



Rape Kit Testing

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What is a Rape Kit?

A rape kit is a Sexual Assault forensic examination. It is voluntary and does not have to be done if the victim does not want it. The victim can also receive the rape kit and not report the crime. This allows the victim to have evidence saved and possibly report at a later time.

The DNA collected if there was any or apparent trauma will be documented and saved. Then later tested if the victim so chooses. It is important not to shower or change clothes before getting the examination done.

Rape Kit actually is referring to the actual kit that has everything needed to perform the medical forensic examination.

Research Question

Should all rape kits be tested? It costs around 1,000 to test each one, is it reasonable to test all kits?

Research Overview

- Research was done with a survey
- Population surveyed: Random Sample of Utah Valley Univ. Students
- Distributed through email

Link to Survey:

https://uvu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bfIDp1TMswNykCN

Survey Participants

- 500 random sampling of UVU Students
- 43 completed responses

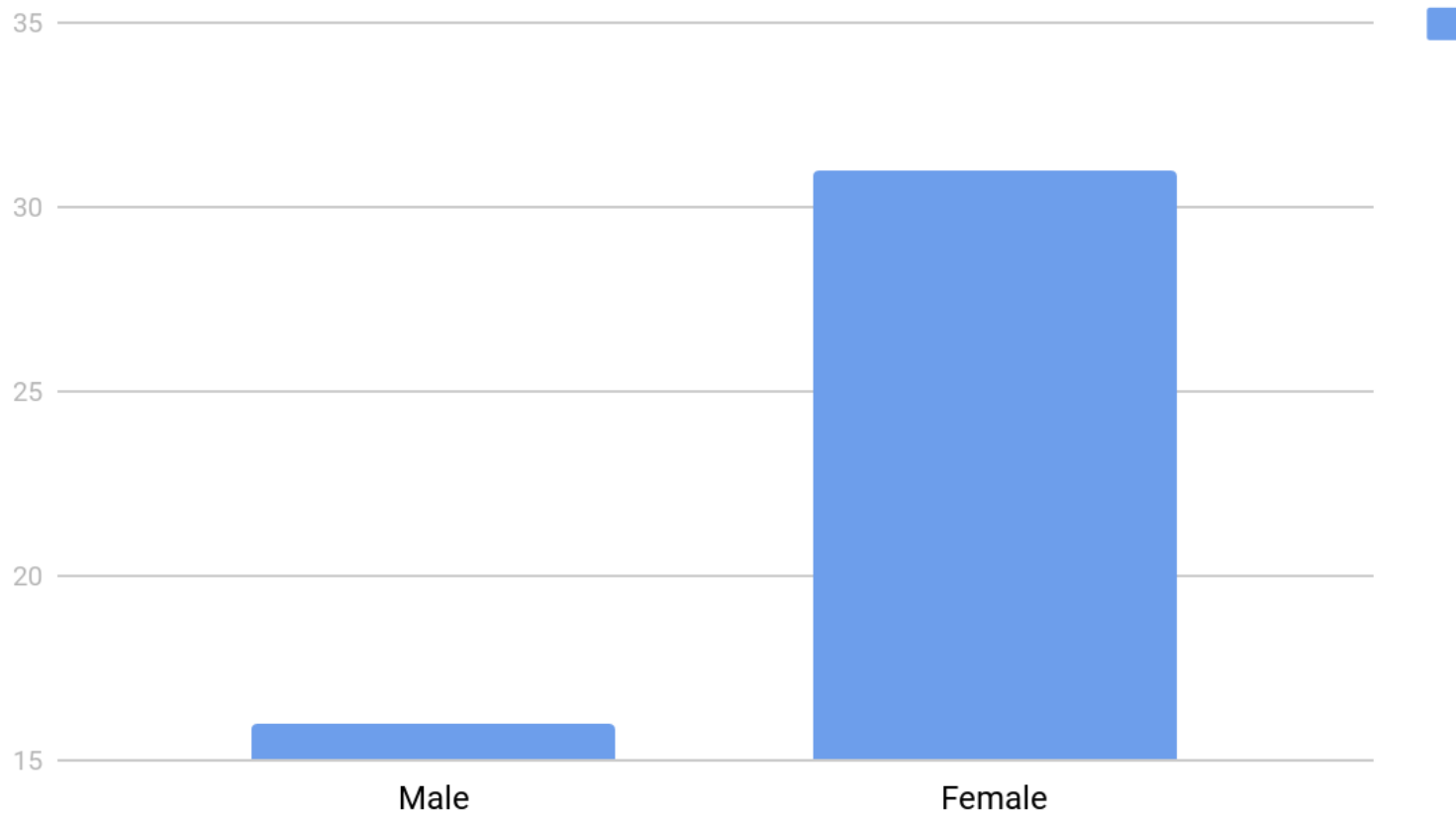
The response to our survey through email was low compared to how many was sent out. There was a follow up email distributed to kindly ask other UVU students to support their fellow classmates in their research project.

