

Police perceptions of rape victims and the impact on case decision making: A systematic review.

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Abstract

Police officers are frequently perceived to hold negative attitudes about rape victims. The aim of this systematic review is to: (1) synthesise the current literature on police officers' attributions of rape victim blame, assessments of rape victim credibility, and rape myth acceptance; and, (2) examine the evidence that holding these attitudes impacts on police investigative decision making in rape cases. Twenty-four articles published between 2000-2016 were included following a systematic search of the available literature. The findings highlight that some police officers do hold problematic attitudes about rape victims e.g., blame, rape myth acceptance, although they are frequently noted to be at a low level. Furthermore, characteristics of the victim, e.g., alcohol intoxication and emotional expression, can affect attributions of victim credibility. Assessments of victim credibility were related to police investigative decision making e.g., recommendations to charge the perpetrator, perceptions of guilt. However, the impact of rape victim blaming and rape myth acceptance is less clear. Given that the literature was predominantly vignette-based, it is unclear how these judgements have an impact in real rape investigations.

Keywords: police; rape myth acceptance; attitudes about rape; blame; credibility

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1. Introduction

Historically, rape victims have been treated poorly by investigative and criminal justice systems (Caringella, 2009). In the 1980s, the police response (in England and Wales) to rape victims was epitomised within the BBC television series “Police” where, in one episode, an alleged rape victim was subjected to aggressive questioning and disbelieving attitudes by three police detectives (British Film Institute Screenonline, 2003). The broadcasting of this programme and subsequent items in national newspapers (e.g., ‘The Times’, which published comments from the second author of the current article) were a catalyst for change within England and Wales in relation to the police and criminal justice response to rape cases. However, although much has since changed in both police and court systems, there still exist considerable issues surrounding the treatment of rape victims particularly in relation to the investigation of rape cases. Horvath, Tong, and Williams (2011) argued that nowhere have criticisms been more consistent than those relating to the police’s ability to investigate such offences. Similar challenges have arisen around the world, including the U.S.A., which is particularly problematic given the importance of the police’s role in bringing cases to criminal justice systems (Spohn & Tellis, 2012).

Frequently, research has reported low levels of victim satisfaction with the police response and revealed negative or poor treatment by the police (e.g., Jordan, 2001, 2004, 2008). For example, Myhill and Allen (2002) found that only a third of their sample of rape victims were very satisfied with the police response and 22% indicated they were very dissatisfied with the way the police handled their cases. Similar findings have been reported regarding male rape victims with Walker, Archer, and Davies (2005) finding that police officers’ responses to male victims included reactions such as homophobic attitudes and

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disinterest. However, some studies have found more positive levels of satisfaction with the police (e.g., Frazier & Haney, 1996) and the ability of some police officers to demonstrate empathy towards rape victims (Lea, Lanvers, & Shaw, 2003; Maddox, Lee, & Barker, 2011). Jordan (2001) compared interview data gathered in the 1980s with interviews carried out in the 1990s in which female rape victims discussed their experiences of the criminal justice system. She found that little of substance had changed over the years in the experiences of women reporting rape to the police, in terms of encountering negative attitudes. Although two-thirds of the victims reported some level of satisfaction with the treatment that they received from the police (in the 1990s), 15% of the victims stated that in the light of their experiences with the police, they would not encourage others to report their rapes. A later study by Jordan (2008), with a sample of victims who had been attacked by the same serial rapist, found they rated the police response much more positively, potentially suggesting change in the way police officers deal with rape cases. However, the rape victims' experiences were not always positive. One victim related an incident that occurred at a police station.

"About three days after it happened I was up at the station talking with (the detectives) and they turned around and said 'come on Kathleen, we know you are making this up. We know you were having an affair and you were having sex that morning and it all got a bit rough and you made all this up so your husband doesn't find out'" (Jordan, 2008, p. 56)

In addition to these issues, rape cases have been found to experience a high level of attrition, with a particularly high level of cases dropping out during the police investigative stage (Rape Monitoring Group, 2013/14). Ministry of Justice (2013) data revealed that in England and Wales only 25% of recorded rapes were passed to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) by the police for further processing. Although attrition is a problem across all

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stages of the criminal justice process, these data identified that the police investigative stage has the highest level of attrition for cases dropping out. Such attrition may (i) cause poor victim satisfaction with the police response and/or (ii) indicate that police decision making about rape cases may be affected by the negative attitudes of some police officers. Spohn and Tellis (2012) highlight the important gatekeeping role that police officers have in investigating rape cases in determining the amount of investigative effort they expend in a case and that investigative effort, and thus police decision making, is affected by both legal and extralegal factors; their extralegal factors included victim, suspect, and offence characteristics, where there is potential for decision making to be affected by stereotypes about rape (e.g., rape myths) or attributions of victim blame and responsibility. Such findings suggest that there is a need to understand whether some/many police officers do hold negative attitudes about rape victims, but more importantly to examine whether negative attitudes impact on decision making in rape cases.

In determining whether police officers generally do hold negative attitudes about rape victims, there is extensive literature that such attitudes are prevalent in broader society e.g., rape myth acceptance and rape victim blame (Grubb & Harrower, 2008; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010). Police officers, as members of society, have been ascribed as having negative and disbelieving attitudes about rape victims, with their personal beliefs about rape thought to impact upon their likelihood of believing allegations of rape (Edward & MacLeod, 1999). Early research in this area suggested that police officers' rape myth acceptance actually was low (LeDoux & Hazelwood, 1985). Indeed, Koppelaar, Lange, and van de Velde (1997) found that police officers were less biased, less stereotypical, and more sympathetic towards rape victims than a sample of law students. Other studies have found that police officer samples are no more negative about rape victims than general population samples (e.g., Brown & King, 1998; Feild, 1978).

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However, some studies have produced more negative findings. For example, Krahe (1991) found that the characteristics police officers attributed to a credible rape scenario did not reflect the characteristics of most actual rapes. Credibility was based upon a physically resistant victim, with no alcohol involved, with threats made by the perpetrator, and the use of a weapon. Such characteristics reflected an adherence to the 'real rape' stereotype (Estrich, 1986), a stereotype that has been shown to not reflect the reality of rape (e.g., Feist, Ashe, Lawrence, McPhee, & Wilson, 2007; Hunt & Bull, 2012). Similarly, Campbell and Johnson (1997) showed that police officers' personal definitions of rape can deviate from those laid down by legislation. Also, Feldman-Summers and Palmer (1980) found that police officers held beliefs that rape was caused by male sexual frustration, that rapists were mentally ill, or that rape was caused by the poor judgment of the victims. It is clear there are contradictions in the above research findings concerning whether police officers hold negative attitudes and whether these affect police decision making. This has led some researchers to contend that only a small proportion of police officers hold problematic attitudes about rape victims (Lea et al., 2003). However, many other researchers argue that they indicate an organisational culture that reflects a disbelief of rape allegations (Jordan, 2011).

