

Study examines how women label abuse

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U.S. social scientists have found women assaulted by those known to them are less likely to label the experience as abusive violence.

The University of Georgia researchers said they based their conclusion on data from female college students who had been physically or sexually assaulted.

Study authors also found that women's perceived risk of future assaults wasn't related to their belief that they had been assaulted or with actual rates of victimization. In fact, women who labeled assaults as abuse experienced more physical assaults than those who didn't.

The researchers also determined that women who labeled incidents of sexual or physical violence as abuse were more likely to change their behavior to decrease the risk of future sexual, but not physical, assault.

The study appears in the journal *Psychology of Women Quarterly*.

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