Adult Male Rape Myths in England Since 1994: A Systemic Mixed Methods Review

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Author Note

The review analysed existing research studies protected by copyright laws, making the entire dataset unavailable. However, the scholarly articles used in the review can be found in the sources listed in the 'References' section. The review was not preregistered, but the supplementary materials can be accessed via this OSF page https://osf.io/esdq6/ .

We have no known conflict of interest to disclose.

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Abstract

Adult male rape, defined as a man sexually assaulting another man, became legally recognised by English Law through the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (1994). However, the rate of reporting male rape in England remains low compared to female rape and other non-sexual intimate partner violence. Scholars suggest that the low reporting rate could be partly attributed to the persistence of male rape myths in society. For this reason, this paper reviews the literature on male rape myths in England and Wales since 1994. This period is significant as it marks the time when erroneous beliefs began to be recognised as myths. Using a mixed-methods approach within a systematic review framework, we identified, evaluated, and synthesised empirical evidence from 11 studies to address our research question. The thematic synthesis of these studies revealed the persistence of certain male rape myths in England, often tied to stereotypical gender roles and endorsement of homophobic beliefs. However, the review identified limitations, such as the type of rape the studies focused on and their limited applicability, given that most employed student samples. Future research should explore perceptions of male rape using qualitative, and mixed-methods approaches with professionals, male survivors, and community samples. Additionally, future research should challenge the acceptance of male rape myths and raise awareness of male rape in England.

Keywords: Male rape, Rape myths, Rape scripts, Rape disclosure, Sexual offences Act

Introduction

Research on the issue of rape in England and Wales has demonstrated that the rate of reporting rape is low, particularly for male victims compared to female victims (Burrowes & Horvath, 2013). The self-report Crime Survey of England and Wales year ending March 2023 (Office for National Statistics [ONS], 2023) indicated that since the age of 16, 0.1% of men were reported victims of rape (excluding attempts), compared to 6.3% of women. These figures are considerably lower than reports of other forms of intimate violence. For example, from the year ending in March 2022, 12.8% of men and 25.7% of women aged 16 and over were victims of non-sexual domestic abuse (ONS, 2022a). The low reporting of male rape could be attributed to the gendered nature of English law and society's misconceptions about male rape victims (Tewksbury, 2007; Pearson & Barker, 2018). Notably, Scotland and Northern Ireland have distinct legal frameworks, including their own sexual offences legislation, hence the focus on England and Wales. In 1994 the Sexual Offences Act ([SOA], 1976), which applies to the England and Wales territories, was amended to include men as possible victims of rape (Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994). However, male survivors may be unaware of whether their assault meets the legal definitions of rape because, under the SOA (2003), rape is defined as:

> A person (A) commits an offence if—
>
> (a) he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus, or mouth of another person (B) with his penis,
>
> (b) B does not consent to the penetration, and
>
> (c) A does not reasonably believe that B consents (SOA, 2003, p.7)

Consent is when an individual has the freedom, capacity, and choice to participate in sexual activities (SOA, 2003). It is crucial to clarify that this review explicitly focuses on adult male rape and sexual assault as these are distinct concepts underpinned by different beliefs compared to sexual offences involving male children. Therefore, studies focused on child sexual abuse or sexual offences involving boys are beyond the scope of this review. Nevertheless, the definition of rape confirms that current English law does not recognise female perpetrators as rapists (Home Office, 2020). Instead, female perpetrators' offences are downgraded to sexual assault by penetration (SOA, 2003; section 2) or forcing an individual to engage in sexual activity (SOA, 2003; section 4). Perpetrators of rape can receive custodial sentences of 4 years to life imprisonment (Section 1; SOA, 2003), and perpetrators of sexual assault (section 2 & 4; SOA, 2003) can receive community service to life imprisonment (Sentencing Council, 2014). The minimum terms of sentence for both offences are considerably different, which suggests deep-rooted differences in the perceptions of rape and sexual assault within the legal system and discourse (Fisher & Pina, 2012).

However, the way these legalities play out in the justice system can be better understood with recent data. For example, Recent findings from the UCL Jury Project, published in the Criminal Law Review, provide detailed breakdowns of charges, pleas, and convictions for rape and sexual offences in England and Wales from 2007 to 2021 (Thomas, 2023). The researchers analysed every charge (5,263,800) against every defendant in every Crown Court centre over 15 years. The distribution of rape offences revealed that 34.7% involved the rape of a female aged 16 years and over, compared to 0.9% for the rape of a male in the same age bracket. Rape accounted for 19.7% of all sexual offence charges, with the remaining 80.3% encompassing other sexual offences.

Additionally, the rate of pleas taken on rape charges increased from 88.01% in 2007 to 91.59% in 2021. However, non-guilty plea rates remained high at an average of 85% for rape charges across the 15 years. This is nearly double the rate for other sexual offences, which stood at 44%. The outcomes of jury deliberations on rape charges showed an average of 57.52% guilty verdicts, 41.52% not guilty, and a small percentage of hung juries (0.96%). Though the number of hung juries was low, it is notable that 0.11% of these juries returned guilty pleas on other serious offences, such as attempted rape or sexual assault. Despite the high incidence of non-guilty pleas, rape convictions remained relatively consistent over the 15 years, with a rate of 58%. For comparison, the conviction rates for threatening to kill, attempted murder, murder, and drug possession with intent to supply were 36%, 47%, 76%, and 84%, respectively. When breaking down the conviction rate by gender, an average of 50% of charges involving females aged 16 and over resulted in convictions across 15 years, reaching 91% in 2021.

In contrast, the rate for charges involving males in the same age bracket was 63%, which remained steady into 2021 (Thomas, 2023). These findings demonstrate that a jury can reach a guilty verdict if the case is brought before a jury, despite the noted high attrition rates reported by (George & Ferguson, 2021). Moreover, these findings also highlight gender disparities in the outcomes of rape cases. These findings not only reflect the gender difference in the legal handling of rape cases but also set the stage for a broader conversation about societal misconceptions and stereotypes that may influence such outcomes (Lowe & Rogers, 2017; Weare & Hulley, 2019). For instance, a review into the Criminal Justice System Response to adult rape and serious sexual offences across England and Wales by the Home Office and Ministry of Justice (George & Ferguson, 2021) argues that rape myths and stereotypes are one of many cross-cutting issues that adversely affect all stages of adult rape

cases. This is particularly relevant when considering male rape cases, as societies may have specific misconceptions about male rape, often called male rape myths ([MRM]; Tewksbury, 2007; Pearson & Baker, 2018).

In the psychological literature, rape myths are defined as false, stereotypical, or prejudicial beliefs about rape, rapists, and rape victims (Burt, 1980; Payne et al., 1999). These myths shift blame for the incident, wholly or partially, from the perpetrator to the victim (Burt, 1980; Bohner et al., 2009). Conversely, in the United Kingdom legal context, especially within the Crown Court, the term "rape myths" is not typically used. Instead, judges employ the terminology "misleading or false assumptions", reserved for widely held beliefs about rape that have been contradicted through reliable evidence or experience within the criminal justice system (Picton et al., 2023). This approach aims to debunk known misconceptions to ensure a fair trial in line with guidelines set by the Court of Appeal Criminal Division (Judiciary of England & Wales, 2023). Despite this difference in terminologies, this review will use MRM and rape myths interchangeably to refer to rape myths about male victims, consistent with the terminology used in the psychological literature. Research indicates that anyone can subscribe to MRMs (Anderson & Lyons, 2005; Jackson et al., 2017), which can adversely influence how they engage with male rape survivors (Bonner-Thompson et al., 2023). These adverse effects can contribute to secondary victimisation, defined as victim-blaming attitudes, practices, and behaviours by professionals, which can result in further trauma for the male rape victim (Campbell et al., 2001).

