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**Male rape has, for a long time, been almost completely unacknowledged, rarely reported and often scorned. How, after all, can a man possibly be raped? In the first article in a 4-part series, DIANNE STEVEN uncovers some surprising facts about the prevalence of male rape in South Africa.**

## **Male Rape: Part 1 It's More Common Than You Think<sup>1</sup>**

By [Dianne Steven](#)

South Africa is often described as the rape capital of the world, but what often goes unmentioned is the high incidence of male rape in the country. Male rape is far more common than we think.

Melvin came to me for counsel when he was serving a prison sentence for rape. He had been gang raped as a five year old by three men. When he went home bleeding and told his mom, she ignored him and told him not to be silly. He then closed up and spoke to no-one, but carried the pain, anger and bitterness around for years until one day he violently raped a woman and then his wife. In prison he met Jesus Christ and found healing.

Johannes was rejected by his family when only four years old. He ended up sleeping on the Cape Town Station where he was raped. After that he found an axe which he used for protection over the years, until eventually he was arrested for an axe murder and sentenced to prison, where I met him, and where he met Jesus Christ.

### **MALES RELUCTANT TO REPORT RAPE:**

Rapes on males are under-reported by a very large margin as compared to rape and sexual assault on females.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://gatewaynews.co.za/2013/03/20/male-rape-part-1-its-more-common-than-you-think/>

Male survivors are less likely to report the crime and seek help, largely because of society's expectations regarding the role of men and boys. Men are encouraged to concentrate on competition, physical strength, and leadership. Male victims of sexual assault may feel ashamed because they were overpowered or dominated, and shame may contribute to feelings of isolation and reluctance to seek professional help.

Several studies also argue that male-male prison rape is quite common and may be the least reported form of rape. Male rape is rife in South African prisons. It often goes undetected as victims' lives are threatened by fellow inmates.

Most rape research and reporting to date has been limited to male-female forms of rape. Research on male-male and female-male rape is beginning. According to psychologist Dr Sarah Crome, fewer than one in 10 male-male rapes are reported. As a group, male rape victims often get minimal of services and support, and legal systems are often ill equipped to deal with this type of crime.



## **SHOCKING STATISTICS ON MALE RAPE:**

About one in 30 men in South Africa have been raped by a man, according to a study by the Medical Research Council. The study shows that almost 10% of South African men have experienced sexual violence by another man.

The findings presented at the annual Sexual Violence Research Initiative in Cape Town, are based on a household survey conducted among about 1 740 men in two of South Africa's nine provinces – KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape.

In July 2008 IOL News reported that two out of five male South African pupils say they have been raped, according to a study suggesting sexual abuse of boys is endemic in the country's schools.

The survey, published in BioMed Central's International Journal for Equity in Health, showed that boys were most frequently assaulted by adult women, followed closely by other schoolchildren.

## **ATTACKS ON BOYS:**

"This study uncovers endemic sexual abuse of male children that was suspected, but poorly documented," Neil Andersson and Ari Ho-Foster of 'The Centre for Tropical Disease Research' in Johannesburg wrote.

The findings underscored the need to raise awareness about the rape of male children, and they urged further efforts to prevent sexual violence in South Africa, the researchers said. "Sexually abused children are also more likely to engage in HIV high-risk behaviour," they wrote.

The survey carried out in 1 200 schools across the country asked 127 000 boys aged between 10 and 19 if they had ever been sexually abused and, if so, by whom. The findings were shocking:

- Forty-four percent of the 18-year-olds said they had been forced to have sex some time in their lives.
- About 33 percent said they had been abused by males, 41 percent by females and 27 percent said they had been raped by both males and females.
- Abuse by fellow males was more common in rural areas, while attacks by women happened mainly in cities, the study found.
- The researchers say the findings may actually understate the level of sexual violence against boys.

## **Male Rape: Part 2 The Law Catches Up But Culture Lags<sup>2</sup>**

By [Dianne Steven](#)

Male rape has been around for a long time but it took many years for the legal system in South Africa to catch up with this reality.

