

Measuring sexual violence: research experiences from South Africa

Naeemah Abrahams MPH, PhD
Gender & Health Research Unit
South African Medical Research Council

- Based on experience in doing sexual violence research in South Africa (and Africa)
 - Male and female participants
 - National representative samples
 - Community samples
 - Specific sub groups
 - Workers/ Antenatal attendees/school going children
 - Child sexual abuse
 - Sexual assault services

Issues of Definitions

‘any sexual act, or attempted to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work’

Definition of sexual violence, WHO World Report on Violence & Health (2002)

Definitional issues to be considered

- Force sex - women often describe their experience as forced rather than 'rape'
- Force may include physical force/ threats of force/use of weapons
- Coercion: fear of violence/abuse of power
- Context specific/behaviours specific
 - Variations in perception of consent/coercion
 - inability to refuse /threats/persuasion/verbal insistence deception etc
- Questions we used based on WHO instrument:
 - ever physically forced you to have sex when you did not want to?
 - Have you ever had sex with...when you did not want to because you were afraid of what he might do?
 - Have you ever been forced you to do something sexual that you found degrading or humiliating?

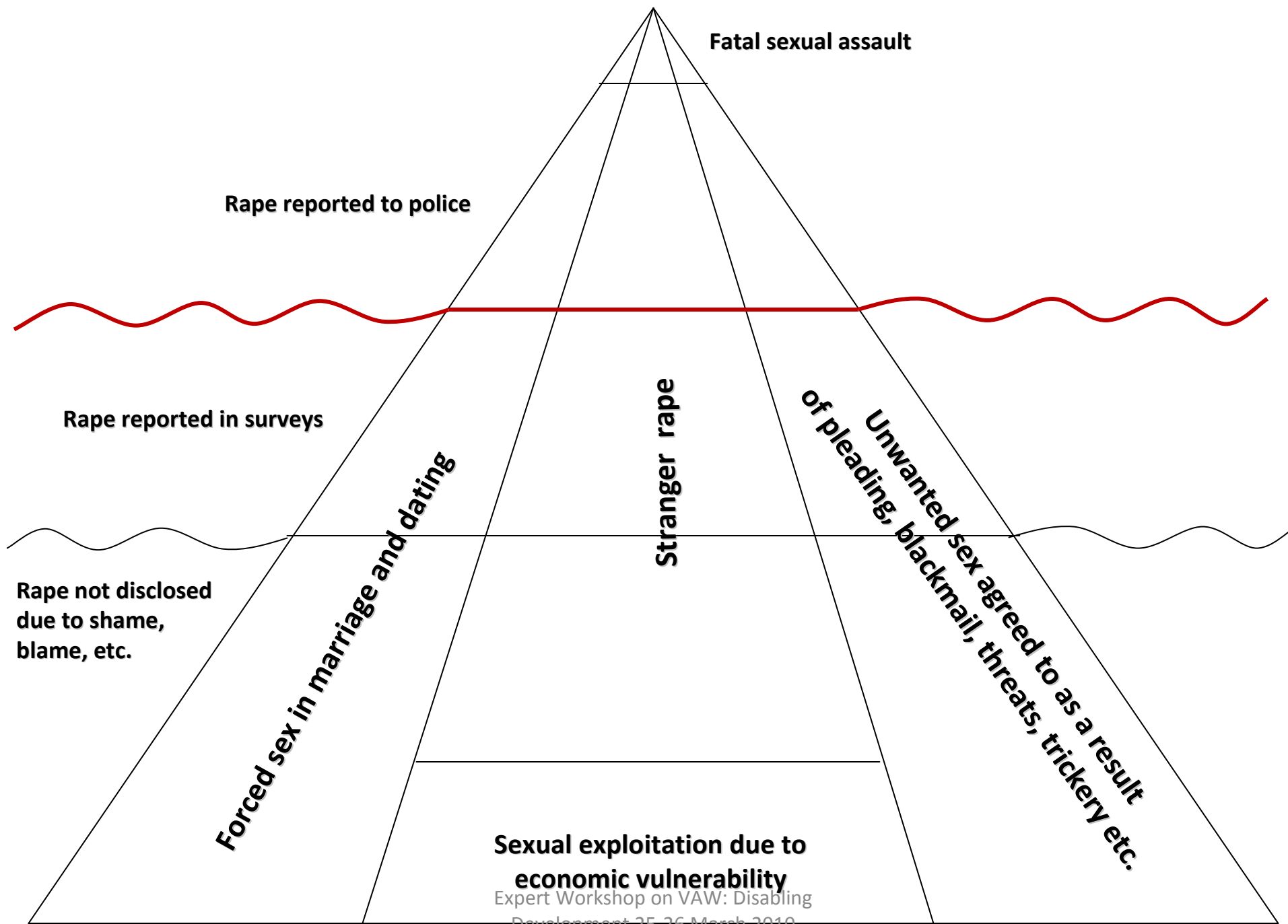
Definitional issues...

