

Sexual Violence Campaigns: An evaluation of the public's ability to recognise myths and victim blaming within campaigns

Abstract

Sexual violence affects one in three women and one in six men during their lives. In response to sexual violence as an issue and needing control primary prevention strategies were introduced. Primary prevention strategies aim to stop violence before perpetration or victimisation and one method of prevention is through campaigns. However, issues with sexual violence prevention campaigns have been recognised especially their focus on victims and the inclusion of myths and victim-blaming. Rape myth acceptance research has revealed that there is widespread endorsement of myths and victim-blaming among the public. Despite these findings no research has explored the public's ability to recognise myths and victim-blaming within sexual violence campaigns. The present study aimed to explore this gap in the research. An online questionnaire was used to gather data from the public in relation to seven different sexual violence campaign posters. Similarly, to rape myth acceptance research the study explored any age and gender impacts on participants' responses. Participants used a Likert scale to indicate whether they thought each sexual violence campaign poster was helpful for the prevention of sexual violence. The study also examined participants' answers to open questions to identify whether they could recognise specific myths and victim-blaming within sexual violence campaigns. Throughout the project it was evident that campaign posters, which aim to prevent sexual violence, contribute to the issue, and reinforce myths and victim-blaming.