



Repeated Sexual Perpetration: What do we know and how do we know it?

June 11th, 2025 RaeAnn E. Anderson, PhD

Outline

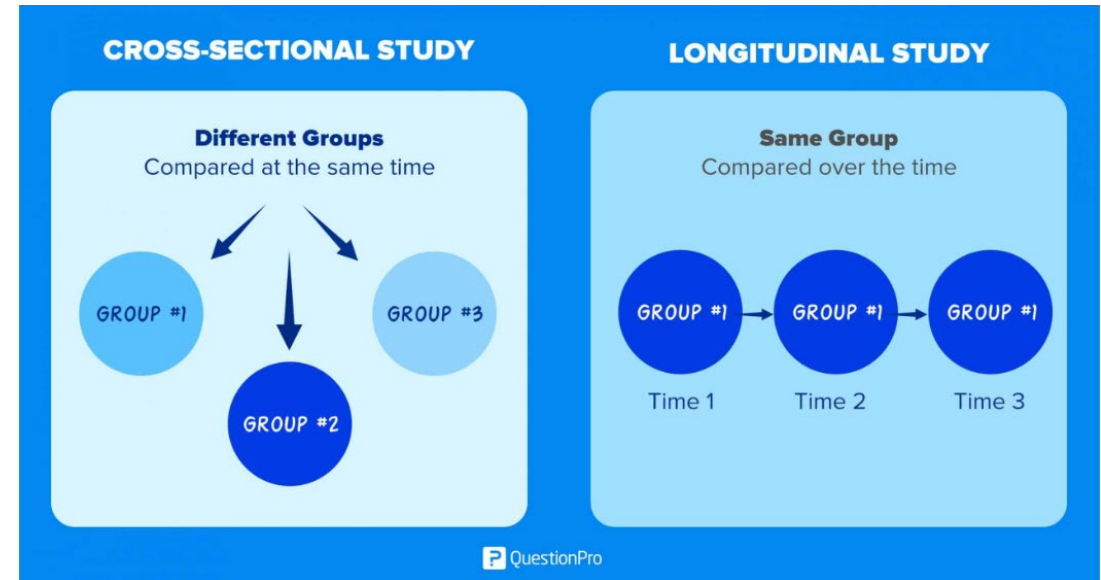
- Review prior, high impact research
- Discuss methodological difficulties
- Review more recent work
- Summary

Big feelings about repeat perpetration

- Why big feelings?
 - Both cultural and practical
- Cultural level.....want to believe certain things about rape
- Practical level.....many implications for how to go about prevention and intervention

Big feelings about repeat perpetration

- Basic question: How many people who perpetrate sexual assault do so more than once?
 - Trickier to answer
 - Measurement of any perpetration behavior is tricky
 - Requires measuring over time
 - Which means retaining people who perpetrate in a longitudinal study....hard to do





Big feelings about repeat perpetration

- Much has been said and debated: some key data points
 - Lisak & Miller 2002 study
 - Using cross-sectional data, asked if behavior occurred more than once
 - Of 120 men who reported a behavior consistent with rape, 63.3% said the behavior happened more than once
 - Swartout et al., 2015 study
 - Using longitudinal data, examined whether behaviors were reported in more than one year/interval
 - Found just 2.7% of 1650 ish college men reported perpetration behaviors during more than one year period

How do we measure sexual perpetration behaviors?

		How many times in the past 12 months?				How many times since age 14?			
		0	1	2	3+	0	1	2	3+
3.	I put my penis (men <u>only</u>) or I put my fingers or objects (all respondents) into a woman's vagina without her consent by:								
a.	Telling lies, threatening to end the relationship, threatening to spread rumors about them, making promises about the future I knew were untrue, or continually verbally pressuring them after they said they didn't want to.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b.	Showing displeasure, criticizing their sexuality or attractiveness, getting angry but not using physical force after they said they didn't want to.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c.	Taking advantage when they were too drunk or out of it to stop what was happening.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d.	Threatening to physically harm them or someone close to them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e.	Using force, for example holding them down with my body weight, pinning their arms, or having a weapon.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



How do we measure sexual perpetration behaviors *longitudinally*?