1.1 The current review

Given the conflicting findings, this review will synthesise the research that has examined police officers' attitudes about rape victims to (i) establish whether there is evidence that police officers hold more negative attitudes about rape victims than other populations, focussing on attributions of blame and credibility and rape myth acceptance; and (ii) determine how such attitudes have an impact on police decision making. No previous review seems to have been carried out in this area, so a systematic review is needed to bring together the available literature. However, given that there is evidence that attitudes towards

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rape have changed over recent years (see Mennicke, Anderson, Oehme, & Kennedy, 2014), this review will only summarise literature published between 2000-2016. The implications of such a review may suggest that change is still needed within police forces, particularly as police officers typically represent the first point of contact with the criminal justice system for rape victims (Wentz & Archbold, 2012) and especially if there is evidence that holding these attitudes is linked to biased investigative decision making. Holding these negative attitudes may provide one important explanation for the low levels of rape victim satisfaction and the high levels of attrition, again supporting the argument that change is still needed in the police.

2. Review selection methodology

Using Torgerson's (2003) guidelines, a research protocol was constructed to outline the scope and methodology that would be used within the systematic review. A systematic wide-ranging search of the literature was carried out initially using the databases: Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, CINAHL, Medline, PsycArticles, and PsycInfo. The first search sought to identify the literature regarding rape victim blaming, with the following search string used: (polic* OR law enforcement) AND (rape OR sex* assault OR sex* violence) AND victim blam*. The search was limited to articles that were published between 2000-2016 in the English language (this limiter was used for all following searches). This search resulted in 128 results. The following inclusion criteria were then applied: the study must include (i) a police officer sample; (ii) a quantitative or qualitative assessment of one of the following attitudes (a) blaming (or responsibility) (b) credibility, or (c) rape myth acceptance; and (iii) original data as opposed to a review or meta-analysis (these criteria were also applied in the following searches). Screening of abstracts and titles resulted in seven studies being extracted: Areh, Mesko, and Umek (2009), Darwinkle,

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Powell, and Tidmarsh (2013), Maddox, Lee, and Barker (2013), Sleath and Bull (2012), Rich and Seffrin (2012), Venema (2016) and Wentz and Archbold (2012). As rape victim blaming is often overlapped with attributions of responsibility and these two concepts are conceptually linked (see Shaver, 1985), the above search was completed with the last component being victim respon* to ensure that all blaming and responsibility articles were found. This did not identify any additional papers. The search was then repeated with the last component replaced with victim cred*, with 43 results found. Screening resulted in six articles retained: Ask and Landstrom (2010), Bollingmo, Wessell, Eilertsen, and Magnussen (2008), Campbell, Menaker, and King (2015), Goodman-Delahunty and Kelly (2011), Schuller and Stewart (2000), and Venema (2014). The final search was repeated with rape myth*, with 85 results found. Screening resulted in six articles retained: Lee, Lee, and Lee (2012), Mennicke, Anderson, Oehme, and Kennedy (2014), Page (2008a, 2008b, 2010) and Sleath and Bull (2015).

Following these initial searches, the above searches were then repeated using ProQuest with the following databases: Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA), Arts and Humanities Database, Humanities Index, Nursing and Allied Health Database, ProQuest Central (includes Business, Health and Medical, Social Sciences, Education, Science and Technology, and Humanities). Due to the size of the databases, the search results were limited to “conference papers and proceedings” and “scholarly journals” in addition to the limits outlined above. The first search (polic* OR law enforcement) AND (rape OR sex* assault OR sex* violence) AND victim blam* resulted in 322 results. Screening resulted in one additional article being included: Rich and Seffrin (2013). The search was repeated with victim respon* (490 results), with no further articles retained. The search was rerun with victim cred*, with 132 results, but with no further articles retained.

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The final search was for rape myth*, which resulted in 76 results, however no further articles were included.

Follow-up searches were then carried out using the databases: Web of Science, and Scopus, as well as hand searching of reference lists and Google Scholar to identify where the above articles were cited. This resulted in three further articles being identified: Davies, Smith, and Rogers (2009), Lonsway, Welch, and Fitzgerald (2001), and Page (2007).

To specifically gather unpublished data, the above searches were also carried out in Proquest to gather any relevant dissertations and theses (although dissertations and theses were not excluded in the above searches). The first search was repeated: (polic* OR law enforcement) AND (rape OR sex* assault OR sex* violence) AND victim blam*, which resulted in 303 results. Screening resulted in one article being retained: Frangoso (2011). The searches were repeated with victim respon* (485 results), victim cred* (372 results), and rape myth* (172 results), however following screening, no relevant articles were found. Therefore, 24 articles are included within this review.

Two quality assessment tools were developed based upon the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme quality assessment tool (<http://www.casp-uk.net/>) so that the quantitative and qualitative papers could be assessed. Each of the tools posed nine questions of the articles (e.g., Was a power analysis conducted? How was the sample size determined? Were the measures used reliable i.e., Cronbach alpha $>.7$), which were scored according to whether the criteria were fully met (2 points), partially met (1 point), not met or unclear (0 points). For example, regarding the question as to whether the measures used were reliable, this was scored as 2 if current reliability of the scale was reported to be above .7 as well as previous measures of reliability reported were above .7. This was scored as 1 if only one of the above pieces of information were included and 0 if neither pieces of information were included. Therefore, the quality of a paper increases with the score to a maximum of 18 points. No

study was excluded on the basis of these quality ratings given the small amount of the literature that is currently available. However, these scores are reported in table one which displays the value that each paper is given.

