What are the experiences of women and girls in South Africa who access healthcare facilities as a result of sexual assault or sexual violence?

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Review question
1) What are the experiences of women and girls who experience sexual violence when attending a South African healthcare facility?

2) What reported support is available for survivors of sexual violence when attending a healthcare facility in South Africa and how is this signposted?

3) What are the reported types of sexual violence relating to women and girls when attending a SA healthcare facility?

4) What are the reported interventions used by healthcare professionals (nurses, doctors) to support survivors of sexual violence within healthcare facilities in SA?

5) What interventions do healthcare professionals (nurses, doctors) use when providing clinical care for victims of sexual violence in SA?

Searches
The search will be conducted in English by the review team (KHS/JM/MR). The sources of the information will be identified by searching electronic databases such as MEDLINE, EMBASE, PsycINFO, CINAHL, Cochrane Library, PubMed and other methods like contacting experts, checking articles, reference lists and hand searching key journals.

Additionally, reference lists of articles will be consulted as well as a group of experts in the field of violence against women and girls. The list of websites is included in the attachment containing the full search strategy search terms.

An initial search including various forms of violence against women and girls has been conducted to provide the breadth of search terms and MeSH terms.

For inclusion, studies had to be (a) based on empirical data; (b) written in English; (c) published in a peer reviewed journal; (d) published up to 2018. Scholarly or theoretical papers, editorials, commentaries, and articles published in any language other than English were excluded from the review.

Full search strategy search terms: The following terms were searched with Boolean operator and wildcard variants depending on the databases' demands:

sexual violence violence against girls OR sexual violence against women OR VAW* OR domestic violence OR GBV OR gender violence OR gender-based violence OR partner violence OR abuse of women OR wife
abuse OR abuse of wives OR wife battering OR battering of wives OR battering of women OR spouse abuse OR family violence OR murdering of women OR homicides of women OR honor killing OR rape OR sexual violence OR sexual abuse OR sexual assault OR sexual harassment OR coerced sex OR unwanted sex OR unwanted fondling OR unwanted touching OR harmful traditional practices OR sexual slavery AND empirical OR review OR meta-analysis OR overview OR summary OR synthesis

AND

prevent* or intervention* or program* or approaches or trial* or evaluation* or response* or evidence or impact* or effect* or efficacy OR what works

Types of study to be included
Only empirical studies that investigated sexual violence/assault will be included. If the study uses mixed methods, only the qualitative part of it will be extracted. Inclusion will not be restricted by ascertainment of sexual violence, as long as sexual violence events are reported separately from other types of violence or abuse (for example financial or psychological violence).

Inclusion criteria:

• Population are female victims of sexual violence

• Study population are residents of South Africa

• Sample are recruited that report accessing healthcare in any clinical setting

• Studies reporting primary data

• Published in English and peer reviewed

• Time Period: No date restriction will be applied

Exclusion criteria:

• Study population that may be reported as South African but the study setting is not in South Africa

• Study type: experimental studies, studies testing interventions, studies reporting quantitative results only

Condition or domain being studied
Sexual assault or sexual violence (SV) perpetrated against women and girls in South Africa The outcomes are self-reported experience of incident SV or sexual assault when seeking medical attention.

Participants/population
Inclusion: Women and girls who report as victims of sexual violence over the age of 15 and seek medical attention in a recognised healthcare facility

Exclusion:

- where the report of sexual violence/assault does not relate to seeking medical attention in stated clinical setting

- participants who are reported as female but are children or babies

Intervention(s), exposure(s)
Any methods or approaches stated as providing support to women and girls who experience sexual assault or sexual violence when seeking medical attention. This may include referral pathways, voluntary
organisations or safe houses.

**Comparator(s)/control**
Not applicable

**Context**
In this context healthcare facilities will include acute hospitals, primary community hospitals, local clinics or community based healthcare clinics. Any clinical setting where patients will seek medical attention relating to a sexual assault or sexual violence.

**Main outcome(s)**
This paper sets out to identify the scope and quality of academic research that has been conducted to understand the experiences of victims of sexual violence or sexual assault who seek medical attention in any healthcare facilities in South Africa. South Africa has a high prevalence of sexual violence/assault against women and girls compared to other African countries.

**Additional outcome(s)**
None

**Data extraction (selection and coding)**

Data selection: The relevance of the topic, objective and methods of the study will be checked. In the first stage duplication will be checked. In the second stage, the title of study will be screened for exclusion. In the third stage, abstracts of the studies will be screened. Lastly, the contents of remaining articles will be accessed and included based on the inclusion criteria. The review authors will independently screen the titles and abstracts retrieved by the searches against the inclusion/exclusion criteria, to determine which records are relevant and should be included within the review. We will obtain the full reports of all titles which appear to meet the inclusion criteria, or over which there is uncertainty. The review team will then screen the full text reports to determine whether they meet the inclusion criteria.

Reasons for review exclusion will be noted and included in a PRISMA diagram (using the Epip-Reviewer). The study authors will not be blinded to the journal authors, titles or review institutions.

Data extraction: Basic data to be extracted: study authors or agency, year; location of health care facility, type of health care facility, age groups. In addition we well record study design; the quality of the evidence on specific support interventions; research strengths based on the literature; research gaps based on the literature.

To ensure collaborative and synergistic abstraction, the reviewer team will compare their results after assessing articles in order to determine whether the crib sheet, theory and also the initial review and extraction results are providing useful information which will aid in addressing the aims and objectives of this review. Reviewers will resolve disagreements by discussion, and advisory panel who will act as a reviewer in the event that there are any unresolved issues during the data collection and abstraction processes.

**Risk of bias (quality) assessment**
All papers are reviewed by two members of the review team using CASP and a system developed by Schuermans (2013) to measure truth value applicability, consistency and neutrality. Both qualitative and quantitative studies are graded for bias and limitations.

**Strategy for data synthesis**
A descriptive synthesis will be utilised to firstly identify common themes from the reported experiences of women and girls. Secondly the synthesis will group the typology of sexual violence and sexual assault and describe any interventions for support provided when working with victims and survivors of sexual violence and sexual assault.

**Analysis of subgroups or subsets**
It is anticipated that due to the complexity of reporting sexual violence there will be limited analysis of subgroups within this review.

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Conflicts of interest

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Details of any existing review of the same topic by the same authors

Stage of review at time of this submission
## PROSPERO
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