

Date Rape: Who's to Blame?

Carolyn Kaulbach and Nicole Bach

University of New Hampshire

This study will investigate the effect of alcohol and potential gender differences in the attribution of blame and responsibility in instances of date rape. One hundred and sixty seven undergraduate students at the University of New Hampshire participated in a survey to examine the relationship between perceived intoxication and the attribution of responsibility in a date rape scenario. Participants responded to questions after reading two vignettes depicting a typical college date rape scenario, one involving alcohol and the other not involving alcohol. The results were analyzed using the statistical program Stata and differences were reported according to gender and vignette. Results from the study suggest that there are significant differences in the attribution of blame and responsibility between genders. However, results also suggest that alcohol is not a leading factor in determining who is to blame in a date rape.

Introduction

The following study seeks to investigate the effect of alcohol and potential gender differences in the attribution of blame and responsibility in instances of date rape. Specifically we are investigating if the presence of alcohol affects which partner is held more responsible for a date rape. Are college students more likely to blame the opposite sex in instances of party rape? And if the same situation were to occur sober, would students attribute blame in the same way or would their opinion change? This addresses numerous issues such as gender roles, sexual behavior and substance abuse; issues that have great sociological relevance, particularly to the college demographic where sexual activity and substance abuse rates are much higher than those occurring in the general population.

This study has the potential to bring attention to the prevalence of date rape on college campuses and educate

the college population on how to detect potentially risky situations. This can help alleviate feelings of guilt and/or blame reported by females after a date rape occurs, which may serve to decrease the number of date rapes that go unreported for these reasons. It can also clarify what constitutes as giving consent when alcohol is present.

Prevalence of Date Rape in College

Literature shows that although many women have been victims of date rape, they do not always perceive alcohol as a factor which increases the risk of a date rape to occur. Women ages 16-24 are at a four times greater risk for date rape than any other age category; a risk that further increases for college women (Adams-Curtis and Forbes 2004:91). It is estimated that one in four college women has been the victim of a rape. Of this, 84% of victims knew the

perpetrators and 57% of assaults occurred while on dates (Loiselle and Fuqua 2007:261). At the time the rape occurred, 73% of perpetrators and 55% of victims were under the influence of alcohol, with higher levels of women's alcohol consumption indicating higher instances of a completed (versus attempted) rape.

According to Armstrong, Hamilton and Sweeny (2006), "The concentration of homogeneous students with expectations of partying fosters the development of sexualized peer cultures organized around status (p. 484)". This suggests that student's perceptions of college often include an active party scene. Students are under enormous pressure from peers to engage in sexual activity and binge drink on a regular basis. As Adams-Curtis and Forbes (2004) state, the perception that everyone else is engaging in sexual activity serves to "place unrealistic expectations and behavioral standards on college women and college men (486)". The pressure to fit in with friends and gain attention from men drives many college women to put themselves in situations that they know are risky. Alcohol abuse, combined with this perception of sex, leads individuals to interpret behavior in a more sexual manner, perhaps where it was not intended.

A New Trend

A relatively new form of sexual behavior found predominantly on college campuses is known as the "hook-up", which can be defined as "a sexual

encounter, usually lasting only one night, between two people who are strangers or brief acquaintances" (Adams-Curtis & Forbes 2004:92). This encounter may or may not include actual intercourse. Recent studies support this concept, finding that 30% of respondents had experience a hook-up which included intercourse, and another 48% had experienced a hook-up without intercourse. Ninety percent of college women claimed that hook-ups were a common occurrence on their campus and 40% admitted to having a hook-up at least one time (Adams-Curtis & Forbes 2004:92). Typically hook-ups occur when one or both individuals are under the influence of alcohol. The combination of new partners and alcohol abuse limits one's capacity along with one's ability to consent to the hook-up, thus potentially constituting a party rape. The present study attempted to determine whether or not college students agreed with the statement that consent cannot be given if a person is intoxicated.