3. Results

3.1 Study characteristics

This systematic search revealed that the majority of the studies used quantitative methodologies to assess the perception of victims or the acceptance of rape myths. Only five articles solely used qualitative methods (Campbell et al., 2015; Fragoso, 2011; Maddox, Lee, & Barker, 2012¹; Venema, 2014, 2016) with a further two containing a qualitative component (Mennicke et al., 2014; Wentz & Archbold, 2012). The predominant methodology to examine perceptions of victims was use of a vignette of a rape scenario, followed by questions regarding blame and/or credibility, as well as questions that related to police decision making, e.g., decisions to authorise the case, perceptions of guilt (see Table 1 for details). Rape myth acceptance was measured using a questionnaire, as were other variables, e.g., participant characteristics. The studies were predominantly from the U.S.A.A. ($n = 13$) but other countries were represented including: England and Wales ($n = 4$), Australia ($n = 2$), Sweden ($n = 2$), South Korea ($n = 1$), Norway ($n = 1$), and Slovenia ($n = 1$). The police samples comprised mainly male participants, with a broad age range from 18 - >65 years of age with means ranging from 26 – 40 years of age. The years of service ranged from 0 – 45 years. There was a broad range of police ranks and levels of specialist training to deal with sexual offences within the samples. Quality assessment of the articles showed that, for the most part, the quality was good with only a few meeting a satisfactory level of quality. For the qualitative studies (or those that contained a qualitative component), the quality ratings ranged from 9-17 ($M=13.14$, $S.D. = 2.91$). For the quantitative studies, the quality ratings ranged from 9-16 ($M=14.16$, $S.D. = 1.89$).

¹ Only study 1 is included in this review.

3.2 Blame and responsibility attributed to rape victims

Blaming was examined in five studies (Areh et al., 2009; Davies et al., 2009; Schuller & Stewart, 2000; Sleath & Bull, 2012; Wentz & Archbold, 2012) and victim responsibility was examined in two (Goodman-Delahunty & Graham, 2011; Darwinkel et al., 2013). All studies examined attributions towards female victims apart from Davies et al. (2009) who examined perceptions of male victims. Study designs varied in terms of whether they examined how attributions of blame and responsibility were affected by victim and/or participants' characteristics. All of the studies demonstrated that police officers do engage in victim blaming, however some of the studies identified that this occurred at a low level (e.g., Sleath & Bull, 2012; Wentz & Archbold, 2012).

The most common victim characteristic to be examined regarding blaming and responsibility was victim alcohol intoxication (e.g., Goodman-Delahunty & Graham, 2013; Schuller & Stewart, 2000). Schuller and Stewart (2000, U.S.A., $n = 202$) found, using regression analyses, that the more the victim was perceived to be intoxicated, significantly more blame was attributed to the victim ($\beta = .21$) and significantly less to the perpetrator ($\beta = -.13$). However, no significant effects were found in relation to victim and perpetrator blame in relation to perceived perpetrator intoxication. Goodman-Delahunty and Graham (2011, Australia, $n = 125$), used Schuller and Stewart's (2000) regression analysis approach, and found no significant relationship between perceived victim intoxication and victim or perpetrator responsibility (no statistics reported). Both of these studies depicted the same type of rape (acquaintance level < 24 hours) and were similar in quality ratings, however, there were some subtle differences in the way in which alcohol intoxication was depicted in the scenarios. Schuller and Stewart (2000) used four conditions that varied the level of intoxication between the victim and perpetrator e.g., one condition where neither were drinking, one condition where both were drinking, and two further conditions that varied the

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drinking between the victim and perpetrator. Whereas, Goodman-Delahunty and Graham (2011) did not include any text regarding the perpetrator drinking alcohol. This may explain the difference in the findings or there is potentially an effect of culture (U.S.A. vs Australia) or time effects as Schuller and Stewart (2000) is published earlier than Goodman-Delahunty and Graham (2011). The 2011 lack of effect in relation to alcohol intoxication may reflect changes in police officer attitudes with regard to their responsibility attributions of rape victims.

Other victim characteristics have been shown to increase victim blaming such as increasing the level of prior relationship between the victim and perpetrator (e.g., Areh et al., 2009, Slovenia, $n = 1000$; Sleath & Bull, 2012, U.K., $n = 125$). In Sleath and Bull (2012) victims of acquaintance rape were blamed more than victims of stranger rape (partial $\eta^2 = .04$), with a small to medium effect size. Areh et al. (2009) did not directly assess blaming of the victim, but instead assessed personality characteristics attributed towards the victims. These characteristics were factor analysed and one factor comprised variables that were considered to be victim blaming. The acceptance or rejection of the mean values of these characteristics were compared between a scenario of stranger rape and marital rape. No statistical testing was carried out, however it was considered that more blaming characteristics were accepted in relation to the case of marital rape in comparison to the case of stranger rape. Combining the findings of these two studies suggests that police officers attributed more blame to victims of rape as the level of relationship increases. However, the nature of the Areh et al. (2009) study should be taken into account in considering the strength of the evidence for this effect.

Davies et al. (2009, U.K., $n = 128$) found that male victims were attributed significantly more blame than female victims ($\eta^2 = .04$), with a small to medium effect. Goodman-Delahunty and Graham (2011) found that when a victim of rape was perceived to

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be more provocative, the victim was attributed more responsibility for being victimised ($\beta = .42$).

In relation to gender effects, Schuller and Stewart (2000) found that male police officers attributed significantly more blame to the rape victim than female police officers (regression analysis: $\beta = -.16$). Sleath and Bull (2012) also found that male police officers blame the victim significantly more when there was a high level of rape myths present within their scenario compared to a low level (partial $\eta^2 = .06$), with a medium effect. The findings also showed that when there was a low level of rape myths within a scenario, female police officers blamed the victim more than male police officers (effect size as before). However, gender effects do not appear to be consistent as the analyses from a number of studies have found no significant effect of participant gender (Davies et al., 2009; Goodman-Delahunty & Graham, 2011; Wentz & Archbold, 2012, U.S.A., $n = 100$). There are some differences amongst these studies, which may explain the contradictory findings. For example, Davies et al. (2009) examined perceptions of male victims and contained a sample of police workers as opposed to solely police officers. However, Goodman-Delahunty and Graham (2011) and Wentz and Archbold (2012) used methodologies based upon Schuller and Stewart (2000), therefore the differences in the findings may reflect changes in police culture over time.

In the only qualitative study, Wentz and Archbold (2012) found that only a very small minority of the police officers (approximately 2%) produced victim blaming statements. These were produced when asking about definitions of rape and were used to either solely blame victims of rape or were used in conjunction with legal definitions of rape. These perceptions were linked quite frequently with a belief that there are high levels of false allegations.