Legal recognition of rape and sexual assaults against men finally came about with the passing of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act in 2007.

Previously sexual attacks on men could only be classified as indecent assault. Only males could be charged with rape and females were the only victims recognised by law.

Before 2007 rape meant vaginal intercourse. The amended Act broadens the definition of rape to include forced anal or oral sex, irrespective of the gender of either the victim or the perpetrator. It also includes sexual penetration with an inanimate object or animal genitalia.

The South African constitution guarantees gender equality and the right of a person to freedom and security.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://gatewaynews.co.za/2013/03/28/male-rape-part-2-the-law-catches-up-but-culture-lags/>

The Bill aims to provide survivors of rape and sexual assault with the maximum and least traumatising protection the law can provide.

Appropriately, the revised law also deals with rape victims' risk of contracting HIV. Recent statistics indicate that about 5.4 million people out of a population of 48 million in South Africa are infected with the HI virus.

Victims of rape or sexual assault may obtain a court order for alleged offenders to undergo compulsory HIV testing and for the results to be revealed to them.

The Act also provides for post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for rape victims to prevent HIV-infection. For this to be effective however, victims should be able to access it within 72 hours.

The law has caught up with the reality of male rape and HIV infection risks. But how is it being implemented?

Despite indications that male on male rape is widespread, I have not found any reports of males charged or convicted of raping males. This is no doubt linked to the fact that shame and fear (especially in prison rapes) hold males back from reporting that they have been raped.

I did find a report of a precedent-setting ruling in February 2012 in which a court found a woman guilty of raping a male. The 45-year-old Eastern Cape woman caregiver was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment for raping a mentally and physically handicapped boy of 13.

Port Elizabeth National Prosecuting Authority spokesman Tsepo Ndwalaza said: "It is the first conviction of its kind. She is the first woman to be successfully convicted of rape in South Africa."

An unusual male rape case is documented in a case report of SA Family Practice, a journal of SA family physicians. It details an incident in 2009 in which a 32-year-old Xhosa-speaking security guard from Transkei was abducted and forced to have sex with three women over a period of three days. An armed man ordered the victim to strip for the women. During his ordeal he was given an unknown potion to drink and an ointment was applied to his genitals.

On the morning of the fourth day, the victim was dropped off, and he reported the case to the police soon thereafter. He had not taken a bath or any medication prior to reporting the case. The reason for presenting to a medical officer was to open a case, and to receive help for the psychological trauma. On the day of the examination, the subject was apprehensive and mildly dehydrated.

There were no injuries. His genitalia were clean, dry and normal, therefore, no specimen was collected for forensic evidence. He was offered psychological counseling and an HIV test, and post exposure prophylaxis (PEP). The police however failed to open a case.

This case highlights the difficulties faced by male rape victims. Despite reporting his ordeal — something that is not easy to do in a culture in which being raped by a woman is not acceptable — he was apparently not taken seriously by law enforcers. The law has caught up with reality but it seems that SA culture has some catching up to do.

## Male Rape: Part 3 Consequences and Healing<sup>3</sup>

By [Dianne Steven](#)



Statistics suggest that male rape victims hardly ever seek help from police or society. The shame they feel at being overpowered causes them to 'bottle up' and suffer in isolation, which further aggravates the problem.

No matter whether the male victim is heterosexual, bisexual, or homosexual, rape can be extremely traumatic and difficult to work through.

*(PICTURED LEFT) A man at the recent "Real Men March" in Cape Town carries a poster confirming that he still bears scars from being raped as a child.*

The following testimonies highlight the long struggles faced by some male rape victims:

- An elderly man carried a banner at the recent 'Real Men March' in Cape Town on March 16; it said: 'I was raped as a child and to this day I still bear the scars'.
- Vinodhan was gang raped by six men at the age of 18. The incident occurred 12 years ago, but scars of the horrific incident are still fresh in his mind.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://gatewaynews.co.za/2013/04/03/male-rape-part-3-consequences-and-healing/>

- In June 2012 Brian told his story of being raped by his step-mother when he was 15 years old. “Many people don’t believe that boys or men can get raped. I did not believe it either until it happened to me,” said Brian. The rape experience caused Brian to start looking at all women as lusty and selfish. He hated his step-mother after the abuse. “Before that forced rape, I had brushed off girls who made advances at me. But after that, I started sleeping with them. After the sex, I would either ignore them or go on a few more times until I got bored. It was the beginning of my mission to punish women. I got worse! Almost each night, I had a girl or two”.

