

SPECIAL ISSUE PAPER

Male-on-male sexual assault: Victim, offender and offence characteristics

Maria Ioannou  | Laura Hammond | Laura Machin

University of Huddersfield, International Research Centre for Investigative Psychology, Department of Psychology, Huddersfield, UK

Correspondence

Dr Maria Ioannou, International Research Centre for Investigative Psychology, Department of Psychology, School of Health and Human Sciences, University of Huddersfield, Queensgate, Huddersfield HD1 3DH, UK.

Email: m.ioannou@hud.ac.uk

Abstract

Unlike male-on-female sexual assaults, little is known about the nature of male-on-male sexual assault, especially in terms of victim, offender and offence characteristics. The present paper systematically reviews the limited research into male-on-male sexual offences in order to ascertain the current state of knowledge with regards to these issues. An extensive search resulted in the identification of 15 empirical studies, with a total of 5,112 cases of male-on-male sexual assaults, for inclusion in the analyses. Findings revealed that, in the main, both victims and offenders of this type of offence tend to be young and heterosexual. Offenders tend to act alone during the assault and to be previously acquainted with the victim. Most male-on-male sexual assaults are violent in nature, taking place in either the victim's or the offender's home. Victims are subjected to various sexual acts, with anal penetration being the most frequent, and victims are frequently forced to perform oral sex on the offender. The implications of these findings, as well as limitations of the reviewed studies and directions for future research, are discussed.

KEYWORDS

offence characteristics, offender characteristics, sexual assault, victim characteristics

1 | INTRODUCTION

Although anyone can be sexually assaulted, regardless of their age, appearance, strength or gender (Porche, 2005), empirical research has focused on the prevalence, nature, characteristics, perpetration and victimisation of female victims of rape and sexual assault. This is not surprising, given that the majority of reported sexual crimes concern female victims. Unlike male-on-female sexual offences, little is known about male-on-male sexual offences. In particular, little is known about the victim, offender and offence characteristics of such crimes. The present paper systematically reviews the limited research into male-on-male sexual offences in order to ascertain the current state of knowledge with regards to these crimes, and discusses potential directions for future research to take in order to further our understanding of such offences.

1.1 | Definition, prevalence and research on male sexual assault

There are variations in the legislation of different countries as to how sexual offences are classed and categorised. For consistency, it is the current UK legal definitions of sexual offences that are used in the present paper. The UK parliamentary Sexual Offences Act of 2003 makes reference to various legally classified crimes. Throughout this review, the term 'sexual assault' will be used to cover the following four categories of sexual offence included in the Act:

1. Rape: 'A person (A) commits an offence if (a) he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, (b) B does not consent to the penetration, and (c) A does not reasonably believe that B consents'.
2. Assault by penetration: 'A person (A) commits an offence if (a) he intentionally penetrates the anus or vagina of another person (B) with a part of his body or anything else, (b) the penetration is sexual, (c) B does not consent to the penetration, and (d) A does not reasonably believe that B consents'.
3. Sexual assault: 'A person (A) commits an offence if (a) he intentionally touches another person (B), (b) the touching is sexual, (c) B does not consent to the touching, and (d) A does not reasonably believe that B consents'.
4. Causing a person to engage in sexual activity without consent: 'A person (A) commits an offence if (a) he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, (b) the activity is sexual, (c) B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and (d) A does not reasonably believe that B consents'.

It is estimated that approximately 473,000 adults are victims of sexual offences in England and Wales each year, with a gender breakdown of around 400,000 female victims and 72,000 male victims (source: 'An Overview of Sexual Offending in England and Wales' – Ministry of Justice, Home Office and the Office For National Statistics, Statistical Bulletin, 2013). Aggregated findings from the British Crime Survey of England and Wales suggest that, on average, 2.5% of females and 0.4% of males report having been a victim of a sexual offence each year. These reports span the full spectrum of sexual offences, ranging from rape and sexual assault to indecent exposure and unwanted touching. In terms of the most serious offences of rape and sexual assault only; it is estimated that there are 85,000 female victims and 12,000 male victims per year (source: 'An Overview of Sexual Offending in England and Wales' – Ministry of Justice, Home Office and the Office For National Statistics, Statistical Bulletin, 2013). These figures should be approached with caution, however, as in reality figures are likely to be higher; many sexual offences are under-reported, therefore making it difficult to obtain reliable information on their prevalence – especially when it comes to male victims. It has been suggested that the true prevalence of male-on-male sexual assault may not be any less than of male-on-female sexual assault (McLean, Balding, & White, 2005).

Previous research has stated that fewer than 20% of victims of sexual assault report the offence to the police (Welch & Mason, 2007), and that fewer men report their victimisation than women (Coxell & King, 1996). Elliott, Mok, and Briere (2004), whose sample consisted of homosexual and bisexual men, reported a victimisation rate of 3.8%, while Ratner et al. (2003) reported a much higher victimisation rate of 14%. Similarly, a high victimisation rate (18%) was reported by King, Coxell, and Mezey (2002), whose sample consisted of men attending genitourinary medicine clinics. However, many male victims of sexual offences do not report their victimisation to anyone, including support organisations (Davies, 2002), which suggests that figures cited in the literature are likely to vastly under-estimate the true occurrence of male sexual victimisation.

Underreporting has its roots in many causes. Research using a sample of 115 men who received help from Survivors UK, an organisation offering support and counselling for male victims of rape and sexual abuse, found that only 17 had reported the assault to the police. Five of these 17 victims reported having a negative experience (King & Woollett, 1997). Men might also see sexual assault as an attack on their masculinity (Calderwood, 1987), and may therefore be embarrassed to admit to being assaulted or not being able to resist and fight their attacker off. Some men have also considered whether they may have consented to the attack due to them not being able to resist (Monk-Turner & Light, 2010). The emotion of self-blame can be further heightened by myths surrounding rape and

sexual assault, ranging from provoking the attack in some way or not doing enough to prevent the assault from taking place (Davies, 2002). Other such myths include as follows: the victim having an erection or ejaculating implying consent; that the victim must be gay or have acted in a 'gay manner'; that a 'real man' cannot be raped (Hillman, Tomlinson, McMillan, French, & Harris, 1990); that men cannot be forced to have sex; that the male body is incapable of being sexually assaulted (Porche, 2005); and that male victims are less affected than female victims (Coxell & King, 1996), making heterosexual victims question their sexuality (King, 1990). Furthermore, victims also face rejection and stigmatisation from society and even from family and friends (Davies, 2002), as well as from the authorities or support services. This is evidenced in the research conducted by Donnelly and Kenyon (1996), who interviewed rape crisis workers. One worker stated: 'Honey, we don't do men ... Men can't be raped'. It is further supported by the fact that male victims who have come forward and reported sexual assault to the police have not been taken seriously (Davies, 2002). Stereotypical beliefs about rape and what it is, a stranger (male) attacking a lone female down a dark alleyway, not only held by society but also by legal and medical professionals, do not help with such attitudes. When victims, offenders and the offence itself vary from this perception of what rape is, society is unlikely to believe what truly occurred (McLean, 2013).

Research into male sexual assault, including work relating to the help and support requirements of male victims, has lagged behind that conducted on female victims (Davies, 2002). In 2012, McLean (2013) carried out a PubMed search for the term 'rape' in either the abstract or the title, which produced 4,767 articles. When the term was amended to 'male rape' only 23 articles were produced (McLean, 2013). It is only really within the past couple of decades that the majority of research on male sexual assault has emerged.

