



What does the research and data tell us about male victims of rape in an Irish context?

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The focus of this paper will be on sexual violence against males, including sexual violence perpetrated against males in childhood, adulthood and in both childhood and adulthood as data allows.

Ireland has a population of approximately 4.2 million.⁽¹⁾

Rape and sexual abuse is very commonly covered in Irish media and has been for at least the last 10 years.

In Ireland we have four sufficiently reliable sets of data that we can consider and which give us information about sexual violence against adult men:

1. The SAVI Report ⁽²⁾, a National Prevalence Survey, 2002
2. The Annual SATU Forensic Examination Report ⁽³⁾, 2009
3. RAJI ⁽⁴⁾, a National Study of the Irish Legal System, 2009
4. RCNI Annual National Rape Crisis Statistics 2009 ⁽⁵⁾

1. Sexual Abuse and Violence in Ireland: A National Study of Irish Experiences, Beliefs and Attitudes Concerning Sexual Violence (SAVI)

This research was undertaken in 2002 as a national prevalence survey. SAVI gives us a very clear baseline of data on abuse against males and females in Ireland which is then categorized into child sexual abuse and sexual abuse against adults.

Summary of key findings;

- More than 3000 participants in the research
- Female Child Abuse: 1/5 contact sexual abuse (SA), 1/10 non-contact SA
- Male Child Abuse: 1/6 contact SA, 1/14 non-contact SA
- Female Adult Abuse: 1/5 contact SA, 1/20 non-contact SA
- Male Adult Abuse: 1/10 contact SA, 1/37 non-contact SA

We can clearly see already from this data that there are some differences in sexual violence against men and women.

SAVI: Lifetime Experience of Sexual Abuse and Assault	Women	Men
Penetrative abuse	10%	3%
Attempted penetration/ contact abuse	21%	18%
Total contact abuse in overall lifetime	31%	21%
Non-contact	10%	7%

Here we can see that the **total of all abuse experiences for women is 41% and for men is 28%**.

SAVI: Relationship of Perpetrator of Sexual Violence to Victims.

SAVI goes further and can give us information about the relationship of perpetrator to victim.

If we look first of all at children, the first significant difference that we see is that boys are more likely to be abused by an authority figure and a non-family member than girls are;

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SAVI: Relationship of Perpetrator to Child Victims	Girls	Boys
Family member	24%	14%
Non-family member	52%	66%
Stranger	24%	20%

Boys are much more likely to be exposed to pornography as children, girls are more likely to be exposed to indecent assault. The levels of serious sexual crimes committed against women remain similar from childhood through to adulthood; there is no decline in the risk of being sexually assaulted. Risks for males were lower whilst they were children and decreased three-fold from childhood to adult life.

When we look at what SAVI tells us about the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim as adults, again we can see some interesting differences:

SAVI: Relationship of Perpetrator to Adult Victims	Women	Men
Partner/ ex-partner	23.6%	1.4%
Friend or known person	47%	42%
Stranger	30%	38%

For males 1 in 10 have been sexually assaulted in adult life. The perpetrators of the abuse are significantly different than those for women. For men partner/ ex-partner is only 1.4% whereas for women this is as high as 23%. The friend or known acquaintance is somewhat similar for men and women. Stranger is higher for men and lower for women.

SAVI: Effects of experiencing sexual violence

Interestingly, SAVI also had a look at the effects of experiencing sexual violence, very clearly stating that those who had experienced attempted or actual penetrative sexual abuse were eight times more likely to have been an inpatient of psychiatric hospital than those who had not been abused at all, thus clearly documenting the impact of sexual violence. Looking in more detail at this, when asked if sexual violence had had a moderate or extreme effect on life overall, women agreed at a rate of 30% whereas for men it was 18%. Where symptoms consistent with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) were recorded, women had symptoms that were consistent with PTSD 25% of the time whereas for men it was only 16% of the time. This data is interesting in terms of the growing body of work looking at how men and women perhaps experience and process trauma and traumatic symptoms differently; there may be significant differences, and these differences might lie behind some of the reasons why men and women take up services differently including taking up rape crisis services.