Body, soul and spirit are affected by rape and violence. Male rape – in fact any sort of rape – is a physically and psychologically damaging evil act that can cause incalculable damage.

Richie J McMullen, author of *Male Rape: ‘Breaking the Silence on the Last Taboo’*, encourages seeking immediate medical attention whether or not the incident is reported to police. Sometimes injuries that seem minor at first can get worse. Survivors may contract a sexually transmitted disease during the sexual assault, without suffering immediate symptoms.

### **PHYSICAL CONSEQUENCES:**

The victim should seek medical and psycho-social treatment including pre- and post-test HIV counseling, post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), testing for sexually transmitted infections, and treatment for injuries.

Common physical consequences include loss of appetite, nausea, stomach aches, headaches. loss of memory or concentration and changes in sleep patterns.

### **GENERAL PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL REACTIONS:**

As with female survivors, case research suggests that male survivors deny their victimisation. Reasons for this include: a lack of information to define their experience as rape; a sense that they will be disbelieved, a fear of reprisal by the perpetrator/s, an unwillingness to think of themselves as rape survivors and fearing all the potential changes that may ensue, and resentment that the perpetrator/s had the power to take control of their lives.

A major problem facing male victims is a sense of vulnerability, damaged self-image and “loss of manhood”. Male survivors are disturbed by the notion that they could not protect themselves and were somehow conquered, even if there were many attackers.

The experience of a rape may affect heterosexual and homosexual men differently.

Heterosexual men often begin to question their sexual identity and are more disturbed by the sexual aspect of the assault than the violence involved (Brochman, 1991). Heterosexual males may begin to think that the sexual assault makes them gay or that they will eventually turn homosexual, and they may feel the need to withdraw from a sexual relationship with their spouse for some time.

Common reactions to rape include: denial and guilt; shame and humiliation; fear and a feeling of self-blame; loss of control; loss of self-respect; flashbacks; anger and anxiety; guilt; retaliation fantasies sometimes shocking the survivor with their graphic violence; nervous or compulsive behavior; depression and mood swings; emotional distancing and withdrawal from relationships; changes in sexual activity; suicidal feelings; and 'Rape-Related Post-traumatic Stress Disorder'.

Male rape victims not only have to confront unsympathetic attitudes if they choose to press charges, they also often hear unsupportive statements from their friends, family and acquaintances (Brochman, 1991).

Incest or rape is often the root cause of eating disorders, and addictions.

## **SPIRITUAL CONSEQUENCES:**

The spiritual effects of sexual abuse vary. Rape victims may have difficulties with prayer and with imagining God as a loving father; they may feel that their relationship with God has been disrupted. Feeling abandoned by God is a common reaction, and has indeed contributed to some people leaving the Church. But although, survivors of sexual abuse often opt to leave the Church, the experience of abuse may also lead to greater spiritual involvement later, once healed, such as in ministry to other victims.

Some survivors of abuse may have difficulties with spiritual direction, since it involves intimate conversations in which they must entrust another person with insights into the workings of their soul. Such mistrust will especially apply if the abuser was a church leader.

## **THE TRUTH THAT SETS US FREE!**

Male rape survivors should always be reminded that the rape was an act of violence and not one of a sexual nature, and any rape victim, regardless of gender and sexual orientation, should be reassured and reminded that the rape was in no way, shape or form their fault.

If we try to erase our past, and try to hide our wounds out of fear and shame, our inner darkness can not be illuminated (set free) nor can it become a light for others. Whatever is denied cannot be healed. We need to open up, be transparent and get it out.