That pushed to get the final 43 responses received. There were students unaware of what a rape kit is, and led us to believe that they may not have responded because of that.

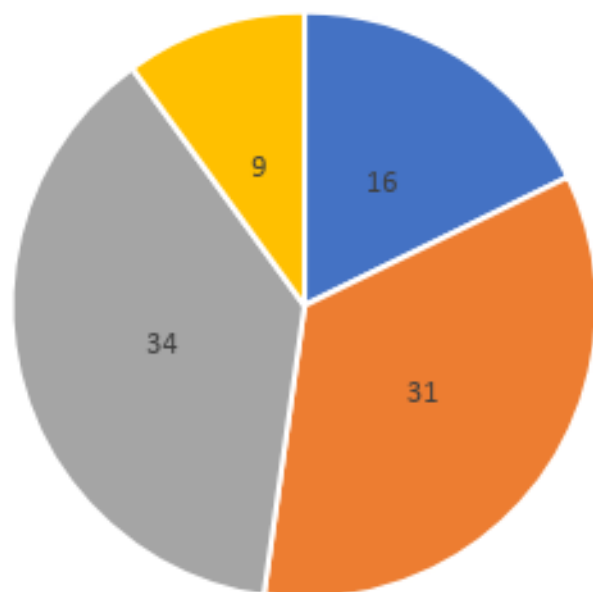
Setbacks

- There were participants that were unaware what a rape kit is used for or what it even is. There should have been an additive explaining that to the students. There were open ended questions that made it difficult for those students who did not have the information they needed to respond to them.
- Lack of responses made could make it difficult to give any weight behind our answers since it is such a small number compared to the sample we were trying to survey.
- The open ended questions made it easier to receive specific feedback to the question, but difficult to display and record the information gathered.

Self reported gender



Those Who Think Rape Kits Should Be Tested



■ # Of Males In Survey

■ # Of Females In Survey

■ Yes answers

■ No answers

Literature review

- One of the main reasons of why rape kits are not tested is due to the cost of doing the DNA tests which use money from other cases or programs which can be used to help the victims, with other services.
- One of the main people who researches why rapes kits are not tested across the United States is a person named Rebecca Campbell.
- She did a research study of why sexual assault kits are not submitted for DNA testing and one reason she said was that most police departments, due to cost, will not use the DNA samples unless they need to confirm they have the right person and the other evidence they have is not able to do that.
- Just in Detroit, Michigan by itself in 2015, which is where Campbell and two other researchers did their study, they have 11,000 Sexual assault kits (SAK) in police storage facilities that dated back to the 1980's.

Literature review cont.

- She also points out that across the country there are hundreds of thousands of DNA kits sitting in police evidence rooms starting from the 1980's to today. The federal government has started to provide grants to police departments to test the kits. New York and Los Angeles have used these grants to get rid of their backlog as well as many of the smaller departments.
- Other states and local departments have started to make reforms to get rid of all of the backlogs of DNA kits that were sitting in storage facilities by allocating more money to crime labs as well as having the incoming kits tested as soon as possible instead of sending them to the storage facilities.

What do UVU students think?

