Title: The relationship between parental communication and rates of sexual aggression

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Introduction: Sexual violence, defined as any sexual act committed or attempted by another person without freely given consent, is pervasive on college campuses. A national survey of sexual violence on college campuses found that over 50% of women had experienced some form of sexual violence, while 34.5% of men reported at least one instance of perpetration. Though there is much literature on rates of sexual violence, little research currently examines the effects of parental communication on sexual violence. Findings thus far have been mixed: college-aged sexual violence perpetrators report worse relationships with their fathers and adolescent perpetrators report lower quality relationships with their mothers. The current study tests the hypothesis that men who regularly communicated with their parents reported less perpetration.

Method: A sample of 319 college-aged male participants, recruited from a participant pool at a mid-sized university, completed a web-based survey. Using a Chi square test, we compared the number of reported acts of sexual aggression across three groups of participants - those who did not speak with their parents, those who spoke with one, and those who spoke with both parents.

Results: On average, men who did not speak with either of their parents reported perpetrating about 7 acts of sexual violence. While men who spoke with both or just one of their parents reported perpetrating 3 and 4 sexually aggressive acts, respectively. There was a significant difference between the number of acts reported by each group, \( \chi^2(56, N = 338) = 128.98, p < .001 \).

Discussion: Participants who reported communicating with one or both of their parents reported fewer acts of sexual aggression than those who did not communicate with their parents. By examining the relationship between sexual violence perpetration and parental communication, this study hopes to discover whether or not parental communication may be repeated to rates of
sexual violence perpetration. Future research on this topic should focus on a larger sample of college students with more family-related questions.