Jackson et al. (2017) reported that male survivors (N=18) had experienced secondary victimisation from professionals, friends, and family when they disclosed the sexual assault, which affected them emotionally, and behaviourally (100% of N=18) and decreased their likelihood of seeking further formal and social support (67% of N=18). This suggests

survivors can be re-traumatised by how professionals (law enforcement, medical facilities, and psychological support services), friends, and family react to their disclosure, and this can inhibit their recovery as they may fear further secondary victimisation (Abdullah-Khan, 2008; Carpenter, 2009; Allen et al., 2015). For instance, Ullman and Peter-Hagene (2014) demonstrated that adverse social reactions to women's sexual victimisation disclosure were associated with more significant Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms and perceived lack of control over their recovery (similar to Snipes et al. 2015). Additionally, male survivors might accept MRM; thus, they might be unaware that the sexual violence they experienced is rape or may perceive that they are partly to blame for the assault (Hammond et al., 2017; Weare & Hulley, 2019).

The issue of MRM in England and Wales has received little professional and academic attention compared to research on female rape myths ([FRM]; Davies & Rogers, 2006; Chapleau et al., 2008). Furthermore, research on male rape myth acceptance (MRMA) has predominantly employed university student samples and quantitative methodology (Judson et al., 2013). Consequently, this literature review will examine MRM in England and Wales research since 1994, when false beliefs about male rape became identifiable as myths, aiming to determine the extent of MRMA in this society following the legal recognition of male rape. Hence, the research question is as follows: What male rape myths have been identified by research conducted in England and Wales since the legal recognition of male rape in 1994?

Method

The philosophical paradigm which underpins this review is the pragmatic worldview (Maxcy, 2003; Lincoln et al., 2011; Morgan, 2014). Pragmatism argues that a practical and

applied philosophy should guide methodological decisions (Maxwell, 2011). Harden (2010) argues that integrating methodologies into a review enhances its efficiency and application. The pragmatism epistemology allows for the quantitative and qualitative methodology to be reviewed and encourages the elimination of the dichotomy between postpositivist and constructionism worldviews (Maxcy, 2003; Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). The postpositivist paradigm is concerned with the belief that there is one truth of reality, and valid knowledge of this truth can only be observed through objective scientific methods which remove or control variables (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). On the other hand, the social constructionism perspective asserts that human actions and understanding are shaped by societal and cultural influences rather than being solely determined by biological or personal psychological factors (Berger & Luckman, 1996).

Finally, the pragmatism worldview focuses on "what works" to answer the review research question rather than concentrating on the philosophical epistemologies that underpin the methodology. For this reason, the mixed methods approach to a systemic review framework ([MMASR] Grant & Booth, 2009; White et al., 2015) was used to inform this review. This framework adheres to the aims of a systemic review which are to methodically identify, evaluate, and synthesise empirical evidence to address the review's research question (Sandelowski et al., 2006; Higgins & Thomas, 2019). However, unlike traditional systematic reviews, which focus on quantitative experimental studies (e.g., randomised control trials), this framework allows for any combination of methodology (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods) and method (e.g., case studies, interviews, correlations) to be considered for review (Harden & Thomas, 2010). This approach was adopted to provide a complete picture of the review research question that goes beyond either a qualitative or quantitative review (Pearson et al., 2015).

Defining the Scope

The literature identification began with a scoping search using Google Scholar and Summon electronic database comprising 161 individual databases (e.g., PsychINFO, Web of Science). The scoping search provided a brief overview of what literature was available on MRM, and this informed the scope of the review and the formulation of the review research question. Through the scoping search, key search terms (see searching and screening section below) were identified and used to source articles for the review (Grant & Booth, 2009). Furthermore, the scoping search assisted in formulating the inclusion and exclusion criteria during the screening process. The inclusion criteria encompassed peer-reviewed quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods primary England and Wales studies from 1994 until the present concerning male rape and acceptance of MRM. Primary England and Wales studies were defined as studies which sampled participants from the countries England and Wales. This included male rape studies that included FRM to form a basis for comparison. A country limit was imposed with a focus on studies from England and Wales as the review aimed to examine MRM since the recognition of male victims in English Law. The inclusion criteria considered adult male rape as 16 years old and over at the time of the rape, in concurrence with the SOA (2003) and Home Office (2020) Counting Rules' definition of adult rape victims.

Articles that were unpublished, non-academic or discussion papers were excluded from the review in keeping with the MMASR framework's definition of "empirical" research (Grant & Booth, 2009; Pearson et al., 2015). Studies that did not explicitly state the gender of the victim were also excluded because feminists argue that gender-neutral legal language signifies an attempt to impede the gendered analysis of sexual violence (Rumney, 2008). Gender-neutral language makes the gender issues surrounding rape immaterial in evaluating

sexual violence and limits the ability to draw gendered inferences from research findings (Cohen, 2014). However, gender plays a vital role in the discourse of rape, as women's and men's experiences are different (Anderson, 2007). Furthermore, studies that only focused on child sexual abuse were also excluded, as a common MRM is that violence toward men only happens to them when they are children (Davies et al., 2011). Lastly, the paper focuses on male survivors, so 6 studies with more female than male participants were excluded to reduce the overrepresentation of female respondents in psychological research (Barlow & Cromer, 2006; Dickinson et al., 2012). This was to facilitate a balanced comparison between women and men participants to get a rigorous understanding of the social issue of rape.

Search Strategy and Screening

The literature search was conducted using Summon, and the British Psychological Society's EBSCO discovery service database, encompassing academic catalogues such as Science Direct and JSTOR. These two electronic databases were used as they allowed for an extensive search and included filtering options for identifying relevant scientific literature (Bramer et al., 2017). For this reason, Google Scholar was not used during this part of the search strategy as it did not allow for filtering out non-empirical papers. Instead, the identification of studies took place using wildcards and the Boolean method (Bronson & Davis, 2011) with the following search terms:

- Search term one: ("Male rape") AND ("Male rape myth*") AND ("Attitude* toward* rape")
- Search term two: ("Male" OR "M*N") AND ("Male rape victim" OR "Male rape survivor") and ("Attitude* toward* rape")

- Search term three: (“Male rape”) AND (“Male rape myth*”) AND (“Qualitative research”)
- Search term four: (“Male rape”) AND (“Male rape myth*”) AND (“Quantitative research”)
- Search term five: (“Male rape victim” OR “Male rape survivor”) AND (“Consequences”) AND (“Male rape myth acceptance” OR “Rape myth acceptance”)
- Search term six: (“Sexual offence*”) AND (“Victim*”) AND (“Adult”) AND (“Male”)
- Search term seven: (“Sexual assault”) OR (Sexual offence*”) AND (“Gender*”) AND (“Adult”)
- Search term eight: (“Sexual assault”) OR (“Sexual offence*”) AND (“Gender*”) AND ("Female offender*")

These searches were coupled with filters such as ‘English language’, ‘1994 to present’, ‘peer reviewed’, and ‘journal article’. The searches yielded 885 articles, and once the duplicates were removed, 583 titles and abstracts were reviewed (see Figure 1 for the screening process). It should be noted that no Welsh studies were found during the searches. Nevertheless, 115 articles appeared to meet the inclusion criteria; thus, their full texts were obtained to affirm their eligibility. Following the full-text screening, data was extracted from 43 articles that met the inclusion criteria (see supplementary material, table S1 for full-text exclusion reasoning).