3.2.1 Impact of specialist police training and experience

Many police forces now provide specialist training to deal with sexual offence cases, however, there was very little literature that evaluated how this training may affect blame and responsibility attributions towards rape victims. Sleath and Bull (2012, U.K., $n = 125$) found that police officers with specialist training did not differ in their levels of blame attributed towards the victim compared to police officers who had not received this specialist training (no statistics reported). The specialist training referred to was Specially Trained Officer/Sexual Offence Investigation Training (STO or previously SOIT). This involves five days of training on a variety of interviewing, evidence gathering, and liaison between individuals involved in the investigation. Goodman-Delahunty and Graham (2011, Australia, $n = 125$) also found no effect of specialist training in relation to victim responsibility. This specialist training referred to the “Investigation and Management of Adult Sexual Assault Course”, although no further details about the content of this training could be found. Darwinkel et al. (2013, Australia, $n = 77$) evaluated an intensive programme of sexual offences training provided to police recruits and assessed pre and post training ratings of victim responsibility across three evidential quality categories (strong, ambiguous, and weak). This intensive programme involved 98 hours of training across four consecutive weeks and included: understanding victims, understanding the offender, and understanding interviewing theory and techniques. The findings of the evaluation demonstrated an interaction between training and evidential quality (partial $\eta^2 = .15$, medium to large effect) in that attributions of victim responsibility were lower post-training compared with pre-training in both weak (partial $\eta^2 = .20$, medium to large effect) and ambiguous (partial $\eta^2 = .18$, medium to large effect) cases but not in strong evidence cases. This study provides some evidence of intensive police training having a positive effect on attributions of victim responsibility and it is particularly interesting that this effect is found within the weak and

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ambiguous cases. Darwinkel et al. (2013) manipulated the strength of the cases by introducing misconceptions about rape in the cases considered weak or ambiguous. Their findings suggest that police training can have an effect on attributions of victim responsibility, potentially by effectively addressing misconceptions about rape. However, the evaluation of the training was carried out immediately after the completion of the training, so it is not clear whether these positive changes are retained over a period of time.

Police experience (often considered in terms of years of service) may be expected to affect levels of victim blaming with greater experience thought to reduce levels of victim blaming. However, the studies that have examined police experience have found no effects of years of police service or months in a specialist role in relating to victim blaming (Goodman-Delahunty & Graham, 2011; Sleath & Bull, 2012; no statistics provided in either study). Wentz and Archbold (2012, U.S.A., $n = 100$) found that one third of the police officers in their sample admitted that their view of rape had changed over the course of their employment, with many of them suggesting that they now question the credibility of the victim, blame the victim, and are reluctant to perceive an alleged victim as a true victim of rape. This suggests that experience does not have a positive effect.

3.3 Credibility of rape victims

Attributions of rape victim credibility were examined in 13 studies (Ask & Landstrom, 2010; Bollingmo et al., 2008; Campbell et al., 2015; Fragoso, 2011; Goodman-Delahunty & Graham, 2011; Maddox, Lee, & Barker, 2012; Page, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2010; Schuller & Stewart, 2000; Venema, 2014; Wentz & Archbold, 2012). As with victim blaming, the characteristics of the rape victim affected the level of victim credibility. Page (2008a, 2008b, 2010, U.S.A., $n = 891$) found police officers' assessments of the credibility of a rape victim depended upon the type of person the victim was described as. For example, 44% were unlikely to believe a prostitute who claimed that she had been raped, compared to

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19% were unlikely to believe a married woman's claim of rape, 5% as a virgin or 2% as a professional woman. However, across these three papers, differences in the perception of credibility of types of victims were not tested statistically.

Bollingmo et al. (2008, Norway, $n = 69$) found that credibility ratings by the police were affected by the emotions displayed by the female victim when giving her statement, these being 'congruent' (negative emotion displayed, upset victim), neutral, or 'incongruent' (positive emotions displayed, relaxed victim) ($\eta^2 = .12$, medium effect). The highest credibility ratings were given to the 'congruent' victim in comparison to the 'incongruent' victim. Similar effects were found by Ask and Landstrom (2010, Sweden, $n = 189$) in that police trainees judged an emotionally expressive victim as significantly more likely to have been raped than not (i.e., veracity judgement) when compared with a non-emotionally expressive victim (OR = 3.87). Bollingmo et al. suggested that when the victim presents negative emotions and is upset (e.g., congruent), this matches the stereotypical beliefs that people hold about victims of rape and potentially strengthens the impression that the allegation is credible. Such findings suggest that police officers have expectations about the way in which victims of rape would behave. This idea is supported by the qualitative findings of Venema (2014, U.S.A., $n = 10$) who found that credibility in rape cases perceived as legitimate was specifically indicated by emotional reactions by the victim e.g., conveying panic, expressing fear, and being shaken. In a second qualitative study, Maddox et al. (2012, U.K., $n = 12$) found that victim emotional distress was used as an indicator of victim reliability. However, Frago (2011) found that police officers highlighted over emotional reactions by victims as a characteristics of false allegations of rape. Finally, Campbell et al. (2015, U.S.A., $n = 45$), in their qualitative study, that police investigators of adult sexual offences did not highlight the emotional expression of the victim as being relevant to the assessments of victim credibility. However, the Campbell et al. (2015) paper was assessed to

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be of lower quality than the other papers, due to the lack of detail regarding the sample. Also, their study included a large number of police officers who investigated juvenile sexual offences, which also may account for the differing findings regarding emotional expression.

In addition to emotional expression, police officers' assessments of credibility can be affected by other factors. Venema (2014, U.S.A., $n = 10$), in a qualitative study, found that credibility was linked to consistency and level of detail provided within victim statements and also the presence of physical evidence when they report their victimisation. In particular, physical injury was found crucial in determining victim credibility, as it was considered unlikely that a victim would not sustain some type of injury however minor. Similar findings were showed by Campbell et al. (2015), who found that victims were deemed more credible when their accounts of the rape did not vary and a consistent narrative was presented by the victim.

Schuller and Stewart (2000, U.S.A., $n = 202$) examined the impact of victim alcohol intoxication on credibility, with the findings showing significantly that the more the victim was perceived to be intoxicated, the less credibility was attributed to the victim ($\beta = -.17$). This may be explained by the findings of Campbell et al. (2015) who found that alcohol intoxication was considered by police officers as victims engaging in risk taking behaviours and as such reduced victim credibility. However, Goodman-Delahunty and Graham (2011, Australia, $n = 125$) found no significant effect of alcohol intoxication on perceptions of victim credibility. These differing effects may reflect cultural differences in relation to alcohol, given that the Goodman-Delahunty and Graham (2011) study used an Australian sample.

Schuller and Stewart showed that male police officers attribute less credibility to rape victims than do female police officers ($\beta = .22$). Similarly, Page (2007, U.S.A., $n = 891$) found that male police officers rated rape victims as significantly less credible according to

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their characteristics (e.g., virgin, prostitute, professional) than did female police officers ($U=37125.5$, $p<.001$). However, Wentz and Archbold (2012, U.S.A., $n = 100$) found no gender difference in attributions of credibility ($t = -1.004$, $p = .32$). Police level of experience (Wentz & Archbold, 2012) and training (Goodman-Delahunty & Graham, 2011) did not have a significant effect on victim credibility.