2. SATU Annual Report 2009

The next set of data that we can look at in Ireland is a relatively new body of data from 2009, an annual report across the 6 SATU units. A SATU (Sexual Assault Treatment Unit) is an interagency unit designed to provide the services that a female or male victim/survivor of recent rape or sexual assault aged 14+ needs and chooses. A victim/survivor can access a SATU directly or through An Garda Síochána (Police) or a Rape Crisis Centre. The services include: (1) a medical examination (provided by a specially trained nurse exam-

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iner or a specially trained medical examiner), (2) a forensic examination and evidence collection (also provided by the same nursing and medial personnel), (3) crisis psychological support (provided by Rape Crisis Centre personnel), (4) reporting the crime to the Gardaí, (5) appropriate medications, (6) STI follow-up testing (provided either by the Clinical Nurse Examiner or the hospital STI Clinic), (7) linking with Rape Crisis Centre services, (8) referral to other appropriate persons or agencies. Information and support are also provided to family and friends who accompany the victim/survivor to the unit by Rape Crisis Centre personnel.

The SATU annual report records attendance for forensic medical examination.

- In 2009, there were 529 attendances at 6 SATU units.
- 500 (94.5%) of patients were female
- 29 (5.5%) were male.

In terms of recently perpetrated sexual assault, we can see a very significant difference between males and females in Ireland. We must keep in mind that SATU units are for those who are 14 years of age and older, thus generally not including the bulk of child sexual abuse.

3. Rape & Justice in Ireland: A National Study of Survivor, Prosecutor and Court Responses to Rape, 2009

The next body of sufficiently reliable data that we have in Ireland which can make an interesting or useful comment on gender is *Rape & Justice in Ireland: A National Study of Survivor, Prosecutor and Court Responses to Rape* (RAJI). One data set that was considered in this document was 173 state prosecutor rape files in cases where the victim was over 18, from the period of 2000 to 2005. These were examined by the researchers. One of their concluding comments was "[a]ll the evidence gathered from the trial court records indicates that rape is overwhelmingly a crime perpetrated by men against women. This fact suggests that the Irish legislature was correct not to follow the trend apparent in many jurisdictions by enacting a gender-neutral legislation."

RCNI Annual National Rape Crisis Statistics 2009

The next body of sufficiently reliable data that we have in Ireland is our own data which is the RCNI national data collection project. Here we will be looking at the 2009 data which was compiled using information collected by 13 RCNI member Rape Crisis Centres (RCCs).

In the late 1970's Rape Crisis Centres (RCCs) began to set-up as a result of the absence of any state provision for victims of sexual violence, and within the context of societal denial of the reality and extent of sexual violence in Ireland. From the outset, RCCs provided direct support for victims, challenged myths and misinformation which enabled sexual violence, and sought better responses from other services and professionals. As a result of all of this work, RCCs have developed dedicated expertise in: direct support, social change and delivering education, training and awareness raising in their local area. The first centres opened 30 years ago. Since then a number of new centres have opened. Six new outreach services have opened in the past year with no additional funding. That brings the current total to 16 centres offering services in 47 different locations.

All direct services that RCCs provide are delivered from a survivor-centred and trauma based approach. In addition to professional individual, couples and group counselling, RCCs provide an extensive range of additional direct services including:

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- Crisis intervention & Advocacy
 - In person
 - On the telephone
 - Accompaniment to the Gardaí, Court, Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU), other forensic exams, medical appointments, other services
- Telephone helpline
- Direct support to partners of survivors and non-abusing family members
- Direct support to teenagers over 14 years of age

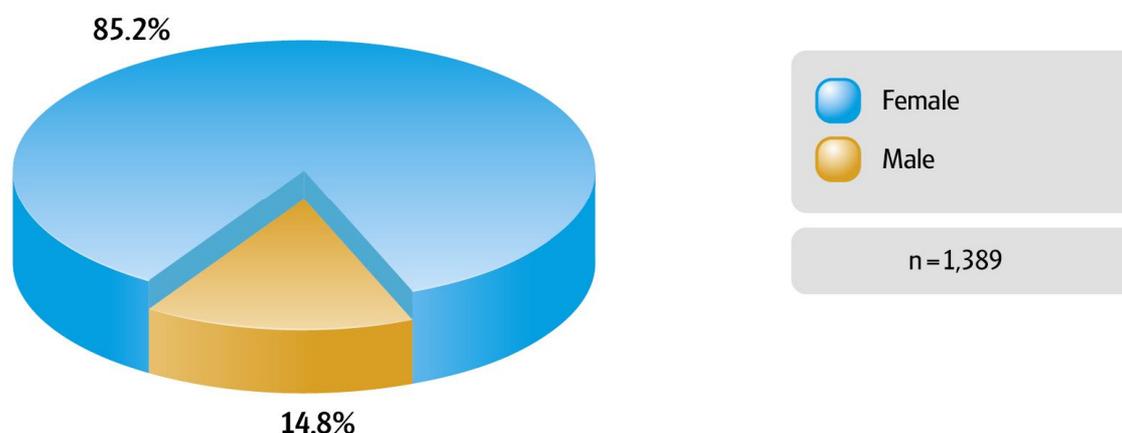
RCCs also engage in a number of activities to improve the responses that sexual violence survivors receive from other professionals and to prevent future sexual violence. These activities include:

- Education and training programmes with second and third level students and youth groups
- Training programmes with other professionals including nurses, community health workers and teachers
- Local awareness raising campaigns

RCCs are locally based experts on sexual violence and are an exceptional resource to local communities as well as health, legal and community agencies.