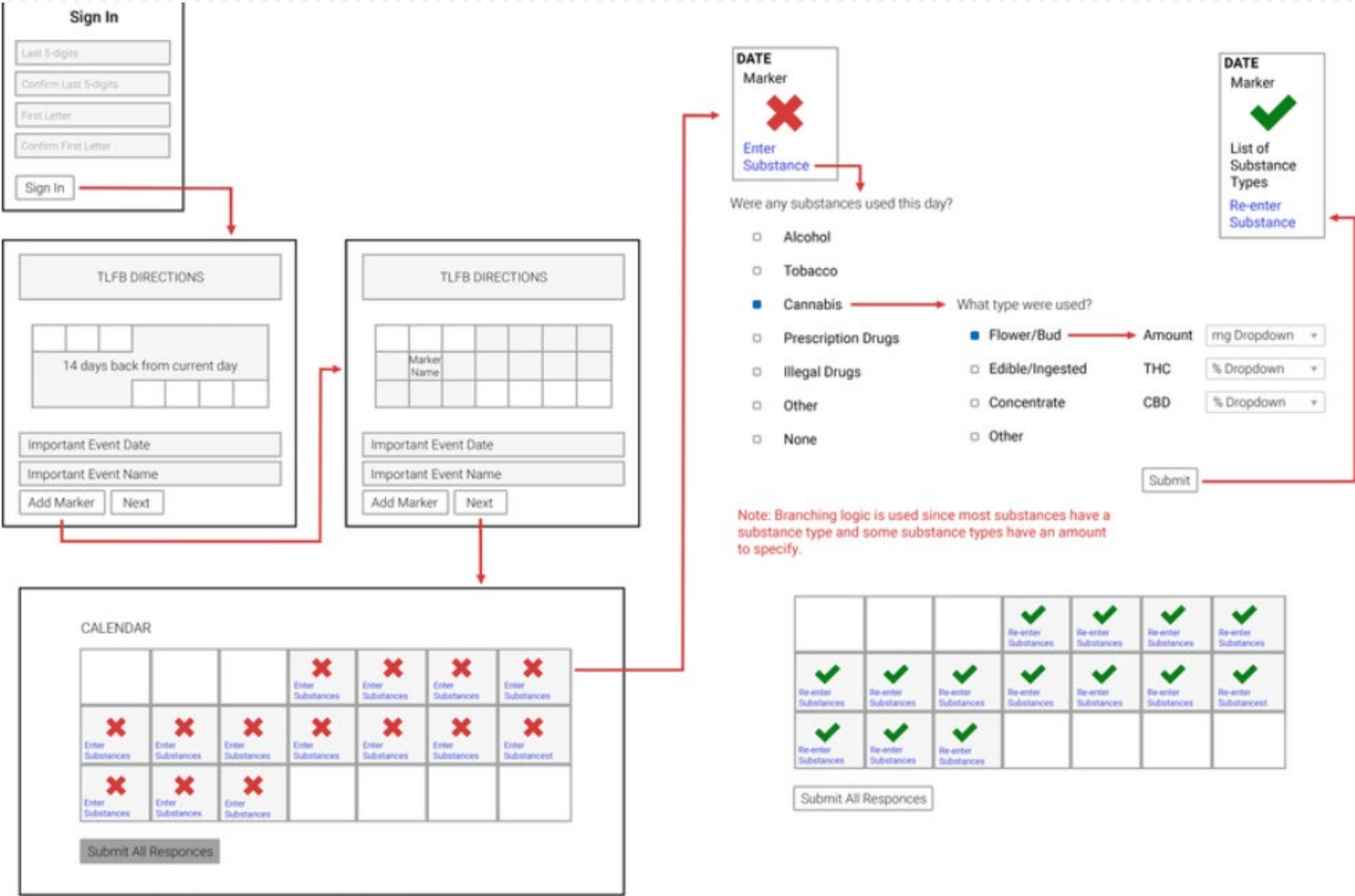
Repeated measures

- Administering the SES or something similarly repeatedly
 - But changing reporting period for each survey
- Potential drawbacks:
- Still not asking how many distinct occasion happens within each reporting period

Daily measure

- Using an event calendar (like the TimeLine Follow Back) to identify days sex occurred and then, which sex days included perpetration behaviors
- Potential drawbacks:
- Haven't deeply studied this method to understand validity, reliability and inconsistent with some theory of perpetration measurement

TimeLine Follow Back/event calendars



Note: Branching logic is used since most substances have a substance type and some substance types have an amount to specify.

* 'Submit All Responses' is not active until all responses have been entered



Re-examination of reported data

Swartout et al., (2015)

- Utilized data from White & Smith (2004) and Thompson et al., (2013)
- Thompson surveyed N = 795 college men every year, 29.1 overall prevalence of perpetration
 - 8.1% - increasing
 - 8.6% - consistently high
 - 12.4% decreasing
 - That's 57.5% repeating perpetration

