

Abstract

Chronic musculoskeletal pain development is a commonly observed sequela of sexual assault. The purpose of this study was to investigate the incidences and rates of clinically significant new or worsening pain (CSNWP) amongst women sexual assault survivors till six months post-assault, and their association with physical injury in ten different body regions. Adult women sexual assault survivors ($N = 706$) presented for emergency care at Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) sites. The mean age of the participants was 28.4 years. Assault characteristics and documentation of physical injury was collected from medical records at the initial assessment, and information on pain severity and location was collected through self-report surveys administered at one-week, six-weeks, and six-months post-assault. The results of this study demonstrated that adult women sexual survivors presenting to emergency care commonly self-reported CSNWP in the six-months post-assault in multiple body regions, and that CSNWP largely occurred in body regions that had not experienced physical injury or direct trauma. The results of this study were consistent with prior research studying chronic pain development amongst a smaller sample size and shorter time points. It was concluded that CSNWP is common after sexual assault.