The remaining articles were assessed for quality using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) 2018 version by Hong et al. (2018), a comprehensive tool that appraises the methodological qualities of qualitative, mixed-methods, and quantitative descriptive studies. The tool included two screening questions and 5 core quality criteria items for qualitative and

quantitative research and 15 items for mixed methods studies. The studies were appraised initially by the first author and then the author team (Pluye, 2013). Six studies (Javaid, 2017b; Javaid, 2017d; Javaid, 2017e; Javaid, 2018a; Javaid, 2018b; Javaid, 2018c) were excluded due to duplicate publication (Larivière & Gingras, 2010; Villar, 2015). A further 27 papers were excluded from the review during the quality appraisal process because they did not meet the MMAT's two screening questions (Schwandt et l., 2007; Hong et al., 2018). The remaining 10 papers' reference lists were read to check for other studies which met the inclusion criteria. This was conducted to include papers that may have been omitted from the database searches, as the Cochrane Collaboration proposes (Horsley et al., 2011). One paper (Walker et al., 2005) was identified through that process and was subsequently included in the review. Consequently, 11 papers were included in the review (see supplementary material, table S2 MMAT detailed quality appraisal).

[Insert Figure 1 here]

Synthesis

Thematic synthesis was employed to analyse the remaining papers, as this method permitted the analysis of qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods data to be integrated into one composition (Thomas & Harden, 2008; Thomas et al., 2017). Furthermore, the thematic synthesis was chosen because it has been demonstrated to be a rigorous and systematic approach to analysing methodologically heterogeneous data in mixed-methods systematic reviews (Noyes et al., 2019; Hong et al., 2020). The synthesis followed three stages. Firstly, all the studies were coded using emergent descriptive codes from the data, for example, 'minimisation of rape incident' (Thomas et al., 2017). Secondly, the codes were developed into descriptive themes to articulate associations between the themes and to relate

conceptually similar themes with one another, for example, ‘rape is not serious for some men’ (Thomas et al., 2017). Lastly, analytical themes were generated by asking how the unearthed descriptive themes address the review’s research question, which will be exemplified in the results (Thomas et al., 2017).

Transparency and Openness

The review analysed existing research studies protected by copyright laws, making the entire dataset unavailable. However, the scholarly articles used in the review can be found in the sources listed in the 'References' section. While the review was not preregistered, the protocol used during the review can be accessed via this OSF page https://osf.io/esdq6/ .

Results

As mentioned above, the final sample included 11 English papers, 8 were quantitative studies, 2 were mixed methods, and 1 was qualitative (See Table 1 for systematic description and findings). Two themes emerged from synthesis, “Departure from the stereotypical rape script” and “Male rape can be avoided”. Additionally, one meta-theme was identified as “Victim’s sexual orientation influences perceptions of male rape”, with the following sub-themes “Straight men are the ‘real’ victims”, “He must be gay”, and “Rape allegations are a cover-up”. Although, notably, 5 of the 11 studies reviewed did not report the demographic of race or ethnicity, all 6 studies that did report the demographic included samples comprised mostly of Caucasian participants (90% to 100%; Davies & McCartney, 2003; Wakelin & Long, 2003; Davies & Hudson, 2011; Davies et al., 2013; Hammond et al., 2017; Walker et al., 2005).

[Insert Table 1. Descriptive characteristics, methods, and findings of included studies]

Departure from The Rape Script

This theme focused on how rape scripts can inform rape myth adherence. The review highlighted that Individuals are more inclined to believe a victim of rape if their attack follows the stereotypical rape script (Anderson, 1999; Anderson et al., 2001; Wakelin & Long, 2003; Doherty & Anderson, 2004; Davies & Hudson, 2011). For example, rape occurs at night in a public place, the male assailant is a stranger who uses a weapon, and the female victim physically resists but is overcome by considerable violence (Krahe, 1991). A rape script is a culturally determined prototype for how non-consensual sex acts typically proceed (Krahe et al., 2001; Ryan, 2011) and how an individual should behave after the incident (Anderson, 1999; Hammond et al., 2017). Rape scripts can shape how individuals react to male survivors' disclosure of their rape; hence departure from the culturally accepted rape script can lead to rape myth acceptance (Davies et al., 2013). Indeed, this review has demonstrated that male survivors are more likely to be blamed for their sexual victimisation in comparison to female survivors, particularly by other male respondents (Anderson, 1999; Davies & McCartney, 2003; Wakelin & Long, 2003; Anderson & Quinn, 2009; Anderson & Bissell, 2011; Davies & Hudson, 2011). This is because society, including male survivors, may perceive a man being the victim as a departure from their accepted stranger rape script, where the victim is expected to be a woman (Hammond et al., 2017).

On the other hand, studies have reported that stereotypical stranger rape scripts similarly apply to the perception of male rape, except they are more likely to contain more fallacious details than female rape scripts (Davies et al., 2013). For instance, the construction of male rape victims includes victim/rapist sexual orientation, rapist motivation, serious

physical injuries, and further violent assault as part of the attack (Davies et al., 2013). The implication of these additional erroneous details of male rape scripts is that individuals may construct MRM which serves to blame male survivors for the attack if the survivors' sexual victimisation is not per the stranger male rape script (Anderson et al., 2001; Hammond et al., 2017). A further implication is that survivors will not report the offence to the police or disclose it to social support systems (Hammond et al., 2017) because they perceive authorities and society will not take a man being a victim of rape seriously (Doherty & Anderson, 2004; Hammond et al., 2017). This indicates that male survivors' likelihood of reporting the offence is informed by awareness or internalisation of MRMs, therefore positioning MRMs as barriers to reporting; and subsequently leading to low reporting of rape (Hammond et al., 2017).

Though it has been argued that male rape scripts contain stereotypical details (Davies et al., 2013; Hammond et al., 2017), the available research suggests these expectations might not be unfounded. These incidents tend to occur at night (Walker et al., 2005), and statistics support the notion that men are less likely to report the incident to the police (ONS, 2018). Nonetheless, it is important to note that the study by Davies et al. (2013) used student samples with a mean age of 22.1. Thus, their findings can only be generalised to that homogeneous sample. This suggests that there may be a bias in constructing the male rape script. Therefore, there is room to explore professional or community samples' perceptions of male rape in England and Wales. Exploring a heterogenous sample would provide a holistic picture of what MRM may be present in English society, rather than relying on students' views as they only represent one part of society (Sturgis, 2012).

Male Rape Can Be Avoided

The following theme describes the misconception of the preventability of being a victim of rape. Three studies have demonstrated that society endorses the myth "he should know better", which implies men should be able to avoid being a victim of rape or that they behaved in a way that warranted the attack (Anderson, 1999; Anderson et al., 2001; Wakelin & Long, 2003). Particularly if the male victims have been assaulted before, this suggests that male victims could have prevented the rape if they had behaved differently (Anderson, 1999; Hammond et al., 2017). Anderson et al. (2001) demonstrated that male and female student dyads construed male and female victims as 'stupid' for not learning from their previous sexual victimisation or for walking alone down a path where sexual violence had previously occurred. Notably, Anderson (1999) argued that having the female-male pairs read a scenario and then spontaneously discuss male-female victims was a more naturalistic way to collect data than interviewer-interviewee methods. However, even with the use of this naturalistic approach, Anderson et al. (2001) were not able to support the Covariation Model of Attribution ([CMA]; Kelley, 1973) they sought to examine. The CMA describes how individuals use social perception to attribute behaviour logically and rationally to internal or external factors of an incident. It focuses on what information is gained through perception and how it is employed to judge the cause of behaviour (Kelley, 1973). Scholars purport that people employ the covariation principle to attribute the cause of rape. They do so by seeking information concerning the frequency of rape and its prevalence in different environments. (Calhoun et al., 1976). Anderson et al.'s (2001) findings suggest that individuals may hold the negative attribution "he/she is very stupid" based on other beliefs rather than 'logical' or 'rational' evaluations of rape victims' behaviour or characteristics (Anderson, 1999).

