



MAINGI-NGUNJIRI LYDIAH W.
PhD fellow Kenyatta University


PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS OF MALE SURVIVORS OF SGBV




**PAPER PRESENTED IN THE 1ST GENDER VIOLENCE CONFERENCE
IN KENYATTA UNIVERSITY (1ST-3RD AUGUST 2012)**

Introduction

- There are increasing reports of abuse of men during times of war and conflict and in non-conflict situations.
- The prevalence of sexual abuse of boys is very disturbing.
approximately one in six men reported direct inappropriate sexual contact by the age of sixteen. An additional one in ten men reported inappropriate, noncontact sexual activity by the same age” (Greenfield 2009)
- Approximately one in four men has a sexual abuse history
- Christian, Safari, Ramazani, Burnham and Glass (2011) noted SGBV perpetrated against men and boys is likely common within a conflict-affected regions
- Often goes unreported by survivors and others due to cultural and social factors associated with sexual assaults, including survivor shame, fear of retaliation by perpetrators and stigma by community members.


- 
- The consequences of sexual abuse on the male survivor are significant and long-term and also impact the health and well-being of his family and community.
 - There is a dearth of research on SGBV perpetrated against men and boys in conflict and post-conflict settings, but it is believed to be widespread (Oosterhoff *et al.* 2004, Russell 2007, Sivakumaran 2007, Dustin 2009 in (Christian et al 2011).
 - Male survivors do not currently receive services from local or international organizations
 - Research depicts that helpers are not so adequately prepared to help the male survivors as they are to for female survivors.

- 
- Several authors have hypothesized that males respond differently from females to SGBV with many being silent about it.
 - Hart-Johnson and Green (2012) report that men have fewer strategies to cope with abuse than men.
 - It is in this light that this paper seeks to fill that knowledge gap and provoke appropriate actions by all stake holders to enhance healing for male survivors of SGBV

Typology of Abuses

Rape

- In armed conflicts especially victims may be forced;
- ❖ to perform fellatio on their perpetrators or on one another;
- ❖ perpetrators may anally rape victims themselves, using objects
- ❖ force victims to rape fellow victims 'enforced rape'.
- ❖ In Sri Lanka, victims have complained of 'sticks pushed through the anus, usually with chillies rubbed on the stick first'
- ❖ ing 'made to masturbate soldiers orally'
- ❖ being 'forced to rape each other in front of soldiers for their "entertainment"'.

- 
- ❖ In Iraq, the Taguba report, commissioned to investigate the conduct of operations of the 800th Military Police Brigade, contains a finding of male detainees being threatened with rape and 'sodomizing a detainee with a chemical light and perhaps a broom stick'.
 - ❖ Before the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, male victims testified that they had been sodomized, often through having a metal rod inserted in them.
 - ❖ Rape plus', the 'plus' being HIV/AIDS, or another consequence of rape, which may have been the very purpose for the rape in the first place. For example, in Kosovo, the OSCE reported one interviewee recounting that, 'he saw two male detainees being raped by two policemen who declared that they had AIDS'

- **Enforced Sterilization**

- Comprises castration and other forms of sexual mutilation..


- According to Sivakumaran (2007) the Report of the UN Commission of Experts observed that, castrations are performed through crude means such as,

- ✓ Forcing one internee to bite off another's testicle
- ✓ Tying one end of a wire to the testicles and the other end to a motorcycle, then using the motorcycle to yank off the testicles'
- ✓ Other witnesses recount having seen Muslims being forced to bite each other's testicles off

Guards cutting off penises in an attempt to frighten the other men.



▪ Genital Violence

- In Kosovo, the OSCE recorded a man recounting that officers 'made us take off our clothes and lie down. They beat us with wooden clubs, on every part of the body, back and head. They also put our penises (mine too) on a table and beat them.'
 - In Bosnia, witnesses told of being hit in the testicles 'using metal hampers, metal bars' and being kicked with boots. There are also reports of electric shocks and beatings being administered to the genital area in many other conflicts such as Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland (Sivakumaran 2007)
- 

Enforced Nudity

- Of Kosovo, the most common way of sexually humiliating men was to force them to strip have forcibly raped a 15-year old fellow detainee, and then photographing him naked;
- naked in public.
- There are reports of men being made to repeatedly undress and dress undress and stand naked for periods of time and undress in front of a group of women.
- Sivakumaran (2007) found that the intentional abuse of detainees by military police personnel included:... Videotaping and photographing naked male and female detainees; Forcibly arranging detainees in various sexually explicit positions for photographing;


- Forcing detainees to remove their clothing and keeping them naked for several days at a time;
- Forcing naked male detainees to wear women's underwear; ...
- Arranging naked male detainees in a pile and then jumping on them;
- Positioning a naked detainee on a MRE Box, with a sandbag on his head, and attaching wires to his fingers, toes, and penis to simulate electric torture; Writing 'I am a Rapist' on the leg of a detainee alleged to
- Placing a dog chain or strap around a naked detainee's neck and having a female Soldier pose for a picture .