Another factor is to forgive: “If you forgive men their trespasses (sins), your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses (sins), neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” Jesus Christ of Nazareth. (Matthew 6:14-15)

When we forgive we become like other ‘wounded healers’. We must live as men & women who have been forgiven and who are forgiving! But how do we get that power and strength and courage to forgive? There is only one place to go – Calvary!

Stand there and watch Jesus bleeding and dying on the cross – watch as He dies alone, naked and in disgrace, yet an innocent victim – watch as He breathes forgiveness to His torturers at a time when they were totally merciless and cruel – when you look at Jesus as your example on that lonely hill outside Jerusalem you will experience His healing power! Jesus cried out on the cross: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.” (Luke 23:34)

### **TESTIMONY OF HEALING:**

In March 2012, a 22-year-old rape survivor, who is not a Christian, but put Biblical principles into practice, said: “The moment you make peace with your true self and open up and acknowledge what happened to you, you can heal.”

He shared his story on a rape crisis blog: “The Cape Flats suburb of Grassy Park was calm and quiet. I wasn’t observant as I opened the front door. The guy came behind me and pushed me into my home with a knife to my back. I panicked and was paralyzed with fear. He made me undress. I remember the pain and the grinding of my teeth as my face was pushed down into a pillow. I remember the hardness in his voice and the way he kept on saying “you deserve it”. I thought he was going to kill me”. “All I could do was hope that I’d survive it”.



He has since made a remarkable recovery following a long journey of healing. He said that “while the perpetrator has not been caught there is not a day that goes by where he does not wish to look him in the eyes and say, “I forgive you”. “Being raped didn’t define me as a person.

I did two courses and that helped me to pull through knowing I was not alone. For a while I often felt sad, angry and depressed, in fear of going anywhere. But that feeling didn't last forever. My support structure was phenomenal. I had friends and family that today I can express my gratitude to for being a part of my life during that journey. I look back and realize that I'm in a good space in my life right now, growing and finding myself. I am no longer a prisoner of my past".

This rape victim was healed and could forgive because of his openness and honesty and willingness to seek help, counsel and a support structure where he could release his internal bitterness, anger and unforgiveness. He did not harbour his pain inside and walk in isolation. Another important thing to do is to prayerfully break all soul ties that will have formed during the rape.

Male rape victims can go to the following links for assistance:

- [www.christianrecovery.com](http://www.christianrecovery.com)
- <http://www.aftersilence.org/male-survivors.php>
- <http://www.antirape.co.za/>
- The National Organization on Male Sexual Victimization: <http://www.malesurvivor.org/>

A rape survivor is usually well-advised to consult with a rape crisis centre or someone knowledgeable in this area rather than relying on general counseling resources. Victims should contact their local rape crisis programme even if services are not expressly advertised for male rape survivors.

Sexual assault and rape are serious crimes. Rape survivors have the right to report the crime to the police. But because authorities are not always sensitive to male sexual assault victims, it is important for them to take a supportive family member, friend or lawyer with them to report the crime.

**Sources:**

<http://www.aftersilence.org/male-survivors.php>  
[http://www.rape.co.za/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=897:male-rape&catid=65:resources&Itemid=137](http://www.rape.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=897:male-rape&catid=65:resources&Itemid=137)

# Male Rape: Part 4 Causes and Prevention<sup>4</sup>

By [Dianne Steven](#)

Most people agree that rape and violence is a serious social problem in South Africa. But it seems there are many knee-jerk views on how to tackle the problem. Educate men to respect women and children, stricter gun control and castration of perpetrators of rape are some such proposals.

So what is the solution? How can we prevent – or at least start reducing this crime? In our quest for lasting solutions we need to try and identify the root of the problem by looking at why people commit the crime of rape. In the context of this series of articles we are especially interested in the shadowy crime of male rape.