Perception of Increased Risk when Alcohol is Involved

Recent research has found that women understand the risk of drinking and sexual aggression but choose to do it anyway, posing an important question: why do college women continue to put themselves in situations that increase their risk of sexual assault? Literature suggests that this is because those areas perceived as most dangerous for women are also the most fun. As stated by Armstrong et al. (2006), "Fun is produced along with sexual assault, leading students to resist criticism of the party scene (p.487)". Areas identified as

being especially conducive to party rape all involved alcohol and included fraternities, bars and house parties.

Although women reported a greater perceived risk of sexual victimization as a function of how much they drink, the majority of respondents in one study thought that their risk for sexual assault was low. “The vast majority (68.3%) of participants reported that they believed themselves to be at low risk for sexual victimization. Approximately one third (30.4%) believed they had a moderate risk for sexual victimization and a minority perceived themselves as having a high risk (1.3%)” (Gidycz et al. 2007:8).

These findings contrast with the reported drinking habits of the same group of respondents. “At baseline, 39% of participants were nondrinkers/light drinkers, 28% were moderate drinkers, and 33% were heavy drinkers” (Gidycz et al. 2007:8). This produces a contradiction between the majority of heavy drinkers perceiving their risk of sexual assault as low, although they also report alcohol as a risk factor for party rape.

This finding is consistent with the present study, which found that 15% of women surveyed considered date rape to be a very serious problem at the University of New Hampshire, yet highly disagreed with the statement that they were at a high level of personal risk for date rape when consuming alcohol in a party atmosphere, which has been identified as a conducive setting for date rape.

Effect of Alcohol on Reaction Time

Alcohol has been demonstrated in multiple studies to delay reaction time

along with affecting one’s ability to give consent. In 2007, Loisel and Fuqua conducted an experiment where participants listened to an audiotape of a dating interaction and asked them to indicate at what point the male should stop his advances toward the female. The control group, who had not consumed any alcohol prior to listening to the tape, averaged 92.19 seconds (Loiselle & Fuqua 2007:264). The experimental group had BACs of .04 at the time they listened to the audiotape. These participants waited an average time of 134.8 seconds before halting sexual advances. This demonstrates a statistically significant difference in latency response times between the control group and the experimental group (Loiselle & Fuqua 2007:264).

This has many implications for the college population. Students in college reach BACs much higher than .04 when they are out partying, and will therefore have an even lower response time to signal detection. This lowered impairment in turn increases the likelihood of a party rape. The study also draws attention to the environment which one is in. Sitting in a room listening to an audiotape is a lot different than being drunk at a party and resisting a man’s sexual advances. This study brings awareness to the fact that even low levels of alcohol can greatly affect one’s decision making in a risky situation.

Another study conducted by Davis, George and Norris (2004) found that intoxicated women were more likely to give consent than sober women because of their impaired judgment. This could be in part due to the fact that intoxicated women were more likely than sober women to “engage in consensual sexual activities prior to the

assault” (Davis, George and Norris 2004:333). Although women should be able to participate in sexual activities if willing, assaults are more commonly preceded by consensual sexual activities. By being more likely to consent to initial advances, a woman puts herself at risk for sexual miscommunication later on. Davis et al. also found that women in casual relationships were more likely to give polite resistance than those in serious relationships. In terms of a party rape, this could be misconstrued as the woman playing “hard to get”, or not really wanting the male to stop. Intoxicated women were also more likely to passively respond either by becoming “paralyzed and unresponsive” or “doing nothing” (Davis et al. 2004:339). This passive responding increases the women’s sexual vulnerability and can even be perceived as a willingness to engage in the act.

The Rape Myth

Male’s perceptions of a party rape are often contrary to those of women. Men are more likely to make light of the situation, either brushing it off or shifting blame to the victim. Burgess (2007) used an exploratory factor analysis to identify five factors of so called *rape myths* (prejudicial beliefs men hold about rape to reverse blame to the victim): (1) justification for sexual aggression based on women’s behavior, (2) belief that women should hold more responsibility for sexual assault, (3) pressure/need for sexual status and misreading women’s sexual intent, (4) acceptance of the use of alcohol and coercive tactics to acquire sexual compliance, and (5) a dislike for the

feminine and acceptance of traditional gender roles.

