

Psychosocial Correlates of Sexual Violence Among Students in Higher Institutions in Cameroon

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Abstract : Current data on the prevalence and psychosocial correlates of sexual violence in the Cameroon is lacking, with the most recent sexual abuse and violence survey dating back to 2001. The current study sought to identify what proportion of University students have experienced sexual violence, if there are sex differences in exposure to different forms of sexual violence, and to what extent different forms of sexual violence are associated with adverse psychosocial outcomes. A nationally representative sample of University students (N = 1,020) completed self-report measures of history of sexual violence and mental health. Approximately one-in-three (34.4%) students experienced some form of sexual violence, including 14.8% who were sexually assaulted (raped) and 31.1% who were sexually harassed. Female students were significantly more likely than men to have experienced all forms of sexual violence ($p < .001$), with the exception of sexual assault by teachers or guardian. All forms of sexual violence were associated with an increased likelihood of serious mental health problems, with sexual assault by a teacher associated with several other psychosocial outcomes in life, including education achievement, and behavior disorder. Sexual violence is a common experience in the general population and female students are disproportionately affected (1-in-2 girls versus 1-in-5 boys). Additional resources to increase mental health care among survivors of sexual violence is urgently needed.

Keywords : psychosocial, effects sexual, violence, females, students

Conference Title : ICCSECD 2023 : International Conference on Cognitive Stages of Early Childhood Development

Conference Location : Vancouver, Canada

Conference Dates : September 25-26, 2023