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Sexual Victimization Among Sorority Women

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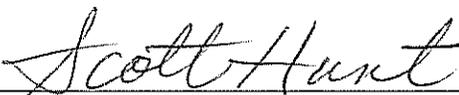
SEXUAL VICTIMIZATION AMONG SORORITY WOMEN

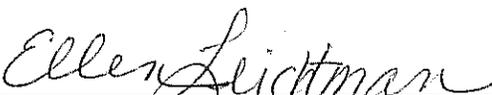
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SEXUAL VICTIMIZATION AMONG SORORITY WOMEN

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Bachelor of Science

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents
for their unwavering support
and to Scott...
for putting up with the late nights, the mess of papers,
and the dedication I had to the computer screen
and for pushing me to finally get this completed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my major professor, Dr. Robin Haarr, for her guidance, patience, and expertise on the subject. I would also like to thank the collegiate chapter as well as the national chapter and the members of the sorority that I focused my research on. Their willingness to open up to me and answer the questions I asked them allowed me to come up with the final product I am presenting here today. Finally, I would like to thank my mom, Sandra, for her understanding, patience, and words of wisdom when I felt like I would never get this process over with.

ABSTRACT

Numerous studies have shown that sorority women have been found to be at greater risk for sexual victimization (including rape and sexual assault) than non-sorority women (29% to 7% respectively; Minow & Einolf, 2009) for several reasons, including: frequent contact and association with fraternity men, the prevalence of alcohol in Greek life, and the effects alcohol has on the body once it is consumed. This paper summarizes research on the circumstances that increase the likelihood that sorority women will become victims of sexual assault, sexual coercion, or rape.

Since the research has suggested that one in four college women are at risk and sorority women are at even greater risk, it is imperative that researchers and college administrators, as well as sorority administrators in this circumstance, know which circumstances lead to sexual victimization of sorority women and how sorority women perceive sexual victimization and their chances for attack so they are better able to prevent it from happening. It is suggested that future research focus on investigating what programs are offered for sorority women to learn how to prevent occurrences of sexual assault and what sorority administrators and advisors do in response to hearing about an incident of sexual victimization among one of their girls.

Keywords: alcohol, fraternity men, rape, sexual assault, sexual coercion, sexual victimization, sorority women

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. Introduction	1
II. Literature Review	3
III. Purpose of Research	13
IV. Methodology	14
V. Results	20
VI. Discussion	34
List of References	37
Appendix	38

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When I was in college, I was a member of a sorority for three and a half years. I was never one of the girls that went out to parties every weekend, and the parties that I went to, I hardly ever drank. For the most part, I only ever went to functions that were hosted by my own sorority, because I knew the party would not be allowed to get out of control. I felt safer going to the parties and events that were hosted by my own sisters because I knew that, because it was our party we were hosting, we had to be extra careful that no one got hurt. I never felt as comfortable going to fraternity parties or events, especially at someone's house, which is probably why I only attended a handful of these during my active years. I just always had the mindset that anything could happen at these parties and if something were to get out of control, I would not be able to stop it because I was not in "my territory".

Throughout my active years, I saw so many girls drink, especially while underage, to the point where they could barely stand up straight. Especially with fraternity parties, there are always women from other sororities there, many whom I had never met or even seen before. I always worried about these girls when they were drinking, and I know of a few times that I had no clue where they ended up after the party. Luckily, for the girls in my sorority, when I would ask about them the following day, I would always find that someone had stayed with them after the party – either moving

on to another party, heading to a friend's house, or simply going back to the dorm and crashing.

After witnessing girls virtually disappear during a party, it made me begin to wonder what could actually happen to these women at house parties and fraternity- and sorority-hosted events, either on or off campus. If they drank too much and no one was around who was paying attention to them? What if they had attended the party alone? How would they get home? Would someone notice that they weren't necessarily "with" anyone at the party and take advantage of that? This is what led me to want to use my thesis as a way to research what experiences sorority members had with partying, alcohol consumption, and sexual assault. I wanted to ask the question that not everyone asks – sexual victimization of sorority girls during their college years.

This thesis is the result of that research which began back in 2010. Sexual victimization is such a personal and sensitive topic that it took many more months of research than was initially planned just to develop a methodology and interview questionnaire that would make this research project worthwhile. Many people were interested in the research topic, but once it came down to gaining access and soliciting interview participation, not so many sorority members were interested, either because of lack of knowledge on the subject or because they simply did not want to share what they themselves or one or more of their close sorority sisters experienced.

Nevertheless, I was able to conduct ten over-the-phone interviews and computer questionnaires with sorority sisters and generate data and findings that are the basis of this thesis.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

College can be a time of independence for any young student and with independence comes the freedom to do whatever one wants - stay out late, go wherever one pleases, and date whoever one wants to date. In a college setting, relationships, whether romantic or otherwise, are an important part of who many people are. Humans have an instinctual need to feel loved and to be part of a group, especially when beginning life in a new city and at a new school. One way for college students to meet new people and become part of a group early on in their college careers is to join a fraternity or a sorority, something only a small percentage of students on college campuses do. Once a student joins a sorority or a fraternity, it opens up a whole new world of opportunities for them to experience, namely philanthropy events, mixers, formals, and house parties. While most of the events hosted by sororities or fraternities are typically community-involved by either raising money or volunteering within the community, not all sorority and fraternity events are so philanthropic.

Formals, mixers, tailgating, and house parties are typically very fun and sometimes festive events to attend. However, if the event is being held off-campus, there is a greater chance that alcohol will be served, which can be a big part of Greek life depending on the university and the students involved in the Greek organizations. Unchaperoned house parties and alcohol can be a recipe for trouble and can have

dangerous effects on Greek organizations as a whole, as well as the members of those chapters, especially sorority women.

According to studies completed in the last couple decades, approximately one in four college women have experienced rape or attempted rape, and the risk of sexual assault among sorority women has been found to be greater than that for the general female college population (Copenhaver & Grauerholz, 1991; Minow & Einolf, 2009). According to recent studies, this increased risk of victimization among sorority women is attributed to frequent contact and association with fraternity men, the prevalence of alcohol in Greek life, and the effects alcohol has on the body once it is consumed (Copenhaver & Grauerholz, 1991; Abbey, 2002; Minow & Einolf, 2009). The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature on sexual victimization of sorority women and the factors that contribute to rape and sexual assault of sorority women.

Prevalence of sexual assault among sorority women

Copenhaver and Grauerholz (1991) and Minow and Einolf (2009) go in-depth into the prevalence of sexual assault among sorority women in their research. Both studies measure different aspects of sexual assault, and the rates varied between the two, most likely from the form of measurement. Copenhaver and Graueholz used questionnaires that were mailed out to 500 randomly selected sorority women; only 28% (140) were returned. Minow and Einolf, on the other hand, distributed a survey to a random sample of 1,000 undergraduate sorority women, and they received a 78% response rate.