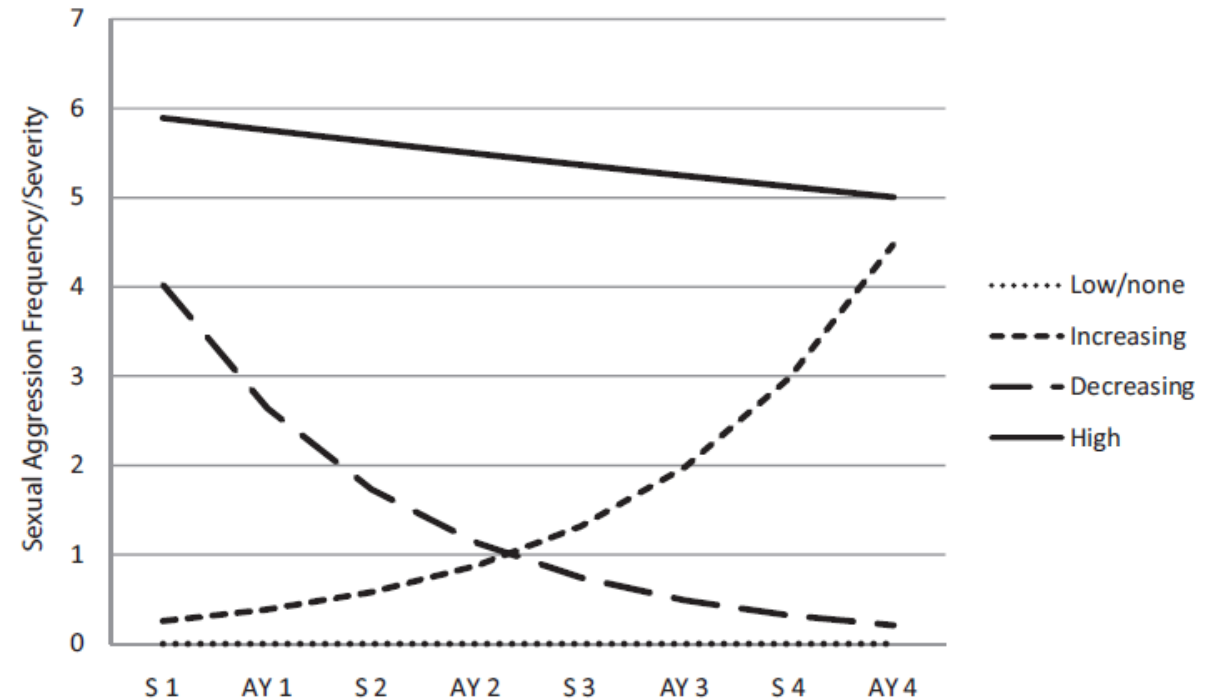


Figure 1. Plot of estimated latent sexual aggression trajectories. Note: S1 = prior to college; AY1 = first academic year; S2 = summer between first and second academic years; AY2 = second academic year; S3 = summer between second and third academic years; AY3 = third academic year; S4 = summer between third and fourth academic years; AY4 = fourth academic year.

Additional existing data

Davis et al., (2015)

- N = 313 community drinking young men
- 41.5% perpetration at baseline
- 3 month TimeLine FollowBack to identify days where sexual perpetration behavior occurred
 - 7.3% reported perpetration
 - Accounting for 36 assaults instigated by 21 people
- 13 of those 21 people reported one assault
- 8 reported more than once (2-6)
 - So 38.1% of those who perpetrated reported repeat perpetration in a 3 month period
- All involved verbal pressure
- Alcohol expectancies for sexual perpetration more powerful predictor than past perpetration

Additional existing data

Anderson & Nickell (2023) conference presentation

- N = 388 college men who completed 90 day TimeLine FollowBack
- 18.6% (n = 72) reported any perpetration since age 14
- 2.9% reported perpetration in past 90 days (n = 11)
- 4/11 reported repeated perpetration – 36.4% repeat perpetration among recent perpetration
 - Range of 2-4 times
- How does risk vary between those reporting high risk (perpetration + recent binge drinking), moderate risk (binge drinking), or low risk (neither)?
 - Sexual victimization since age 14 (5.1 vs. 54.2%) and endorsing neg. consequences of alcohol use most powerful risk factors



Summary

High impact data

- Swartout says 20.4 to 31.8% of college men who perpetrate rape do so repeatedly (that overall 2.7% number)
- Lisak says 63.3% of men who rape do so repeatedly

Additional data

- Thompson data (some used in Swartout study) suggests at least 57.5% of college men who perpetrate do so repeatedly
- Davis et al., (2015) data suggests 38.1% of young, community drinking men repeat perpetration within 3 months
- Anderson data suggests 36.4% of college men who perpetration repeat perpetration within 3 months



Conclusions

- Basic question: How many people who perpetrate sexual assault do so more than once?
 - We don't really know at this point
 - How would we know?
- Existing data suggests 20-57% of young men who perpetrate will do so more than once
- People who perpetrate are heterogenous like any other people

Thank you!

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