This lack of research on male sexual assaults in the past may be down to many reasons. Many of the studies on sexual assault in general use data from support centres for victims, and such services for male victims are lacking and relatively sparse (Hilden, Schei, & Sidenius, 2005; King & Woolett, 1997; Lipscomb, Muram, Speck, & Mercer, 1992). Another aspect of there being fewer support organisations for male victims is that there will be less advocating of the issue, resulting in less public awareness. Increased awareness of this issue would attract more attention to research into the area (Sivakumaran, 2005). Feminism has brought attention to female rape and assault, and – in turn – has increased the support services available for female victims as well as research in the area. For many, male sexual assault is still a 'taboo' subject, evidenced in the fact that most research into male sexual assault has been carried out in western countries (Davies, 2002; McLean, 2013). In many parts of the world, homosexuality is against the law punished with imprisonment or even the death penalty; therefore, research on male sexual assault is not promoted or encouraged.

1.2 | Male-on-female sexual assault characteristics

Unlike male-on-male sexual assault, male-on-female sexual assault is well researched. Research has found that female victims of sexual assault tend to be young. While the Home Office and the Office for National Statistics (2013) report that female victims most at risk of being sexually assaulted are 16–19 years of age, other research has found a mean age of 25 years (Hilden et al., 2005; Riggs, Houry, Long, Markovchick, & Feldhaus, 2000). Male offenders of female sexual assault also tend to be relatively young, with the most common age group being 20 to 39 years of age (Home Office & Office for National Statistics, 2013). In terms of race; research consistently shows that in most cases offenders are White (Haley, 2010). Hilden et al. (2005) found that 84% of victims reported being assaulted by one assailant, while other research shows even a higher percentage of 96.2% for lone offenders (Weiss, 2010).

Although findings on the relationship between offenders and victims of male-on-female sexual assault vary, it has been demonstrated that in most assaults the offender has some form of established relationship with the victim, including being partners, friends and colleagues (Welch & Mason, 2007). Hilden et al. (2005) and Weiss (2010) reported percentages of 46% and 61.7%, respectively, for females being assaulted by someone they have an established relationship with. A study carried out by Riggs et al. (2000), which included victims who had visited a trauma department, reported that the highest percentage of assailants were complete strangers (38.7%). However,

statistics on the assailants being an acquaintance of the victim are more consistent, with most studies reporting percentages of between 20% and 25% (Hilden et al., 2005; Riggs et al., 2000; Weiss, 2010).

In terms of offence characteristics, vaginal penetration has been consistently found to be the most common act female victims of sexual assault are subjected to, with occurrence rates as high as 83.2% in some studies (e.g. Riggs et al., 2000). Further offence characteristics found to be common include the following: oral penetration, anal penetration, the use of restraints, use of physical force and other forms of violence and the presence of a weapon (Hilden et al., 2005; Riggs et al., 2000; Walby & Allen, 2004).

1.3 | Male-on-male sexual assault characteristics

1.3.1 | Victim characteristics

A number of studies have identified certain characteristics that make males more vulnerable to sexual assault. In most studies, the mean age of victims tends to be within the range of 20–30 years (McLean, 2013). In Hodge and Canter (1998), mean ages of 24 and 25.5 years were found for samples obtained through self-report questionnaires and police records, respectively. Pesola, Westfal, and Kuffner (1999) reported a mean age of 28.9 years among victims visiting a hospital and medical centre. In terms of victim's race, figures are likely to vary depending on where the sample was gathered. However, most studies have found the majority of victims to be white (Choudhary, Gunzler, Tu, & Bossarte, 2012; Coxell, King, Mezey, & Kell, 2000; Isely & Gehrenbeck-Shim, 1997; Kimerling, Rellini, Kelly, Judson, & Learman, 2002; Pesola et al., 1999; Stermac, Bove & Addison, 2004), and some even report samples of all white males (Groth & Burgess, 1980; Walker, Archer, & Davies, 2005). As mentioned earlier, though, most studies have been conducted in countries that have a higher population of Caucasians than any other race; therefore, these findings are not surprising. Additionally, individuals from other backgrounds may not report sexual assaults or rapes due to cultural issues.

In terms of sexuality, contrary to myths, research has found that not all victims of male sexual assault are homosexuals (Coxell & King, 1996). In the study of Hodge and Canter (1998), the majority of victims (60%) were found to be heterosexual. Similarly, Isely & Gehrenbeck-Shim (1997) reported a percentage of 81% of heterosexual victims, while a percentage of 50% was reported by Groth and Burgess (1980). Contrary to these findings, some research has reported that the highest percentage of victims were homosexual. Kimerling et al. (2002) reported that 50.9% of male victims were homosexual, while a similar percentage of 53% was reported by Walker et al. (2005). Differences in figures on the sexuality of victims might be due to the nature of the sample under consideration and where it was drawn from (McLean, 2013), as well as the fact that some studies only include gay or bisexual men (Ratner et al., 2003).

1.3.2 | Offender characteristics

Many studies do not report offender characteristics. From the studies that do, it has been found that race statistics for perpetrators of male-on-male sexual assault are similar to those for victims, with the majority of offenders being white. Groth and Burgess (1980) reported that 81% of offenders were White, and Isely and Gehrenbeck-Shim (1997) reported a similarly high percentage of 78.4%. As with victims of male-on-male sexual assault, perpetrators of male-on-male sexual assault are not always homosexual, contrary to widely-held beliefs that a man who rapes or sexually assaults another man must be homosexual (Coxell & King, 1996). Groth and Burgess (1980) and Isely and Gehrenbeck-Shim (1997) found that the majority of perpetrators of male sexual assault were heterosexual, with percentages of 50% and 89.5%, respectively. Conversely, Mezey and King (1989) found that the majority of offenders were homosexual. Both Mezey and King (1989) and Isely and Gehrenbeck-Shim (1997) relied on the victim to provide information on the offender; if the offender was a stranger, though, it is questionable how sure the victim was of their sexuality. This may account for differences in reported findings.

Number of perpetrators has also been neglected in much research. Although most studies have reported the offender mainly acting alone (Canter & Hodge, 1998; Isely & Gehrenbeck-Shim, 1997; Mezey & King, 1989), studies have reported percentages as high as 34 (Hodge & Canter, 1998) and 40.7 (Isely & Gehrenbeck-Shim, 1997) for multiple offenders.

To sum; statistics on offender characteristics are lacking. This might be explained by the under-reporting of male-on-male sexual assaults; if the assault is not reported to the police then the offender is unlikely to be caught and brought to justice, resulting in fewer offenders featuring in statistics or research samples (Davies, 2002). In addition, some studies ask victims to answer questions regarding the offender. However, if the offender is a stranger this information can be inaccurate, particularly information on sexuality and age.

1.3.3 | Offence characteristics

Discussions of offence characteristics are not to say that male-on-male sexual assault happens in a certain way, as every sexual assault will vary in different ways (McLean, 2013). Offence characteristics reveal what actions happen more frequently.

Although most studies that have reported the relationship between the offender and the victim have found that the offender tends to be an acquaintance of the victim (Hodge & Canter, 1998; Isely & Gehrenbeck-Shim, 1997; Mezey & King, 1989), a study which carried out interviews with offenders themselves (as opposed to relying on information from the victims) reported that 75% attacked strangers (Groth & Burgess, 1980). However, caution should be exercised as in many of these studies there are definitional problems in terms of what constitutes an acquaintance, and many of them use the term to mean anything from a few hours of knowledge to a well-established relationship. At what stage an individual goes from being a stranger to an acquaintance varies among studies.