What follows here is data on 1,389 men and women who attended rape crisis centres in person, and who reported some form of sexual assault.

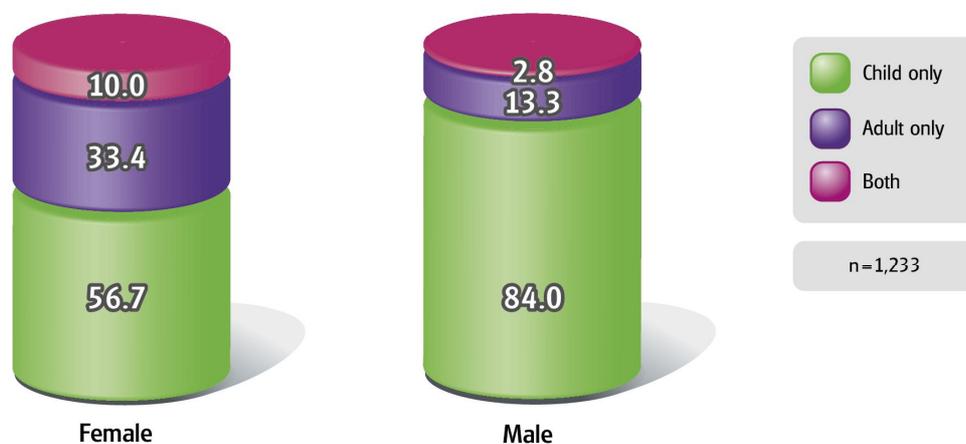
Graph 1:



This has been a fairly consistent figure for a number of years, with about 15% of service users being male. Looking at some of the other data across Europe, this is quite a significant figure for male service users.

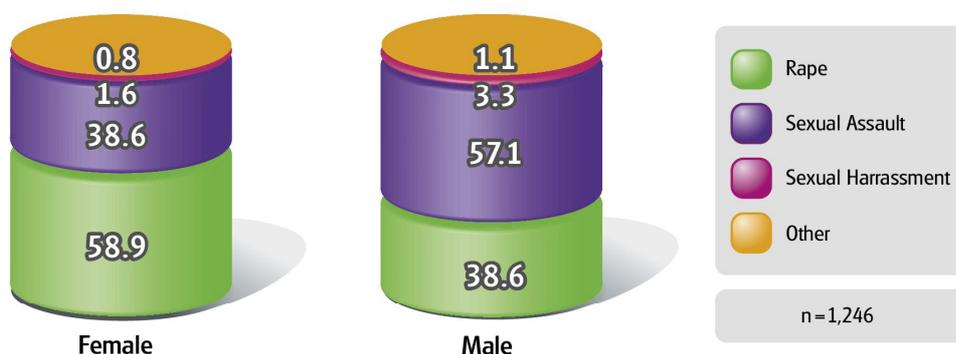
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Graph 2:



The majority of male survivors (84%) attended Rape Crisis Centres as a result of sexual violence experienced as children only (Graph 3). This is in contrast to the single largest group of female survivors who disclosed sexual violence as children only (56.7%). One third of women (33.4%) had experienced sexual violence as adults in comparison to 13.3% of men attending RCCs. One in ten (10%) female survivors disclosed experiencing sexual violence as both children and adults. **These figures support the findings of SAVI that male vulnerability to sexual violence decreases as males' age, while female vulnerability does not decrease with age to the same extent.**

Graph 3:

