



Sexual assault prevalence in deaf and hard of hearing communities

By: Aspen Hastings

Abstract

Presentation for Spring 2019 Undergraduate Research Exposition. Explores the shocking statistics of the rate of sexual assault in deaf and hard of hearing communities and pushes for greater advocacy for this population of people.

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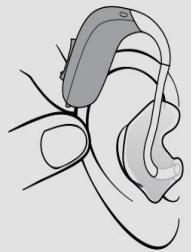
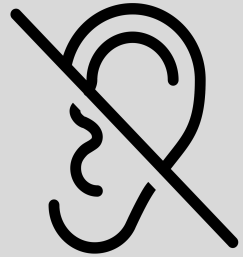
Introduction

The rate of sexual assault is progressing in numbers as the years go on. Those who attend college are at an even higher risk of being assaulted in today's society compared to those who don't. What about minority communities? Are they at an even higher risk of victimization?

Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that the rate of sexual assault is higher in deaf and hard of hearing communities than it is among the hearing community.

Author Name	Sample Characteristics	Association Between X & Y	Main Finding
Vogt (2015)	150 deaf and hard of hearing individuals	<u>Yes</u>	Half of the respondents have been sexually assaulted. Of those assaulted, 19 had been victimized by a family member.
Smith & Pick (2015)	70 deaf females between 18 and 40 years old	<u>Yes</u>	Of the respondents, 69% indicated they had been sexually assaulted at least once in their lifetime.
Peter and Williams (2011)	1,027 deaf and hard of hearing individuals at Rochester Institute of Technology	<u>Yes</u>	Deaf and hard of hearing individuals are nearly two and half times more likely to experience abuse.
Amanda Admire & Blanca Ramirez (2017)	60 deaf individuals from developing countries	<u>Yes</u>	Of the respondents, 30% described violence and abuse by an immediate or extended family member..
Jennifer Obinna et al. (2006)	A two-part study given to deaf and hard of hearing individuals consisting of (1) examination of needs and (2) an institutional ethnographic investigation	<u>Yes</u>	There is a clear gap in the sex education of deaf and hard of hearing individuals compared to hearing individuals.



Summary of Results

According to these studies, over half of the deaf and hard of hearing respondents have been sexually assaulted. Deaf and hard of hearing individuals are two and half times more likely to be victimized than hearing individuals. Those who are deaf and hard of hearing are more vulnerable to acts of incest and intimate partner violence.

Conclusion

Minority populations such as the deaf and hard of hearing community are at a higher risk of sexual victimization. This means these populations should be more frequently included in research and highly considered when addressing what can be changed moving forward in attempt to minimize the issue.

Implications

Moving forward, there must be more qualified American Sign Language interpreters available at law enforcement agencies, a greater amount of sex education should be available to the deaf and hard of hearing, and 911 dispatchers should have the ability to communicate on TTY machines so that deaf individuals have the capability to interact with emergency services.