Studies have reported various findings in terms of the locations in which offences took place, with high percentages reported for victim's and offender's homes as well as for public places, such as car parks and public parks (McLean, 2013; Mezey & King, 1989; Stermac, Sheridan, Davidson, & Dunn, 1996). Physical violence has been reported in most studies (Almond, McManus, & Ward, 2014; Kimerling et al., 2002; Walker et al., 2005), while reports of the presence of a weapon have ranged from as low as 5% (Light & Monk-Turner, 2009) to 48.8% (Isely & Gehrenbeck-Shim, 1997).

Male victims of sexual assault are subjected to and asked to perform various acts during the assault. In the majority of male-on-male sexual assaults rape (anal or oral penetration) has occurred (Kaufman, Divasto, Jackson, Voorhees, & Christy, 1980; Kimerling et al., 2002; King & Woolett, 1997; Mezey & King, 1989; Pesola et al., 1999; Walker et al., 2005). Further acts, such as the victim being masturbated or having their genitals fondled, have been reported to occur in some sexual assaults (Coxell et al., 2000; Hickson et al., 1994; Stermac et al., 1996). Coxell et al. (2000) and Stermac et al. (1996) both found that over 40% of victims in their samples were forced to perform oral sex on the offender. Coxell et al. (2000) further reported that 43% of victims were forced to masturbate the offender and that 5% were forced to anally penetrate the offender. Masturbating the offender was reported in only 7% of the cases in other studies (Almond et al., 2014), while victims were forced to anally penetrate the offender in 42.5% of the cases in the Walker et al. (2005) study. These differences may be due to varying sample sizes, as Almond et al. (2014) used a much larger sample size than the aforementioned studies.

1.4 | The present study

Research into the characteristics of male-on-male sexual assault is lacking, and the research that does exist has produced contradictory findings, adding to the difficulty of getting a clear picture of the nature of this offence, especially in terms of victim, offender and offence characteristics. To the authors' knowledge, there has not been a single study that focuses on these characteristics using a larger sample size. In addition, previous reviews of male-on-male sexual assault have merely made reference to findings from the individual studies considered (c.f. McLean, 2013); there have been no detailed meta-analyses of combined statistics on the nature and characteristics of male-on-male sexual assault offering figures on how often different features or attributes present.

Male sexual assault has been described as a 'poorly understood phenomenon' (Hillman et al., 1990); further research could potentially change this. Research into the victim, offender and offence characteristics of male-on-male sexual assault could have an impact on reducing the myths that surround this offence, enabling victims to come

forward and report the offence. This, in turn, could help generate an increase in the support available for male victims, both in terms of immediate as well as long-term physical and psychological treatment (King et al., 2002). It could also increase recognition for victims among legal and medical professionals, enabling victims to be treated better and with more respect.

The aim of the current study is therefore to conduct a systematic review of previous research to identify the most prevalent victim, offender and offence characteristics of male-on-male sexual assault.

2 | METHOD

2.1 | Search strategy

A search in Summon, PsychInfo, Science Direct and Google Scholar was performed in May and June 2015. Cited published research not generated in the search was also accessed. The following search terms and keywords were used in order to identify relevant articles: *male, male-on-male, non-incarcerated male, victim characteristics, offender characteristics, offence characteristics* along with the main search term *sexual assault*.

2.2 | Selection process

Articles included in the current study had to meet a set of criteria as follows:

1. The study must have contained data on victim characteristics and/or offender characteristics and/or offence characteristics of male on male sexual assault
2. The study must have been written in English.
3. The study must have taken a quantitative approach to data description and/or analysis.

No time scale or sample size criteria were employed.

Fifty-three studies were examined in order to determine whether they contained the relevant information, and they met all the inclusion criteria. These were all subsequently assessed by two members of the research team, with regard to both the quality of the data available and of the research methodology employed. A total of 15 relevant empirical studies were identified for inclusion in the analysis, on the basis of reviewer consensus.

2.3 | Data extraction and analysis

The combined information from the 15 studies was extracted into a summary table. The following data were retrieved from the studies: study (author/s and year of publication), study population, method of data collection, findings for victim characteristics, findings for offender characteristics and findings for offence characteristics. The studies had a very wide range of data collection methods, and also a wide range of results – with different methods of presenting these. Because of these factors, the overall results are presented narratively in Table 1.

3 | RESULTS

Tables 2 and 3 present the findings for victim, offender and offence characteristics. In total, 5,112 sexual assault cases were included in this review, although it should be noted that the sample size for every different characteristic varied as not all studies reported all of them. In addition, while some studies included a number of other characteristics, not all were included in Table 1 as it was not possible to disentangle the data, or the information provided was deemed not to be accurate.

TABLE 1 Description of 15 studies included in review

Study	Study population (location)	Method of data collection	Findings		
			Victim characteristics	Offender characteristics	Offence characteristics
Almond et al. (2014)	305 male victims of sexual assault (UK)	Data were retrieved from the Serious Crime Analysis Section (SCAS) UK database, recorded from 1998 to 2011.	Age: Mean age 26.52 years (SD = 10.70)	Age: Mean age 27.53 years (SD = 9.71) No. of offenders: 64% (196) one offender; 36% (109) multiple offenders	Violence: 31% (96) violence; 31% (96) weapon use or reference to: 30% (93) force; 29% (89) physical injuries; 27% (82) verbal threats Acts subjected: 7% (21) digital anal penetration; 19% (58) fondling of genitals; 11% (34) masturbation; 13% (40) fellatio; 6% (18) ejaculation on victim Acts forced: 35% (107) fellatio; 27% (82) victim was made to perform sexual acts; 7% (21) masturbation
Coxell et al. (2000)	21 male victims of sexual assault (UK)	224 participants visiting a genitourinary medicine clinic were asked to complete a computerised interview.	No data	No data	Acts subjected: 52% (11) fondling/touching of genitals; 43% (9) masturbation; 29% (6) fellatio; 29% (6) masturbation over victim; 29% (6) anal penetration; 19% (4) anal penetration (object) Acts forced: 43% (9) masturbation; 43% (9) fellatio; 29% (6) fondling/touching of genitals; 5% (1) anal penetration
Groth & Burgess, (1980)	22 cases (6 male victims of sexual assault; 16 male offenders who	Victims were either self-referred or referred by the police or hospital personnel.	Age: Mean age 17.5 years (range: 16–28) Race: 100% (6) White Sexuality: 50% (3)	Age: Mean age 24 years Race: 81% (13) White;	Relationship (n = 16): 75% (12) strangers; 18.7% (3) acquaintances; 6.2% (1) brother