Research has examined how sex differences and homophobia influence blame attribution towards rape survivors. Homophobia is a negative attitude towards gay individuals (Fraïssé & Barrientos, 2016). When it concerns sex differences, Wakelin and Long (2003) found that male participants were more likely to perceive rape as avoidable than female participants, possibly due to the "man box" concept of ideal masculinity (Kivel, 1998). The “man box” is a societal expectation that men should be dominant, assertive, and resilient. This may have contributed to male participants assuming that male victims of rape could have avoided it more easily than female victims (Connell & Pearse, 2015). In addition to sex differences, participants perceived that gay and lesbian survivors should have been able to avoid rape more effectively than straight survivors (Wakelin & Long, 2003). Respondents also thought chance was more to blame when the survivor was a gay male than a straight male, suggesting participants thought gay men have a higher chance of being a victim of rape due to factors such as overt gay behaviour or appearance (Wakelin & Long, 2003). This implies that homophobic stereotypical perceptions of sexuality contributed to tougher judgements of gay male survivors (Anderson, 1999; Davies & McCartney, 2003; Wakelin & Long, 2003; Doherty & Anderson, 2004; Anderson & Bissell, 2011; Davies & Hudson, 2011).

It should be noted that Anderson (1999), Anderson et al. (2001), and Wakelin and Long (2003) used stranger rape scenarios as stimuli within their research. Therefore, their findings are limited to research focusing on male stranger rape. It has been argued that stranger rape and acquaintance rape influence blame attribution differently (Davies & McCartney, 2003; Anderson & Bissell, 2011). The next synthesised meta-theme expands on the relationship between sexual orientation and male rape more comprehensively.

Victim's Sexual Orientation Influences Perceptions of Male Rape

This meta-theme argues that male rape and sexual orientation are inseparable in comparison to female rape and contains three sub-themes: "straight men are the 'real' victims", "he must be gay", and "rape allegations are a cover-up" (Anderson, 1999; Davies & McCartney, 2003; Wakelin & Long, 2003; Doherty & Anderson, 2004; Davies & Hudson, 2011; Davies et al., 2013; Hammond et al., 2017). In addition, scholars argue that sexuality-based rape myths are rooted in homophobia, which is a facet of heteronormative culture that adversely informs people's perceptions of male rape (Doherty & Anderson, 2004) and functions to minimise the issue of male rape (Davies & McCartney, 2003).

Straight Men Are The 'Real' Victims.

This theme describes which men are considered the actual victims of male rape, as studies have demonstrated that the severity of rape for straight men and gay men is conceptualised differently (Davies & McCartney, 2003; Doherty & Anderson, 2004; Davies & Hudson, 2011; Hammond et al., 2017). For instance, Doherty & Anderson (2004) demonstrated that respondents constructed male rape as more severe for straight survivors than gay survivors, as the rape threatens their heterosexual identity. This is under the Gender Role Conflict theory (GRC; O'Neil, 1981), which states that men should be capable of behaving in a manner that is typical of men (e.g., resist the attack, handle confrontational situations; Davies et al., 2013; O'Neil, 2013). Therefore, individuals who subscribe to this theory may perceive that the male victim did not fend off his attacker in a 'macho' manner, thereby casting doubt on his heterosexual identity and membership to hegemonic masculinity (Doherty & Anderson, 2004; O'Neil, 2013). Hegemonic masculinity is the idealisation of stereotypical male qualities as the masculine cultural archetype, which explains why and how

men maintain dominance over groups considered to be feminine (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). As a result, the male victim's membership to hegemonic masculinity may be revoked post-assault (Doherty & Anderson, 2004; O'Neil, 2013).

The other threat is the misconception that the straight survivor's sexuality will be questioned because of the rape; this notion is under the "taint of homosexuality theory" ([THT] Doherty & Anderson, 2004; Sivakumaran, 2005). The THT argues that society may question the straight survivors' sexuality after the rape due to the survivor's physiological response, such as arousal or ejaculation during the rape (Sivakumaran, 2005). The THT also states that any sexual activity between two men is gay regardless of whether the act is non-consensual (Sivakumaran, 2005). This means people may perceive all male rape victims as gay (Wakelin & Long, 2003; Davies et al., 2013; Hammond et al., 2017). However, scholars argue that sexuality is innate and not nurtured; hence a straight man being assaulted by another man will not change his sexual orientation to gay (Mustanski et al., 2002; Weeks, 2017). Furthermore, the belief that male survivors must be gay implies gay survivors are considered as belonging to an already marginalised masculinity and therefore lack the traits that fit into the hegemonic norm (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Hence gay survivors are deemed as less affected by rape (Wakelin & Long, 2003) because it is assumed that anal penetration is a "normal" sexual expression for gay men (Davies & McCartney, 2003; Doherty & Anderson, 2004; Davies & Hudson, 2011; Hammond et al., 2017). Thus, the belief that rape is not as severe for gay survivors as it is for straight survivors is damaging as it threatens the recognition of male rape as an issue for all men (Davies & Hudson, 2011).

Furthermore, the assertion that sexuality influences the impact of rape is unfounded. For instance, Walker et al. (2005) demonstrated that male survivors are psychologically impacted by their sexual victimisation regardless of their sexuality compared to a control

group of male non-survivors. Following the assault, male survivors reported experiencing depression, secondary victimisation, psychological disturbances, low self-esteem, insomnia, post-traumatic stress disorder-related symptoms, sexual identity issues, suicidal ideation, and attempted suicide (Walker et al., 2005). Subsequently, the conception that straight survivors are the 'real' victims can marginalise gay survivors to a greater extent, compounding their traumatising experience (Doherty & Anderson, 2004; Walker et al., 2005; Davies et al., 2013; Hammond et al., 2017). It is worth noting that Walker et al. (2005) used the world assumption 32-item scale (Janoff-Bulman, 1989), which measured male survivors' assumption of the world they reside in with a focus on justice, self-worth, luck, self-controllability, the benevolence of individuals, randomness, and general controllability. However, they only reported the lowest subscales' internal consistencies (self-control $\alpha = .69$, justice $\alpha = .58$ and randomness $\alpha = .40$), which some scholars would consider unacceptable because the low alphas may be due to the constructs that are measured being poorly related (DeVellis, 2003; Cohen & Swerdlik, 2018). Consequently, the findings should be interpreted cautiously as the low internal consistency may reflect heterogeneous constructs of the world assumption scale or the low number of items in each subscale. Nevertheless, it can be said that this severity rape myth is contrary to the following theme "He must be gay".

He Must Be Gay.

This theme concerns the notion that all male rape victims must be gay because they must have behaved in a gay manner which is atypical of hegemonic masculinity (Wakelin & Long, 2003; Davies et al., 2013; Hammond et al., 2017). Thus, arguably male survivors may be judged more harshly based on the acceptance of homophobic beliefs, particularly by straight individuals (O'Neil, 1981; Anderson, 1999; Connell, 2005). This rape myth is

particularly problematic as it assumes that male survivors are gay, and their rape is not deemed 'real' rape (Wakelin & Long, 2003). For example, studies have demonstrated that straight men are more likely to blame gay male victims for rape (Davies & McCartney, 2003; Wakelin & Long, 2003) than they are to blame straight women (Wakelin & Long, 2003), gay women (Wakelin & Long, 2003), and cross-dressing (female or male undefined) rape survivors (Davies & Hudson, 2011). However, findings on the intersectionality of sexuality and gender and victim blame attribution have been complex. For instance, Davies and McCartney (2003) demonstrated that straight men attributed more blame toward straight women than gay men.

