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Presenting on behalf of SCORE, Belfast

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Investigating the Prevalence of Non-Consensual Sexual Experiences in a Northern Ireland University Student Population

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COMPETING INTEREST OF FINANCIAL VALUE

> £1,000:

NONE

Background

Previous research is concerning, but no previous work has investigated the Northern Irish student population

- “Hidden Marks”, NUS, 2010
 - 1 in 7 ‘a serious physical or sexual assault’
- “Say Something”, USI, 2013
 - 10% ‘unwanted sexual experience’

Methodology

Retrospective, cross-sectional study, measuring incidence of non-consensual sexual experiences of 2016 student population in university

Online survey over 6wks

Safety pages were used, and the survey was split into 6 sections:

- Demographics
- Prevalence and nature of non-consensual experiences
- Alcohol and drug involvement
- Reporting of the incident and reasons for not reporting
- Impact of experience(s) on life at QUB
- Respondent Recommendations

Demographics

12.5% of the total students responded – 3,097

- 63.8% female (56.1% of the student population)

13.8% identified as “LBG+”, 4.2% as “unsure”

14% of participants were not from the UK or ROI

7% indicated they have a disability

96% full time students, 75% undergraduates (80% of total student pop)

Penetrative Assault

5.5% (169/3097) experienced at least 1 episode of penetrative assault during their time as a student

39.6% (67) experienced at least 1 further episode of penetrative assault

Demographic breakdown

- 85.8% Female
- 21.4% LGB+

Circumstances (multiple options could be selected)

- Taken advantage of when intoxicated (58.6%)
- Freezing (42.6%)
- Physical force (39%)

Penetrative Assault

Only 1 in 4 sought medical advice:

- 35.7% - GP
- 33.3% - GUM clinics
- 21.4% - Brook
- 11.9% - A & E
- 7.1% - Rowan SARC

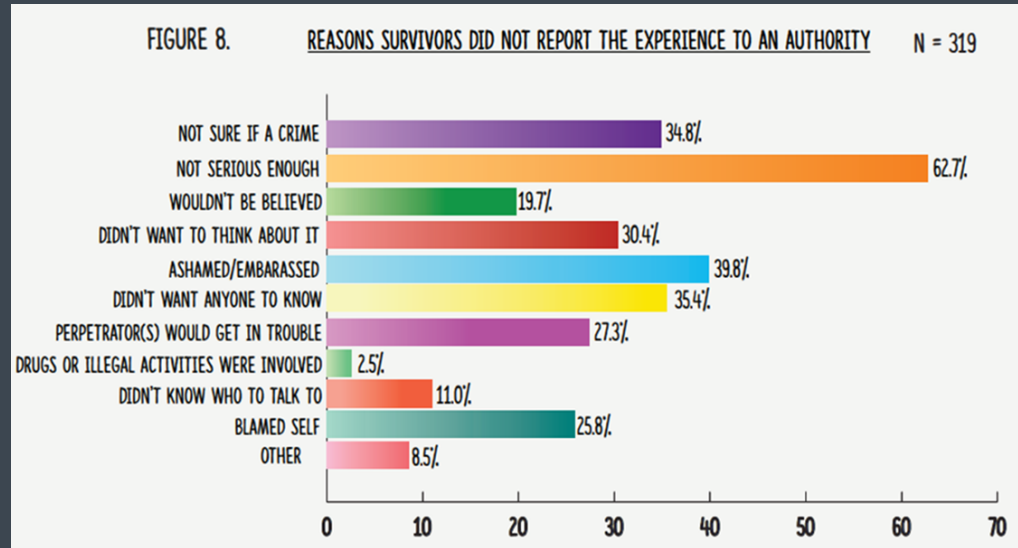
LGB+ students are much more likely to seek advice (41.7%) compared to non-LGBT respondents (20.5%)

Students registered with disability services are much more likely to seek advice (45.5%) compared to students who do not consider themselves to have a disability (21.2%)

Female students (24.8%) are almost equally likely to seek advice as male students (26.3%)

