

## **Still a Man's World? Rape Myth Acceptance, Attitudes Towards Women and Traditional Male Gender Role Beliefs in a Sample of British Military Veterans**

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**Abstract :** Despite efforts to address the issue through prevention and education, sexual assault remains an issue within the military. Rape supportive beliefs have been identified as a risk factor linked to sexually aggressive and coercive behaviours. Rape myth acceptance is part of a wider cognitive framework of attitudes which perpetuate negative sociocultural norms about the male role. Notwithstanding the established links between rape myth acceptance, attitudinal variables, and rape proclivity, relatively little research has been conducted with military samples. In this study, 151 British military veterans completed an online survey measuring their rape myth acceptance, attitudes towards women, belief in male role norms and basic personality traits. Consistent with previous research, male veterans had higher levels of rape myth acceptance, more negative attitudes towards women, and subscribed to more traditional notions of masculinity. The types of myths endorsed also varied by gender, with male veterans significantly more likely to blame rape victims or believe women regularly lie about being raped. A relationship between rape myth acceptance, negative attitudes towards women, and adherence to male norms was found, which explained a significant proportion of the variance in rape myth acceptance. Implications for sexual assault prevention programmes are discussed.

**Keywords :** rape myths, rape myth acceptance, military sexual assault, sexual assault beliefs

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