Additionally, Davies and Hudson (2011) explored survivor status (straight, gay, cross-dressing, trans women and trans men) and could only demonstrate that straight men were blamed less than the cross-dressing survivors. These mixed results suggest there is room for research to explore how participant and survivor gender and sexuality inform rape myth acceptance in England and Wales, as the findings from these studies imply that when participants are presented with a diverse range of victims, they are more likely to blame the sexual minorities.

Rape Allegations Are A Cover-Up.

The following synthesised sub-theme builds upon the "He must be gay" subtheme by arguing that male survivors had consensual intercourse. However, "he lied" about being raped to hide his sexual orientation (Anderson, 1999; Hammond et al., 2017). The current theme is similar to the FRM "she lied", and both myths function to deny the survivor's claim of rape. Though notably, the "he lied" and "she lied" are underpinned by different ideologies, the beliefs that underpin the FRM version are beyond the scope of this review (for the female

context, see Edwards et al., 2011). The ideology that informs the MRM version is that individuals may perceive male survivors as lying about sexual victimisation because they are trying to 'cover up' their sexual experience with another man (Anderson, 1999; Hammond et al., 2017). This suggests that male survivors are ashamed of consensual intercourse and come to regret it due to fear related to their sexuality, resulting in a false allegation of rape (Doherty & Anderson, 2004). However, this myth has been largely unsubstantiated by research conducted in England and Wales compared to the international exploration of male rape, which is beyond the scope of this review (for the international context, see Klement et al., 2018). Therefore, there remains a gap for further research to explore what perceptions about male rape may be present in England and Wales.

Discussion

This systematic review identified the persistence of MRMs in England since 1994 (Burt, 1980; Payne et al., 1999). The review demonstrated that MRMs arise when individuals receive information about a rape that does not match the stereotypical rape script (Anderson, 1999; Anderson et al., 2001; Wakelin & Long, 2003; Doherty & Anderson, 2004; Davies & Hudson, 2011). This review has also demonstrated that the stereotypical rape script has changed to include male victims, with additional considerations such as the victim's sexual orientation and rape severity (Davies et al., 2013). These additional factors to the stereotypical rape script can lead to people questioning male survivors' sexual orientation, masculinity and rape claim legitimacy. Additionally, the victim-blaming ideologies that arise when male rape departs from the stereotypical rape script have also been observed in American (Schneider et al., 1994; Struckman-Johnson, 1998; Weiss, 2010) and Mongolian (Peitzmeier et al., 2015) research. This review argues that the questioning mentioned results

in misconceptions about male rape that function to minimise and dismiss the issue of male rape (Payne et al., 1999; Bohner et al., 2009), following Burt's (1980) definition of a rape myth.

Notably, some of the myths identified in our review contradict each other, revealing the complexity of male rape myths. For example, the myths "male rape can be avoided" and "straight men are the 'real' victims" acknowledge the possibility of straight men being victims of rape and aim to differentiate the experiences of straight and gay male victims adversely (Davies & McCartney, 2003; Wakelin & Long, 2003; Doherty & Anderson, 2004; Davies & Hudson, 2011; Hammond et al., 2017). On the other hand, the myths "he must be gay" and "rape allegations are a cover-up" argue that all male victims of rape are gay and either unaware of this or actively trying to hide their sexuality (Anderson, 1999; Payne et al., 1999; Wakelin & Long, 2003; Hammond et al., 2017). A common thread running through these myths is their basis in the acceptance of homophobic beliefs, stereotypical gender roles, and hegemonic masculinity (Doherty & Anderson, 2004; Anderson & Bissell, 2011; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Weeks, 2017).

Moreover, our review found that similar Irish (McGee et al., 2011) and American (Judson et al., 2013; Walfield, 2018; DeJong et al., 2020) research has found adherence to sexual orientation based MRMs, while Dutch (Huitema & Vanwesenbeeck, 2016), South African (Mgolozeli & Duma, 2019), and American (White & Yamawaki, 2009) research has demonstrated endorsement of gender role and hegemonic masculinity-based MRMs. This suggests that the issue of male rape is also an issue of homophobia and sexism cross-culturally (Davies & Hudson, 2011; O'Neil, 2013). However, it should be noted that how these MRMs are communicated varies across cultures due to factors such as the country or state's discourse concerning sexual violence law, rape, sexual orientation, and gender

identity. This highlights the need for a nuanced understanding of how male rape myths function within particular cultural contexts to develop more effective interventions.

Nevertheless, this review's findings suggest that the MRMA aims to dismiss the issue of male rape as an issue of sexual identity. Should this dismissal of the issue of male rape persist, there is a risk that gay survivors will be further marginalised and that straight survivors will not be able to see themselves reflected in the services available for male survivors. Both problems could negatively impact male survivors' physical and psychological well-being, as male rape can happen to all men regardless of sexual orientation, including Men who have Sex with Men (Carpenter, 2009). Another risk is the potential for these myths to impact the credibility of male survivors of rape in legal proceedings. For example, if a survivor's sexual orientation is questioned based on a myth that all male victims of rape are gay, this could impact the likelihood of the perpetrator being held accountable. This could also result in further victimisation of straight survivors whose sexual orientation is unduly questioned. Additionally, this could result in a lack of legal protections for male survivors of rape and contribute to high attrition rates, per George & Ferguson (2021), and affect charges, pleas and conviction rates (Thomas, 2023). Therefore, efforts to dispel MRMs are necessary to prevent the marginalisation of gay survivors and ensure that straight survivors see themselves reflected in the services available to male survivors, including legal services (Carpenter, 2009; Pearson & Baker, 2018).

The review findings have also shown a need for more up-to-date research on male rape and MRMs, as relevant studies are scarce and dated (Pearson & Baker, 2018). the need for more up-to-date research on male rape and MRMs has legal implications for policymakers and lawmakers. If research on male rape is scarce and dated, this can impact the development of policies and laws related to sexual violence. Without up-to-date research,

policymakers and lawmakers may not fully understand the issues faced by male survivors of rape and may not be able to develop effective policies and laws to address these issues. Another legal implication is the need for information resources to dispel MRMs for all audiences (e.g. survivors, formal services and legal professionals). Review findings have demonstrated that male survivors can accept MRMs and know that MRMs persist within English society (Walker et al., 2005; Davies et al., 2013; Hammond et al., 2017; Weare & Hulley, 2019). This knowledge influences survivors' likelihood of seeking support from formal services, legal services, family, and friends out of fear of secondary victimisation (Campbell et al., 2001; Abdullah-Khan, 2008; Carpenter, 2009; Allen et al., 2015; Hammond et al., 2017; Jackson et al., 2017). This is noteworthy, as the findings show that male survivors' psychological and physical well-being are impacted by rape, contrary to rape myths that aim to diminish the impact of male rape. Therefore the information resources could help reduce further victimisation of male survivors of rape.