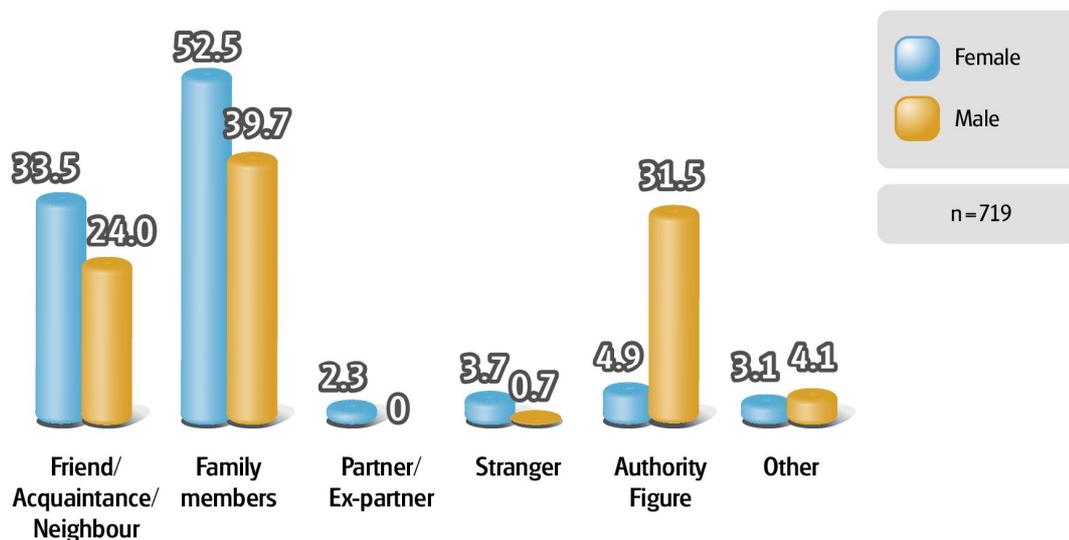


Again we can see clearly the differences here in the type of sexual violence that males and females report being subjected to. Female survivors attending RCCs disclosed rape followed by sexual assault as the most

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common forms of sexual violence perpetrated against them (58.9% and 38.6% respectively). This trend is reversed for men, where 57.1% disclosed sexual assault and 38.6% disclosed rape. A small number of both women and men who sought support had been subjected to sexual harassment (1.6% and 3.3% respectively).

Graph 4:



If we examine those reporting sexual violence as children only, we see gender differences emerging. Family members and relatives were the most commonly disclosed perpetrators of sexual violence against children for both females and males (52.5% and 39.7% respectively). Females (33.5%) more commonly than males (24%) disclosed friends, acquaintances and neighbours as the perpetrator. The figures for girls' relationships to perpetrators is approximately the same as that in the 2008 National Statistics, however there is a marked decrease for male survivors of sexual violence as children reporting friends, acquaintances and neighbours as the perpetrator (24% in 2009 compared with 40.2% in 2008). **In 2009 males disclosed authority figures as perpetrators more often than females** (31.5% compared with 4.9%). This has increased significantly from 2008 figures where 17.1% of boys disclosed abuse by an authority figure. This does not indicate an increase in sexual violence against boys by authority figures, but rather a significant increase in males who experienced this type of abuse accessing RCC services. Some of this may be due to the public debate around the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse Report and the Report by Commission of Investigation into Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin.

The number of males reporting sexual violence as adults to rape crisis centres is insufficient to provide reliable data.

Summary and conclusion

The 4 reliable sets of data regarding sexual violence that we have in Ireland tell us that there are some notable differences between males and females.

- 1 in 10 males have been sexually assaulted in adult life.
- The relationship between victim and perpetrator can be significantly different for males and females, both in childhood and adulthood;
- In particular, sexual violence by a partner/ ex-partner is quite low for adult males whereas sexual violence perpetrated by a stranger is higher for men than for women.
- In terms of the effects of sexual violence, there may be significant differences in how men and women experience and process trauma and subsequently, how they take up services.
- Our own data tells us that of 1,389 rape crisis centre service users in 2009, 14.8% were male.
- We know that there is a considerable gender difference in the attendance at SATU units, with only 5.5% of attendees being male.
- Our figures on when the violence took place supports SAVI findings that for men, vulnerability decreases in adulthood whereas for women does not decrease with age to the same extent.
- Male survivors attending RCCs disclosed sexual assault followed by rape as the most common forms of sexual violence perpetrated against them. This is significantly different to women for whom rape was the most common form of sexual violence.
- In 2009, males disclosed authority figures as perpetrators more often than females.

Footnotes

1. The population of Ireland is 4,239,848 according to CSO Population Figures 2006
2. McGee H, Garavan R, de Barra M, Byrne J, Conroy R: *The SAVI report: Sexual Abuse and Violence in Ireland*. Dublin, Liffey Press; 2002.
3. Eogan, Maeve: First National Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU) Annual Clinical Report: 2010
4. Hanly C, Healy D, and Scriver S: *Rape & Justice in Ireland: A National Study of Survivor, Prosecutor and Court Responses to Rape*. Dublin, Liffey Press: 2009
5. RCNI National Rape Crisis Statistics 2009: 16/11/10