Hidden Behind a 53 Foot Trailer: Are Women Truck Drivers at Risk for Sexual Assault?

Kim Bourne, Western Kentucky University
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Kim Bourne, MSN, RN, SANE, CEN, Instructor RN to BSN program, Western Kentucky University; PhD Student/OEHN Scholar, University of Kentucky
Madison Gilinsky, Student Nurse, Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program, Western Kentucky University

Purpose

- To compare the characteristics of women truck drivers with the characteristics of women victims of sexual assault
- To describe the prevalence rates, risk factors, and physical and psychological consequences of sexual assault
- To discuss why victims do not report

Methods

- Literature Review using Search Engines
  - PubMed, CINAHL, PsycInfo, MedLine, Google Scholar
- Key words
  - Females, homicides, sexual assault, rape, sexual violence, workplace, women truck drivers
- Articles in English between 2011 and 2015
- Inclusion criteria
  - Females above age 18, prevalence rates, risk factors, physical and psychological consequences, reporting statistics
- Exclusion Criteria
  - Campus sexual assault, males

Sexual Assault

Definition: Intentional sexual contact involving vaginal, oral or anal penetration without a person’s consent
- Act of aggression related to power and control
- Affects 1 in 3 to 1 in 5 women, worldwide, over lifetime
- 22 million in the US over lifetime
  - 272,350 annually
  - 715 per day
  - 30 per hour
- 42% of victims expect to be sexually assaulted again
- 50-80% know perpetrators
- 50% are physically injured during assault
- 12% of assaults occur in the workplace

Truck Drivers

- 3.5 million truck drivers; 200,000 women
- Drive solo or as a team
- Haul cargo through 48 lower states, Canada, and Mexico
- Value of cargo: Few dollars to thousands of dollars
- Away from home days to months at a time
- Daily mandatory 10 hour breaks
- Rest areas, highway ramps, empty parking lots, truck stops

Comparison of Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women Victims of Sexual Assault</th>
<th>Women Truck Drivers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50% Caucasian or African American</td>
<td>75% Caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44% Young to middle aged: 18-39 yrs</td>
<td>68% Middle aged: 30-50 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85% Single</td>
<td>47% Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55% Lower income levels: less than $50,000/yr</td>
<td>62% Low to middle incomes: $30,000 to $50,000/yr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school or lower education level</td>
<td>51-77% At least a high school education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65% Occurred late at night or early morning</td>
<td>Drives all hours of day and night based on delivery times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works alone</td>
<td>75% drive with a partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works in isolated areas</td>
<td>Picks up and delivers in urban and rural areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interacts with the public</td>
<td>Interacts with shippers and receivers, truck stop personnel, co-workers, and other drivers daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile workplace</td>
<td>70-92% spend more than 21 days/month away from home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consequences

- 60% of victims have negative health outcomes

- 73% of assaults are not reported

Future Studies

- Examine relationship between risk factors and incidence rates in female truck drivers
- Determine prevalence of physical and psychological consequences in female drivers who report being a victim
- Explore reasons for not reporting

Contact Information

Kim Bourne, MSN, RN, SANE, CEN
Western Kentucky University
College of Health and Human Services
School of Nursing
Kimberly.bourne@wku.edu

Madison Gilinsky, Student Nurse
Western Kentucky University
College of Health and Human Services
School of Nursing
Madison.gilinsky129@topper.wku.edu

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Cathy Abell, PhD, MSN, RN, CNE Professor, Western Kentucky University
College of Health and Human Services, School of Nursing

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References Available Upon Request

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