It should come as no surprise then that a man’s highest likelihood of committing sexual assault or coercion is during his college years (Burgess 2007:973). These men are voluntarily participating in binge drinking, have a high desire and expectancy to engage in sexual activity, and are constantly meeting new attractive females in typical party settings. Attending college exposes young men to these five factors at a much higher level than another setting might, potentially setting the stage for a party rape.

These rape myths go hand in hand with the “just world” theory, which supports the idea that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get (Idisis, Ben-David and Ben-Nachum 2007:104). This could be a contributing factor as to why so many party rapes and attempted rapes go unreported. Victims fear that they will be blamed for the incident, whether it be because they were drunk, wearing provocative clothing or didn’t resist forcefully enough. They may even come to believe the rape was their fault, and hold feelings of guilt shame and embarrassment. The present study found that men and women have different opinions regarding the effect of provocative dress on date rape. Men were more likely than women to report agreement with the following statement; “if women did not dress provocatively, or act in a sexually suggestive way, the incidence of date rape would decrease”. This is an important gender difference found in this study that supports the present literature.

Partying: A Gender Specific Experience

Another recurring issue found in literature introduces the role of gender and the inequalities between men and women, particularly involving sex. The concept of partying in itself is gender neutral, yet society has transformed partying into a gendered experience. Women are expected to fulfill certain roles at parties, while men are expected to behave differently. As stated by Armstrong et al. (2006), "Cultural expectations that partygoers drink heavily and trust party-mates become problematic when combined with expectations that women be nice and defer to men. Fulfilling the role of the partier produces vulnerability on the part of women, which some men exploit to extract nonconsensual sex (p.484)".

Women are also extremely conscious of men's opinions at parties, and attention from men plays a large role in their self-esteem or lack thereof. "The women found men's sexual interest at parties to be a source of self-esteem and status. They enjoyed dancing and kissing at parties, explaining to us that it proved men liked them" (Armstrong et al. 2006:487).

The places where most parties occur are also extremely gendered, especially fraternities. "Fraternities control every aspect of parties at their houses: themes, music, transportation, admission, access to alcohol, and movement of guests" (Armstrong et al. 2006:489). The fact that men have so much control over these parties places women in a subordinate role as soon as they walk through the door. They are expected to be grateful to their hosts and abide by rules of the house. These rules are often extremely gendered such as in

the case of theme parties. "Party themes usually require women to wear scant, sexy clothing and place women in subordinate positions to men.

During our observation period, women attended parties such as "Pimps and Hos", "Victoria's Secret", and "Playboy Mansion" (Armstrong et al. 2006:489)". Parties with these themes objectify women and encourage their male party-mates to consider them in a sexualized way. At these types of parties, men see women as implying sexual interest by the way they dress and are more likely to engage in conversation or give the woman attention because of what they perceive as a sexual interest. Women however, reported having less sexual interest in their male party-mates. "The women found that men were more interested than they were in having sex. These clashes in sexual expectations are not surprising: men derived status from securing sex, while women derived status from getting attention" (Armstrong et al. 2006:488). This poses a difficult problem; as long as women are gaining self confidence and status from male attention, they will most likely continue to present themselves in ways that they feel will be successful in gaining this attention. Conversely, men will continue to react to what they perceive as a woman's sexual cues by giving her the attention they will believe will achieve them sex.

Misinterpretation of Sexual Cues

Men and women's perceptions of sexual behavior in partying and/or drinking scenarios tend to vary quite a bit. The misinterpretation of sexual cues is an important factor in many instances of party rape, and is also indicative of

sexual assault. Men are more likely to perceive sex as being readily available to them. This is largely due to the fact that men are more open to the idea of casual sex, even when no attraction or emotion is involved, and believe that strong physical attraction is a good enough reason to engage in sex (Adams-Curtis & Forbes 2004:96). The misinterpretation of sexual cues is also based on men's expectations that in certain situations a woman will agree to sex, when in many cases the woman is not interested in sex. "If a man thinks that a woman is interested in having sex with him, he will pay most attention to cues that fit this hypothesis and ignore or minimize cues that disconfirm this hypothesis" (Abbey et al. 2005:131). Sometimes this selective acknowledgement of sexual cues is intentional, however, in cases involving alcohol it is not always so clear.