(Continues)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Study	Study population (location)	Method of data collection	Findings		
			Victim characteristics	Offender characteristics	Offence characteristics
	admitted to sexually assaulting another male; USA	Convicted offenders referred to the study. Interviews were conducted, and clinical records were examined.	heterosexual; 16.6% (1) homosexual; 16.6% (1) bisexual; 16.6% (1) unknown	19% (3) Black Sexuality: 50% (8) heterosexual; 37.5% (6) bisexual; 12.5% (2) homosexual	
Hickson et al. (1994)	219 homosexual male victims of sexual assault (UK)	930 homosexual men, recruited through requests for participation in public places and published media, were interviewed. Only those who had been sexually assaulted and by another man were included in the study.	Age: Mean age 16.1 years	No. of offenders (n = 212): 11.3% (24) multiple offenders	Acts subjected: 45.2% (99) anal penetration; 13.2% (29) touching/fondling of genitals over or through clothes; 11.9% (26) masturbation; 5.9% (13) oral penetration; 5% (11) attempted anal penetration; 2.3% (5) rubbing against body; 4.7% (10) fellatio; 1.4% (3) masturbation & ejaculation over the victim Acts forced: 3.7% (8) masturbation.
Hodge and Canter (1998)	119 cases of male sexual assault (UK)	83 self-report questionnaires (participants recruited using advertisements placed in the national press) and 36 cases from police records (the 43 UK police forces provided reports of cases in their jurisdictions)	Age: Self report – mean age 24 years; 54% (44) 16–21 years Police report – mean age 25.5 years; 51% (18) 18–21 years Sexuality: Self report – 40% (26) homosexual; 35% (24) heterosexual Police report – 32% (8) homosexual; 60% (15) heterosexual	Age: Self report – 40% (33) 22–30 years Police report – 42% (14) 22–30 years Sexuality: Self report (n = 66) – 45% (30) heterosexual; (15) homosexual; (21) bisexual Police report (n = 23) – 43% (10) bisexual; 33% (8) homosexual; 22% (1) other	Relationship: Self report (n = 81) – 50% (40) acquaintance (more than 24 hours); 28% (23) acquaintance (less than 24 hours); 22% (18) stranger Police report (n = 36) – 39% (14) stranger; 33% (12) acquaintance (less than 24 hours); 25% (9) acquaintance (more than 24 hours); 3% (1) other Location: 32% (38)

(Continues)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Study	Study population (location)	Method of data collection	Findings		
			Victim characteristics	Offender characteristics	Offence characteristics
Isely and Gehrenbeck-Shim (1997)	3,635 male victims of sexual assault (USA)	Brief surveys were sent to 1,300 agencies, serving victims of male sexual assault, across the USA. Information provided was drawn from their clinical records.	<p>Race (n = 1,968): 85% (1,664) White; 12% (229) Black; 2% (55) Latino; 0.8% (15) Native American; 0.2% (5) Asian</p> <p>Sexuality (n = 1,062): 81% (856) heterosexual; 16% (174) homosexual; 3% (32) bisexual</p>	<p>Race (n = 1,044): 78.4% (818) White; 19.2% (201) Black; 2.2% (23) Latino; 0.2% (2) Native American; 0% Asian</p> <p>Sexuality (n = 1,107): 89.5% (991) heterosexual; 8% (89) homosexual; 2.5% (27) bisexual</p> <p>No. of offenders: (n = 1,977) 59.2% (1,170) one offender; 40.8% (807) multiple offenders</p>	<p>Relationship (n = 1,940): 68.5% (1,329) acquaintance; 31.5% (611) stranger</p> <p>Location (n = 1,736): 22.6% (392) victim's home; 14.1% (244) offender's home; 5.7% (98) park; 0.9% (16) bar; 3.3% (58) public restroom; 7.5% (130) college campus; 15.6% (271) other public area; 6.6% (114) car; 2.4% (42) while hitchhiking; 9.2% (160) while walking; 12.1% (211) other</p> <p>Violence (n = 1,904): 59.9% (1,140) physical force; 68% (1,294) physical threat; 48.8% (872) weapon use (n = 1,786)</p>
			<p>(5) heterosexual</p> <p>No. of offenders (both datasets): 64% (76) one offender; 34% (40) multiple offenders</p>	<p>offender's house; 31% (37) in public/outdoors; 15% (18) victim's house; 6% (7) in private/indoors; 5% (6) offender's car; 11% (13) other.</p> <p>Violence: 35% (14 out of 39) of heterosexual victims sustained serious injuries; 45% (15 out of 34) homosexual victims serious injuries; 61% (24 out of 39) heterosexual and 89% (30 out of 34) of homosexual minor injuries</p>	

(Continues)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Study	Study population (location)	Method of data collection	Findings		
			Victim characteristics	Offender characteristics	Offence characteristics
Kaufman et al. (1980)	14 male victims of sexual assault. (USA)	Data from the Sexual Assault Response Team, sponsored by the University of New Mexico. The follow up care was used to compile information on the victims.	No data	No data	<p>Acts subjected (n = 1,808): 71.4% (1,291) anal penetration/ intercourse; 6.6% (120) anal penetration (object); 22.6% (409) fellatio; 19.5% (353) fondling; 23.3% (422) other sexual acts (e.g. masturbation)</p> <p>Acts forced (n = 1,686): 59.3% (1,000) fellatio; 24% (404) fondling; 6.6% (111) anal penetration</p> <p>Violence: 64% (9) beaten; 36% (5) severely beaten</p> <p>Acts subjected: 100% (14) anal penetration</p> <p>Acts forced: 64% (9) fellatio</p>
Kimerling et al. (2002)	68 male victims of sexual assault (USA)	Data were obtained via chart review of the San Francisco rape treatment Centre (SFRTC) for the years 1992–1996.	<p>Age: Mean age 30.06 years</p> <p>Race: 67.6% (46) Caucasian; 14.7% (10) Hispanic; 11.8% (8) African American; 2.9% (2) Asian; 1.5% (1) Native American; 1.5% (1) other unknown.</p> <p>Sexuality (n = 57): 50.9% (29) homosexual; 38.6% (22) heterosexual; 10.5% (6) bisexual</p>	<p>No. of offenders: 27.9% (19) multiple offenders</p>	<p>Relationship: 36.8% (25) stranger; 10.3% (7) current/former intimate partner</p> <p>Location (n = 55): 23.6% (13) victim's home; 18.4% (10) offender's home</p> <p>Violence (n = 55): 35.3% (19) physical injuries; (n = 35) 47.2% (17) restraints; (n = 36) 8.6% (3) burns</p> <p>Acts subjected: 76.5% (52) anal penetration</p>

(Continues)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Study	Study population (location)	Method of data collection	Findings		
			Victim characteristics	Offender characteristics	Offence characteristics
Lundrigan and Mueller-Johnson (2013)	209 cases of stranger male rape (UK)	Data were obtained from the Serious Crime Analysis Section (SCAS) of the Serious Organised Crime agency (SOCA), UK from 1998 to 2011.	Age: Mean age 25.8 years (SD = 11.0)	No data	Violence: 7% (15) moderate to severe levels of violence; 29% (61) weapon use; 30% (63) verbal threats Acts subjected: 76% (159) anal penetration; 23% (48) fondling; 19% (40) fellatio; 15% (31) masturbation; 7% (15) ejaculation on victim's body/face; 4% (8) anilingus Acts forced: 42% (88) fellatio; 14% (29) masturbation; 4% (8) fondling
Mezey and King (1989)	22 male victims of sexual assault (UK)	Participants were recruited through UK national newspapers. All completed a questionnaire and 8 attended for an interview.	Age: Mean age 26.3 years (range 16–82) Race: 100% (22) White Sexuality: 45.5% (10) homosexual; 36.4% (8) heterosexual; 18.1% (4) bisexual	Race: 95.5% (21) White; 4.5% (1) Black Sexuality: 50% (11) homosexual; 13.6% (3) bisexual; 22.8% (5) unknown No. of offenders: 82% (18) one offender; 18% (4) multiple offenders	Relationship: 18% (4) stranger; 82% (18) acquaintance - 16.7% (3) lover/ex-lover; 5.5% (1) family member; 33.3% (6) well established acquaintance; 27.8% (5) brief acquaintance a few hours; 16.7% (3) sexual pick-up; in 38.9% (7) cases position of trust or authority Location: 41% (9) offender's home; 27.2% (6) outdoors; 22.7% (5) victim's home; 9.1% (2) neutral territory Violence: 68.2% (15) physical injuries; 9.1%

