



## **SOCIETAL ATTITUDES ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT**

Background Paper, American Medical Association

*A survey of 6,159 college students enrolled at 32 institutions in the United States found:*

54% of the women surveyed had been victims of some form of sexual violence, more than one in four college-aged women had been victim of rape or attempted rape,  
57% of the assailants and 55% of the victims had used alcohol or drugs prior to the assault,  
25% of the men surveyed admitted some degree of sexually aggressive behavior  
42% of the victims told no one.

*In a survey of high school students, 56% of the girls and 76% of the boys believed forced sex was acceptable under some circumstances.*

A survey of 11 to 14 year olds found:

51% of the boys and 41% of the girls said forced sex was acceptable if the boy “spent a lot of money” on the girl,  
31% of the boys and 32% of the girls said it was acceptable for a man to rape a woman with past sexual experience,  
87% of boys and 79% of girls said sexual assault was acceptable if the man and the woman were married,  
65% of the boys and 47% of the girls said it was acceptable for a boy to rape a girl if they had been dating for more than six months.

In a survey of male college students:

35% anonymously admitted that, under certain circumstances, they would commit rape if they believed they could get away with it.  
One in 12 admitted to committing acts that met the legal definition of rape and  
84% men who committed rape did not label it as rape.

In another survey of college males:

43% of college-aged men admitted to using coercive behavior to have sex, including ignoring a woman’s protest, using physical aggression and forcing intercourse.  
15% acknowledged they had committed acquaintance rape, 11% acknowledged using physical restraint to force a woman to have sex.