It is because of these misinterpreted sexual cues that date rape is so predominant on college campuses. The sight of a woman drinking may lead males to believe she is willing to engage in sexual activities. When intoxicated, men become more sexually aroused and aggressive. A woman's capacity to resist gets lower as she drinks more. By not being able to recognize sexual advances being made at her, a woman is putting herself at a greater risk to be taken advantage of. Physically, her reaction time may also be slower, making her more prone to being caught off guard by an attacker (Loiselle & Fuqua 2007:261).

Methods

Hypotheses

H1 - Alcohol will have a direct effect on which partner is held more responsible for a date rape.

H0 – Alcohol will have no effect on which partner is held more responsible for a date rape

H1 - Women will hold men more responsible for an incident of date rape due to an intoxicated woman's inability to give proper consent, and men will consider women to be more responsible due to exhibiting a misleading behavior that implies a desire to engage in sex.

H0 – There will be no difference between genders as to who is held more responsible for a date rape.

Participants

One hundred and sixty seven undergraduates at the University of New Hampshire participated in the survey; 90 of whom identified themselves as male (53.89%)and 77 of whom identified themselves as female (45.51%). Seventy six participants reported being freshmen (45.5%), along with forty five sophomores (26.9%), nineteen juniors (11.4%) and twenty six seniors (15.6%). In order to ensure anonymity of respondents, no further demographic data were collected other than gender and class year. Participation was voluntary and no compensation was given to participants.

Materials

Two vignettes were used in this study to determine the relationship between alcohol and the attribution of responsibility in a date rape scenario. The vignettes were identical except that one included alcohol and the other made no mention of alcohol. The two vignettes introduced characters Mark and Sandy, a couple who are going on their first date. Mark and Sandy go out to dinner and seem to be enjoying each others company (in the alcohol vignette they split a bottle of wine). After dinner, the couple decides to go to Mark's house to watch a movie (in the alcohol vignette they each consume two beers). After a series of events in which Sandy indicates her discomfort both verbally and physically, Mark forces the situation, resulting in sexual intercourse.

Participants were asked to respond to eighteen questions following the vignette. Eleven questions pertained directly to the vignette and seven were demographic and personal attitude question. For consistency purposes all questions had response categories of strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree and strongly disagree (excluding questions twelve and thirteen which asked for respondents sex and year in school).

Survey Limitations

The first limitation pertained to the questions asked about each vignette. Although the study was designed to measure the effect of alcohol on the attribution of blame and responsibility in instances of party rape, there were no questions on the survey directly addressing the role of alcohol as a

contributing factor to the date rape. This was done intentionally so as not to lead participants towards a particular response. The researchers did not want to draw attention to the alcohol consumption in the vignette; rather the overall impressions and initial responses of students were preferred. This was a limitation because by not drawing student's attention to the alcohol consumption through the use of survey questions clearly addressing alcohol as a factor it may have been overlooked.

A second limitation was that the majority of the survey questions were not mutually exclusive. This is significant because although some respondents chose to strongly agree with certain questions, they did not always strongly disagree with others. For instance, one question stated that Mark should be held 100% responsible and another question states that Sandy was just as responsible as Mark. Some students agreed with both statements which is contradictory and indicates that they didn't necessarily attribute blame to one partner.

This also raises another limitation which is that the survey questions were not sensitive enough to determine exactly how much blame was attributed to each partner. This could have been improved by including more questions that systematically compared the different levels of responsibility of Mark and Sandy. Vagueness and subjectivity were also limitations of this study in both the questions asked and response categories. This made it difficult for the researchers to systematically compare responses. This could have been addressed by asking more specific questions regarding blame and responsibility in the vignettes and offering more specific response categories.