Methodological Considerations

This review did not find empirical support for the notion that different types of people (e.g., friends, family, formal support systems, mock jurors) can be accepting of male rape myths, contrary to previous research (Anderson & Lyons, 2005; Jackson et al., 2017), as a majority of the studies included relied on student samples as mentioned above. Indeed, it is important to understand rape myths among university students because this population is at an increased risk of sexual violence (Judson et al., 2013; Reling et al., 2018; Crocker & Sibley, 2020). However, these studies may provide an underestimated rape myth adherence which threatens the validity of their findings because university students are predominantly sampled from social sciences programmes. Social sciences students may be aware of rape

myths. Therefore, research that employs student samples may demonstrate lower rape myth adherence than broader society. (Hanel & Vione, 2016). Future research should examine MRMA in a sample from the wider community, similar to the research by Davies and McCarthy (2003) and Davies and Hudson (2011), who examined community sample endorsement of MRM. Furthermore, only one study within this review sought to examine survivors' MRMA (Hammond et al., 2017), and one other explored the impact of male rape and sexual assault on well-being (Walker et al., 2005) since 1994 in England. It would also be beneficial if future research could allow male survivors to voluntarily participate in research that concerns them, similar to research by Hammond et al. (2017). Their experiences as male survivors, as highlighted by Dinisman and Moroz (2017), could offer valuable insights into perceptions of male rape in England, including the use of gendered terminology in the law. This is consistent with the findings of Weare and Hulley (2019).

In addition to the preponderance of the student sample, most of the research in the review was quantitative. Eight of the 11 studies in the review used quantitative methodology and demonstrated how individuals' MRMA and blame attribution might vary in controlled circumstances (Queirós et al., 2017). However, due to the numerical nature of quantitative research, contextual factors (e.g., the reasoning behind scale item ratings, understanding and knowledge of the constructs being measured), which would have assisted in interpreting the results or explaining the variations found, could not be applied to the findings (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Queirós et al., 2017). Furthermore, these studies did not directly address the potential connections between the law and male rape myths, making it difficult to draw definitive conclusions on whether the law informs the myths or if societal beliefs shape the law, which could perpetuate the myths. The focus on quantitative approaches aimed to quantify the complex topic of male rape, thus limiting their ability to draw inferences from

the findings (Eatough, 2012). Consequently, there is room to examine the issue of MRMA and blame attribution qualitatively because the findings from the quantitative approaches provide a partial view of MRMA. The use of qualitative approaches would allow for the exploration of confirming and contradicting beliefs on the topic of MRMA and blame attribution, similar to the two studies by Anderson et al. (2001) and Doherty & Anderson (2004) in the review, which used discourse analysis (Wiggins & Potter, 2017). Discourse analysis could provide evidence of what misconceptions of male rape persist in society, how they are constructed through language (Gee & Hanford, 2014; van Dijk, 2015), and how the legal system may influence them.

Some quantitative studies did not report the size of the effect they found. The four quantitative studies that did report effect sizes had good substantive significance (effect size; Hill et al., 2007), though the remainder of the studies did not report the effect sizes, leaving readers to decide whether the study had enough substantive significance (Cohen, 1988; Lakens, 2013). It would also be beneficial for future research to report effect sizes, as reporting substantive significance and statistical significance aids the reader in understanding the extent of the differences observed (Sullivan & Feinn, 2012; Schäfer & Schwarz, 2019). Furthermore, the quality appraisal process revealed that six of the quantitative and mixed methods studies (Hong et al., 2018) did not clearly state their target population or explain their chosen target population. Thus, it was not easy to ascertain whether these studies represented their population of interest (Sturgis, 2012).

Additionally, some studies achieved a low nonresponse bias (6 studies with response rate above 60%; Sturgis, 2012). Four of the quantitative studies and the mixed methods studies did not report a response rate. Fincham (2008) argues that it is essential for studies to report response rates to help the reader ascertain whether the study's sample of participants is

representative of the study's target population. Therefore, it was not possible to evaluate the studies' findings that did not provide a response rate in the review with the assurance that the sample of participants reflected aspects of the target population with depth and breadth (Fincham, 2008). Thus, the lack of response rate reporting impeded the ability to assess the validity and reliability of the findings fully (Fife-Schaw, 2012). Future research could benefit from reporting both the target population and response rate, as these would allow the reader to appraise the research findings with confidence in whether the sample adequately represents the population of interest (Lavrakas, 2008).

A few studies applied materials that were designed to be used in female rape myth studies directly to male rape myth studies with altered gender pronouns (Anderson et al., 2001; Davies & McCartney, 2003; Doherty & Anderson, 2004; Anderson & Bissell, 2011; Davies & Hudson, 2011). Whilst this limited the number of scales participants would have to complete, reducing respondent fatigue (Lavrakas, 2008), research has demonstrated that the conceptualisation of MRM and FRM can be similar and dissimilar (Davies et al., 2013). Furthermore, a study within the review argued that a robust MRM scale did not exist as reasoning for constructing their own (Anderson & Quinn, 2009). However, the study was published in 2009, while the Male Rape Myth Acceptance Scale ($\alpha = .90$; Melanson, 1998) was available and has been shown to have good internal consistency ($\alpha = .91$; Kassing et al., 2005; Cohen & Swerdlik, 2018). Therefore, it would be advantageous for research examining MRM and FRM to use psychometric scales specifically designed to measure constructs unique to male and female rape.

Furthermore, as previously stated 6 of the 11 studies disclosed the racial or ethnic demographics of their participants, and most of those samples were predominantly Caucasian (90% to 100%; Davies & McCartney, 2003; Wakelin & Long, 2003; Davies & Hudson,

2011; Davies et al., 2013; Hammond et al., 2017; Walker et al., 2005). Thus, their findings do not represent the England and Wales population. According to England and Wales 2021 Census (ONS, 2022b), Asian ethnic groups (5.5 million), Black ethnic groups (2.4 million), mixed ethnicity groups (1.7 million)and other ethnicities (1.3 million) make up approximately 18.3% of the population in England and Wales. Consequently, a gap exists in investigating to what extent ethnicity influences MRMA. It would be beneficial to investigate ethnicity, and MRM instead of race, as this would allow individuals to self-describe their ethnic background (Solomos & Collins, 2010). This would also allow for detecting ethnic differences if any were present (Kashima & Gelfand, 2012; Connelly et al., 2016) and contribute to ensuring that ethnic groups are sufficiently represented within research (Owusu-Bempah & Howitt, 2000; Redwood & Gill, 2013). Notably, the review was open to primary studies from Wales; however, none were found. Hence there is room for scholars to examine MRMA in Wales to help close this knowledge gap.

Nevertheless, there were a few limitations of the review that were identified. Firstly, most of the research within the study focused on stranger rape, when the attacker is not known to the victim. Therefore, caution should be exercised when applying the findings to acquaintance rape. Future research could explore perceptions of male rape with a focus on stranger and acquaintance rape to identify any differences (Davies & McCartney, 2003; Davies & Hudson, 2011; Persson & Dhingra, 2021). Secondly, due to the methodologically diverse and small sample of studies included in the review, it was not possible to conduct a meta-analysis to demonstrate a generalisable effect size (Cohn & Becker, 2003; Valentine et al., 2010). It was also improbable to conduct a meta-ethnography to develop models from findings across multiple qualitative studies (Atkins et al., 2008; France et al., 2019). Future

research should focus on exploring the issue of male rape qualitatively so that it can be possible for a meta-ethnography to be conducted.

Additionally, future reviews could include unpublished work (e.g. dissertations, preprints) to increase the sample size, thus increasing the ability to conduct a meta-analysis or meta-ethnography. Thirdly, the full spectrum of sexual and gender identities has not been fully explored as the studies only reported on the demographic of sexuality as “straight”, “gay”, “trans man”, “trans woman”, and “cross-dressing”. Further studies could explore how a wide range of sexual (e.g. bisexual, pansexual, asexual men) and gender identities (i.e. genderqueer men) inform perceptions of sexual violence against individuals who identify as men. Lastly, it was not possible to contextualise the MRMs observed to FRMs found in the UK due to the different theoretical frameworks underpinning MRMs and FRMs. Therefore, there is room for further research to explore the theoretical ideologies that inform both FRMs and MRMs to identify any differences or/and similarities.