3.4 Rape myth acceptance

Thirteen papers examined rape myth acceptance in police officers (Goodman-Delahunty & Graham, 2011; Lee et al., 2012; Lonsway et al., 2001; Mennicke et al., 2014; Page, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2010; Rich & Seffrin, 2012, 2013; Sleath & Bull, 2012, 2015; Venema, 2016). As with victim blaming, some studies noted that rape myth acceptance was at a low level amongst most police officers (Mennicke et al., 2014, U.S.A., $n = 149$), although this varied according to the type of rape myth. Page (2007, U.S.A., $n = 891$) found that the highest level of acceptance of rape myths concerned the idea that any women (or man) can be raped. Ninety-three per cent of the sample demonstrated some level of acceptance of the myth “any woman can be raped” (66.4% in relation to 'any man can be raped'). The next highest level of myth acceptance related to the behaviour and characteristics of the rape victim, suggesting that provocatively dressed women are inviting sex (20.1%), that any victim can resist a rapist if they want to (22.7%), and that a significant number of victims make false allegations of rape to draw attention to themselves (19.7%). Lower levels of acceptance were found for myths that suggest that all rape victims are promiscuous (6.6%), that going to the home of a date implies consent on the part of the victim (6%), that women secretly wish to be raped (6%), and blaming the victim for being raped if they engage in prior sexual contact (7.1%).

Sleath and Bull (2012; U.K., $n = 123$) examined rape myth acceptance in male and female police officers. Using the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance (IRMA) scale, which has

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seven sub-factors, they found that the highest levels of acceptance were found in the 'she lied' factor, a myth that suggests that rape victims lie about being raped. This is similar to the findings of Page (2008a, U.S.A., $n = 891$) in that there is a perception that (alleged) victims of rape frequently lie about rape. The highest levels of acceptance were found for myths that stated that women caught having an affair claim it was rape (60% for males, 65.08 for females), that women who consented to sex and then changed their mind afterwards claiming to have been raped (40% for males, 34.92% for females), and that rape accusations are used to seek revenge on men (31.67% for males, 28.57% for females). The next highest levels of acceptance were found for 'he didn't mean to' myths, which is used to excuse the actions of the perpetrator. Relatively high levels of acceptance were also found for myths that suggest that men rape out of their strong desire for sex (21.67% for male, 15.87% for females), that rapists are sexually frustrated individuals (11.67% for males, 12.70% for females), and men don't mean to rape women but they get carried away (16.67% for males, 9.52% for females). In contrast to Page (2007), Sleath and Bull found very low levels of acceptance for myths that suggested that rape victims were to blame for being raped when wearing revealing clothing and that women should be able to resist a rapist. Low levels of acceptance were also found for going to the home of a date implies consent (0% for males, 6.35% for females), that women secretly wish to be raped (0% for males, 1.59% for females), and blaming the victim for being raped if they engage in prior sexual contact (1.67% for males, 1.59% for females).

The previous studies were all descriptive accounts of the levels of acceptance of different types of rape myths. However, Sleath and Bull (2015, U.K., $n = 123$) followed up their 2012 study with a comparison study of police officer rape myth acceptance with two samples of psychology and of law students. The findings showed that police officers accepted "she lied" rape myths at a significantly higher level than both psychology and law students (partial $\eta^2 = .19$, medium to large effect). However, for the other six rape myth sub-

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factors, there was either (i) no difference between the three samples (for the myths “it wasn’t really rape”, “rape is a trivial event”, “rape is a deviant event”, “she wanted it”) or (ii) students accepted myths at a higher level than police officers (“she asked for it” and “he didn’t mean to”).

Some characteristics of police officers have been shown to be related to their level of myth acceptance. Page (2007, 2008b, U.S.A., $n = 891$) found that male police officers accepted rape myths at a significantly higher level than did female officers ($U=33506.5$, $p<.001$), that police officers with lower levels of educational attainment were significantly more accepting of rape myths than those with higher levels of educational attainment ($U = 3822$, $p<.05$), and that officers with less experience of conducting rape investigations were significantly more accepting of rape myths than those with more experience ($U=12936$, $p<.001$) (see also Rich & Seffrin, 2012, U.S.A., $n = 429$). Page (2008b) found that higher rape myth acceptance significantly correlated with higher attitudes that demonstrated both ‘old fashioned’ sexism ($r_s = .41$) and ‘modern’ sexism ($r_s = .35$).

Rape myth acceptance has also been related to negative perceptions of rape victims. Goodman-Delahunty and Graham (2011, Australia, $n = 125$) found that rape myth acceptance was significantly related to higher levels of victim responsibility (no statistic reported) and less victim credibility ($\beta = -.31$). Lee et al. (2012, South Korea, $n = 236$) also showed, in a sample of Korean police officers, that greater endorsement of rape myths was significantly associated with an increased level of adherence to negative attitude about rape victims ($\beta = .29$). Page (2008a) found that police officers with high rape myth acceptance were significantly less likely ($U = 34380.5$, $p<.001$) to believe a victim who did not fit a genuine victim stereotype (also known as a ‘real rape’ victim, Estrich, 1986).

3.4.1 Impact of specialist police training and experience

Lonsway et al. (2001, U.S.A., $n = 161$) trained police recruits to deal with sexual assault victims and to address rape stereotypes. The training comprised information on the Illinois Criminal Sexual Act (60 minutes), dynamics and preliminary investigation of sexual assault (90 minutes), and sexual assault impact and interview (60 minutes). The police recruits who received the training did not differ in their rape myth acceptance compared to recruits who did not receive this training. Similarly, Goodman-Delahunty and Graham (2011, Australia, $n = 125$ and Lee et al. (2012, South Korea, $n = 236$) did not find any differences in rape myth acceptance between police officers who had or had not received specialist training. Rich and Seffrin (2012) found that (i) police officers who had high acceptance of rape myths had significantly less knowledge of how to effectively carry out an interview with a sexual assault victim ($\beta = .57$) and (ii) that police officers of higher ranks ($\beta = -.11$) or with more years of experience ($\beta = -.14$) had significantly lower levels of rape myth acceptance when compared with lower ranked/less experienced police officers.

