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How Cognitively Distorted Thinking and Patriarchal Belief Influence Victim Blaming Among Japanese Males?

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ABSTRACT

Sex violence against women is a serious global issue. Although there is a considerable amount of research on sex crimes against women in Western countries, there is a scarcity of knowledge on the issue in Japan. Given low reporting rates, little remains known about those who perpetrate these crimes in Japan. Thus, it is vital to identify risk factors for sexual violence to prevent it before it occurs. In Western countries, individual characteristics such as cognitive distortions about women and children and cultural risk factors such as patriarchal beliefs have been linked to increased risk for sexual violence perpetration. However, to date, no research has examined how these variables may be linked to perceptions of sex crimes against women in Japan. This study examined the relationship between cognitive distortions, patriarchal beliefs and rape myth acceptance in a sample of 234 Japanese men recruited through an online survey platform. Significant positive relationships were found between the endorsements of cognitive distortions toward women, patriarchal beliefs and perceptions of rape myths. Additionally, no significant relationship was found between age, beliefs of patriarchal ideas, cognitive distortion, and rape myths acceptance. There was also found no significant association between employment status and rape myth acceptance. Overall, this study suggests that similar to Western societies, individual and societal beliefs and values which promote incorrect or unequal beliefs about women can increase rape myth beliefs among a sample of Japanese men. These findings are discussed as they pertain to the primary prevention of sexual violence in Japan.

Keywords: Sex crimes, sexual violence, sexual assaults, Japan, the U.S., Cognitive Distortion, Patriarchal Belief, male centered belief, rape myth, victim blaming, East Asia