Copenhaver and Grauerholz (1991) sampled 500 undergraduate sorority women at a large public Midwestern university using the Sexual Experiences Survey (SES). In their research, they found that 83% of sorority women had experienced at least one act of sexual aggression listed in the SES while in college, and 95% of those women knew their attacker. The most common act of sexual aggression sorority women experienced was unwanted sex play due to a man's continual arguments and pressures (42%), nearly one-fourth (24%) experienced attempted rape, and 17% reported incidences that legally qualified as rape. According to Copenhaver and Grauerholz (1991), even more prevalent than rape experiences were other unwanted sexual experiences such as coercion and unwanted sexual contacts, and nearly half of respondents had experienced at least one act of sexual coercion as measured by the Sexual Experiences Survey. What was probably even more alarming about this study was that 38% of the victims in the study had never met the offender previous to the day or night of the incident (Copenhaver & Grauerholz, 1991).

More recently, Minow and Einolf (2009) distributed a survey to 1,000 undergraduate sorority women at a large public university. Their study revealed that sorority women are victims of sexual assault at a much higher rate (29%) than nonsorority women (7%). They also found that sorority women were more likely to experience attempted rape (14%) and completed rape (33%) at a much higher rate than nonsorority women (6% and 8% respectively).

Association with fraternity men

Existing research suggests that sorority women are at greater risk of sexual victimization (e.g., sexual coercion, sexual assault, and rape) because they associate with fraternity men on a more frequent basis (Copenhaver & Grauerholz, 1991; Kalof, 1993). In fact, each contact between fraternities and sororities, as suggested by Copenhaver and Grauerholz (1991), increases the likelihood that sorority women will experience some form of sexual coercion. Moreover, they found that sorority women who were most active in Greek life were most likely to report experiencing attempted or completed rapes during fraternity functions or by fraternity members. In fact, Copenhaver and Grauerholz found that over half of the rapes reported by sorority women occurred either during a fraternity function or was committed by a fraternity member.

Studies have also found that sorority women are at increased risk of sexual victimization because of their frequent contact with fraternities which represents a peer environment that both tolerates and encourages heavy drinking, aggression and violence, female objectification, sexual promiscuity, and sexual coercion of both sorority and nonsorority women (Abbey, 2002; Copenhaver & Grauerholz, 1991; Kalof, 1993; Koss & Cleveland, 1996; Murnen & Kohlman, 2007).

Studies reveal that men who join fraternities as new members will more than likely receive different information about women and sexuality than men who do not participate in fraternity recruitment or membership (Bleecker & Murnen, 2005). Research has revealed that fraternities have a cultural context that generates

and reinforces beliefs that women are subordinate objects that can be spoken to and treated aggressively (Copenhaver & Grauerholz, 1991; Kalof, 1993). Fraternities also legitimize and even encourage gender stereotyping, male sexual aggression, sexual permissiveness, and sexual victimization of females at rates higher than non-fraternity men (Kalof, 1993; Murnen & Kohlman, 2007). Copenhaver and Grauerholz (1991, p. 31) even suggest that a fraternity's "preoccupation with loyalty, group protection and secrecy, use of alcohol, involvement in violence and physical force, and an emphasis on competition and superiority, creates an atmosphere conducive to rape."

Furthermore, it is suggested by Koss and Cleveland (1996) that fraternity members actually use the party scene as a sexual access strategy because peer Greek norms may lead fraternity and sorority members to drink heavily and engage in sexual conduct (see also Abbey, 2002). Abbey (2002) further maintains social environments, such as fraternities and sororities, "accept getting drunk as a justification for engaging in behaviors that would usually be embarrassing" (p. 124) because the norm for many fraternity parties is to drink heavily. Heavy drinking at fraternity parties can then lead to sorority women and fraternity men acting in ways they normally would not act when they are sober. In turn, a consequence of heavy drinking can be casual, and often times, nonconsensual sex of intoxicated individuals (Abbey, 2002).

Prevalence of alcohol in Greek Life

Social functions such as dances or mixers, philanthropy events, and individual dating behaviors are all activities that bring sorority and fraternity members together on

a frequent basis (Copenhaver & Grauerholz, 1991). Some events, such as mixers, dances, formals, and house parties may be furnished with alcohol which increases the likelihood of victimization because of potential risky behaviors the individuals may participate in.

Scott-Sheldon et al. (2008) found in their research that Greek members reported heavier alcohol use than non-Greeks, suggesting that the fraternity and sorority environment contributes to excessive alcohol use because of peer influence and norms that stem from the Greek life environment. In fact, many events in Greek life contribute and cater to alcohol use, namely, dances, tailgating, mixers, formals, and house parties, just to name a few. These atmospheres that are created at fraternity and sorority social functions encourage alcohol use - and even its abuse (Copenhaver & Grauerholz, 1991). Research has even shown that most sorority women know that by attending a fraternity party, they are expected to drink and that most fraternity parties emphasize heavy drinking and even casual sex (Abbey, 2002). This suggests that, not only is it expected that members drink at these types of parties, but women sometimes attend these parties for the sole purpose of being expected to drink.

Official fraternity and sorority social events are typically regulated so underage people cannot drink and the professionals hired to bartend the event are trained to keep an eye on party-goers to make sure no one has had too much to drink. If they see someone who either should not be drinking or who has had too much, they have the authority to cut off their alcohol supply so they are not able to consume anymore. However, private apartments or houses are used in the hours leading up to the official

event where alcohol can be consumed for hours before the event begins. If this is the case, there are no professionals available at these private pre-parties to regulate how much people drink. For those who engage in “pre-gaming” who also attend the party can continue to drink at the actual party, and as long as they can hold their alcohol well, the bartender may have no idea how much the person has already had to drink prior to the party.

Some striking research has been done on the setting in which rapes and sexual assaults typically occur. Minow and Einolf (2009) found in their study that the most common locations in which rapes occurred were off-campus private residences (47%) and fraternity houses (32%), meaning that over one-third of the rapes occurred in fraternity houses. Similarly, but more disturbing because of the higher number, Copenhaver and Grauerholz (1991) found that 41% of the rapes and attempted rapes in their study were committed in fraternity houses. Additionally, but without exact figures, Abbey (2002) supports the claim that the most common locations for rape and sexual assault occur at the woman’s or man’s home (which includes apartments, fraternities, sororities, and parents’ homes), but she adds that these also most commonly occur during a date or a party atmosphere.

