated that they had experienced being forced to engage in sexual acts. In the 2003 German representative study, this applied to only 12% of the women surveyed. Here, too, the results confirm the opinion widely accepted among researchers that >young women especially frequently become victims of rape or other serious sexual assaults.

Where does the violence occur?

Only a small proportion of the assaults mentioned by the respondents occurred on the university campus or in university buildings. While 15% of the students had experienced sexual harassment at the university, only about 5% of cases of stalking or sexual violence had taken place there. The greater proportion of sexual violence took place in the respondents' own home or in someone else's home.

Who perpetrates violence?

The overwhelming majority of incidents of both sexual harassment and violence and stalking are perpetrated by men: 98.9% of harassment and 99.31% of sexual violence was carried out by men. Whereas sexual harassment and violence thus represent a form of behaviour towards women that is almost exclusively male, the percentage in relation to stalking is somewhat less gender-specific: here, the female students indicated in 92% of cases of stalking that it was men who were involved.

How safe do female students feel?

When asked how safe they feel when walking alone in the dark across the university campus, more than half the students answered that they did not feel safe. Furthermore, one in seven of the respondents said that they do not walk alone across the campus in the dark. The interview results indicate that fear is a significant factor that restricts students in their freedom of movement.

A marked discrepancy emerged in terms of the students' perceptions of places they consider to be unsafe and are therefore associated with a feeling of fear compared with the places where incidents actually occur. Sexual violence actually takes place much more frequently in offices, which the students do not perceive to be scary places.

Fempower

Do students speak about the violence they have experienced?

The students' willingness to talk about an assault they have experienced depends to a considerable extent on the form the violence took. Only one in ten students who had been stalked had not told anyone about it, whereas more than half the students who had experienced sexual violence kept the information to themselves.

The specific reasons for remaining silent about sexual violence are known to researchers and confirm the results of the study: a sense of shame and blaming oneself for what happened are the most frequent reasons given.

"I don't want anyone to find out about it!"

(Student in online questionnaire)

The reticence of those affected to tell anyone in the university's support services about what they have experienced does not make it easy for the university to respond to its students' experiences of sexual violence. Fortunately, though, the students do seem to regard their university as a relevant point of contact if they have been assaulted by a member of the university. In addition, the students contact university support services more often if they have been assaulted by teaching staff at the university than if a fellow student is involved. It may be that this has something to do with the fact that the person affected is in a relationship of dependency with the member of teaching staff, so that only the university itself can help to resolve the problem.

In presenting its recommendations for prevention and intervention, taking account of all areas of university life, the research project seeks to help to enable female students to perceive their university as a place (to live) where they are guaranteed safety, support and trust during this important period of their life.

Katrin List Dipl.Pol.

studied Political Science, Slavonic Studies and East European History at Freie University Berlin (Germany) and at St. Petersburg University (Russia) and is currently a research assistant on the European project "Gender-based Violence, Stalking and Fear of Crime" at the University of Bochum (Germany). She did gender-related research on the situation of women in the former Soviet Union during Perestrojka and worked in publication-projects dealing with both feminist theories and the compatibility of work and family at universities in Germany. Furthermore, she is responsible for coordinating several European projects in the field of educational research.



Dr. Rosa Schneider

MA studied at the Institute for Women's Studies at Lancaster University (UK) and is currently a research assistant on the European project "Gender-based Violence, Stalking and Fear of Crime" at the University of Bochum (Germany). She is an experienced WenDo trainer and was commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth to develop a set of nationwide quality standards for exercises aimed at strengthening women's self-confidence, as part of the national research project "SELBST – Selbstbewusstsein für Frauen und Mädchen mit Behinderungen" (SELF – Self-confidence for women and girls with disabilities).



A magazine published
by the WAVE office



WAVE-Office /
European Information Centre Against Violence

Bacherplatz 10/4, A-1050 Vienna,
Phone: +43-1-5482720
E-mail: office@wave-network.org
Website: <http://www.wave-network.org>
ZVR: 187612774