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Symposium WA-1  
Wednesday, July 26, 2006

## **Risk factors of men's and women's sexual aggression: Some German data**

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A series of studies will be presented that examined the prevalence and risk factors of sexual aggression among adolescents and young adults in Germany. In addition to men's sexual aggression against women, women's use of aggressive tactics to obtain sexual contacts with men were explored. Risk factors included childhood experiences of abuse, high level of sexual activity, and ambiguous communication strategies in negotiating sexual intimacy. The findings, which constitute the first quantitative data base on the scale of sexual aggression among this age group in Germany, showed that sexual aggression is widespread among adolescents and young adolescents. Childhood experiences of abuse were consistently related to subsequent sexual aggression in men and women. High levels of sexual activity and ambiguous communication patterns were also related to sexual aggression across the studies. Furthermore, two studies explored the extent to which risk factors of sexual aggression are part of adolescents' and young adults' sexual scripts and are related to behavioral risk taking as well as the normative acceptance of sexual aggression. Sexual scripts are defined as cognitive representations of prototypical sequences of events in sexual interactions. The studies focus on the extent to which behavioral risk factors of sexual aggression (multiple sexual partners, alcohol consumption in the context of sexual encounters, ambiguous communication of sexual intentions) are part of adolescents' scripts for consensual sexual interaction. Endorsement of these risk elements was shown (a) to increase as a function of becoming sexually active, (b) to predict the likelihood in engaging in these risk behaviors, (c) to predict the normative acceptance of sexual aggression, and (d) to predict men's sexual aggression. The findings will be discussed in comparison to North American evidence and in terms of their implications for rape prevention efforts.

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