In other words, private house or apartment parties are the most dangerous venue for fraternity and sorority members to drink because alcohol, along with a private, non-supervised venue in which to drink can lead to circumstances that lead to sexual victimization. Scott-Sheldon et al. (2008) points out the dangers of off-campus private housing through increased opportunity, a lack of adult supervision, increased

opportunity, and a protective environment as compared to traditional on-campus residential housing. Koss and Cleveland (1996) go so far as to point out that fraternity members who are looking to score with sorority women may adopt a certain favoritism toward different strategies because of the access to the facilities that are afforded to the fraternity for either official or unofficial use. This means that many fraternity members may purposely use alcohol and private houses or apartments to lure women into drinking so much that they lose their inhibitions and take actions that they may not normally take when sober.

Alcohol's effects on the body

When any individual, whether male or female, decides to drink, the alcohol can have debilitating effects on their cognition and their ability to perform normal physical functions. In fact, women and men experience the same types of cognitive deficits when drinking alcohol. Abbey (2002) completed some compelling research on the effects alcohol has on both men and women during their college years, namely that alcohol consumption “disrupts cognitive processes such as abstraction, conceptualization, planning, and problem solving” (p. 122). Her research goes a long way in understanding why fraternity men use alcohol as a debilitating tactic against sorority women.

Abbey (2002) found that men reported feeling more powerful and sexual after drinking, making him more likely to engage in sexual conduct he may or may not have engaged in when sober. In addition, since alcohol consumption disrupts the most basic

of cognitive processes, men may find it very difficult to determine what a woman's true intentions are if she is flirting with him while he is intoxicated. Abbey (2002) showed that 74% of women had engaged in either kissing or another form of sexual contact such as touching or fondling immediately prior to forced sex. This kind of action while intoxicated by either or both participants increases the likelihood that sexual assault or rape will occur because of the effects alcohol has on a man. Alcohol leads to many misperceptions by the man of what the woman wants, which has been reported to lead to sexual assault and forced sex because alcohol increases the chances that someone will behave aggressively, especially if provoked and especially if the man feels like he has been let on and then is all of a sudden turned down when he attempts sex (Abbey, 2002). Consuming alcohol to the point of intoxication hinders one's ability to consider long-term consequences of drunken behavior because they are only able to focus on the short-term benefits that they may receive from their actions (Abbey, 2002).

Abbey (2002) also found that women who were drinking at the time of their sexual assault reported that being intoxicated resulted in them taking risks that they normally would not take, because the alcohol allowed them to "let their guard down and focus on their desire to have fun and be liked rather than on their own personal safety" (p. 123). Abbey concluded that alcohol prohibited the women from recognizing danger cues that eventually led to their sexual victimization (Abbey, 2002). Additionally, their intoxication made them feel so comfortable that they consented to actions they typically would avoid if they were sober, and if it reached that point where things began to get uncomfortable, the alcohol caused them to be less likely to physically resist their

attacker. One account that Abbey (2002) collected from a sexual assault victim has this to say: "if no alcohol was consumed, I would never have crossed that line" (p. 118).

Conclusion

The prevalence of sorority sexual victimization is astonishing, and so are the numbers that describe the circumstances surrounding the assault. It is obvious from the literature that there are three factors that increase the probability of sorority women being sexually attacked: frequent contact and association with fraternity men, the prevalence of alcohol in Greek life, and the effects alcohol has on the body once it is consumed. It is these factors that work together in this specific environment that cause sorority women to be more likely than nonsorority women to be sexually victimized by one of their peers.

CHAPTER III

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

As shown above, sexual assault, sexual coercion, and rape seem prevalent within the Greek community, as well as excessive alcohol consumption leading up to sexual victimization. It is also obvious that not a lot is being done to prevent such occurrences from happening or to punish those perpetrators (and those involved) in the sexual victimization of sorority women. Therefore, the purpose of this exploratory research study is to get first-hand accounts of circumstances that sorority women have been in while in college, during their time in a sorority. I have two goals in this study: first, to reveal the problem of sexual assault among sorority girls on college campuses, and the circumstances surrounding such sexual assaults, such as consumption of alcohol and engagement in risky behaviors, and second, to determine what, if any, precautionary measures are taken to prevent sorority women from becoming victims of sexual assault and what, if anything, is done by either the sorority or the University once a sexual assault has occurred. Before any questions can be asked, a word on methodology is needed.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

The literature review reveals that sexual victimization among sorority women is an occurrence on college campuses; however, there has been limited research on sorority women's perceptions of sexual victimization among sorority women. Based on the previous research, it is obvious that not a lot of researchers have met with any sorority women to get an idea of how sorority women perceive the realities of sexual victimization, what they know about sexual victimization, what they have seen, and what they have personally experienced. It is also apparent that not a lot of research has been done on what preventative measures are taken with individual chapters to prevent college age women from becoming victims of sexual assault or rape. This research explores sorority women's perceptions and experiences of sexual victimization within Greek life, and to determine their extent of knowledge and response to such sexual victimization.

Challenges

One of the challenges a researcher may face when doing research on sorority women and sexual victimization is the fact that they are not openly willing to speak to just anyone about what happens within the inner workings of Greek life. I am an alumnus of a national sorority, which helped me significantly in this research to gain access to sorority women and hear their perceptions and experiences.

Sample

My sample came from alumni of one national sorority at Eastern Kentucky University. My objective was to generate a sample of between 10 and 15 women regarding their experiences when they were active members of their collegiate sorority when they were undergraduate (as opposed to member that were either permanently or temporarily not active at any point in time during their time in the sorority). The final sample of respondents consisted of 10 women that were active member of a sorority during their college years. They ranged in age from 26 to 43 at the time of the interview.

Sample Selection

In order to obtain this sample, I used social networking to solicit participants for the study. Once I located the chapter's social networking site, I was able to post a public message on the sorority's forum, requesting alumni that were possibly interested in participating in my research study. Out of the 228 alumni members that were registered with the site, a total of 25 alumni (11%) responded to my inquiry.

Once they showed interest in my study, I sent them a personal message that no one but the account holder could see. In this message, I provided them with an abstract of my study, and asked them to respond with their personal email address if they would be interested in participating. Each of the 25 alumni who showed interest in the study provided me with her email addresses, and was then provided with the informed consent form and the outlined details of my research purpose. I explained to them that

in order to participate in the study, I would conduct either a telephone interview that would last approximately 30-45 minutes with them or send them the research questions via email so they could answer at their leisure. I guaranteed them confidentiality. In addition, I informed them that I would only use the data for research purposes and for my master's thesis. If they choose to participate in the study, I requested that they forward me an email stating that they agree to participate in the study.

Out of those 25 alumni, I only received responses from 10 of them stating they wanted to continue with the interview. Two participants out of the 10 chose the phone interview, while the other eight chose to answer the questions by having the questions emailed to them in a Word document.