3.5 Impact on case processing

There is a very limited knowledge of how attributions of blame and acceptance of rape myths may affect case processing decisions. Schuller and Stewart (2000, U.S.A., $n = 212$) found no significant relationship between victim blame and intentions to charge the perpetrator in police officer samples. Darwinkel et al. (2013, Australia, $n = 77$) examined the relationship between attributions of responsibility and case authorisations (decisions to charge) both before and after providing specialist training to police officers and found within each sample that as attributions of victim responsibility increased, the likelihood of authorising the case significantly decreased (pre-training $r = -.43$, post-training $r = -.38$). Although the size of this relationship did reduce after the training was completed, this was not a substantial reduction nor was it tested for significant difference. Goodman-Delahunty

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and Graham (2011, Australia, $n = 125$) found a significant relationship between RMA and the likelihood that police officers would recommend charging the perpetrator ($r = .29$). However, this effect became non-significant when credibility assessments and perceptions of guilt were added to the model. Similarly, Rich and Seffrin (2013, U.S.A., $n = 429$) found that higher RMA significantly reduced the level of involvement with crime victim advocates ($\beta = -.21$), however this relationship became non-significant when other professional characteristics (e.g., knowledge of interview techniques, years of police experience) were added to the model. The same was also found by Venema (2016, U.S.A., $n = 174$) in that RMA predicted perceptions of a “good” case, until relative suspect blame and peer perceptions were added to the model, when this then became non-significant.

The effect of victim credibility on case processing decisions is clearer. For example, Campbell et al. (2015, U.S.A., $n = 45$) found that police officers emphasised the importance of establishing victim credibility early in an investigation so that investigative effort is not wasted. Other findings with regards to credibility have shown that the more credible a victim is judged to be, it is significantly more likely for police officers to (i) indicate a higher likelihood that they would recommend charging the perpetrator (Goodman-Delahunty & Graham, 2011, $\beta = .27$; Schuller & Stewart, 2000, $\beta = .27$); (ii) perceive the perpetrator to be guilty (Goodman-Delahunty & Graham, 2011, $\beta = .33$); and (iii) perceive that the perpetrator would be found guilty in a court of law (Bollingmo et al. 2008, mean $r = .57$, Norway, $n = 69$; Goodman-Delahunty & Graham, 2011, $\beta = .17$). Schuller and Stewart (2000) found female police officers to be significantly more likely to believe that the perpetrator was guilty ($\beta = .20$) and that they would charge the perpetrator with rape ($\beta = .16$). However, female and male police officers did not differ in their ratings of the likelihood that they would encourage the alleged victim to withdraw her allegation ($\beta = -.02$). The impact of victim credibility was further emphasised by Campbell et al. (2015) who found that when examining what guided

police officers' decision making in referring cases onto legal processing, a victim being deemed as credible was considered "paramount" (p. 35).

4. Discussion

It is surprising, given a generally accepted belief that police officers do hold negative attitudes about rape victims, that there is only very limited published empirical research that has evidenced this using police samples. From the general rape victim blaming literature, it has been made very clear that blaming attitudes towards victims of rape exist in several societies (Grubb & Turner, 2012), therefore in examining this literature, it should be considered unlikely that police officers did not also hold such attitudes (Jackson, Witte, & Petretic-Jackson, 2001). In fact, the present review has demonstrated that police officers do hold negative attitudes about rape, particularly in relation to blaming and rape myth acceptance. However, a number of the studies do emphasise that these levels are very low, particularly in relation to blame e.g., Wentz and Archbold (2012) found that only 2% of their sample of police officers produced victim blaming statements. Similarly, rape myth acceptance has been shown to be at a low level across some myths, however, some types of myths demonstrate far higher levels of acceptance (e.g., Page, 2007). These higher levels are very problematic when it relates to myths that suggest that victims of rape lie about their victimisation (Page, 2008a; Sleath & Bull, 2012). However, we must be careful in using these findings to vilify police officers as holding more negative attitudes about rape victims than do other groups. We know that rape myth acceptance is prevalent in several societies and earlier research suggests that police officers may not accept rape myths more so than other populations (e.g., Brown & King, 1998; Field, 1978). Furthermore, Sleath and Bull (2015) found that police officers did not hold higher rape myth acceptance than two types of student samples (law and psychology) for six out of the seven measured rape myth sub-factors.

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The issue does remain that as gatekeepers to the criminal justice system (Spohn & Tellis, 2012), police officers hold a somewhat unique role in enabling victims to gain justice for their victimisation. Therefore, the *impact* of police officers holding negative attitudes about rape victims may be far greater than that of individuals within the general population. Police officers' blame and credibility assessments do seem to be affected by both victim and participant characteristics, but there is a lack of consistency in the research findings. One of the most commonly examined victim characteristics was alcohol intoxication, however the more recently published study demonstrated that depicting a victim as intoxicated did not significantly affect the levels of blame attributed to her (Goodman-Delahunty & Graham, 2011), whereas the older study did (Schuller & Stewart, 2000). This may suggest an impact of time, where this effect may have diminished with greater awareness of the reality of rape. The impact of victim alcohol intoxication was slightly clearer in relation to credibility, where this behaviour reduced the credibility of the victim, and was perceived as risk taking by the victim, which could be an explanation for why it reduced victim credibility (Campbell et al., 2015). However, Goodman-Delahunty and Graham (2011) showed no effect of alcohol intoxication on credibility.

One of the most consistent effects in the general rape victim perception literature is that males (i) attribute higher levels of blame, (ii) lower levels of credibility, and (iii) hold higher levels of rape myth acceptance in comparison to females (e.g., Grubb & Turner, 2012). This consistency has not been found within this current review in relation to blaming, but was consistent in terms of victim credibility (Page, 2007; Goodman-Delahunty & Graham, 2011) and rape myth acceptance (Page, 2007). Some studies have demonstrated that male police officers blame rape victims at a higher level compared to female police officers (e.g., Schuller & Stewart, 2000; Sleath & Bull, 2012) but these small to medium effects tended to occur in specific types of depicted rapes e.g., acquaintance or where the level of rape myths in the

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scenario have been varied. Thus, an influence of rape myths may interact with gender effects. However, this argument is not supported by other studies that have not found gender effects. For example, both Wentz and Archbold (2012) and Goodman-Delahunty and Graham (2011) depicted rapes that included numerous rape myths e.g., alcohol, date rape, engaging in prior consensual sexual behaviour but found no gender effects.