Sampling Procedure

In order to obtain a sample the researchers chose to use a systematic random sampling procedure. First, the list of all general education classes offered for the current semester (fall 2007) was obtained. From this list every twenty-fifth class was selected, and each professor was emailed asking if they would allow the survey to be administered in their class. The sampling procedure and research subject was explained in each email, as well as a suggested date for data collection and contact information for the researchers and supervising professor. Ten professors were emailed and a response was received from each. Eight of the professors were unable to offer time in their classes for data collection and two responded positively allowing the survey to be administered. Data was collected from Econ402 (Macroeconomics) and Anth412 (Adventures in Archaeology) for a total of one hundred and sixty seven completed surveys.

This sampling procedure was chosen because all students are required to take general education classes at the University of New Hampshire and therefore would provide a representative sample of all students. The University of New Hampshire was chosen for convenience purposes because it was readily available to the researchers.

Administering the Survey

Participants completed the surveys either at the beginning or end of their regularly scheduled class time. Researchers introduced themselves along

with the nature of the study, explaining it had to do with perceptions and attitudes toward date rape. It was explained to students that completion of the survey indicated informed consent. They further told students that completion of the survey was voluntary and anonymity was ensured through the use of a covered box that the surveys could be dropped into once completed. The researchers chose not to disclose to the class that there were two different vignettes being distributed. Eighty-one surveys depicting the alcohol vignette were distributed, and 86 surveys with the no alcohol vignette were distributed. The survey took approximately five minutes to complete and the majority of students chose to participate.

Variables

The survey included seventeen categorical variables which measured the respondent's level of agreement with each question, and one dichotomous variable that determined the respondent's gender. The categorical variables included rape, responsibility, clarity, assertive, stop, unclear, contradicts, sandy, escalate, verbal, coerce, year, party rape, involvement, risk, men, and dress.

Categorical variables were chosen because they were able to be quantified and analyzed using statistical methods. The cronbach's alpha was 0.78, which demonstrates that the variables are well correlated with one another and therefore reliable.

Results

To quantify and analyze the survey data the researchers used Stata. Each survey question was analyzed using a chi-squared test to determine statistically significant differences both by gender and by vignette.

By Gender

Quantitative analysis revealed numerous statistically significant results:

Question five stated that *Mark should have stopped the first time Sandy said she was uncomfortable*. 94.7% of females “strongly agreed” with this statement, versus 76.7% of males. The remaining 5.3% of females along with 18.9% of males “somewhat agreed”. It is important to note that none of the females surveyed were in disagreement with this question, while 4.4% of males responded that they “somewhat disagreed”. This gender difference is significant at the .01 level ($p=.004$).

Question eight stated that *Sandy was just as responsible as Mark*. Males were more likely to attribute more responsibility to Sandy than females were. 5.6% of males “strongly agreed” with this question, compared to only 1.3% of females. Females, on the other hand, were more likely to “strongly disagree” with this statement (37.7% of women versus 18.9% of men). This difference is significant at the .05 level ($p=.032$).

Statistically significant differences between gender were also found when analyzing the personal opinion questions:

Women were more likely than men to *perceive date rape as a serious problem at the University of New Hampshire as*

addressed in question fourteen. 12.9% of females “strongly agreed” that date rape is a serious problem at UNH, while only 5% of males held the same view. Twenty percent of males “strongly disagreed” that date rape is a serious problem at UNH, compared to 2.9% of females. This difference is statistically significant at the .01 level ($p=.007$).

Women were *more likely to know someone involved in a date rape* than men were. 35.5% of females compared to 10% of males “strongly agreed” with this statement. 61.1% of males versus 40.8% of females “strongly disagreed” with this statement. This difference is statistically significant at the .001 level ($p=.001$).

The question pertaining to provocative dress as a contributing factor to date rape was found to be statistically significant. 19.8% of males “strongly agreed” with question eighteen which states if *women did not dress provocatively or present themselves in a sexual way, the occurrence of date rape would decrease*, compared to only 1.4% of females. 39.2% of females “strongly disagreed” with this question, compared to only 22.1% of males. This difference is statistically significant at the .001 level ($p=.001$).