Interviews and Instruments

Before beginning the telephone interview, I informed each of the research participants that they were free to refuse to answer a question or stop the interview at any time if they felt uncomfortable or simply did not want to continue with the interview. If one of the participants decided to prematurely discontinue the interview, I asked her if she might want to continue the interview another day. If she did not want to continue the interview either at that time or in the future, I asked if I could use the information I had received from her already. If she said I could, I noted that the interview was terminated due to her request and that I could use the data I had collected up until the point that the interview was terminated. If she did not want me to use the information she gave me, I shredded it immediately. During the course of the

interview process, two women withdrew from the study, both of them having participated in the telephone interview. The first woman to withdraw from the study allowed me to keep her answers recorded up until the point of her withdrawing. The second and final woman to withdraw from the study asked that I remove all of her answers from my records.

The phone interview was in the form of an open-ended conversation, where I kept the conversation going with specific questions that I would like to have answered. I did not use any audio recording devices other than my computer, where I only typed what the women said during the interview in response to my questions. No names were recorded during the interview. In order to keep participants separate and distinct, I coded each research participant with a letter and a number, such as F1 for female 1 and F2 for female 2, and so on.

If the research participants choose to have the interview questions sent to them via email as a Word document, I informed them that if at any time, they decided they wanted to stop answering the questions, they were able to do so. If they chose to stop answering the questions, they could either send me the questions they had already completed, or choose to forego sending me any of their answers.

I made the initial contact through social networking in the first week of February 2012 in order to begin soliciting participants. As the alumni members responded to my forum posts, I sent them personal messages, and then sent the consent forms to their personal email address. I conducted telephone interviews from February 12 through March 31, 2012, with the goal of having all of the phone interviews completed no later

than April 7, 2012. For those participants that choose to have the questions sent to via email, I sent the questions as the requests came in, giving the participants a deadline of April 7, 2012 to have them completed and emailed back to me.

Analysis

Once I finished with the telephone interviews and received all of the written questionnaires back, I began my analysis. It is important to note that because this is a qualitative research project and exploratory in nature, there are no statistics to analyze. Rather, the focus of the analysis was to explore sorority women's experiences with sexual victimization during their college years, and their time in the sorority, as well as to examine the relationship between sexual victimization and alcohol consumption.

Thus, I analyzed each of the fully and partially completed interviews to reveal their perspectives and experiences, and to understand similarities and differences between respondents' answers to the various interview questions.

Limitations

As is with all research involving human subjects, there will be limitations. One limitation of data collection is that some of the sorority women were reluctant to participate in this research project. In order to get past this limitation, I did everything I could to explain the importance of this research and the important role they can play in providing the information needed to better understand the nature of the problem of

sexual victimization of sorority women. I also reassured them confidentiality and guaranteed that their name will never be connected to their interview answers.

One of the key considerations that emerged in the beginning of this study was the type of methodology most appropriate for gaining meaningful information about how sorority women perceive sexual victimization and their experiences with it. In order to support my intended approach of conducting telephone interviews, it was important to look back at the literature that had already been published on the topic. Each of the previously mentioned research studies used impersonal self-report questionnaires that were handed out or mailed out to hundreds of students. Granted, self-report questionnaires may seem like a viable alternative to telephone interviews because they provide more anonymity as the interviewer and respondent never speak, they are also impersonal and typically yield a low response rate. For the purpose of this study, semi-structured informal interviews that were focused on personal knowledge and experiences of each respondent were best suited due to the possible sensitive nature of the topic. Moreover, the fact that I am an alumna from the same national sorority as the one that I was intending to sample would hopefully allow the women to better trust me and also allow me to more deeply understand and empathize with each woman's story.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

Understanding of Sexual Assault

The interviews began by asking respondents to define sexual victimization and sexual assault in an effort to understand how they conceptualize these forms of sexual violence.

Analysis revealed that respondents defined sexual victimization and sexual assault in different ways, and often their definitions varied in terms of degree of seriousness. Some respondents defined sexual victimization and sexual assault in terms of the lack of consent to sexual contact, such as *“inappropriate sexual contact against someone’s wishes”* (F8), *“being taken advantage of in a sexual manner without consent”* (F2), and *“any unwanted physical or verbal contact with someone that is of a sexual nature”* (F3). Similarly, one respondent stated, *“sexual victimization is any sexual occurrence that happened when one partner says NO and the other presses forward”* (F1). Some respondents also maintained there needs to be violence for it to be sexual victimization or a sexual assault. For instance, one respondent explained it is *“sexual intercourse or penetration under a threat of violence”* (F4); similarly, another respondent defined sexual victimization as *“sexual intercourse during actual or threatened violence”* (F9) and sexual assault as *“knowingly causing another person to engage in unwanted sexual act by force or threatened force”* (F9). Finally, another

respondent explained sexual victimization as *“a sexual act that made a person feel like a victim”* (F10).

Despite some variation in the way each of the 10 respondents defined and understood sexual victimization and sexual assault, I believe that the participants did not fully understand the concepts of sexual victimization and sexual assault. This led me to believe that it is possible that acts of sexual assault could have been grossly under-reported both during their college years and during the interview process because they had a hard time defining what happened to them as sexual victimization or sexual assault.

Knowledge of Sexual Victimization of Others

In recognition that respondents may be reluctant to speak about their own sexual victimization during their college years, they were instead asked (early in the interview) if they were aware of any situations in college where any of their sorority sisters were victims of sexual victimization or sexual assault. Four out of 10 respondents reported they knew first hand of a sorority sister that was a victim of sexual assault during their college years. As one respondent revealed,

“Yes, I could probably think of several times actually, but one comes to my mind immediately so I’ll focus on it... We were at a party and one of my sorority sisters had been drinking. She sat down on a couch and looked sleepy. Before we realized, she was gone . . . and we went looking for her. Apparently she had been carried upstairs to a bedroom by a guy and he was having sex with her. It was horrible. We got her out of there, but she didn't want to do anything about it . . . I'll still never understand why.” (F7)

Another respondent told,

“A group of my sorority sisters went to a party at a fraternity house. One of my sisters was taken to the basement and gang raped. She was dating one the brothers of that fraternity. My big Brother was from that fraternity but I didn’t know the guys involved in the incident. Drinking was involved by both the boys and the girl. I knew of the incident but I didn’t speak directly to her. I know that the chapter advisers and the dean of student affairs were involved. It put a wedge between the fraternity and sorority for a few months. I heard that a couple of boys were black balled from the fraternity. I am not sure if the police were involved. I was away that weekend.” (F4)

Another respondent revealed,

“The other incident was a sister was walking home from downtown and was picked up in car. They think she was drugged She doesn’t remember anything until she woke up in the motel naked. She called up to the floor to come get her. Her roommate, little sister and I went to the motel and got her and took her to the hospital and SANE examination was done. Police were notified. Someone stayed with her for the first two to three weeks. She was horrified. It changed her she wasn’t confident in herself. We kept reassuring she would be ok. I know over the weekend she didn’t want us to call her parents or tell her parents. It happens at the end of the school year. I am not sure if they ever made an arrest in this case.” (F4)

Additional probing questions revealed that each of the four sexual assaults of sorority sisters that respondents had knowledge of occurred off campus, such as downtown between buildings when the girl was walking home to avoid a DUI (F2), in a Daytona Beach motel during spring break (F4), at a sports team’s house party (F7), in an apartment (F8), and two of them occurred within a party atmosphere, such as at a party at a fraternity house (F4, F7).

