

Men Who Commit Rape in Singapore

L E C Lim,**FAMS, MBBS, MRCPsych*, K P Gwee,***MBBS, M Med (Psych)*, M Woo,****BSc (Hons)*, G Parker,*****MD, DSc, FRANZCP*

Abstract

Introduction: Rape is regarded as one of the most serious forms of sexual assault, yet there has been a lack of clinical information on convicted rapists in Singapore. This paper attempts to confirm the hypotheses that rapists come from disordered backgrounds, from large families and are poorly educated. We further hypothesize that they are more likely to have a history of antisocial behaviour and to have had recent exposure to pornography. **Methods:** Rapists serving sentence in a Singapore prison were compared with 2 control groups, one consisting of violent non-sexual offenders and another comprising non-violent non-sexual offenders. **Results:** Rapists tended to be men in their late thirties who rape women in their early twenties. A large majority of the rapists and their victims are known to each other. Rapists are more likely to come from large, disordered families, attaining low educational levels but seemingly less antisocial when compared with the controls. More rapists and violent controls reported recent viewing of pornography before committing their offences. **Conclusion:** The demonstrated similarities between rapists and violent controls lend support to the view that rape is an act of violence carried out in a sexual manner rather than a sexual act violently expressed.

Ann Acad Med Singapore 2001; 30:620-4

Key words: Antisocial personalities, Educational level, Family size, Pornography, Rapists

* Consultant Psychiatrist and Adjunct Associate Professor

** Consultant Psychiatrist

*** Psychologist

Institute of Mental Health & Woodbridge Hospital, Singapore

**** Professor and Head

School of Psychiatry, The University of New South Wales, Australia

Address for Reprints: Adjunct Associate Professor Leslie Lim, Department of Community Psychiatry, Institute of Mental Health & Woodbridge Hospital, 10 Buangkok View, Singapore 539747.

E-mail: Leslie_Lim@inh.com.sg