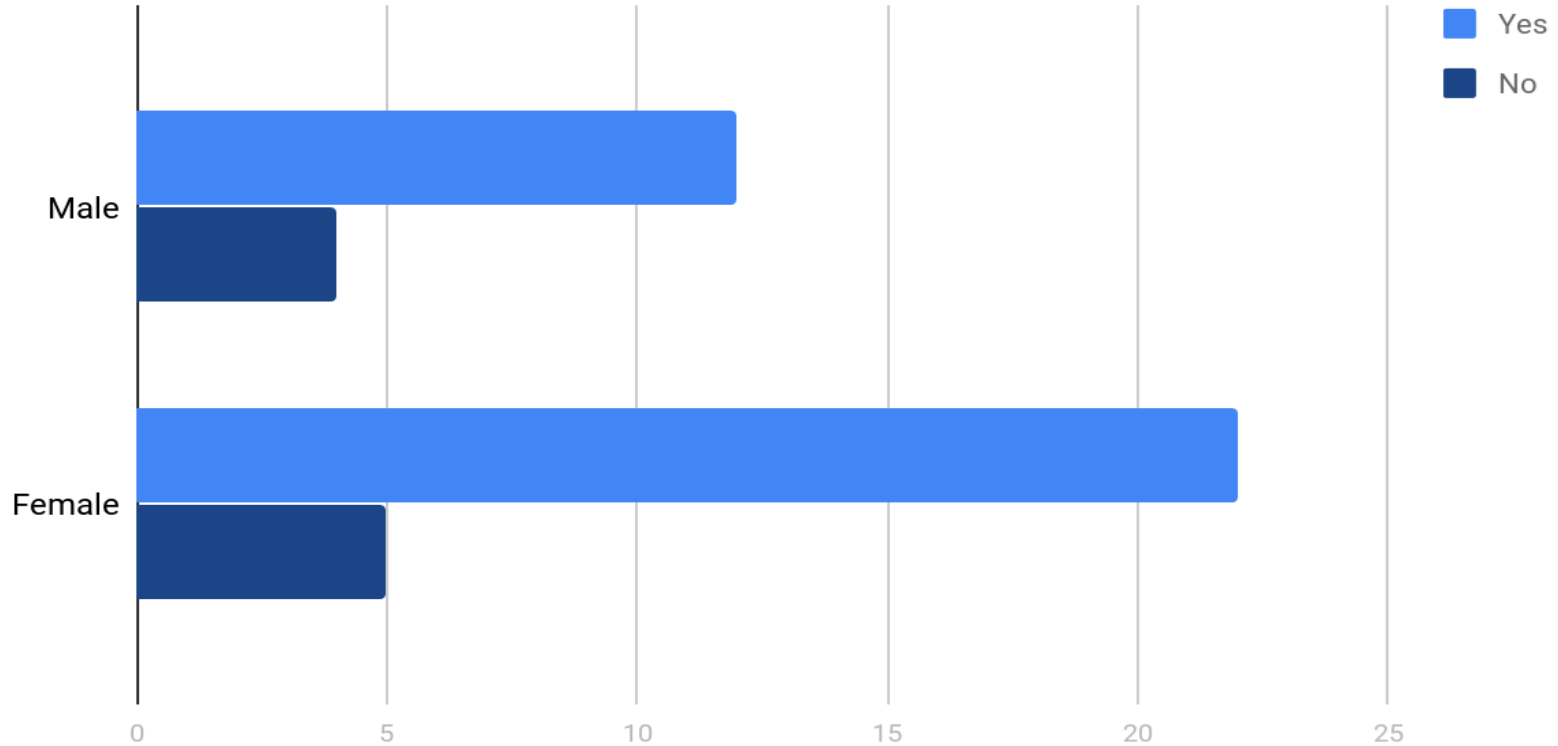
Survey questions were open ended and opinion based.

Should all rape kits be tested?

The overwhelming response was yes, but there is some confusion on what a rape kit is and how many are taken per victim.

There was one participant that felt it was impractical to test them all, and that they should not all be tested because women can lie about consent.

Would you think it was worth testing each kit if it costs 1,000?



How did UVU students answers change?

- Would your opinion change based on age of victim?
- Would it change if you were the victim or it was someone close to you?
- Would it change if it was your tax dollars being used to pay for the tests?

The students answers did not change depending on the varying factors. Except one student who said maybe because it would make the problem more real.

Many of the answers changed when put in the situation of them becoming the victim or if it happened to someone close to them.

Most of them said that they would let there tax dollars be used for the tests.

Conclusion

Our conclusion from our survey based research is that 98% of UVU students think that all rape kits should be tested. Whether it costs 1,000 dollars per kit or not. Students would be willing to have their own tax dollars put to the cause. There was some disagreement in how to sort through rape kits, but that they should all be tested to catch the culprit and bring the victim justice.