Each of the four respondents that reported they knew of a sorority sister that was sexually assaulted during their college years reported they knew the sorority sister very well, and one respondent reported it was *“one of my very best friends”* (F2).

Perpetrators

Respondents were also asked if they knew the boy(s) that sexually assaulted their sorority sisters. Three of the four respondents were not overly familiar with the perpetrator, responding that they knew him *“not at all”* (F2), *“not very well”* (F8), and *“just his name, that he was known for sleeping with a lot of girls, not much else”* (F7). The fourth respondent knew the perpetrator *“very well”* (F4). Three of the four perpetrators were members of a fraternity on campus and none of them were ever punished for their actions. One respondent even went so far as to say,

“It wasn’t necessarily a punishable thing. It was something she was uncomfortable with, but felt that she was too drunk to make an informed decision, but she couldn’t really remember exactly what happened.” (F8)

Reported the Sexual Assault

Respondents were asked to recall details regarding how their sorority sisters dealt with, and whether or not they reported, the sexual assault to the authorities. Three out of the four respondents claimed the sorority sister just *“moved on”* (F4), *“never talked about it again”* (F7), and *“seemed to just pretend it didn’t happen”* (F8). The fourth respondent reported that the sorority sister dealt with it *“not very well... she withdrew from school”* (F2). Three of the four respondents admitted that neither the

chapter as a whole nor the National Sorority Council ever found out about the incident of sexual assault. The one respondent who was aware that the chapter knew admitted it was *“semi-supportive”* (F2). In each of the three cases where neither the National Council nor the chapter found out, only a handful of close friends were told what happened. One respondent revealed that the sorority sister *“did report the rape to local police”* (F2). When asked whether he was punished in any way, she admitted *“I believe so, but am not positive”* (F2).

Personal Victimization

Questions regarding personal sexual victimization are difficult for respondents, so I reserved such questions for the end of the interview. When asked whether respondents had ever been put in a situation where they felt they were pressured or forced by a boy(s) to do something sexually that they didn't want, seven out of eight respondents answered no. Two respondents maintained that while it never happened to them in college, it had happened to them when they were in high school.

Additionally, one respondent revealed that while she never felt sexually pressured or forced sexually by anyone while in college, she did reveal *“I had a lot of sexual partners because I was drinking. I was never forced to have sex, but I was put into a bad position because of drinking”* (F4).

Only one respondent revealed that she had personally been sexually assaulted not once, but twice while in college. She explained, *“One was freshman year... in my dorm room... on campus, the other was sophomore year... at a fraternity member's*

house... off campus” (F3). She revealed that on both occasions, neither herself nor the guy she was with had been drinking alcohol, but that both of them had been members of a fraternity on campus. When asked if she told anyone, such as friends, family, the National Council, or the authorities, she responded “no” each time. When asked what happened after the sexual assault, she revealed that she felt “really awkward afterward, so I just avoided them” (F3) and her coping method was that she “just avoided them (the boys with whom she had the sexual encounters)” (F3). Finally, when asked whether either of the boys had been punished, she claimed “neither were punished, but one of the guys eventually dropped out of his fraternity and left school” (F3).

When asked the next set of questions about whether the respondents had ever experienced a sexual encounter in college that left them feeling uncomfortable or embarrassed afterward, three of the eight remaining respondents revealed that they had in fact experienced an embarrassing sexual encounter. An additional respondent stated, *“I may have had some regrets, but I can’t say that it wasn’t anything that I could place any blame on the male” (F8). One respondent offered up her full story,*

“I went to spring break and meet up with a group of Fraternity boys and stay the night in their room. I was seeing one of the guys and we had sex. I am not sure if others were around or not. Very embarrassed of thing I did in college related to drinking. Sophomore year I really didn’t start paying attention more until I got out of College and now I am ashamed of the things I did back then.” (F4)

Of the two remaining respondents, one respondent was a victim of sexual assault during her freshman year and it occurred at *“his house he shared with a couple of other fraternity brothers... off campus” (F3). When asked how well she knew the boy, she*

reveals *"I had met him the week before, but I knew who he was already"* (F3). She stated that neither one of them had been drinking alcohol, that in fact, they had been working a University event together when *"we just wanted to hang out after a long day of freshman events"* (F3).

The other respondent was a victim during her sophomore year at another college. She explained that the sexual assault happened *"on campus... in a dorm room"* (F7). She revealed that she did not know the boy very well, he was not in a fraternity and that they were on a date at the time. When asked about alcohol consumption, she stated that *"I had drunk a small amount of alcohol... he had drunk some alcohol"* (F7).

When asked how these two women coped with the sexual assaults, one of the respondents said *"I felt stupid obviously. Quit answering his phone calls, decided not to make such stupid decisions again and moved on"* (F7), while the other respondent revealed,

"I wasn't forced to do it, but I felt pressured to because he knew I liked him and I voluntarily went to his house with him, so I was more mad at myself than anything and I was forced to hear the rumors that were going around for about a month until I was able to convince him to tell people it didn't actually happen. After that, we just avoided each other." (F3)

Additionally, these two women were asked if they did anything in particular after the incident to try to minimize the risk of it happening to them again. One respondent responded, *"I actually began avoiding fraternity guys, making sure that I always had one of my sisters around when I was with other fraternity guys"* (F3). Similarly, the other

added, *“I didn’t put myself in private situations anymore with men I didn’t know well and trust; and... I grew up a lot”* (F7).

Influence of Alcohol on Sexual Victimization

When I began this research project, I understood from the research literature that alcohol often plays a significant role in the negative sexual encounters sorority women have while in college, so I designed the interview questionnaire to explore the relationship between alcohol consumption and sexual assault. In particular, respondents were asked whether they were aware of any sorority sisters who had negative and unwanted sexual experiences while in college and the details surrounding those occurrences, such as alcohol consumption. All four respondents who reported knowledge of a sorority sister being sexually assaulted revealed that the girl had in fact been consuming alcohol at the time. They each recognized that the girl who was sexually assaulted had consumed enough alcohol to the point that she was impaired. As one respondent stated, *“yes (she had been drinking)... not much, but enough to not want to drive”* (F2). The other three respondents stated yes the girls had been drinking and that they drank as one respondent described as *“too much”* (F4). When asked if the boys had also been consuming alcohol, three respondents reported the boys had also been drinking, and one respondent stated *“I have no idea”* (F2).