- 
- **Enforced Masturbation**
 - The most experienced form of male sexual violence.
 - The Taguba report also contains a finding that groups of male detainees were forced to masturbate themselves while being photographed and videotaped.
 - In other conflicts such as that in Sri Lanka, there are reports of victims having been forced to masturbate their captors.

The psychological effects of abuse on the male victims

Hopper (2012) reported findings on long-term problems including;

- Guilt and self-blame;
- Low self-esteem and negative self-image,
- Problems with intimacy;
- Sexual problems;
- Compulsions; or dysfunctions;
- Substance abuse and depression
- Symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

- 
- A survivor reported this about his experience; “it was good and at the same time very painful as I had my first ejaculation, a terrible feeling, a tremendous feeling of shame I never since got rid of. (Andersen 2008).
 - When one male survivor was asked about the year the rape occurred he said ‘100 years ago’.
 - A survivor stated ‘After the rape I felt sick, I had trouble in my head. I used to shout, beat people and had other problems ...’.
 - The wife of a male survivor said ‘He has nightmares and finds it difficult to sleep. He has headaches when he thinks about it ... He is also afraid and cries out in his sleep’. (Christian et al 2011)

Other long term effects

Disempowerment

- The effects of disempowerment do not just take place at the individual level but also of the family and community just as the chastity of the family and community is considered lost when female members are sexually violated.

- Public Humiliation

At an individual level, the male is stigmatized as a victim and the community is informed that their male members, their protectors, are unable to protect themselves., the manliness of the man is lost and the family and community are made to feel vulnerable.


Emasculation

- Individuals who are forced to strip naked feel exposed, vulnerable and without dignity.
- ❖ Some male survivors state that, 'the humiliation of being interrogated while naked was a very drastic event in their gender stereotyping which suggests that men cannot be victims, only perpetrators.'
- Sexual violence may be considered to be inconsistent with certain societies' understandings of masculinity.



- Feminization

- The intention of the rape may be to 'lower' the social status of the male survivor by 'reducing' him to a 'feminized male',

- 'I haven't told my wife as two wives cannot live in the same house'. The rape, he stated, changed him from a man into a wife of the Hutu rebels (Christian et al 2011)
- 



- **Homosexualization**

- When reference is made to masculinity, the dominant construct is that of heterosexual masculinity. It is the heterosexual male that is the symbol of power.
- During a rape, it is not uncommon for the victim to experience an erection or ejaculate, causing him to question his sexuality and feel homosexualized.

- **Relationship difficulties**

- Dube et al (2005) reported that Compared with those who did not report Childhood Sexual Abuse, men exposed to childhood sexual abuse were at a 40% increased risk of marrying an alcoholic, and at 40% to 50% increased risk of reporting current problems with their marriage.

Masculinity/Identity construction ideologies

- Hopper (2012) indicate that male survivors of childhood sexual abuse may experience: Attempts to "prove" their masculinity by having multiple female sexual partners, sexually victimizing others, and/or engaging in dangerous or violent behaviors; Confusion over their gender and sexual identities; Sense of being inadequate as men; Sense of lost power, control, and confidence in their manhood

Physical health Consequences

Physical health issues reported included weakness, headaches, body aches, loss of appetite, bloody noses, incontinence of urine and stool, fever and symptoms consistent with sexually transmitted infections, and reduced desire for sexual activities with their wife.



Drugs and substance abuse

- Substance abuse was significantly more prevalent among both sexually and physically abused men than among non-abused subjects. (Lisak and Luster, 1994).

Conclusion

- Effects of sexual and gender based abuse on male victims are many, some unique to their gender and complex
- These effects are part of the reason why male victimization is under reported.
- Partly these have also resulted to their role in perpetration of the same evils.
- Helping services for survivors of SGBV should be opened up to men and women who should be trained and sensitized to sexual violence against men for fear of accentuating the problem.
- Survivors should be able to choose the sex of their helpers and service providers.
- Further research in this area is necessary
- Programmes that are sensitive to the needs of the male survivors need to be established.