Although there is some debate around the characteristics of the victims and the assailants that are involved in male rape, it appears that it is a crime that does not discriminate on the grounds of age or sexual orientation, thus rendering all males potential victims. Rape by male or female heterosexual offenders is slightly more common than by homosexual offenders.

Karen Bachar MA, Research Specialist Senior, University of Arizona Prevention Center, focused her research on ‘causes’ around two areas: – vulnerability to victimisation and characteristics influencing the behavior of both male and female offenders.

## **RISK FACTORS FOR VICTIMISATION:**

Assaults by heterosexual males tend to target strangers. A further characteristic of this form of assault is that, although the victims’ age is not a factor, their vulnerability is. This type of attack is further characterised by a possible need to humiliate and control, which could be motivated by feelings on the part of the offender of unresolved sexuality, gay hatred or difficulties with peer acceptance (Hodge & Canter, 1998, p. 229).

According to Hodge and Canter (1998, pp. 229-231), homosexual assault is one that is more likely to involve individuals in an established relationship and can entail a higher degree of psychological manipulation, rather than physical control. The victims of this form of assault are generally between the ages of 16 and 25 and subject to manipulation by older offenders.

Factors linked to a person’s likelihood of being raped include: passivity, hostility, low self esteem, alcohol and drug use, differences in education or income (Karen Bachar).

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<sup>4</sup> <http://gatewaynews.co.za/2013/04/11/male-rape-part-4-causes-and-prevention/>

Researchers have examined personality traits and attitudes that could increase vulnerability to rape. Recent studies found no specific characteristics that would make certain women more susceptible to violence than others (Pittman & Taylor, 1992).

## **FACTORS INFLUENCING BEHAVIOR OF OFFENDERS:**

There is no single theory that conclusively explains the motivation for rape; the motives of rapists, both male and female, can be multi-factorial and are subject to debate.

Nicholas Groth, a clinical psychologist and author of 'Men Who Rape: The Psychology of the Offender', says all sexual assault is an act of aggression, regardless of the gender or age of the victim or the assailant. Neither sexual desire nor sexual deprivation is the primary motivating force behind rape. It is not about sexual gratification, but rather a sexual aggressor expressing power, hate and control; it is a violent demeaning act of gross violence against the victim.

Denov (2004) states that societal responses to the issue of female perpetrators of sexual assault "point to a widespread denial of women as potential sexual aggressors that could work to obscure the true dimensions of the problem".

## **MOTIVATION OF PERPETRATORS:**

- The legalisation of porn and an immoral, lust-saturated media has poured fuel on the fires of an already sexually immoral society. Porn is a manual for rape and child abuse.
- Entitlement: "There is a sense that people can demand sex whenever they want it."
- Endemic unemployment, causing boredom, addictions and hence rape.
- Dysfunctional families: If females and males have themselves been sexually abused in childhood, they are more likely to rape. Boys that grow up in single parent families don't have a healthy male role model. Without the role model of a strong father and a lack of Biblical teaching on manhood, many males have come to believe that part of being a man means accepting violence and dishing it out.
- Lack of legal deterrents: Rape survivors are frequently unable to convict their attackers. Medical Research Council research shows that just 6% of reported rape cases in Gauteng are successfully prosecuted. The Bible says in Eccl 8:11 "When the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, people's hearts are filled with schemes to do wrong."