Reporting -173 (54.2%) told someone

4.4% of those who had experienced a penetrative assault made a report to the PSNI



Only 6.4% consider themselves to have been “sexually assaulted.” 5.7% of students were unsure

Impact on Survivors of Penetrative Assault

$n = 169$

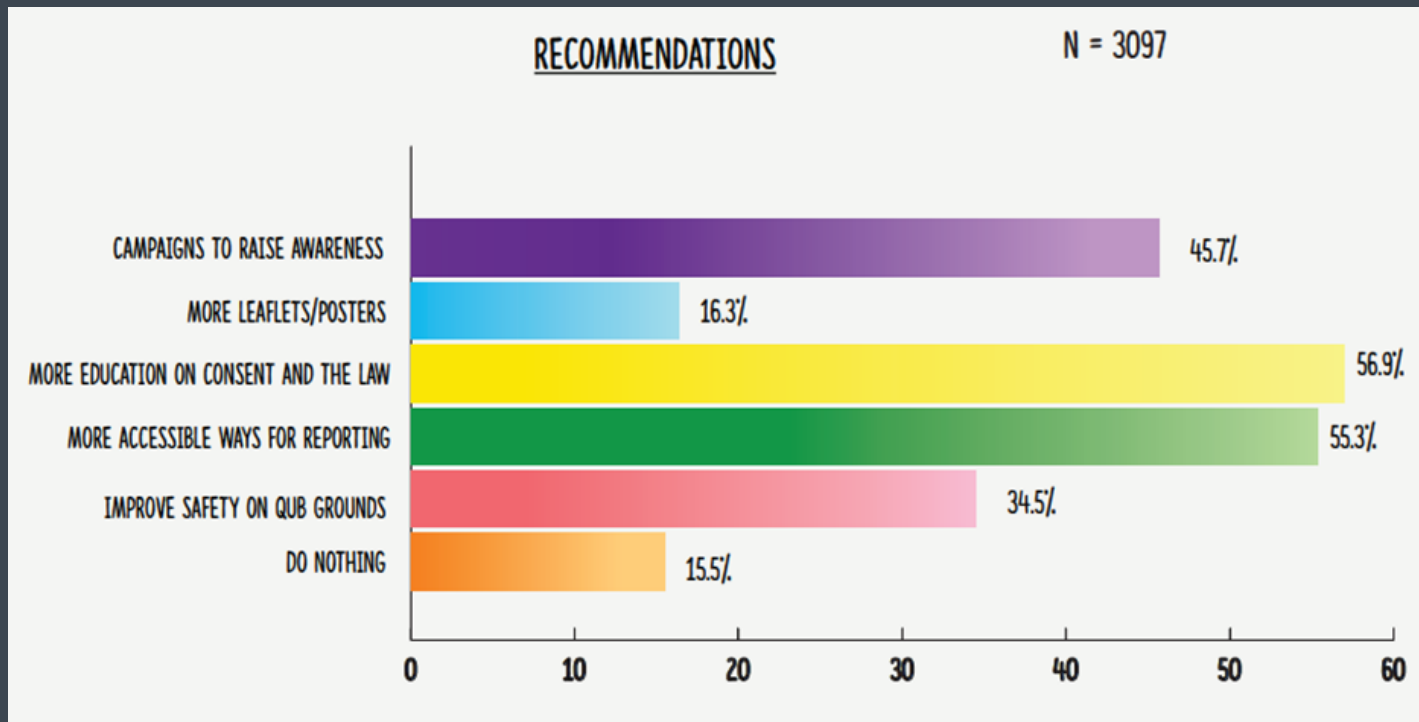
Academic performance

- 49.1% missed class
- 43.8% experienced a drop in academic performance
- 18.9% considered dropping out

60.9% reported a negative impact on their mental health

33.1% of those who had experienced a penetrative assault felt unsafe in the University

Respondent Recommendations



Conclusions

First study of this kind in NI

5.5% had experienced at least 1 episode of penetrative assault

Very low level of reporting or seeking medical advice

Significant impact on subsequent mental health and academic performance

Sexual violence policy with clear pathways is being developed