Respondents were also asked if they had ever seen their sorority sisters do things under the influence of alcohol that they would not have done while sober, particularly things that may have increased their risk of sexual victimization. Two

respondents stated “no” (F2, F10); however, six of the respondents revealed a variety of risky behaviors that their sorority sisters engaged in when under the influence of alcohol. For instance, one respondent maintained that some sorority sisters would “stay over at men’s houses that they did not know very well or just met” (F1) if they drank too much alcohol. The quotes below by five other respondents revealed the relationship sorority sisters had with alcohol consumption, their engagement in risky behaviors, and how it increased their risk of sexual assault and victimization while under the influence.

“Many times at events, I would see girls get really drunk and do things in public they probably wouldn’t be doing if they had been sober, such as sitting on a guy’s lap and making out with them. Sometimes, when someone would mention what they did the next day, the girl that did it claimed they didn’t remember it and seemed embarrassed about doing it.” (F3)

“I saw a lot of underage drinking especially on trip during spring break and downtown. Girls would be participating in wet t shirt contests. The drinking causes a few to have multiple partners and put them at risk for sexual assault. Parties at Fraternity house where there were kegs and hooch that was easily available and bedrooms were a bad combination. I saw girls dancing on tables and bars that I would have never thought would do that. Going home with people they just met.” (F4)

“I saw several drunken girls get very out of hand at parties and sorority functions. Since alcohol lowers inhibitions and reaction times I do think their behaviors put them at risk. I remember once instance of a girl giving a boy a blow job at a party outside next to the air conditioning unit – I can’t imagine that would have happened if alcohol had not been involved. I’ll also make the point that I think a lot of college men, both fraternity and non-fraternity members, might expect sorority women to conform to a stereotype – party girls who are “easy,” if you will, which may make them more likely victims of sexual victimization or assault.” (F5)

“This happened a lot. Girls would get wasted, get flirty, dance, pee in public, stay over at frat houses, etc. Even though there was a lot of risk, for the most part the fraternities though were all trustworthy and we never had problems with them trying to sexually assault anyone that I know of. The bigger risk in my opinion were the sports houses.” (F7)

“I saw a lot of things happen under the influence of alcohol. Not just my own sorority sisters, but girls in other sororities on campus. I’ve seen girls strip at a party. I’ve known girls who were probably a lot more promiscuous under the influence. Lots of girls who have left their friends to go off by themselves or with guys.” (F8)

Respondents were also asked if while they were in college they had ever done something under the influence of alcohol that they would not have done while sober. Three respondents reported they had not, while another respondent simply stated, *“I kissed someone at a bar”* (F1). In comparison, four respondents revealed they had engaged in risky behaviors while under the influence of alcohol; behaviors they would not have engaged in if they were not under the influence of alcohol.

“I told a fraternity guy that I loved him at a party and I ended up taking him back to my dorm room that night. I knew that he wouldn’t have done anything to hurt me, but I always think back and question myself and wonder what if he wasn’t as nice of a guy as I thought he was. I could have really gotten into trouble that night.” (F3)

“I was binge drinker and unfortunately I had multiple sexual partners in college. I was never raped but I put myself at risk. For instance I was in Chicago for Spring Break freshman year and I left a Chicago bar with I guy I met in the bar and went to his car. He could have raped or better yet killed me. There were 6 people in my group all drinking heavily and no one stopped me or I didn’t know better because I was intoxicated.” (F4)

“There were definitely times when I stayed places b/c I was drunk and didn't want to drive home. I guess these could be considered risks. But, I was lucky...and never had any problems.” (F7)

“If I hadn’t been drinking I would have made better decisions. I tried my best to never leave my friends, but occasionally ended up walking home alone from downtown. I also drove while drinking a couple times. I was lucky enough to be very good friends with some trustworthy fraternity men who probably protected me from getting myself into some dangerous situations.” (F8)

Knowledge of Warning Signs & Protections

When asked whether or not the respondents, while in college, were familiar with the warning signs that would indicate to them that they were in danger of being sexually assaulted, they had varying answers. Four respondents admitted they were not aware of the warning signs during their college years. As one respondent explained,

“No, I think social I would get a red flag if someone wanted to leave me alone with someone I didn’t know. Or if someone was making unwanted advances at me or if someone was buying me lots of drinks” (F10).

Similarly, two others stated,

“I really didn’t know until it was too late. I was always under the impression that it couldn’t happen to me, not because I was prepared if it did happen, but because it just couldn’t happen to me.” (F3)

“I didn’t back then but now I do. Don’t drink too much. Fix your own drinks and stay in a pack. Have at least one of your sisters be sober and watch out for the group if you must drink” (F4)

In comparison, one respondent stated *“aggressive behavior”* (F2) was an indicator that there could be trouble, while two other respondents were a little more detailed about what they considered a warning sign:

“Never leave a drink you had alone, walking alone back to dorm or house and man was hangin’ on me and groping on arm etc while walking home. A guy being very intoxicated and you stayed when your other sisters left.” (F1)

"If you are too drunk to stay awake or stand. If you are the only girl, never let your sisters leave you behind. If you do not have a plan for where you'll end up at the end of the evening...either knowing for sure where you will stay...or how you will get home." (F7)

When asked how sorority sisters would respond when they knew one of their sisters was going home with a guy at the end of the night, the responses varied significantly. One respondent said they would *"try to discourage"* (F10) the girl. Another respondent revealed, *"We encouraged everyone to go back to campus together"* (F2). Other girls maintained that a lot depended upon who the sorority sister was with, such as if she was with her boyfriend, or how senior she was.

"We had a rule that no one was to be left anywhere if they had consumed alcohol, even if they were good friends. No matter how much the fight was at that moment, we got them home. It was more acceptable if the girl was at her boyfriend's house if they were on a date and dating a long time. The older a sister was, the more acceptable it was. Frosh were watched much more." (F1)

"Some would intervene and some would not. I think it depend on if it was a boyfriend or not. Know I would watch for them when I was older and try to protect them." (F4)

"Depends on who the guy was, who she was, whether or not they are dating, good friends, strangers, etc." (F7)

When asked whether or not their responses would change if the girl was drunk, two respondents stated *"no"* (F10) and *"I would have just said the same thing with more force"* (F2). In comparison, another respondent stated, *"Definitely. If he was someone she doesn't usually stay with sober"* (F7), and another respondent explained, *"It depended on who it was, if we knew the guy she was going home with, and how drunk she was"* (F8).

