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The Occupational Impacts that Sexual Assault has on Female College Students

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The Occupational Impacts that Sexual Assault has on Female College Students



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BACKGROUND

- About every 68 seconds, someone in America is sexually assaulted (RAINN, n.d)
- It is estimated that one in five women are sexually assaulted while in college (Office on Women’s Health, 2021).
- Secondary conditions that follow trauma (such as depression, anxiety, or PTSD) cause disruptions in one’s daily life.
- SA can create dysfunction within occupational performance (Truog, 2019) .
- Areas impacted: sleep, school performance, romantic relationships, overall health, self-care routines and changes in behavior (Hodge & Privott, 2020; Potter et al., 2018; Turchik & Hassija, 2014).

PURPOSE

To research individual experiences to identify areas of disruption within occupations and establish a role for occupational therapy

Research Question: What are the occupational impacts that sexual assault has on female college students?

CASE DESCRIPTION / METHODS

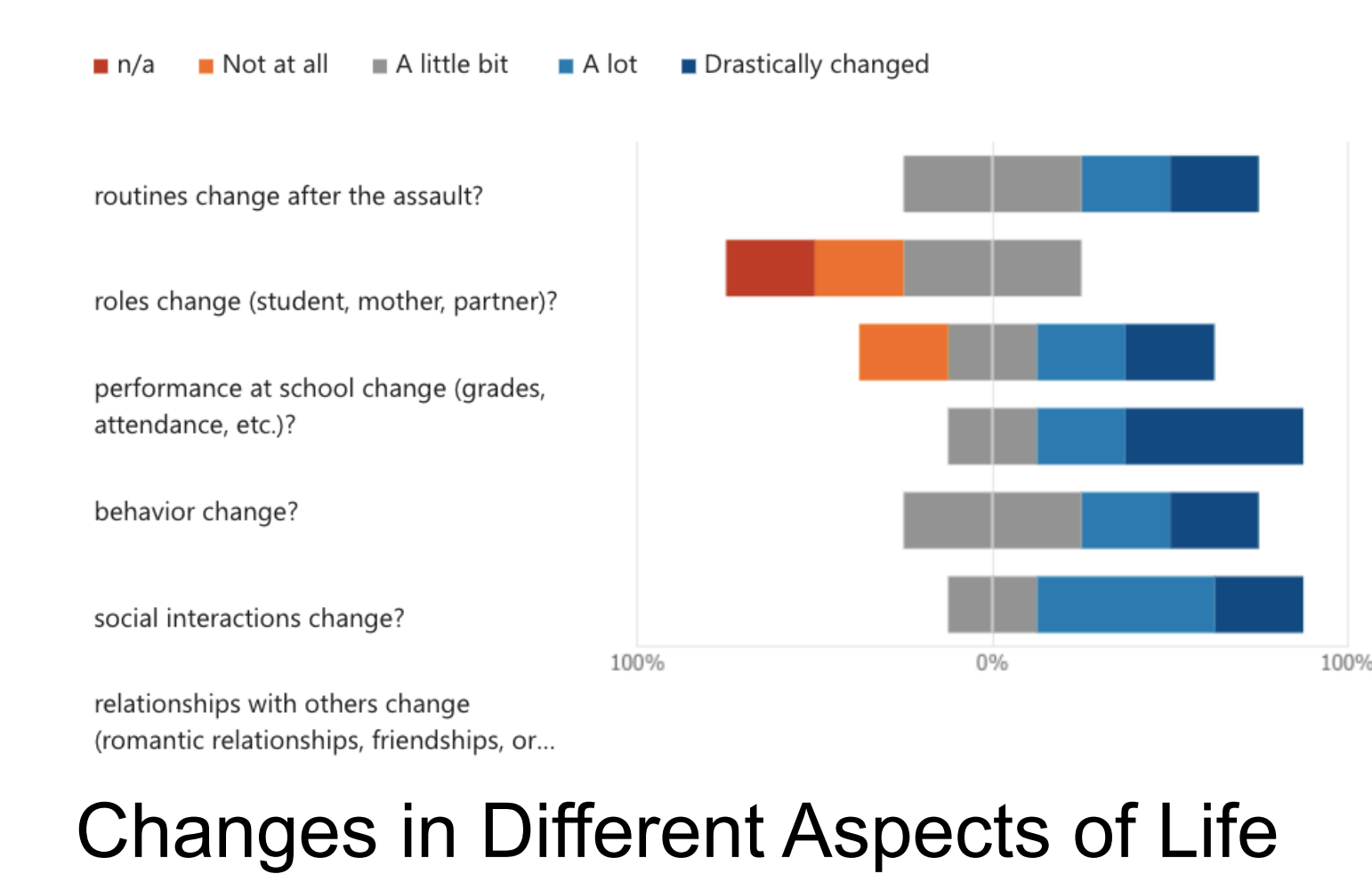
- Mixed methods research study
- Participants: Eight responders from Microsoft forms survey, four excluded n=4; 20 sources reviewed for shared experiences (several individuals per source)
- Inclusion criteria: female aged 20-65, have experienced sexual assault while furthering their education, and at least 2 years post assault.
- Exclusion criteria: If they identify as a male, if it has been less than two years since the assault, and if they have experienced sexual assault outside of college
- Recruitment through social media
- Quantitative and qualitative data analysis using Dedoose Software.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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RESULTS