(Continues)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Study	Study population (location)	Method of data collection	Findings		
			Victim characteristics	Offender characteristics	Offence characteristics
Monk-Turner and Light (2010)	219 male victims of sexual assault or rape (USA)	Male respondents to the Violence and Threats of Violence Against Women and Men in the United States Survey between the years 1994 and 1996 who disclosed victimisation were interviewed.	Race: 79% White (173); 9% (20) African American/Black; 12% (26) other	No data	(2) weapon use Acts subjected: 77.3% (17) anal penetration; 13.6% (3) attempted anal penetration; 50% (11) multiple types of assault, that is, urinated on; 22.7% (5) masturbation Violence: 11% (24) physical injuries; 5% (11) weapon use; 23% (50) threats Acts subjected: 32% (70) anal penetration
Pesola et al. (1999)	24 male victims of sexual assault (USA)	Charts of all patients visiting St Vincent's Hospital and Medical Centre of New York between 01.1994 and 12.1997 were reviewed, 27 cases were included in the study (24 patients).	Age: Mean age 28.9 years (range: 13–68) Race: 50% (12) White; 25% (6) African American; 8.3% (2) Hispanic, 16.7% (4) unknown Sexuality: 41.7% (10) homosexuals; 20.8% (5) heterosexual; 37.5% (9) unknown	No data	Relationship (n = 19): 47.4% (9) acquaintance (more than 24 hours); 26.3% (5) acquaintance (less than 24 hours); 26.3% (5) stranger Violence: 37.5% (9) physical injuries Acts subjected: 58.3% (14) anal penetration; 16.7% (4) oral intercourse; 37.5% (9) both anal and oral intercourse
Stermac, Del Bove, and Addison (2004)	144 male victims of sexual assault (Canada)	Cases were extracted from a hospital's Sexual Assault Care Centre database in Ontario, Canada	Age: Mean age 26.7 years (range 14–65) Race: 67% (96) Caucasian; 19.65% (29) visible minorities; 13.4% (19) unknown	No data	Relationship: 55% (79) acquaintance; 45% (65) stranger Location: 29% (42) offender's home; 26% (37) park/outside; 14%

(Continues)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Study	Study population (location)	Method of data collection	Findings		
			Victim characteristics	Offender characteristics	Offence characteristics
		between 1992 and 1999.			(20) victim's home; 6.25% (9) institution Violence: 44% (64) physical injuries; 39% (56) verbal threats; 37.5% (54) physical restraint; 22% (32) weapon use; 18% (26) physical violence Acts subjected: 58% (83) anal penetration; 42% (60) fellatio; 21.5% (31) touching/fondling; 2% (3) foreign object penetration
Walker et al. (2005)	40 male victims of sexual assault (UK)	Advertisements were placed in newspapers and males magazines in the UK and also on sexual assault victim's pages on the internet. Respondents were asked to complete five questionnaires.	Age: Mean age 24 years Race: 100% (40) White Sexuality: 53% (21) homosexual; 32% (13) heterosexual; 10% (4) bisexual; 5% (2) asexual	Race: 92.5% (37) White; 5% (2) Moroccan; 2.5% (1) Black Sexuality: 42.5% (17) homosexual; 22.5% (9) heterosexual; 12.5% (5) bisexual; 22.5% (9) unknown No. of offenders: 62.5% (25) one offender; 37.5% (15) multiple offenders	Relationship: 25% (10) stranger; 20% (8) brief acquaintance; 17.5% (7) well-established acquaintance; 15% (6) lover or ex-lover; 10% (4) family member; 12.5% (5) person in position of trust Location: 45% (18) offender's home; 20% (8) victim's home; 10% (4) street; 5% (2) vehicle; 20% (8) other Violence: 52.5% (21) physical force; 27.5% (11) violent force; 10% (4) weapon use Acts subjected: 100% (40) anal penetration; 55% (22) anal and

(Continues)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Study	Study population (location)	Method of data collection	Findings		
			Victim characteristics	Offender characteristics	Offence characteristics
Weiss (2010)	51 male victims of sexual assault or rape. (USA)	Victim narratives from the National Crime Victimization Survey in the USA collected during the years 1992–2000.	No data	Age: 22.9% (12) (12–17 years); 25% (13) (18–24 years); 52.1 (26) (25+ older years)	oral penetration; 50% (20) masturbation; 15% (6) anal penetration (object) Acts forced: 42.5% (17) anal penetration; 10% (4) masturbation Relationship: 29.4% (15) co-workers; 23.5% strangers (12); 15.7% (8) other acquaintances; 13.7% (7) friends; 5.9% other family (3); 3.9% (2) intimate partners; 3.9% (2) classmates; 3.9% (2) neighbours and roommates Violence: 17.6% (9) either physical injury or weapon use

3.1 | Victim characteristics

The most commonly reported victim characteristics were age, race and sexuality (Table 2). The overall mean age of male sexual assault victims was found to be 24.7 years. The highest percentage of victims were White/Caucasian (82.6%), while Black/African Americans made up the second largest group (approximately 10% of the sample). In terms of sexuality, studies showed different findings, with some reporting the highest percentage of victims being heterosexual (Groth & Burgess, 1980; Hodge & Canter, 1998; Isely & Gehrenbeck-Shim, 1997) and others homosexual (Kimerling et al., 2002; Mexey & King, 1989; Pesola et al., 1999). Overall, though, the majority of victims were heterosexual (71.1%), 21% were homosexual, and 3.5% were bisexual. From the above, it can be concluded that most victims of male-on-male sexual assault tend to be white and heterosexual, with a mean age of 24.7 years.

3.2 | Offender characteristics

The most commonly reported offender characteristics were age, race, sexuality and number of offenders involved in the attack (Table 2). Although very few studies reported the age of male sexual assault offenders, the overall mean age was found to be 25.8 years. As with victims, the highest percentage of offenders were White/Caucasian (79.2%) and Black/African American made up the second largest group (approximately 18% of the sample). The overwhelming majority of offenders were found to be heterosexual (82.1%), a finding supported by most studies. 11.1% were homosexual and 5.7% bisexual. While most sexual assaults (62.8%) involved one offender, more than one third of the victims (37.2) were assaulted by more than one offender (range 2–6). From the above findings it can be concluded that offenders of male-on-male sexual assault tend to be white and heterosexual, with a mean age of 25.8 years, and to act alone during the assault.

