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Poster Presentations

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Sexual Assault Prevention & Education: A Culturally Tailored Approach

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Introduction

Although sexual assault education is prevalent on college campuses, current initiatives may not be culturally sensitive and may not be reaching students from diverse backgrounds with unique risk and protective factors. One particular underserved population is African-American college students. In 2014, the White House Task Force conducted its first report on sexual assault prevalence across the country's colleges and universities. Only one primary prevention program was identified as being a promising prevention strategy targeting college students. The generalizability of this program to students of color is questionable as the population used was 90% White. Consequently, more information is needed to inform the creation of culturally informed prevention programs that account for the distinctive needs of African American students. One specific difference between African-Americans and Whites is that sexual violence occurs more frequently in the context of dating relationships among African Americans, suggesting the need to incorporate domestic and dating violence in prevention efforts. Additionally, African-American women consume alcohol at a much lower rate than White women, indicating that prevention efforts directed at women can focus less on explaining alcohol's role with sexual assault. Furthermore, barriers such as mistrust and fear of police and administration, which lead to reduced reporting, must be taken into account when engaging this group. In order to account for the specific needs of this population, more information needs to be gathered on how African-American students conceptualize sexual assault and rape culture.

Method

Therefore, a case study was conducted on a female African-American university student to help better understand the perceptions around sex assault in addition to identifying additional cultural barriers to reporting sexual violence. The interview was a 90-minute semi-structured session. It was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Results & Discussion

Data was analyzed using a phenomenological approach by three coders to identify core ideas. Results from this study provides a foundation for future research among this population. Findings indicate that in order to effectively reach African-American students in prevention and education efforts, culturally targeted efforts should be implemented. Specifically, the role of the African-American family, church, media representation, gender socialization, and historical legacy of racially motivated sexual violence against the community should be further explored incorporated.