In conclusion, the MMASR was used to identify, evaluate, and synthesise empirical evidence from quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods studies in England and Wales to address the review's research question. Through this approach, the thematic synthesis demonstrated that there are male rape myths that persist in England. The identified myths concern stereotypical rape scripts, stereotypical gender roles, the preventability of rape, and sexual identity. Challenging MRMs would be essential to reduce the endorsement of stereotypical gender roles and reduce acceptance of homophobic beliefs in England. In addition, further empirical attention is required to explore the perception of male rape myths to raise awareness of the issue of male rape and challenge misconceptions about male rape. Finally, research should use qualitative and mixed methodologies to explore the different perspectives of MRM in England with non-student samples.

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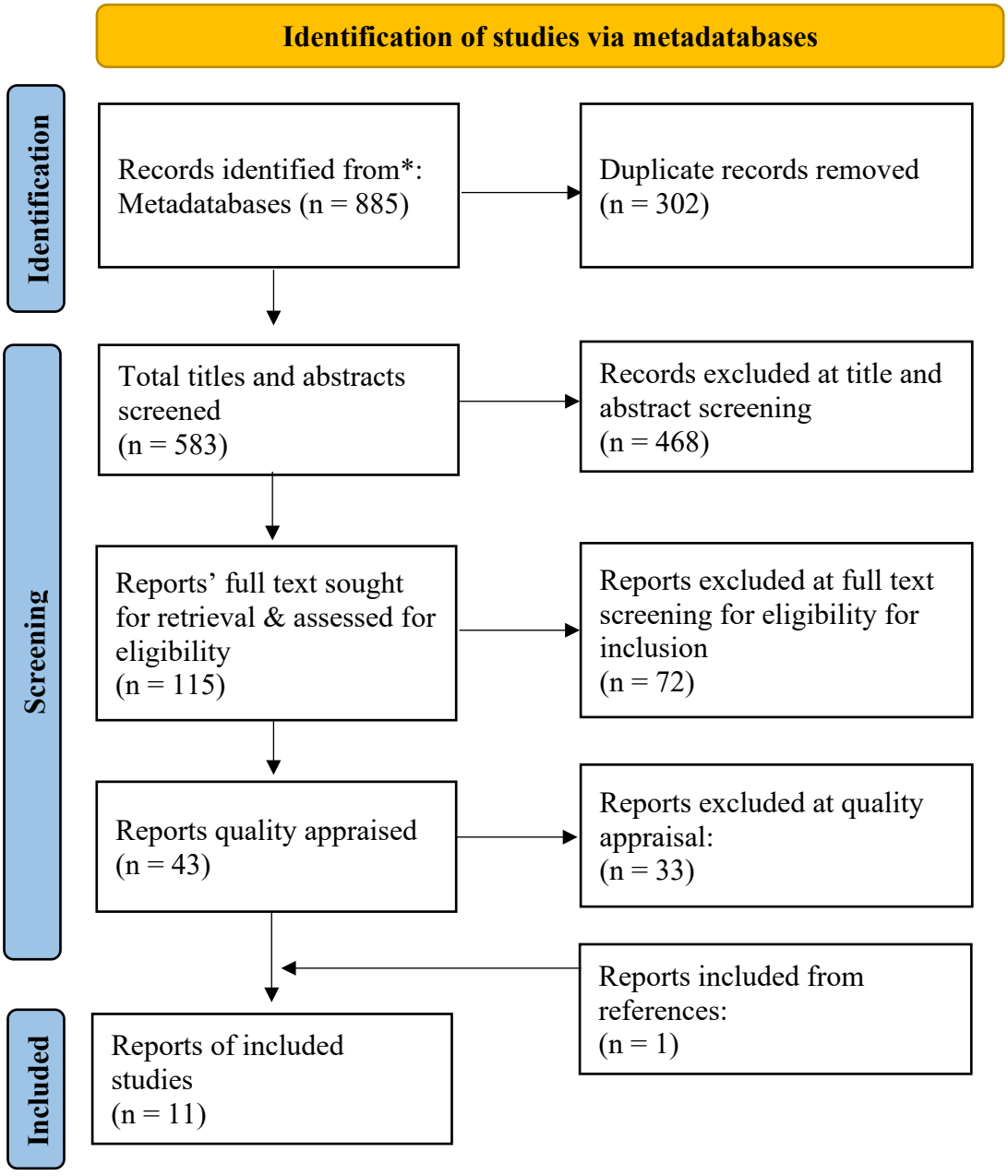
Figure 1

PRISMA flow diagram for systematic review of included report (Page et al., 2021)



Note. Metabases are the mentioned Summon and the British Psychological Society's EBSCO discovery service databases.

Table 1.
Descriptive characteristics, methods, and findings of included English studies.

Author (Year)	Aims	Characteristics of sample	Materials, data collection	Analysis and main findings
Anderson (1999)	To examine the impact of participant and victim gender on occurrences of characterological and behavioural blame during conversations about stranger rape.	60 men and 60 women. University students.	60 - female-male dyads discussed the female rape incident 60 - female-male dyads discussed the male rape incident Vignettes of stranger rape scenarios	The content analysis revealed that male and female participants viewed the female rape survivor more negatively than the male survivor. Men attributed more behavioural blame to the male survivor, and women attributed more to the female survivor. In addition, men attributed more characterological blame to the female survivor than the male survivor. However, men and women ascribed behavioural and characterological attributions equally to the male survivor. Finally, men and women did not differ in the frequency of attributions they made to the female and male survivors.
Anderson and Bissell (2011)	To examine the extent to which participant, victim and perpetrator gender influence blame and fault attribution in acquaintance rape.	52 men and 52 women. University students.	Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Burt, 1980) Acquaintance rape vignettes. Blame and fault attribution questions	The three-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) demonstrated that participants' gender influenced blame attributions towards male and female perpetrators of rape. Male participants attributed more blame to male perpetrators than female perpetrators, while female participants attributed more blame to female perpetrators. Male participants also exhibited higher levels of rape myth acceptance and negative perceptions of rape victims than female participants. Furthermore, regression analysis showed that participants who endorsed more rape myths were more likely to blame the victim.
Anderson and Quinn (2009)	To examine negative attitudes toward female and male rape victims	120 men and 120 women.	Attitudes Toward Rape Victims Scale (Ward, 1988)	A two-way ANOVA revealed that male participants exhibited more negative attitudes towards rape victims than female participants. Attitudes towards male rape

Author (Year)	Aims	Characteristics of sample	Materials, data collection	Analysis and main findings
	in a sample of UK medical university students.	Medical university students. Age (*M* = 23.8)		victims were more negative than attitudes towards female rape victims.
Anderson et al., (2001)	To investigate the systematic and rational/logical application of covariational rules of inductive reasoning to victim blame attributions.	15 men and 15 women. University students. Age (*M* = 21.5)	15 - female-male dyads discussed the female rape incident 15 - female-male dyads discussed the male rape incident. Vignettes of stranger rape scenarios	The content analysis identified two categories: 'Meta-commentary' and 'negative attribution to the victims'. In addition, the content analysis demonstrated that participants' blame attributions were informed by beliefs around gender and sexuality rather than the covariational information present within the vignettes. Discourse analysis (Edwards & Potter, 1992) focused on the categories identified in the content analysis. The discourse analysis demonstrated that participants challenge the intended purpose of the covariational information, which in turn constructs the participants as sensible and logical in their talk.
Davies and Hudson (2011)	To investigate attribution of blame and perceived severity of the assault when the victim is either a gay or straight man or is trans gender.	75 men and 58 women. Age (*M* = 24) Community sample.	Victim sexuality (five levels: straight, gay, cross-dressing, trans man, & trans woman) x participant sexuality (two levels: gay & straight) x participant gender (two: levels: male & female) between subject's design.	The Three-way ANOVA results demonstrated that victim blaming varies according to the victim's sexuality and the gender of the participant. Straight participants tend to blame victims more, especially if they are male. Male straight participants also considered the attack on the victim less severe than gay and female participants. Furthermore, straight victims are blamed less than cross-dressing victims. Finally, gay participants judged the attack as more severe than straight participants.