Rape myth acceptance and attributions of credibility and blame have been used as measure of effectiveness in relation to police training. In relation to the reviewed literature, there are a number of studies that have demonstrated that receiving specialist police training does not impact upon levels of victim blaming/credibility (e.g., Goodman-Delahunty & Graham, 2011; Sleath & Bull, 2012) or rape myth acceptance (e.g., Lee et al., 2012; Lonsway et al., 2001). Such findings are somewhat troubling as it is considered that police specialist training should address negative attitudes about rape victims and misconceptions that may be held about rape, particularly given that this group of police officers will have an increased level of contact with rape victims. Some hope is offered by Darwinkel et al. (2013) who evaluated an intensive sexual offending training programme in Australia, which demonstrated significant large effects in reductions of victim responsibility rating following training. However, this training consisted of four consecutive weeks of training and it is questionable in this time of budgetary concerns, whether this is feasible to be implemented elsewhere. In addition, it was not clear whether these improvements were maintained following the training, particularly as Lonsway et al. (2001) found that effects of training (in terms of knowledge about rape cases) disappeared over a period of weeks. This is particularly important given that the effects were only found in weak and ambiguous cases, where misconceptions about rape were introduced into the case materials. Furthermore, in England and Wales, the HMIC/HMCPSI (2007) identified that there is no nationally accredited relevant programme of police training. This does not necessarily suggest that training is

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ineffective but it may suggest that the quality of training provision may vary widely from police force to force.

Police experience (often considered in terms of years of service) may be expected to affect the way in which rape victims are perceived. However, the studies that have examined police experience have found no effects of years of police service or months in a specialist role in relating to victim blaming (Goodman-Delahunty & Graham, 2011; Sleath & Bull, 2012) or victim credibility (Wentz & Archbold, 2012). Although Rich and Seffrin (2012) did find lower levels of rape myth acceptance in more experienced police officers compared to those with less experience, these were smaller effects. However, in the qualitative component of their study, Wentz and Archbold (2012) found that one third of the police officers in their sample admitted that their view of rape had changed over the course of their employment, with many of them suggesting that they now question the credibility of the victim, blame the victim, and are reluctant to perceive an alleged victim as a true victim of rape. This suggests that experience may not have the positive effect that some believe it should have in reducing negative attitudes about rape victims.

The above findings are important in synthesising the literature regarding attributions and attitudes about rape victims, however the second aim of this review was to establish whether holding these attitudes has an impact on decision making about rape cases. In relation to victim blame, Schuller and Stewart (2000) are the only study to examine this and found no significant relationship between victim blame and intentions to charge the perpetrator. The two studies that examined the impact of RMA found significant relationships between RMA and case decisions, however these relationships became non-significant when other variables were included e.g, perceptions of guilt, knowledge of interview techniques. These findings tentatively suggest that although blaming attitudes and rape myth acceptance may be present in police populations, they may not be the key

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determinant in affecting the processing of rape cases where police officers are the decision makers. Similarly, several of the effects demonstrated to affect blame and credibility assessments (e.g., alcohol intoxication) were not found to be associated with police decision making. For example, Schuller and Stewart (2000) found that perception of victim's intoxication level did not affect police case processing in relation to whether they would encourage a rape victim to withdraw his/her allegation or whether they would charge the perpetrator.

However, attributions of responsibility and credibility of the victim were found to be related to police decision making showing larger and more consistent effect sizes. Darwinkel et al. (2013) found that as attributions of responsibility increased, the likelihood of authorising (i.e., charging) the case decreased. Receiving specialist training did reduce the size of this relationship but not to a large extent (nor was this statistically tested). Victim credibility was particularly important in relation to police decision making about cases. The evidence shows that the more a victim was deemed to be credible, the higher likelihood that the police officers would charge the perpetrator (Bollingmo et al., 2008; Goodman-Delahunty & Graham, 2011; Schuller & Stewart, 2000). Victim credibility seems to be important across the police investigative process in determining, at the start of the case the amount of investigative effort that is expended as well as whether the case is referred to further legal processing (Campbell et al., 2015). Indeed, Jordan (2004) noted that police officers often assess rape victims in relation to credibility and culpability, which is likely to be due to their investigative focus. The difficulty with the emphasis of the importance of victim credibility is that the first aim of this review has demonstrated how victim credibility can be affected by case characteristics. For example, the findings of Page (2008a, 2008b, 2010) showed that 44% of the police officers were unlikely to believe a prostitute's claim of rape compared to 2% being unlikely to believe a professional woman's claim of rape. Although there are some

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contradictory findings, characteristics such as victim emotional expression and alcohol intoxication have been linked to credibility (e.g., Ask & Landstrom, 2010; Campbell et al., 2015). This suggests an element of rape myths or stereotypes affecting police officers' judgements of credibility. This is supported by Goodman-Delahunty and Graham (2011) who showed that police officers who had higher rape myth acceptance were significantly less likely to perceive the victim's allegation of rape as credible.

In assessing the current literature of police officer attitudes about rape victims, it is recognised that there are considerable limitations to it. There is only a limited number of current studies that have examined these attitudes. This may reflect the challenges of recruiting police officers to take part in such research. A number of researchers have noted the challenges of effectively carrying out research within police forces (e.g., Hodgson, Parker, & Seddon, 2005) including difficulties with recruitment even when official permission has been granted (which can be a lengthy process) and suspicion of researchers' objectives (e.g., Wise, 2010). This may explain why such a small amount of studies are currently available. Furthermore, an examination of the studies' samples demonstrates that there is a considerable gender imbalance of participants, with a substantially larger number of male participants. Given that gender differences in both blame/credibility attributions and rape myth acceptance have been previously demonstrated in other samples, this means that the findings from these studies should be generalised cautiously. The samples did involve a wide range of experience, police ranks, and levels of specialist training but future research (with larger sub-samples) needs to establish whether these variations may have an impact upon attitudes. Furthermore, the context of culture must be considered in discussing the findings. Comparing studies across different countries and cultures may be particularly problematic, particularly in relation to sexual violence where attitudes can differ significantly. However, the majority of the studies were drawn from U.S.A., U.K. and Australian police

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samples, which given the similarity in cultures may mean that this is not a significant issue within this review. One other issue relates to the measurement of the attitudes, particularly rape myth acceptance, within these studies. Many of the studies rely on variations of Burt's (1980) Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (RMAS) or the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance scale (IRMA). Criticisms have been levelled at both of these measures (see Oh & Neville, 2004; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1995; Norton & Grant, 2008; Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999; Ward, 1988). In particular, Gerger, Kley, Bohner, and Siebler (2007) suggest that some rape myth acceptance scales (i.e., RMAS; IRMA) suffer from low mean scale responses, which may impact upon their validity. Furthermore, RMA scales items tend to be phrased in such a way that the rape myth is obvious and explicitly stated. Therefore, it is possible for respondents to identify the 'appropriate' way to respond to such items rather than in a way that may reflect their true acceptance of rape myths (Mennicke et al., 2014). This may be a particularly challenge when examining RMA within police officer samples where police officers may recognise a 'correct' or socially desirable way to respond, but which may not be reflective on their individual attitudes towards the topic. This is unfortunately an issue that applies to the field of research in relation to rape myth acceptance. Finally, it must also be acknowledged that police officers were responding to theoretical cases of rape and, as with any use of vignettes, this may not reflect the way in which the participants would respond in real life.