## **PREVENTION MEASURES:**

- According to Karen Bachar's research sexual violence affects all parts of society and the prevention of sexual violence should be categorized under individual approaches, health care responses and community-based efforts.
- Sexual assault may be prevented by secondary school, college and workplace education programmes for males and females. At least one programme for fraternity men produced "sustained behavioral change".
- The complainant or witness must be informed of protective measures that will be instituted, to encourage more rape victims to report their cases. Where there is a delay in reporting the matter or, no previous consistent statements were made, the court must not be allowed to look at it in a negative way when making judgement. The court must take into consideration the surrounding circumstances and impact of the sexual offence. The National Director of Public Prosecutions should decide whether or not a police investigation should be discontinued, not the investigating officer.
- More stringent measures should be taken against investigating officers. The loss of documents must not be allowed to continue as this helps the rapists. No bail should be allowed for alleged rapists whatever their gender. The law must be swift at all times to punish rapists! Justice delayed is justice denied.
- The public must have a sense that justice is being served by avoiding leniency in sentencing through having minimum mandatory sentences. The civil government is called to be a minister of God's justice to punish those who do wrong. Their primary duties and responsibilities are the protection of law-abiding citizens.
- By failing to prevent sexual violence from taking place inside prison walls, automatically the whole nation is placed at risk, as prisoners exposed to violent unprotected sex who become infected with HIV carry it into the community.
- Boys are not taught their rights and how to respect the rights of others, or how to say "no" to abusive clergy, scout-masters, coaches, and other potential perpetrators.
- Church leaders, community Leaders and traditional leaders should take the initiative in leading young boys and men to become role models for the next generation and stop hiding behind tradition and culture.
- Gang rape has become a game where gangsterism is a way of life for young men who don't work but sit around taking drugs and alcohol which play a large role in rape and violence.

## **UNRESOLVED ANGER:**

Vineyard pastor [Alexander Venter](#) writes that 2000 years ago a young Jewish rabbi, Jesus of Nazareth, gave an incisive diagnosis to the issue of violence and to the human condition in general. He taught that anger, if not resolved, leads to contempt and even hatred, which in turn results in rage, violence and murder (see Matt 5:21-26). In his teachings – Jesus first addresses the issue of anger and forgiveness in his ‘Sermon on the Mount’. It’s the foremost issue in human relationships – in personal morality and social reality. Just think of it: if all the unresolved anger were taken out of human relationships the world would be entirely different.

He points out that Jesus deals with the problem of anger ahead of lust – lust as in sexual sin and brokenness – the use and abuse of others for our gratification (see Matt 5:27-30). Rape is not about sexual lust per se. It’s about violence due to unresolved anger, stemming mostly from deeply broken masculinity in terms of disempowerment or powerlessness. Rape is one of the oldest weapons in human history – along with murder – used by so-called men to humiliate, punish and destroy, for feelings (and reasons) of power and control.

Unresolved anger in women can presumably also lead to the type of violent behavior that Venter describes for men. Dealing with the deep-seated anger of men and women should therefore lead to a reduction in all types of rape.

Male rape victims can go to the following links for assistance:

- <http://www.aftersilence.org/male-survivors.php>
- <http://www.antirape.co.za/>
- Or, contact ‘Rape Crisis’ in your area.

### **Sources:**

[http://www.rape.co.za/index.php?](http://www.rape.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=897:male-rape&catid=65:resources&Itemid=137)

[option=com\\_content&view=article&id=897:male-rape&catid=65:resources&Itemid=137](http://www.rape.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=897:male-rape&catid=65:resources&Itemid=137)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rape>

<http://gatewaynews.co.za/2013/03/07/south-african-crisis-of-violent-rape-and-murder/>

<http://www.inspiringwomen.co.za/articles/45-legal-matters/511-south-africa-and-rape>

Gender researcher Lisa Vetten, the M.R. C’s Professor Rachel Jewkes, Sonke Gender Justice’s spokesman Mbuyiselo Botha and People Against Women Abuse counselor Tiny Moloko and Africa Christian Action

## Resources from Kanaan Ministries:

For additional resources, please check out the following from Kanaan Ministries:

- Our foundational series, **Journey2Freedom** (particularly *J2F8*).
  - <http://www.kanaanministries.org/courses/journey2freedom/>
  - <http://www.kanaanministries.org/courses/journey2freedom/new-j2f8-9-materials/>
- Our “Healing Our Wounded Hearts” series, focused on dealing with inner healing:
  - <http://www.kanaanministries.org/courses/healing-our-wounded-hearts/>
- Our **Healing The Sexually Broken-Hearted** series, particularly the book on sodomy and sexual abuse, available for free download at the following link:
  - <http://www.kanaanministries.org/downloads/?did=65>