By Vignette

Quantitative analysis revealed one statistically significant result:

Question two stated that *Mark should be held 100% responsible*. There was greater polarization of responses in the alcohol vignette as opposed to the vignette with no alcohol. Participants who received the vignette with alcohol were more likely to respond with the “strongly agree” (36.5%) category or the strongly disagree (5.9%) category

compared to participants who received the no alcohol vignette (22.2% strongly agreed and 1.2% strongly disagreed). Participants who received the no alcohol vignette were more likely to respond with the “somewhat agree” (53.1%) or “somewhat disagree” (23.5) category compared to participants who received the alcohol vignette (36.5% somewhat agreed and 21.2% somewhat disagreed). This difference is statistically significant at the .05 level ($p=.046$).

By Demographics & Personal Opinions

The survey addressed personal opinions in two ways; the perception of date rape as a serious problem at UNH (question fourteen) and perception of one’s personal risk of date rape when consuming alcohol in a party atmosphere (question sixteen). Fifteen percent of respondents who “strongly agreed” with the statement that date rape is a serious problem at UNH also “strongly agreed” that they perceived themselves to be at a high level of risk for date rape when consuming alcohol in a party atmosphere. However, the same percentage (15%) of those who “strongly agreed” that date rape is a serious problem at UNH, reported that they “strongly disagreed” that they were at a high level of personal risk for date rape when consuming alcohol in a party atmosphere. Furthermore, 39.7% of those who “somewhat agreed” that party rape is a serious problem at UNH reported that they “strongly disagreed” that they were at a high level of personal risk for date rape when consuming alcohol in a party atmosphere. These results are statistically significant at the .01 level ($p=.010$).

Discussion

Review of Major Findings

The results from this study present a number of different findings relating to the research questions. The original purpose of this study was to investigate how people attribute blame and responsibility in instances of date rape. The study further attempted to determine the effect of alcohol on the attribution of blame and responsibility, and also if any differences between genders exist. The results suggest that while there are statistically significant differences between men and women, they are inconclusive and few in number. The data analysis revealed five significant differences between men and women according to gender; women were more likely than men to believe men should discontinue all sexual acts at the first sign of a woman’s discomfort, women were more likely to know someone who was involved in a date rape and women were more likely to believe that date rape is a serious problem at the University of New Hampshire. Men were more likely than women to attribute more responsibility to females and believe that a woman’s provocative dress and/or sexually suggestive behavior is a contributing factor to date rape. These differences supported the hypothesis that there are differences in the way men and women attribute blame and responsibility in instances of date rape.

The second hypothesis was that the presence and consumption of alcohol by those involved in a date rape will have an effect on how people attribute responsibility and blame. Statistical analysis revealed only one question from

the survey that supported this hypothesis; people were more polarized and were more likely to find the male perpetrator in a date rape situation to have either much higher levels of responsibility, or much lower levels of responsibility, when alcohol was involved. When alcohol was not involved, people were more likely to hold the male perpetrator to more moderate levels of responsibility.

Conclusions

The results of this study were found to support the null hypotheses rather than the hypotheses. While it is important to note the significant differences between gender and the effect of alcohol as stated in the above section, it is equally as important to note the lack of statistically significant differences between these variables. The study sought to determine differences between gender and the effect of alcohol, and few significant differences were found. This suggests that men and women do not attribute blame and responsibility differently in instances of date rape. In general, women were not more likely to blame men, and men were not more likely to blame women. Alcohol also appeared to be an obsolete factor as blame and responsibility were attributed in the same way when alcohol was involved and when it was not, with only one exception. In this exception, where *Mark should be held 100% responsible*, it could not be determined if responsibility was attributed due to Mark's intoxication or Sandy's.