3.3 | Offence characteristics

While a number of different characteristics were reported in the studies reviewed, five major themes of offence characteristics were created, as these were the most commonly reported. These are relationship victim-offender, location of offence, level of violence, acts victims were subjected to and acts victims were forced to perform (Table 3). The

TABLE 2 Summary of victim and offender characteristics

Victim characteristics		Offender characteristics	
Age (n = 1,156)		Age (n = 321)	
Mean age	24.7	Mean age	25.8
Race (n = 2,491)		Race (n = 1,122)	
White/Caucasian	82.6% (2,059)	White/Caucasian	79.2% (889)
Black/African American	10.6% (263)	Black/African American	18.4% (206)
Hispanic/Latino	2.7% (67)	Hispanic/Latino	2% (23)
Native American	0.6% (16)	Native American	0.2% (2)
Asian	0.3% (7)	Moroccan	0.2% (2)
Minorities	1.2% (29)	No. of offenders (n = 2,740)	
Other	1.04% (26)	One offender	62.8% (1,722)
Unknown	0.96% (24)	Multiple offenders	37.2% (1,018)
Sexuality (n = 1,330)		Sexuality (n = 1,274)	
Heterosexual	71.1% (946)	Heterosexual	82.1% (1,046)
Homosexual	21% (279)	Homosexual	11.1% (142)
Bisexual	3.5% (47)	Bisexual	5.7% (72)
Unknown	4.2% (56)	Unknown	1.1% (14)
Asexual	0.2% (2)		

TABLE 3 Summary of offence characteristics

Offence characteristics	
Relationship victim-offender (<i>n</i> = 2,380)	
Acquaintances	67.4% (1,604)
Strangers	32.6% (776)
Location of offence (<i>n</i> = 2,046)	
Victim's home	22.3% (456)
Offender's home	17.7% (361)
Other public area	13.2% (271)
Other	11.3% (232)
In public/outdoors/park	8.9% (182)
While walking	7.8% (160)
College campus	6.4% (130)
Car	6% (122)
Public restroom	2.8% (58)
While hitchhiking	2.1% (42)
Bar	0.8% (16)
Institution	0.4% (9)
In private/indoors	0.3% (7)
Level of violence (<i>n</i> = 3,060)	
Physical violence	58.8% (1,799)
Verbal/physical threats	50.5% (1,545)
Weapon use	35.2% (1,078)
Acts victim was subjected to (<i>n</i> = 3,093)	
Anal penetration	60% (1,845)
Fellatio/oral intercourse	18.6% (576)
Fondling/touching (including genitals)	17.1% (530)
Other sexual acts	14.4% (446)
Anal penetration (object)	4.3% (133)
Masturbation	4% (122)
Ejaculation on/masturbation over victim	1.4% (42)
Both oral and anal intercourse	1% (31)
Anal penetration (digital)	0.7% (21)
Acts victim was forced to perform (<i>n</i> = 2,616)	
Fellatio/oral intercourse	46.4% (1,213)
Fondling/touching (including genitals)	16% (418)
Anal penetration	4.9% (129)
Various sexual acts	3.1% (82)
Masturbation	2.7% (71)

majority of offenders were acquainted with the victim (67.4%), a finding consistent in most studies reviewed, while strangers made up 32.6% of the sample. It should be noted that the category 'acquaintances' includes both well-established relationships and brief acquaintanceships (less than 24 hours), as well as current/former intimate partners, lovers/ex-lovers, family members, sexual pick-ups, friends, classmates, neighbours, roommates, co-workers and persons in position of trust. Because of the different ways that studies reported the relationship between offenders and victims it was not possible to provide a more accurate breakdown.

Although location of offence was also reported differently in most studies, the current review found that most sexual assaults took place either at the victim's (22.3%) or offender's (17.7%) home. The rest of the assaults occurred in public areas not specified (13.2%), in public/outdoors/park (8.9%; most of these took place in parks), college campuses (6.4%), vehicles (6%), public restrooms (2.8%), bars (0.4%), institutions (0.4%) and in private/indoors (0.3%). For approximately 11% of the cases, information was not provided. Isely and Gehrenbeck-Shim (1997) reported two categories not appearing in any other studies; while walking (7.8%) and while hitchhiking (2.1%).

Most sexual assaults for which information was provided involved some level of physical or verbal violence. Out of the 3,060 cases for which information on various forms of violence was provided, almost 60% (58.8%) involved physical violence. This included physical violence, physical and violent force, with physical injuries ranging from minor to severe. Further, half of the victims (50.5%) were threatened and in over one-third of the cases (35.2%) a weapon was used.

The victims of male sexual assault in the studies reviewed were subjected to various acts. There were mixed findings on the number of victims subjected to anal penetration, with studies ranging from 7% (Almond et al., 2014) to 100% (Walker et al., 2005). It should be stressed out that the 7% refers to digital anal penetration; no reference was made to anal penetration by other means, and it is not clear from the study whether this variable was not reported by the authors or did not occur in their sample of 305 male victims of sexual assault. Therefore caution should be exercised when interpreting these results. Overall, from all 15 studies reviewed, the percentage for anal penetration, the highest occurring act victims were subjected to, was 60%. The offender fondled the victim in almost 20% of the cases and was fondled/touched (including genitals) in approximately 17% of the cases. Victims were also anally penetrated with objects (4.3%) and digitally penetrated (0.7%). Four percent of the offenders masturbated their victims, and some ejaculated on/masturbated over the victim's body and/or face (1.4%). As with anal penetration, caution should be exercised when interpreting these results as some studies (i.e. Isely & Gehrenbeck-Shim, 1997) included some of these acts in a category 'other sexual acts'. For example, Isely and Gehrenbeck-Shim (1997) included masturbation and acts they did not specify in 'other sexual acts'. For the purpose of this review, this category also including 8 cases of anilingus, 11 cases of offender urinating on the victim and 5 cases where the offender was rubbing himself against the victim's body. Other sexual acts were reported in approximately 15% of the cases.

Fewer studies reported acts that the victim was forced to perform. The most common was fellatio or oral intercourse, occurring in almost half the cases (46.4%). Other acts victims reported they were forced to perform were fondling/touching the offender's genitals (16%), anally penetrating the offender (4.9%) and masturbating the offender (2.7%). Various sexual acts were reported in 3.1% of the cases.

From the aforementioned findings, it can be concluded that most male-on-male sexual assaults tend to involve acquaintances, are violent in nature, and take place either at the victim's or the offender's home. Victims are subjected to various sexual acts, with anal penetration being the most frequent. They are also often forced to perform oral sex on the offender.

4 | DISCUSSION

The aim of the current study was to conduct a systematic review of previous research to identify the most prevalent victim, offender and offence characteristics of male-on-male sexual assault.

Findings revealed that most victims of male-on-male sexual assault tend to be young, with a mean age of 24.7 years, White and heterosexual. In terms of race, all studies included in the review reported the highest percentages of victims as being White, a finding that it is not surprising given that all of these studies took place in countries with higher populations of White individuals. Variations in the percentages of victim's race were also observed depending on where the study was carried out. For example, Pesola et al. (1999) reported that 25% of the victims in their sample were African/American and 8.3% Hispanic. This study was conducted in a hospital in New York, and this may explain the higher percentages of these groups. The finding on sexuality is an interesting one, as previous studies have reported mixed results – a fact that can be attributed to different methods of data collection. For

example, studies that found the majority of their victims to be homosexual (i.e. (Kimerling et al., 2002; Pesola et al., 1999; Walker et al., 2005) obtained their data from hospital charts in American hospitals or by placing advertisements in UK newspapers, which may have resulted in a higher number of homosexual victims attending these clinics or responding to the advertisements. Heterosexual men find it more difficult to report their assaults or volunteer information from fear of being labelled as 'gay', out of embarrassment, or because they struggle to come to terms with what happened, questioning their sexuality (Davies, 2002). Contrary to this, studies that found the majority of their victims to be heterosexual (Groth & Burgess, 1980; Hodge & Canter, 1998; Isely & Gehrenbeck-Shim, 1997) used mixed methods of data collection, including police records, surveys sent to agencies supporting victims of sexual assault and referrals from police and hospital staff, all of which are likely to provide a more accurate picture.