The respondents were then asked what they would have typically done in this situation, seeing one of their sorority sisters potentially go home with a guy they may or may not know while that sister was possibly too drunk to make rational decisions for herself. Four respondents reported, in some way or another, they would have tried to talk her out of it or refuse to let her go. They stated, “[I would] *take her home with us*” (F2), *“I would have tried to stop her and make her understand that she would regret her decision in the morning”* (F3), *“refuse to let her go”* (F7), and *“say why it wasn’t a good idea and encourage them to stay with us”* (F10). One respondent revealed

“If we knew the guy well then we pretty much let them make their own decision unless they were so drunk we didn’t feel like they knew what they were doing.”
(F8)

Six respondents revealed they had taken special precautions in college to protect themselves from the risks of sexual assault, such as staying with friends and in a pack (F2, F4), always having a game plan (F1, F7), carrying pepper spray (F8) and not partying with people you didn’t know (F10). One respondent’s response was troubling *“neither the sorority nor the campus provided any kind of sexual assault seminar or class or even a pamphlet so I just always assumed it could never happen to me, so I never really took any precautions”* (F3) because of the reality of how many college women probably feel that way.

It was surprising that only two respondents could remember their sorority offering any kind of advice or guidance about sexual assault and rape on campus. Of the two women that remembered precautions being taken, one stated that someone came

to a meeting to speak with them (F1) and the other remembered an *“in-service [seminar] about drinking and date rape”* (F4).

Finally, respondents were asked to provide advice to sorority women that can help to reduce their risk of sexual victimization and sexual assault whole in campus.

Each one of the respondents offered advice worth remembering:

“Always be knowledgeable of your surroundings, even if it is just walking to your vehicle. Always travel in groups when possible. Have something with you to draw attention at all times when in a situation that you feel uncomfortable in. Have cell phone on you, but do not be texting etc walking to your car so you focus on that and not surroundings. Take a self defense class. Always have a plan in place in the possible situations.” (F1)

“Never leave a sister alone... especially in a situation where there is alcohol... use their head and stay with friends.” (F2)

“There should be someone in the chapter who is familiar with the subject and have at least one seminar per semester or maybe touch on the topic every week at meeting, or to send a reminder to all the girls before a big party. Girls need to be more informed because it can be dangerous out there... learn about the subject, read up on instances of sexual assault on other campuses, and never assume it can never happen to you.” (F3)

“Watch how much you drink and watch yourself and your sisters... pay attention. Party with friends that have your back and protect each other.” (F4)

“Always have a friend with you at all times. Always have cash and a way home or a safe place to stay planned out before you leave to go out each night. Never go home with guys you meet at the bar. Always go home with your sisters instead.” (F7)

“Know the statistics of sexual assaults around their own campus in addition to risk factors that can increase your chance of being a victim.” (F8)

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

I encountered a few challenges during this research, beginning with obtaining research participants. When I had first decided on my thesis topic, I was living near campus and my plan was to conduct in-person interviews with 20-25 sorority members. Since then I have moved out of state, and have had to reconstruct my methodology twice, finally deciding to solicit research participants through social networking. Then, I had a limited number of alumni within the social networking group (11%) respond to my inquiry. I was surprised by what seemed like a lack of interest in participating in the research, since I had expected a large number of respondents. I assume the lack of response was because the vast majority of people did not know who I was, as well as the sensitive nature of the topic. I took every measure I could to assure those who were interested and those who participated that they, as well as their answers, would remain completely anonymous.

The second challenge I encountered centered around getting responses back from people. The 25 people who responded to the original inquiry asking for volunteers were all emailed a copy of the informed consent form. I only received responses back from 13 alumni members, each of them agreeing that they would participate. Three of the 13 wanted to participate in a phone interview, and the other ten participants wanted their questions sent to them in a Word document. Two of the three phone interviews were never able to be completed because of timing issues – one person was

only available during the day on weekdays when I was at work and the other person had a family member fall ill – and I only received answers to the written questionnaires from eight of ten participants. So overall, my participation rate, compared to the number of possible participants, was low.

Despite the challenges I faced in conducting this exploratory research, the data obtained from the 10 respondents was meaningful and enabled me to explore the problem of sexual assault among sorority girls on college campuses, and the circumstances surrounding sexual assaults, such as consumption of alcohol and engagement in risky behaviors. Overall, a total of four respondents had knowledge of another sorority sister having been sexually victimized while in college, in circumstances ranging from house parties, to spring break vacations, to a public sidewalk downtown. Only one respondent had been a victim of sexual assault herself, on two separate occasions, once on campus, and once at an off-campus fraternity house.

All four respondents who reported knowledge of a sorority sister being sexually assaulted revealed that alcohol played a factor in either one or both parties involved in the sexual assault. Additionally, six of the respondents were able to recall a variety of behaviors that either they or other sorority sisters engaged in while under the influence of alcohol, typically in a party atmosphere, including engaging in risky sexual behaviors in public and going home with unfamiliar men or people they just met. These research findings coincide with the findings discussed in the literature review where Copenhaver and Grauerholz (1991), Abbey (2002), and Minow and Einolf (2009) all revealed similar findings that support the claims that the most common location for sexual assault

occurs at a private residence or fraternity house. I also discovered similar findings to Abbey (2002) in that alcohol intoxication made them feel so comfortable that they did things they typically wouldn't do while sober.

The data also enabled me to determine what, if any, precautionary measures are taken to prevent sorority women from becoming victims of sexual assault and what, if anything, is done by either the sorority or the University once a sexual assault has occurred. Overall, I found very little being done on campus either from the University or through the sorority to help educate women about the precautions they need to take to help reduce their risk of becoming sexual assault victims. Only two respondents were able to recall instances where either a seminar occurred or a speaker was brought in to discuss the dangers of drinking and sexual assault.

In general, the findings of my research study coincide, for the most part, with the literature I reviewed in order to prepare for this project. While I did not survey any non-sorority college women, sexual assault was prevalent within the Greek community, considering half of the women who completed the survey were aware of at least one sorority sister who had been sexually assaulted while in college. Alcohol use and abuse was also found to be widespread within the Greek community and it also played a significant role in risky sexual behaviors among sorority women and fraternity men.

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APPENDIX:
Interview Questions

Interview Questions

Understanding of sexual assault

I would like to begin by asking you several very simple questions for which there is no right or wrong answer.

1. How would you define “sexual victimization”?
2. How would you define “sexual assault”?

Knowledge of sexual victimization of others

Now I would like to ask you some questions about your time in college or at the university. Because I am particularly interested in the experience of sorority members, I would like to ask you some specific questions about experiences of girls in the sorority. When you answer the questions, do not give me any names of people.

3. When you were in college, did you know of any sorority sisters that had negative sexual experiences happen to them, sexual experiences that they did not necessarily want or that they felt uncomfortable about? Can you tell me about it, what happened, based upon what you know?
 - Additional probing questions:
 - Where did this happen?
 - Was it on or off campus?
 - What it in a dorm room, apartment or fraternity member’s house?
 - Was it a date, a large party, a philanthropy function?
 - How well did you know this girl/sorority sister?
 - How well did you know the boy or boys that did this to her?
 - Where they a member of a fraternity?
 - Do you know if she had been consuming alcohol? Do you know how much alcohol she had you consumed?
 - Do you know if the boy(s) that did this to her had consumed alcohol? How much alcohol had they consumed?
 - Did she tell you what happened to her? What advice did you offer her?
 - Did she tell anyone else about what happened to her? Who did she tell (not their name, but were they family, friend, sorority sister or someone else)?
 - Did she tell the authorities?

