

# Timely research on barriers for male victims of sexual violence

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As the #metoo conversation continues, another group of victims is being recognized: men. A recently published paper in the *American Journal of Men's Health* shows that some men who have experienced sexual violence are hesitant to speak out or seek help.

The lead author of the study is Martina Delle Donne, a visiting researcher in the lab of Victoria Frye, associate medical professor in the Community Health and Social Medicine Department, at the CUNY School of Medicine at The City College of New York.

This research aims to fill the gap in the literature and better understand how men, both straight and gay as well as cisgender and transgender, conceptualize, understand, and seek help related to [sexual violence](#). Key findings show that those who both self-identify as men and as members of sexual-orientation minority populations are at higher risk of sexual violence and are less likely to report or seek support services. Like women, these men face barriers. But some of those barriers are unique, including:

- Traditional gender norms that encourage men to be "strong" and not show vulnerability
- Stigma associated with both being gay and being a victim of sexual violence (e.g. "you asked for it")

It's worth noting that the majority of the study participants who experienced violence stated that it was from another man, which is in line with the data reported from the [National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey](#) (2011) which show that when men are raped, in 79.3 percent of the cases the perpetrator is another man.

According to Delle Donne, "The goal of this exploratory study is to describe the barriers in order to interrupt stigma, reduce shame, and

diminish stereotypes that have left men who experience sexual [violence](#) feeling silenced and invalidated. As one of the Silence Breakers, Terry Crews noted, right now it's crucial to speak out and advocate for victimized people's rights."

**More information:** Martina Delle Donne et al. Barriers to and Facilitators of Help-Seeking Behavior Among Men Who Experience Sexual Violence, *American Journal of Men's Health* (2017). [DOI: 10.1177/1557988317740665](https://doi.org/10.1177/1557988317740665)

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