Quantitative Data Analysis



Qualitative Data Analysis

Themes	Sub-themes
Sleep	Sleep Schedules
	Sleep anxiety Sleeping too much Trouble sleeping
Education	Decline in performance
	Changed trajectories Attendance
Social Participation	Fear Difference in friends
Relationships	Family Friends Romantic

Themes	Sub-themes
Re-victimization	Re-traumatization
	Questioning/blaming victim Lack of justice
Mental Health	Anxiety
	Depression Intrusive thoughts
Taking back power	Risky behaviors
	Risky occupations Hyper-focusing

DISCUSSION

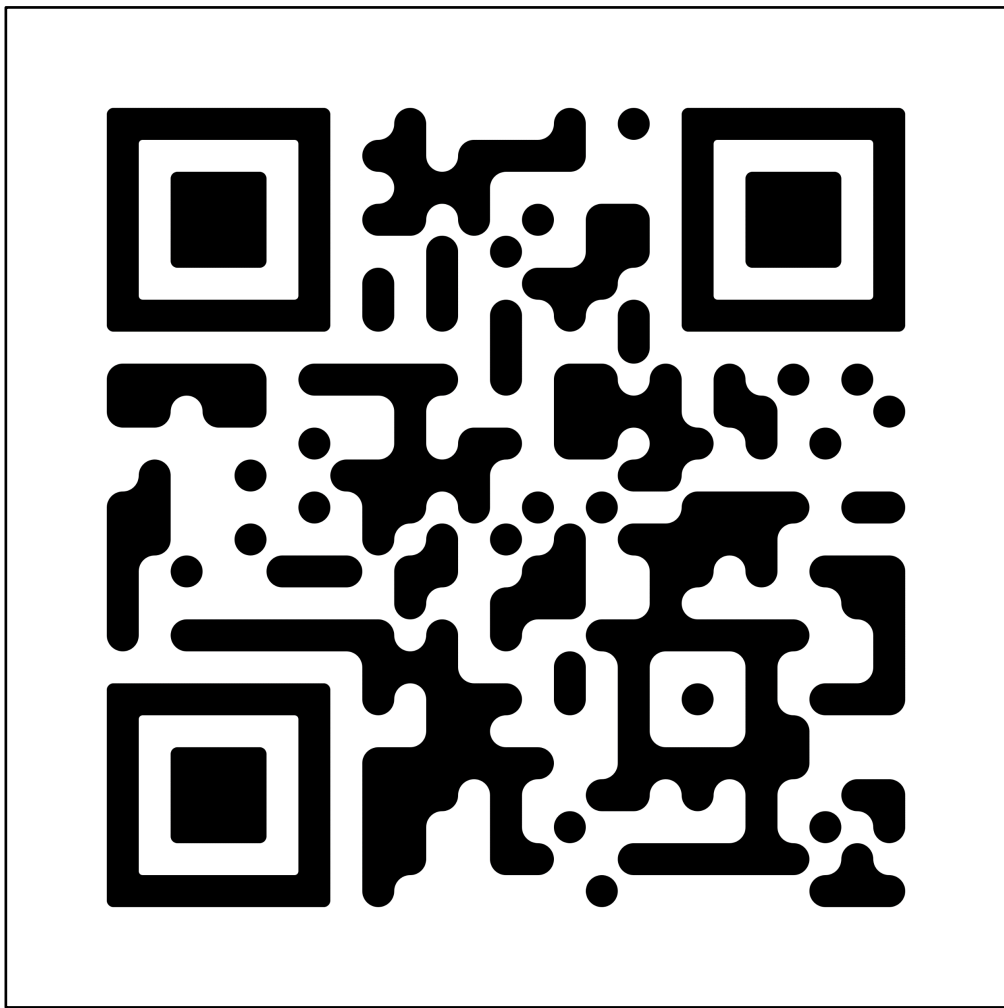
Limitations

- IRB approval for interviews (mandatory reporting)
 - Breaks confidentiality / more to risk
- Time (capstone and IRB process)
- Small sample size
- Inclusion criteria (statistically more likely to be sexually assaulted again)
 - There were consistencies with the findings in this study and the literature review. A lot of the time these themes intertwined, and one would affect the other. Mental health issues creates dysfunction in occupations.
 - OTPs can help this population by continuing to use trauma-informed care approach and seeking ways to return occupational justice.
 - It is underreported, and many people do not seek out services

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, there are countless impacts on one’s life after sexual assault as a college student and it can have an impact on occupations which can affect the rest of their lives. Sharing information with law enforcement and schools may produce opportunities for education and advocacy for both profession of OT and the population. Future Implications: Continue research, Program development for survivors, and do a needs assessment/ research if information should be provided earlier.

REFERENCES



This project involves human subjects; it has been reviewed and approved by the IRB.

Themes/sub-themes	Quote/ paraphrasing
Sleep schedules	Got their nights and days mixed up