The survey was constructed on the hypothesis that it would be worthwhile, and would produce the most accurate results if two vignettes were presented, one with alcohol and one

without, to assess the effect of alcohol on the research questions. After the data was analyzed and survey flaws were discovered, the idea that two different vignettes would produce two different sets of responses was invalidated. Although these results could potentially be an accurate data set supporting the hypothesis that alcohol has no effect on the attribution of blame and responsibility in instances of date rape, it is most likely true that these findings are due to an imperfect survey instrument.

Another point of interest was found in the statistically significant difference between the level of seriousness people attributed to date rape at UNH, and perceived personal threat when consuming alcohol in a party atmosphere. Although it was not addressed in the initial set of hypothesis, a relationship was found during data analysis between the two variables that appeared to be worth noting. The literature suggested a disparity between what college students perceive to be a personal threat to themselves, and what they believed to be a serious threat in their demographic. In other words, many students believe that date rape is a serious problem, yet feel that it could never happen to them. Results from this study suggest that students consider date rape to be a serious problem at UNH, yet perceive their levels of personal risk to be very low, even when consuming alcohol and in a party atmosphere. However, these results could be skewed due to the fact that they were not gender specific. For example, some males perceived party rape to be a serious threat at UNH, but did not perceive their own risk level to be high. Improvements could be made to analyze this question for men and women separately.

Limitations & Improvements

There was a significant amount of limitations on this study, and many ways in which it could have been improved. The survey limitations included vague questions and vague response categories. Although the survey was designed to be subjective due to the opinion of the subject, it became clear that quantifying and analyzing data as subjective as the information involved is difficult and most often inconclusive. This could have been improved by including more response categories for respondents, and clarifying many of the questions. The questions themselves were short, ambiguous, and followed no clear or logical order. This could have been improved by determining a list of variables to investigate before compiling the survey, and deriving the survey questions from this set of preconceived variables instead of deriving the variables from the set of questions. Not only would this have made a more cohesive survey, it would have been beneficial to the data analysis, and made this a more reliable survey.

A major limitation for the alcohol vignette survey was that no questions were asked directly addressing alcohol as a factor in the date rape. This was done intentionally so as not to draw the respondents attention directly to the alcohol and influence their potential responses. The purpose of the survey was to assess the overall opinions to the vignettes and determine respondent's initial responses. However, without including any questions directly pertaining to the alcohol, it was very difficult to compare the two vignettes and draw any significant conclusions from the results. This is therefore an extreme limitation because it leaves one

of the original hypotheses with no data to analyze to either support or refute it. This could be improved by creating an alcohol variable, and creating a set of questions for the vignette with alcohol to address.

One of the goals for the study was to more clearly define consent, and if consent can realistically be given if a woman is intoxicated. Unfortunately, there were no survey questions addressing consent and therefore no data was collected and analyzed on this subject. This was an oversight in the original survey, and time constraints did not allow for it to be included before data collection began.

Suggestions for Future Research

Further research on this topic is necessary to further prove or disprove the hypotheses discussed in this study. The social problem of date rape affects the college population, which has been shown in both the literature and in this study. Data collected and analyzed in this study reveals that 60% of women at UNH know someone who has been involved in a date rape, which is consistent with the literature. Future research could help discover the ways in which alcohol and gender affect one's perception of date rape, and who should be held more responsible. Specifically research could be done in the following areas:

- Determining if the location or setting of the date rape affects one's perception of blame and responsibility. Future research could include more vignettes depicting multiple locations that are conducive to consuming

alcohol and interaction with the opposite sex such as a bar, fraternity party or house party.

- Determining if the attribution of blame and responsibility varies according to how intoxicated both people involved are. Future studies could include different levels of intoxication for both the male and the female in the vignettes. For example. Vignettes could include one in which the female is intoxicated and the male is not, and one in which the male is intoxicated and the female is not.
- More closely examine the effect of alcohol on the attribution of blame by asking specific questions addressing this variable.
- More specifically determine whether consent can be given if a person is consuming alcohol. Does the level of intoxication matter in determining whether one is able to give consent?

Research on these areas would bring greater awareness to incidence of date rape, and by attaining more data on the variables of alcohol and gender more progress could be made in reducing date rape in the college population.

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