

CENTER for VICTIM RESEARCH

Building an evidence base for victim services

Unwanted Sexual Experiences Measure

Author(s) of Instrument:

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Key References: Publications related to this instrument

Zweig, J. M., Crockett, L. J., Sayer, A., & Vicary, J. R. (1999). A Longitudinal examination of the consequences of sexual victimization for rural young adult women. *Journal of Sex Research, 36*(4), 396-409.

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Primary Use/Purpose: This section describes what this instrument was designed to measure.

This research instrument is designed to measure sexual victimization among young adults, with a particular focus on intercourse (including vaginal, oral, or anal). It seeks to understand if young adults have experienced unwanted sex and, if so, what type of sexual coercion they experienced. Types of sexual coercion include: internal psychological pressure, substance-related coercion, external psychological manipulation, and threat or actual use of violence by the perpetrator.

It has been implemented through paper and electronic, self-administered surveys, as well as during phone-administered interviews. Given the sensitive nature and the intention for use with youth subjects, this instrument likely requires the consultation and oversight of a human subjects research ethics board. It is also recommended that this instrument be administered with mental health professionals/counselors available in case a respondent is triggered or upset by the content.

Background and Development: How and why this instrument was developed.

The unwanted sexual experiences question of the measure was created for the above study. It drew on research (Koss 1993)¹ that encourages the use of behaviorally focused questions in framing questions around actions rather than labels. For that reason, respondents are asked about "unwanted sex," rather than about "rape" or "sexual assault." The questions related to the types of sexual coercion were adapted from measures created by Muehlenhard and Cook (1988)² and Koss and Oros (1982).³

Psychometrics (if applicable): Any testing of this instrument.

To assess scale reliability for the measure, researchers calculated estimates of internal consistency (i.e., Cronbach's alpha), and convergent and discriminant validity coefficients were assessed as well.

Link to Instrument: Link to the instrument if available.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1345&context=psychfacpub>

Submitted by: Janine Zweig submitted this instrument to the CVR Instruments Collection and certified permission to share the link to this instrument.

¹ Koss, M. P. (1993). Detecting the scope of rape: A review of prevalence research methods. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 8*, 198-222.

² Muehlenhard, C. L., & Cook, S. W. (1988). Men's self-reports of unwanted sexual activity. *The Journal of Sex Research, 24*, 58-72.

³ Koss, M. P., & Oros, C. J. (1982). Sexual experiences survey: A research instrument investigating sexual aggression and victimization. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 50*, 455-457.