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Healthcare Seeking Behaviors of Sexually Assaulted Women

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Health Care Seeking Behaviors of Sexually Assaulted Women



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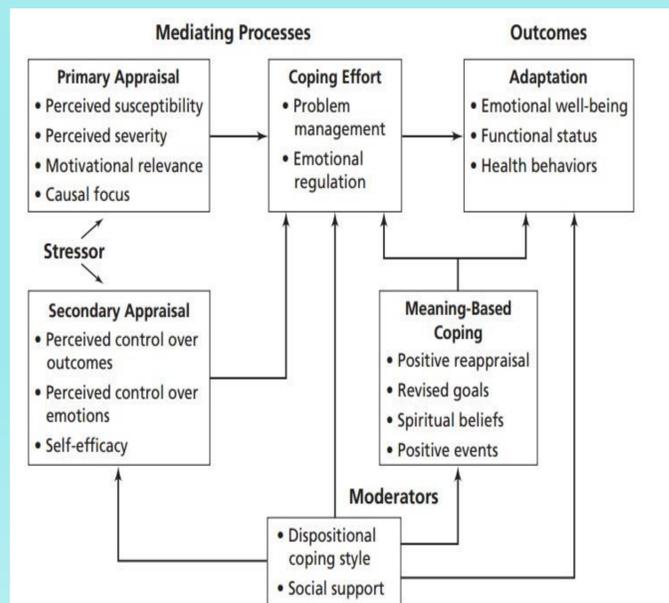
Background and Significance

- Every 98 seconds someone is sexually assaulted
- 321,000 Americans over 12 years old and 60,000 children were sexually assaulted in 2016
- 94% of women experience acute stress disorder post assault
- 30% of women experience PTSD post assault
- Sexual assault survivors often go untreated
- Long term psychological and physical effects often manifest including panic attacks, trust issues, somatic body pain, and poor health

Theoretical Framework

Stress Coping and Adaptation Model deals with how a person copes with a stressful situation. The two main factors are:

- 1) Person-environment relationship
- 2) Appraisals



Research Questions and Purpose

Purpose: explore the long-term effect that sexual assault has on the health care seeking behavior of female survivors

Research Questions:

- 1) **What are the health seeking habits of female survivors of sexual assault?**
- 2) **What are interventions that nurses can use to better care for these patients?**

Methods

- Integrative Review based on the Whittemore and Knafl framework using literature found through PsycInfo, Academic Search Complete (ACS), and Cumulative Index to Nursing and Health Literature (CINAHL).
- Separate searches were done for each research question with keywords used included: sexual assault, sexual abuse, survivor, healthcare seeking habits, trauma-informed care, implications, and interventions
- Articles selected with the timeframe of January 2006-December 2016.

Results

Health Care Behaviors	Interventions
<p><u>Common themes among survivors:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women who don't disclose to their HCP state that self perception, fear and fear that HCP would be unhelpful • Majority of survivors express fear of medical procedures • Many women avoid seeking out care due to fears • Sexual assault survivors express more dissatisfaction with services than non assaulted woman 	<p><u>Important interventions include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided trauma informed care • Appropriate responses to disclosure • Training programs • Ensuring sensitive care for all • Guidelines to provide care • Soundproofing • Ensuring privacy • "Inform before perform" care • Explanations of actions • Warming equipment before use

Discussion

- Sexual assault is a crime that does not end with the initial trauma. There is a relationship between sexual assault and future health care seeking behaviors. Habits are affected during the immediate aftermath and during future encounters with HCPs.
- Interventions by HCPs can be implemented to ensure better care of sexual assault survivors and provide and safe, comforting, and beneficial experience.

Nursing Implications

- Nurses often care for patients that sexual assault survivors both during the initial assault and in future health care experiences.
- SANEs exist to employ compassionate care and decrease instances of re-traumatization however all HCP do not receive the same training
- Interventions and guidelines need to be created and enforced to provide sensitive delivery of care and it is important for nurses to provide evidence based care to sexual assault survivors

Limitations

- This research focused solely on female sexual assault survivors and excluded literature concentrating on males.
- Studies included were published only within the past 10 years