Author (Year)	Aims	Characteristics of sample	Materials, data collection	Analysis and main findings
			Victim blame and perceived severity of the assault (Davis et al., 2001) Vignettes of stranger rape scenarios	
Davies and McCartney (2003)	To investigate victim blame and rape myth acceptance in a sample of gay men and compare their reactions to a gay male victim with those of straight men and women.	100 men and 50 women. Community sample. Age (*M* = 27.7)	The author adapted the Male Rape Myths Scale (Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992) The author created a Victim Blame Scale Vignettes of male-on-male acquaintance rape.	The one-way Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) showed that straight men were more likely to endorse rape myths and be anti-victim compared to straight women or gay men. Conversely, straight women were more anti-victim than gay men. In addition, straight men were more likely to blame the victim for the rape than gay men and viewed the assault as less severe. However, there were no significant differences in victim blame between straight men and women or between straight women and gay men. Similarly, there were no significant differences in views about the severity of the assault between straight men and women or between straight women and gay men.
Davies et al. (2013)	To explore male and female rape scripts in a group of non-victimised university students.	50 men and 50 women. University students. Age (*M* = 22.1)	Participants were instructed to write up to 500 words on what they considered "typical" rape when the victim is female and male, and the perpetrator is male.	The content analysis found categories such as the location of rape, victim-perpetrator relationship, long-term psychological impact on the victim and motivation of the attack. The log-linear analyses of categories frequencies revealed that male victims were more likely to be perceived as gay than female victims. Male victims were also less likely to be depicted as reporting the assault or screaming during the assault. Female victims were more likely to be depicted as seriously injured and abused after the assault. The victim's age

Author (Year)	Aims	Characteristics of sample	Materials, data collection	Analysis and main findings
				also affected how they were depicted, with male victims more likely to be over 25 and female victims more likely to be under 25. The victim-perpetrator relationship did not show any significant main effects, but there was a significant interaction between the participant's gender and the victim's gender. Male and female respondents reported that the motivation of the rapist was power and control.
Doherty and Anderson (2004)	To trace the relationship of accounting practices for male rape to power relations and the fabric of everyday life. To offer an alternative analysis to the frequently deployed experimental tasks in the rape perception paradigm that fails to appreciate the subtlety, skill and complexity of rape talk	30 men and 30 women. University students. Age (*M* = 21.5)	30 – female-male dyads discussed the female rape incident 30 - female-male dyads discussed the male rape incident Vignettes of stranger rape scenarios	The discourse analysis (Edwards & Potter, 1992) focuses on the construction and consequences of the "who suffers most" interpretive repertoire concerning male rape victims. The "who suffers most" repertoire is based on the argument that heterosexual male rape victims will suffer more ridicule from society and that the rape act will be more traumatic for heterosexual men than other categories of victims. The study shows how the repertoire is built through interaction and how it constructs men as stronger than women, positioning women as natural victims of more able men. The discourse also constructs an image of a society where people are likely to ridicule heterosexual male rape victims for failing in their duties to be "real men". The physical act of rape is assumed to deviate from the normative sexual practice of heterosexual men, making it worse for them than for women or gay men. This discourse diminishes the importance of rape and trivialises its devastating effects on women and gay men.

Author (Year)	Aims	Characteristics of sample	Materials, data collection	Analysis and main findings
				The discourse constructs female rape as consistent with socially constructed norms of heterosexuality and constructs male rape as a departure from the script of hegemonic masculinity. Men are not considered socially accepted victims of rape and are often seen as emasculated and ineffective. The findings show how these discursive constructions have the effect of reducing the tragedy of the rape of a gay man and trivialising the victimisation of women.
Hammond et al. (2017)	To explore the prevalence of male rape, sexual assault and assault by penetration in a general sample of men. To determine potential barriers to reporting incidents of male sexual victimisation and reasons for reluctance to report.	98 men (*n*=11 survivors, *n*=45 knew a survivor). Community sample. Age (*M* = 26.17)	Male Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson, 1992) Qualitative questionnaire on reporting sexual victimisation	The Mann-Whitney U tests showed that the participants were more likely to agree with rape myths when the perpetrator was a woman. However, when it came to assault by penetration, they were less likely to agree with the myths but still more likely to agree when the perpetrator was a woman. In addition, most participants believed that the police would take a complaint seriously if another man raped a man. However, almost half of the participants did not believe that a complaint would be taken seriously if a woman raped a man. Forty-five per cent of men would not report their sexual assault to the police for these reasons: police would not take it seriously, embarrassment, shame and if the perpetrator were male. In addition, some men felt that the police would be gender-biased and not take the crime seriously.
Wakelin and Long (2003)	To examine the effects of victim gender and	113 men and 108 women.	The author formulated a scale with some items from the Case Reaction Questionnaire	The three-way MANOVA demonstrated that men tended to attribute more behaviour and character blame to victims than women. Gay male victims are more

Author (Year)	Aims	Characteristics of sample	Materials, data collection	Analysis and main findings
	sexuality on judgments of victims of stranger rape by a male perpetrator	University students. Age (*M* = 22.04)	(Schneider et al., 1994) and Kopper's Blame Attribution Scale (Kopper, 1996). Vignettes of stranger rape scenarios	likely to receive blame than heterosexual male and lesbian victims, while heterosexual female victims receive more blame than heterosexual male and lesbian victims. Men also tended to attribute a more unconscious desire to victims than women. Participants believed that victims could have avoided the situation more if they were gay or lesbian rather than heterosexual. Male participants were likelier to believe that victims could have avoided the situation and attributed more blame to the victims than female participants. Participants perceived perpetrators of the rape of gay men as less responsible for their actions than perpetrators of the rape of lesbian or heterosexual male victims. Participant gender had significant effects on judgments of victim behaviour and the percentage of blame attributed to the perpetrator.
Walker et al. (2005)	To investigate the effects of rape on a non-clinical sample by comparing them on standardised tests with a control group with no prior history of sexual assault. No studies have compared male survivors of rape to non-survivors	80 men (*n* = 40 survivors, *n* = 40 control group). Age (*M* = 34.2)	The General Health Questionnaire (Goldberg, 1978) The World assumptions scale (Janoff-Bulman, 1989) The State self-esteem scale (Heatherington & Polivy, 1991) The impact of event scale (Horowitz et al., 1979)	The main assault characteristics were that most assaults (62.5%) occurred indoors and were carried out by acquaintances. Coercion was reported in almost all cases and physical force in over half. Multiple comparisons between non-survivors and survivors using *t*-tests revealed that survivors reported: higher psychological distress levels, high somatic symptoms, social dysfunction, anxiety, depression, and lower self-worth and self-esteem than the control group. Survivors also reported intrusive thoughts and avoidance of specific ideas, feelings, and situations. Logistic regression demonstrated that seeking psychological help after the assault significantly predicted attempted suicide.