

# Sexual Assault History and Health Perceptions: Seven General Population Studies

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This article uses data from 7 population surveys to evaluate the association of sexual assault history with health perceptions. It estimates the extent of generalizability across gender, ethnic groups, and studies; the extent to which depression accounts for or mediates the association; and whether some circumstances of assault are more strongly related to poor subjective health. Data from each of 18 subsamples of the surveys were analyzed (pooled N = 10,001; 7,550 women and 2,451 men), and results were combined by using meta-analysis. Assault was associated with poor subjective health (odds ratio [OR] = 1.63, 95% confidence interval [CII = 1.36, 1.95) and this result was consistent regardless of gender, ethnicity, or sample. Controlling depression did not markedly change this result (OR = 1.46, 95% CI = 1.21, 1.77), indicating that depression did not account for or mediate the assault-health perceptions association. Multiple assaults and assaults by strangers or spouse were most strongly associated with poor subjective health.

Key words: sexual assault, rape, sexual abuse, health perceptions, depression, women's health

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