Sleep anxiety	Had trouble sleeping and was afraid someone would come through the door and it would happen again. They had recurring nightmares as well
Sleeping too much	"I slept all day"
Trouble sleeping	Could not sleep and would have nightmares all the time
Decline in School Performance	Spiraled and got low grades; the lowest GPA that term the whole they were in college
Changed trajectories	Switched to online; forced to change universities; decided to change majors
Stopped attending classes	Dropped out; stopped going to class; fear of running into attacker on campus
Fear	Stopped going out; scared to run into attacker or people associate with attacker
Change in friends	Mutual friends; stopped hanging out with friends they used to party with
Family relationships	Craved family support; felt shamed or pitied
Friendships	Good close friend was attacker; lack of support from so-called friends
Romantic relationships	Shame from partner/break up; decline in sexual desire/
Re-traumatization	Completing rape kit; insults and threats for reporting; victims being bullied
Questioning/blaming the victim	"are you sure it was rape?" "were you drunk?", "that's not going to look good to a court or jury" referring to flirting with attacker before the assault; interrogating victim vs the suspect
Lack of justice	Suspect wasn't interviewed many times; only 1% suspects are prosecuted; "how the school handled it hurt me way more than how he hurt me"
Depression	Was numb; constantly crying; "too despondent to get out of bed"
Anxiety	Panic attacks; lived in constant fear; felt in danger all the time
Intrusive thoughts	Paranoid thoughts; suicidal ideation; angry thoughts (slashing tires and paying someone to beat him up
Risky behavior	Being "promiscuous" and having one night stands, was seen as a "power trip"
Risky occupations	Drinking, misusing substances, partying more
Hyper-focus	gaining back control with school, and doing well in school