In relation to offender characteristics, results revealed that most perpetrators of male-on-male sexual assault tend to be young, with a mean age of 25.8 years (slightly older than the average victim), White, heterosexual and to act alone during the assault. As with the findings for victim's race, caution should be exercised when interpreting these results, as the studies took place in countries (the UK and the USA) with higher percentages of Caucasians. Similar to victim sexuality, studies reported mixed results with regards to perpetrator sexuality, which again can be attributed to the different methods of data collection. For example; two studies that found the offenders in their sample to be mainly homosexuals or bisexuals (Hodge & Canter, 1998; Mezey & King, 1989) relied on victims providing information on their offender's sexuality and this may have not been accurate. Groth and Burgess (1980), who found 50% of their sample to be heterosexuals, interviewed offenders directly, and this is likely to have provided more accurate results. In relation to the number of offenders; while all studies included in this review reported higher percentages for lone offending, it should be noted that more than one third of the assaults included multiple offenders.

In terms of offence characteristics, results revealed that most male-on-male sexual assaults tend to involve acquaintances, to be physically violent in nature and to take place either at the victim's or the offender's home. Victims are subjected to various sexual acts, with anal penetration being the most frequent. As pointed out in the introduction, while the majority of the studies support the finding that the offender and victim are usually acquaintances (McLean, Balding, & White, 2005), the term 'acquaintance' can be problematic as it has a different meaning in the various studies. It can mean anything from a sexual pick-up (acquaintances for a few hours) to well-established relationships (intimate partners, friends, colleagues and so on). The one study in this review that found different results, with the majority of the offenders being strangers (Groth & Burgess, 1980), relied on information from convicted offenders, and it may be that offenders who attack acquaintances are less likely to be convicted as their victims choose not to press charges against them, as suggested by Walby, Allen, and Simmons (2004). In the current review, strangers made up almost 33% of the overall sample. The finding that most sexual assaults take place either at the victim's or the offender's home is not surprising if we interpret this in conjunction with the finding that most offenders are acquainted with the victim. The next most common location identified was the offence occurring in a public place, which is possibly those cases in which offenders attack strangers, although this claim would need to be further investigated. Almost 60% of the cases in this review involved physical violence, in the forms of physical and violent force, and/or physical injuries ranging from minor to severe. Half of the victims were threatened, and over one-third of the cases involved the use of a weapon. It should be noted that not all studies reported information regarding the presence or absence of physical injury or physical or violent force, which may have affected the overall findings of this review. For example, Mezey and King (1989) reported that 68.2% of their participants were physically injured, yet there was no indication of violent or physical force in their study. It is assumed that injury would have occurred due to some sort of force used against the victim.

In terms of the sexual acts occurring during the offence, this review looked into acts that the victim was subjected to and acts that the victim was forced to perform. Overall, the most likely act victims were subjected to was found to be anal penetration (60% of victims), followed by oral intercourse, fondling/touching, anal penetration with object, masturbation and ejaculation on/masturbation over the victim's body and face. Similar to the findings in relation to physical violence, many of these acts varied from study to study, producing mixed results with anal penetration for example ranging from as low as 7% (anal penetration digital) to 100%. This can be explained by the fact that not all

studies report the same sexual acts that victims were subjected to, in addition to the fact that data collection methods may have had an impact on what has been reported by victims. For example, although this review found that overall only 4% of the victims were masturbated by the offender, a careful examination of the findings of the studies included in this review that reported this act shows that it occurred in between 11% (Almond et al., 2014) and 50% (Walker et al., 2005) of cases in most studies. Only one study (Hickson et al., 1994) reported a 1.4% occurrence which, together with the absence of reports of this act by many of the studies, may have resulted in a low overall frequency. A similar pattern was identified for oral intercourse, anal penetration (object), fondling of genitals and attempted anal penetration.

The most common act that almost half of the victims were forced to perform was found to be oral intercourse on the offender, followed by fondling/touching, anal penetration, various sexual acts and masturbation. However, even fewer studies reported acts that the victim was forced to perform, in relation to acts the victim was subjected to, resulting in a lack of adequate information.

The aforementioned findings have contributed towards an enriched understanding of the nature of sexual assault against males, demonstrating that the male-on-male sexual assaults are similar in many ways to male-on-female sexual assaults. Findings therefore provide evidence to counteract the myths that seemingly surround this type of offence. Myths, such as victims of male-on-male sexual assaults being homosexuals or acting in a 'gay' manner (Coxell & King, 1996), can further victimise those subjected to it, making it harder for them to deal with their assault, making them question their sexuality, or may result in them being stigmatised by society (Davies, 2002) and deprived of support. Similarly, the myth that only homosexual men would sexually assault another man (Coxell & King, 1996) has not been supported here, showing that a sexual assault may not be about sexual desire but an expression of aggression (Lacey & Roberts, 1991), further evidenced by the high levels of violence involved in such attacks. Therefore the choice of victim does not have necessarily have to do with his/her gender, but other situational and individual (i.e. vulnerability) factors. By abolishing such myths and consequent stigma, male sexual assault victims may be more willing to report the offence. This, in turn, may result in more offenders brought to justice. In addition, these findings may prove to be educational for various professionals (i.e. legal and medical) who deal with male victims of sexual assault, and might hopefully contribute to an increase in support services for male victims, including tailored support centres and programmes.

Despite the importance of these findings, the study has a number of limitations. Many studies that were reviewed did not provide information on all offender and/or victim characteristics, or did not include all offence characteristics. This may have impacted on the accuracy of the findings. Although the number of cases involved is large, the presence or absence of certain variables, characteristics and/or behaviours may have skewed the results. It may be the case that some acts with low frequencies occur more often but were not reported, either by the victims in the studies or by the researchers. Another limitation concerns definitional issues; for example, it was not possible to separate 'acquaintances' of a few hours from those with an established relationship due to the fact that not all studies provided this information. They therefore had to be combined in one category. In addition, some studies may have had a greater influence on the overall findings of the review due to larger sample sizes. Further, the study by Isely and Gehrenbeck-Shim (1997) included a very small number (120) of female offenders which it was impossible to remove from the overall sample. As this was one of the most extensive reviews, based on empirical data of 3,635 cases, of male sexual assault available, it was deemed important to include in this review. This small number of female perpetrators, though, may have affected the overall findings.

Further research to address these limitations needs to be carried out. Presently, all research into male-on-male sexual assault has been carried out in western countries, most commonly the UK and the USA. It is suggested that future works should seek to utilise larger, national datasets in order to enable more detailed and robust investigations of the characteristics and features of male-on-male sexual assaults. Findings from such studies could then be compared in order to examine contextual and cultural variations in terms of the characteristics of such offences; something that was beyond the scope and remit of the present study. Further, it is difficult to draw any reliable conclusions with regards to what is typical with regards to male sexual victimisation, given the varied and differing samples employed in existing studies. Utilising more representative, population-based samples would provide a

greater degree of insight than that available from the current figures and findings. It would also be valuable for future research to consider any temporal changes or variations in data on male-on-male sexual victimisation, to establish whether there are any changing patterns with regards to victim, offender and offence characteristics. This would further enable potential bases for any myths regarding such offences to be addressed, as well as the likely impacts of changing public perceptions. The impacts of changes with regards to policy and provisions for male victims of sexual offences could also be considered.

Most previous studies have been conducted from a victim perspective, using available data. Future research should therefore be carried out with offenders of male-on-male sexual assault. More extensive comparisons between the characteristics and victimisation of males and females should also be conducted, in order for tailored support services and programmes to be developed. From the findings of the current review, it seems that the two offences (male-on-female and male-on-male) have many similarities, but this needs to be further investigated.