- Recognition and inclusion of subtypes depending on setting
 - Gang rape/ Streamlining (more than one perpetrator at same time)
 - Having sex with a women when she is too drunk to say whether she wants it
 - Forced 1st intercourse
 - ? Denial of right to use contraceptives
 - ? Denial of right to use protection against STI
 - E.g. we excluded FGM

Three household surveys done in same (1999)

Study	Questions / phrases used	Lifetime prevalence %
Three province study random sample 1306	(2 questions) Ever physically forced or persuaded to have sex against will (include attempts)	EC – 6.7 % MP – 11.9 % NP – 6.3 %
SADHS random sample 11735	(two questions) Forced to have sex Persuaded to have sex	Range: 2.3-7.1% Range: 2.8-12%
Victims of crime survey random 4000	Screening question 'sexually abused' 2 nd question used phrase rape	1.7%

Study	N	Questions	%
Female Respondents Antenatal care attendees IPV	1391	WHO instrument 3 items	20.1
Female respondents Stepping Stones Community sample	1295	Adjusted from WHO	11.5
Male Respondents Workers study IPV	1368	2 items Attempted and forced her to have sex	15.3
Male respondents Stepping Stones community sample Perpetration all women	1370	Adjusted from WHO Added •Had sex with woman against her will when she is drunk •Gang rape questions	21.9
Male community based study in 2 provinces Perpetration all women	1738	7 questions- extended on the SS questions	27.6



Expert Workshop on VAW: Disabling
Development 25-26 March 2010

Police data vs survey data

	MRC 3 Province Study (ages 18- 49)	Police stats (all ages)
Rapes per 100,000 women	1300	212
9 fold increase found in survey		

Disclosure

- WHO – set of guidelines to promote disclosure
- Reasons for non disclosure identified in qualitative research
 - Stigma, shame, blame
 - Severity of injury
 - Who perpetrated
 - Support networks
 - Views on rape/sexual violence by important others
 - Level of awareness
 - Availability of services
 - Prevention of HIV

Female homicide/Femicide study

- National mortuary study
 - Data extracted from forensic report to identify evidence of sexual assault at time of murder
 - Evidence of genital and other injuries
 - DNA /semen/ other specimens/ clothes
 - Crime scene information : Position of body /clothes etc
 - rape homicide suspected in 16.3% of murders
 - 1 in 6 female homicides
 - Rape homicide rate of 3.65/ 100 000 women

Other basic data elements ...

- Perpetrator

- Who perpetrator

<i>Boyfriend.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Husband.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Father or family member.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Teacher.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Boy from school/area.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Man from area.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Stranger/unknown person.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Friend of the family.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Co-workers/boss.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Other.....</i>	<i>10</i>

- Number of perpetrators
- Frequency
 - Never/once/few times/often
 - Never/once/> once

- Period

- Ever
- Last 12 months

- Severity

- Attended health services

- Use of weapons

- Guns

- Where incident happen?

- Home/public spaces
- Urban/rural

- Perpetration studies (men)

- Who victim
 - Partner/ non-partner/ other man/boy

Asking men about sexual violence

As perpetrators

- Male workers study (15.3% SV (partners) in last 10 yrs)
- Stepping stones Study - men aged 16-26 (20.9%)
- Male violence and HIV study (27.6% - ever - any woman)

As Victims

- Male workers study
 - 4.9% reported partners had used physical violence against them
- Stepping Stones study (men aged 16-26 years)
 - 3% of all the men had been coerced into sex by a man
- Male violence and HIV
 - 2.9% reported rape of boys or men

In the field and ethical issues

- Ethical dilemmas
 - Reporting of child sexual abuse
 - Working with perpetrators
- Training and support of field workers critical
 - Vicarious trauma

Sharing our work

- With advocates / policy makers / service providers
 - 1 in 9 campaign
 - Magistrate training on female murders
 - Development of sexual assault policy
 - Child sexual abuse services