In short, there remain significant challenges in improving the criminal justice response to rape victims, of which police officer attitudes represents one area for future development. In reviewing this literature, it is recognised that police officers are not the only aspect of criminal justice systems that offers challenges to rape victims. The investigation of this crime requires significant commitment on the part of the victim, particularly with the forensic gathering of evidence and the intrusive nature of the crime itself. Jordan (2001)

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identified this as a key challenge with tension between the needs of the victim and the requirements of the police investigation. However, the importance of a positive response and support provided by police officers should not be underestimated, particularly as police officers are often the first response that victims of rape receive (Wentz & Archbold, 2012). Some researchers in this area are now considering whether the negative treatment of rape victims reflects an organisational rather than individual police issue (that may reflect their rape related attitudes). Jordan (2011) suggested that this may perhaps be driven partly by police 'performance' targets in that the findings from this review certainly do not provide clear evidence of a culture of disbelief. Brown (2011) contended that we do not have sufficient evaluative research to demonstrate whether the issues with the investigation and prosecution of rape are attributable more to individual resistance or more to systemic problems.

That blaming and rape myth acceptance do not seem to be affected by receiving police specialist training needs to be more fully researched, especially as this may provide one explanation for low levels of reported victim satisfaction (Jordan, 2008). The review has also shown the importance that victim credibility, but not blaming or rape myth acceptance, can have on police decision making. However, it is challenging to see attributions of credibility as unrelated to attributions of blame and rape myth acceptance. The importance of victim credibility may explain the high levels of attrition from police investigative process, whereby credibility decisions (potentially guided by misconception about rape) may impact in expended investigative effort (e.g., Campbell et al., 2015). The point remains that there is still much to improve in relation to the police response to rape cases, however at this point, the role of negative attitudes about rape victims in that improvement is only partially understood.

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Authors	Rape related attitude	Details of sample (n) and country of data	Methodology	Quality assessment score
Areh et al. (2009)	Blame; Empathy; Non-attribution of blame	1,000 police officers (863 males and 137 females). Age range 18 – 60 years ($M = 26$ years). Years of service 0 - >15 years. A range of educational levels reported. Slovenian sample.	Between-participants vignette design. Scenario conditions of no victimisation, raped by husband, stranger rape, and burglary. Inspection of mean values only in relation rapes related attitudes. No statistical analysis.	9
Ask & Landstrom (2010)	Credibility	189 police trainees (135 male and 54 female). Age range was 20- 38 years ($M = 26.57$). Swedish sample.	Between-participants vignette design with two conditions of cognitive load (yes vs. no) and victim demeanour during a police interview (emotional vs. neutral). Dependent variable: Credibility of the allegation	14
Bollingmo et al. (2008)	Credibility; Perpetrator guilt	69 police investigators (49 male and 20 female). Age range was 24 – 59 years ($M = 37$ years). All had a minimum of 4 years' experience from investigating rape, murder and other violent crime cases. Norwegian sample.	Between-participants design. Scenario conditions of emotional presentation of the victim: neutral, emotionally congruent, and emotionally incongruent. Dependent variables: victim credibility and perceptions of guilt of the perpetrator (no α reported).	11
Campbell et al. (2015)	Credibility	45 police officers in Houston Police department for adult ($n = 13$) and juvenile sex crime ($n = 31$) investigations. U.S.A. sample.	Qualitative study identifying determinants of victim credibility and the decision to arrest/present case to District Attorney for legal processing.	9
Darwinkel et al. (2013)	Responsibility	77 police officers from a range of ranks (51 male and 26 female). No age range given. Range of police roles e.g., general duty police officers to sexual offence investigators. Prior experience of investigation sexual offences 0 - >20 years. Australian sample.	Within-participant design examining the effectiveness of a sexual assault training programme. Pre/post training design. Twelve scenarios varying the strength of evidence (strong, ambiguous, weak) with half relating to <16 years victims and the other half relating to >16 years victims. Dependent variable: victim responsibility (no α reported).	15
Davies, Smith, & Rogers (2009)	Blame; Assault severity	128 (75 male and 53 female) police workers (65% police officers of various ranks). Age range was 21-59 years ($M = 37$ years). A range of police roles but all worked in areas that came into contact with rape cases. U.K. sample	Between participant vignette design. Stranger rape scenario with one condition: gender of victim (male vs. female). Dependent variables: victim blame (3 items) and assault severity (8 items)(no α reported).	14
Fragoso (2011)	Credibility	11 police officers/detectives (5 males, 6 females). Years of experience 10 – 38 years. U.S.A. sample.	Qualitative study identifying perceptions of false allegations of rape.	17
Goodman-Delahunt & Graham (2011)	Credibility; Responsibility; RMA;	125 police officers from various ranks (89 male and 36 female). Age range 20–51 years ($M = 34$ years). Years of service in an investigative role ranged from 1-25 years ($M = 6.7$ years). Specialist training: yes - 59.2%, no - 40.8%. Australian sample.	Between-participant vignette design. Scenario with three variables: victim depicted as drinking alcohol (yes vs. no), victim clothing (conservative vs. provocative vs. no information), whether the police officer was specially trained or not (yes vs. no). Dependent variables: credibility assessments of victim and perpetrator, responsibility of victim and perpetrator, perceptions of guilt, decisions to charge, and perceptions of other influencing factors. RMA measured via Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance – Short Form (IRMA-SF)(no α reported).	12
Lee et al. (2012)	RMA; Rape supportive attributions	236 male police officers. Age range 26-56 ($M = 40$ years). Years of service ranged from 1-31 years ($M = 14$ years). Range of police ranks. 33% attended previous specialist training. South Korean sample.	Within-participant design. Scenario with three rape conditions: acquaintance, dating, and marital. Variables were rape supportive attribution scale (α across three conditions = 0.81-.90), two factors taken from the Korean translation of IRMA: rape survivor	16

Table one

Studies that

Attitudes

towards Rape

Victims and

Perpetrators in

Police Officer

Samples.

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