The present review is only one step towards an enhanced understanding of the nature of male-on-male sexual assault and the abolishment of a number of myths that surround this type of offence. More research is needed in order to encourage victims to come forward and, in turn, increase public awareness and support services for male victims of sexual assault. A recent newspaper article by a male rape victim expressed that the support service Survivors, the main support service available solely for male victims of sexual assault in the UK, was 'instrumental in saving my life' (Alexander, 2015). Such facilities need to be made more readily available, in order to save more victims.

REFERENCES

- Alexander, B. (2015, May 26). I was raped by another man. And now the government wants to take away the one thing that saved my life. *The Independent*. Retrieved from <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/i-was-raped-by-another-man-and-now-the-government-wants-to-take-away-the-one-thing-that-saved-my-life-10276852.html#commentReference>.
- Almond, L., McManus, M. A., & Ward, L. (2014). Male-on-male sexual assaults: An analysis of crime scene actions. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 29*(7), 1279–1296.
- Calderwood, D. (1987). The male rape victim. *Medical Aspects of Human Sexuality, 21*, 53–55.
- Choudhary, E., Gunzler, D., Tu, X., & Bossarte, R. M. (2012). Epidemiological characteristics of male sexual assault in a criminological database. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 27*(3), 523–546.
- Coxell, A. W., & King, M. B. (1996). Male victims of rape and sexual abuse. *Sexual and Marital Therapy, 11*(3), 297–308.
- Coxell, A. W., King, B., Mezey, G. C., & Kell, P. (2000). Sexual molestation of men: Interviews with 224 men attending a genitourinary medicine service. *International Journal of STD & AIDS, 11*(9), 574–578.
- Davies, M. (2002). Male sexual assault victims: A selective review of the literature and implications for support services. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour, 7*(3), 203–214.
- Donnelly, D. A., & Kenyon, S. (1996). "Honey, we don't do men": Gender stereotypes and the provision of services to sexually assaulted males. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 11*, 441–448.
- Elliott, D. M., Mok, D. S., & Briere, J. (2004). Adult sexual assault: Prevalence, symptomatology, and sex differences in the general population. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 17*(3), 203–211.
- Groth, A. N., & Burgess, A. W. (1980). Male rape: Offenders and victims. *The American Journal of Psychiatry, 137*(7), 806–810.
- Haley, J. (2010). Sexual assault. In R. N. Golden, & F. L. Peterson (Eds.), *The truth about abuse* (pp. 182–187). New York: Facts on File Inc.
- Hickson, F. C., Davies, P. M., Hunt, A. J., Weatherburn, P., McManus, T. J., & Coxon, A. P. (1994). Gay men as victims of non-consensual sex. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 23*(3), 281–294.
- Hilden, M., Schei, B., & Sidenius, K. (2005). Genitoanal injury in adult female victims of sexual assault. *Forensic Science International, 154*(2), 200–205.
- Hillman, R. J., Tomlinson, D., McMillan, A., French, P. D., & Harris, J. R. (1990). Sexual assault of men: A series. *Genitourinary Medicine, 66*(4), 247–250.
- Hodge, S., & Canter, D. (1998). Victims and perpetrators of male sexual assault. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 13*(2), 222–239.
- Isely, P. J., & Gehrenbeck-Shim, D. (1997). Sexual assault of men in the community. *Journal of Community Psychology, 25*(2), 159–166.

- Kaufman, A., Divasto, P., Jackson, R., Voorhees, D., & Christy, J. (1980). Male rape victims: Noninstitutionalized assault. *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, *137*, 221–223.
- Kimerling, R., Rellini, A., Kelly, V., Judson, P. L., & Learman, L. A. (2002). Gender differences in victim and crime characteristics of sexual assaults. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *17*(5), 526–532.
- King, M. B. (1990). Male rape. *BMJ [British Medical Journal]*, *301*(6765), 1345–1346.
- King, M., Coxell, A., & Mezey, G. (2002). Sexual molestation of males: Associations with psychological disturbance. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, *181*(2), 153–157.
- King, M., & Woollett, E. (1997). Sexually assaulted males: 115 men consulting a counselling service. *Archives of Sexual Behaviour*, *26*, 579–583.
- Lacey, H. B., & Roberts, R. (1991). Sexual assault on men. *International Journal of STD & AIDS*, *2*(4), 258–260.
- Light, D., & Monk-Turner, E. (2009). Circumstances surrounding male sexual assault and rape: Findings from the national violence against women survey. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *24*(11), 1849–1858.
- Lipscomb, G. H., Muram, D., Speck, P. M., & Mercer, B. M. (1992). Male victims of sexual assault. *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, *267*(22), 3064–3066.
- Lundrigan, S., & Mueller-Johnson, K. (2013). Male stranger rape: A behavioral model of victim-offender interaction. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, *40*(7), 763–783.
- McLean, I. A. (2013). The male victim of sexual assault. *Best Practice & Research. Clinical Obstetrics & Gynaecology*, *27*(1), 39–46.
- McLean, I. A., Balding, V., & White, C. (2005). Further aspects of male-on-male rape and sexual assault in greater Manchester. *Medicine, Science and the Law*, *45*(3), 225–232.
- Mezey, G., & King, M. (1989). The effects of sexual assault on men: A survey of 22 victims. *Psychological Medicine*, *19*(01), 205–209.
- Monk-Turner, E., & Light, D. (2010). Male sexual assault and rape: Who seeks counselling? *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, *22*(3), 255–265.
- Home Office & the Office for National Statistics. (2013, January). An overview of sexual offending in England and Wales. Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/214970/sexual-offending-overview-jan-2013.pdf.
- Pesola, G. R., Westfal, R. E., & Kuffner, C. A. (1999). Emergency department characteristics of male sexual assault. *Academic Emergency Medicine*, *6*(8), 792–798.
- Porche, D. J. (2005). Male sexual assault: History, description, epidemiology, and clinical presentation. *The Journal for Nurse Practitioners*, *1*(4), 196–197.
- Ratner, P. A., Johnson, J. L., Shoveller, J. A., Chan, K., Martindale, S. L., Schilder, A. J., ... Hogg, R. S. (2003). Non-consensual sex experienced by men who have sex with men: Prevalence and association with mental health. *Patient Education and Counselling*, *49*(1), 67–74.
- Riggs, N., Houry, D., Long, G., Markovchick, V., & Feldhaus, K. M. (2000). Analysis of 1,076 cases of sexual assault. *Annals of Emergency Medicine*, *35*(4), 358–362.
- Sivakumaran, S. (2005). Male/male rape and the “taint” of homosexuality. *Human Rights Quarterly*, *27*(4), 1274–1306.
- Stermac, L., Del Bove, G., & Addison, M. (2004). Stranger and acquaintance sexual assault of adult males. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *19*(8), 901–915.
- Stermac, L., Sheridan, P. M., Davidson, A., & Dunn, S. (1996). Sexual assault of adult males. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *11*(1), 52–64.
- Walby, S., Allen, J., & Simmons, J. (2004). Domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking: Findings from the British crime survey. London: Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate.
- Walker, J., Archer, J., & Davies, M. (2005). Effects of rape on men: A descriptive analysis. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *34*(1), 69–80.
- Weiss, K. G. (2010). Male sexual victimization: Examining men's experiences of rape and sexual assault. *Men and Masculinities*, *12*(3), 275–298.
- Welch, J., & Mason, F. (2007). Rape and sexual assault. *BMJ [British Medical Journal]*, *334*(7604), 1154–1158.

How to cite this article: Ioannou M, Hammond L, Machin L. Male-on-male sexual assault: Victim, offender and offence characteristics. *J Investig Psychol Offender Profil*. 2017;14:189-209. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jip.1483>