- How did she deal or cope with the situation?
 - What was the reaction of the Chapter as a whole or the National Council to this incident?
 - Do you know what happened (if anything) to the boy(s) that did this? Were they ever punished in any way?
4. When you were in college, did you know of any girls/sorority sisters that were sexually assaulted or sexually victimized? Can you tell me about it, what happened, based upon what you know?
- Additional probing questions:
 - Where did this happen?
 - Was it on or off campus?
 - What it in a dorm room, apartment or fraternity member's house?
 - Was it a date, a large party, a philanthropy function?
 - How well did you know this girl/sorority sister?
 - How well did you know the boy or boys that did this to her?
 - Where they a member of a fraternity?
 - Do you know if she had been consuming alcohol? Do you know how much alcohol she had you consumed?
 - Do you know if the boy(s) that did this to her had consumed alcohol? How much alcohol had they consumed?
 - Did she tell you what happened to her? What advice did you offer her?
 - Did she tell anyone else about what happened to her? Who did she tell (not their name, but were they family, friend, sorority sister or someone else)?
 - Did she tell the authorities? Or did she report the situation to anyone?
 - How did she deal or cope with the situation?
 - What was the reaction of the Chapter as a whole or the National Council to this incident?
 - Do you know what happened (if anything) to the boy(s) that did this? Were they ever punished in any way?

Influence of alcohol

I would like to ask you some questions about alcohol consumption during your college years.

5. When you were in college, did you ever see your sorority sisters do things under the influence of alcohol that they would not have done if they were sober, particularly

things that would have put them at risk of sexual victimization? Can you tell me about that?

6. When you were in college, did you ever feel that you had done something under the influence of alcohol that you would not have done if you were sober, particularly something that would have put you at risk of sexual victimization? Can you tell me about that?

Personal victimization

Now I would like to ask you some questions about your sexual encounters during your time in college or at the university.

7. When you were in college, were you ever put in a situation where you felt you were pressured or forced by a boy or boys to do something sexually that you didn't want to do? Can you tell me about it, what happened?
 - Additional probing questions:
 - When did this happen (as a freshman, sophomore, junior, senior)?
 - Where were you?
 - Was it on or off campus?
 - What it in a dorm room, apartment or fraternity member's house?
 - Was it a date, a large party, a philanthropy function?
 - How well did you know this boy or boys that did this to you?
 - Where they a member of a fraternity?
 - Had you been consuming alcohol? How much alcohol had you consumed? How drunk were you?
 - Had the other person consumed alcohol? How much alcohol had they consumed? How drunk were they?
 - What did you do after it was over?
 - Did you tell anyone? Who did you tell (not their name, but were they family, friend, sorority sister or someone else)?
 - What advice did they offer you?
 - Did you tell the authorities?
 - How did you deal or cope with the situation?
 - After that happened to you, did you do anything in particular to try to minimize the risk of it happening to you again?
 - What was the reaction of the Chapter as a whole or the National Council to this incident?
 - Do you know what happened (if anything) to the boy(s) that did this? Were they ever punished in any way?

8. When you were in college, did you ever have a sexual encounter where afterwards you were left feeling uncomfortable or embarrassed about what had happened? Can you tell me about it, what happened?
- Additional probing questions:
 - When did this happen (as a freshman, sophomore, junior, senior)?
 - Where were you?
 - Was it on or off campus?
 - What it in a dorm room, apartment or fraternity member's house?
 - Was it a date, a large party, a philanthropy function?
 - How well did you know this boy or boys that did this to you?
 - Where they a member of a fraternity?
 - Had you been consuming alcohol? How much alcohol had you consumed? How drunk were you?
 - Had the other person consumed alcohol? How much alcohol had they consumed? How drunk were they?
 - What did you do after it was over?
 - Did you tell anyone? Who did you tell (not their name, but were they family, friend, sorority sister or someone else)?
 - What advice did they offer you?
 - Did you tell the authorities?
 - How did you deal or cope with the situation?
 - After that happened to you, did you do anything in particular to try to minimize the risk of it happening to you again?
 - What was the reaction of the Chapter as a whole or the National Council to this incident?
 - Do you know what happened (if anything) to the boy(s) that did this? Were they ever punished in any way?
9. When you were in college, were you ever sexually assaulted? Can you tell me about it? What happened?
- Additional probing questions:
 - When did this happen (as a freshman, sophomore, junior, senior)?
 - Where were you?
 - Was it on or off campus?
 - What it in a dorm room, apartment or fraternity member's house?
 - Was it a date, a large party, a philanthropy function?
 - How well did you know this boy or boys that did this to you?
 - Where they a member of a fraternity?
 - Had you been consuming alcohol? How much alcohol had you consumed? How drunk were you?
 - Had the other person consumed alcohol? How much alcohol had they consumed? How drunk were they?
 - What did you do after it was over?

- Did you tell anyone? Who did you tell (not their name, but were they family, friend, sorority sister or someone else)?
- What advice did they offer you?
- Did you tell the authorities?
- How did you deal or cope with the situation?
- After that happened to you, did you do anything in particular to try to minimize the risk of it happening to you again?
- What was the reaction of the Chapter as a whole or the National Council to this incident?
- Do you know what happened (if anything) to the boy(s) that did this? Were they ever punished in any way?

Warning signs and protections

I have a couple of final questions that I would like to ask you about some of the warning signs and precautions that sorority girls can take to protect themselves against sexual assault or victimization.

10. When you were in college, did you know how to identify the warning signs that you might be in danger of a sexual assault or sexual victimization? What were the warning signs?
11. When you were in college, what was the response of sorority sisters when they know one of their sisters was going to go home with a guy at the end of a party/night?
 - Would your response change if she was drunk?
 - Would your response change if the guy was not her boyfriend?
 - What would you typically do in this situation?
 - What would your other sisters do in this situation?
12. When you were in college, did you take any special precautions to protect yourself from the risks of sexual assault or sexual victimization? What did you do?
13. Do you know if the sororities offered any advice or guidance to the girls about sexual assault and rape on campus?
14. What sort of advice do you think needs to be offered in sororities to sisters to help educate and protect them about the risks of sexual assault and rape on campus?
15. What do you think sorority girls can do to reduce their risk of sexual assault or sexual victimization during college?

Finally, please answer the follow for classification purposes.

What is your age?

What years were you in the sorority?

Is there anything else you would like to share with the researcher?