



## Kasey Jahnke and Rose Langston

### ABSTRACT

This study aims to enhance and expand the limited research--primarily international and qualitative--on the relationship between the trauma experience by the secondary victim of rape, and their experience couple satisfaction, using quantitative measures. A slight modification of the Couple Satisfaction Index will be used to measure this. We are limiting our variables by focusing on secondary victims that have been with their intimate partner for at least 6 months at the time of rape, and are 18 years of age and older. The population will be taken from working in connection with sexual assault research centers online. One hypothesis is the trauma experience of the secondary victim of rape effects their experience of couple satisfaction. A second hypothesis is the length of the relationship significantly moderates couple satisfaction for the secondary victim of rape.

### INTRODUCTION

- Relationship satisfaction in couples where one member is a survivor of rape, in the areas of communication and sexual satisfaction, is directly affected by the survivor's PTSD symptoms, especially in those relationships where phsycotherapy is not saught (DiMauro & Renshaw, 2019).
- There is limited research on partners's responses and their experiences of relationship satisfactions following a rape (DiMauro & Renshaw, 2018; Connop & Petrak, 2004).
- The available research suggests the partner's "secondary victims" (Christiansen, D., Bak, R., & Elklit, A. 2012, p. 247) (SV) of rape responses and experiences of feeling confused and conflicted on how to best help and support the "primary victim (PV)" (p. 246) affects the couple's relationship and their experience of relationship satisfaction (Van Vijk, E., & Harrison, 2014 a; Van Wijk, E., Duma, S. E., & Mayers, P. M., 2014b; Christiansen, D., Bak, R., & Elklit, A., 2012, ; Connop & Petrak, 2004)
- This study focuses on the secondary victom's of rape experiences of relationship satisfaction following one partner's surviving a rape--stranger and acquaintance--external to the relationship

### PRIMARY AIM AND HYPOTHESES

#### Research Questions

- Does the trauma experienced by the secondary victim of rape affect their experience of their couple satisfaction?
- Does length of the intimate partner relationship affect the relationship between the trauma experienced by the secondary victim of rape and their couple satisfaction?

#### Hypothesis

H1) The trauma experienced by the secondary victim of rape negatively affects couple satisfaction.

H2) The relationship between the trauma experienced by the secondary victim of rape and their experience of couple satisfaction will be stronger for couples who have been together longer.

### METHODS

#### Participants

- The population of interest is couples where at least one partner was a victim of rape- prior to or since the relationship began.
- The target sample size is between 150 couples.
- The recruiting process will occur by reaching out to couples through the King County Sexual Assault Resource Center (KSARC) website.

#### Procedures

- Responses to surveys are completed by participants and collected online.
- The data will be collected once biweekly over the span of 2 months.
- The data will be separated between long-term couples and new couples for comparison.

### MEASURES

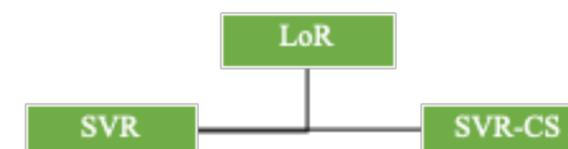
- Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS). Given during week 2 to population that qualifies for our research (couples who are currently together where one or more people have experienced sexual assault).
- Secondary Traumatization Scale (PTSD-8). Given during week 6 to assess for trauma symptoms in secondary victim.
- Relationship Satisfaction Scale. Given during week 4 to assess for relationship satisfaction, given again during week 8 to assess for changes and compare. Scoring will be based on the average of the scores.

T1, assessed for during initial part of study, two weeks. Base one. This is the relationship satisfaction scale.

T2, assessed for at 8 weeks, base two. This is to see if the relationship satisfaction has altered or changed during this time.

### RESULTS

- This study aims to look at the relationship between the trauma experienced by secondary victims of rape and their negative experience of couple satisfaction and the strength of their experience of couple satisfaction based on how long the couple has been together.
- Moderation analysis will be conducted in a multiple regression model to understand the direct relationship between secondary victims of rape and their experience of couple satisfaction and the effect of length of relationship (LoR) on the magnitude of this relationship between secondary victim of rape (SVR) and their experience of couple satisfaction (SVR-CS).



### Discussion

- This study aims to fill a gap in the current limited research on the experiences of secondary victims of rape in their intimate partner relationship.
- A new direction in research beyond this study would be to do research on secondary rape trauma in various categories, doing qualitative studies in North America to expand upon global research.
- Social implications of this study include shedding light on and expanding upon an experience that is real for many couples but is not discussed or researched much in the literature.
- Doing quantitative research provides greater depth of knowledge in this topic which provides more information for the study of this group.
- Researching this topic creates more information for rape survivors, and builds upon information for clinicians in the field. This would benefit the pool of research by expanding where it is coming from and who it impacts based on culture and relevance.