



Research Article

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Sexual Victimization among female Secondary School Students in South-South Zone of Nigeria

Cletus Akpo Atah^{1*}

Joseph Ofem Usani²

¹PhD, Department of Vocational Education,
University of Calabar, Nigeria

²PhD, Department of Educational Foundation
University of Calabar

*Corresponding author

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine sexual victimization among female secondary school students in the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria. To achieve this aim, four (4) research questions and four (4) null hypotheses were formulated and tested. A survey research design was adopted for the study, and data were collected using a researcher-designed questionnaire that contained 33 items. A total of three thousand, two hundred and eighty (3280) secondary school students responded to the instrument. The data gathered were analyzed using the mean and standard deviation to answer research questions, and an independent t-test and an ANOVA were used to test the hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings from this study, among others, revealed that female secondary school students in the study area are sexually victimized. This sexual victimization of these secondary school students has affected them psychologically, socially, and physically in terms of their academic pursuits and how they relate to others in the school environment and society at large. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that the federal and state governments pass a law that could bring to book all the perpetrators of sexual victimization, and the victims of sexual victimization should be able to report anyone who has attempted to victimize them.

Keywords: Sexual, victimization, female, secondary and schools

1. Introduction

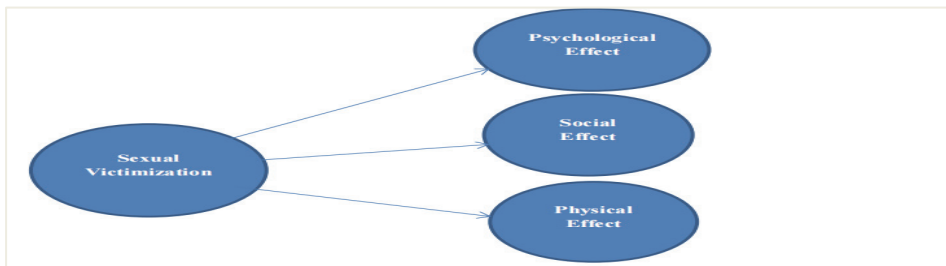
Victimization due to sexual misconduct is commonly portrayed as a gender-based issue combining a female plaintiff and a male perpetrator. Sexual victimization of female counterparts is a complex and widespread problem that occurs in the domain of sexual disorderliness in the twenty-first century. Engagement in sexual misconduct is either undesired or compelled for female victims of sex crimes for the purpose to satisfy another individual's sexual pleasure, need for authority and control, or financial profit. The majority of sex crime perpetrators know their victims, and females are more inclined to be victimized and males are more inclined to be culprits, irrespective of the victim's years of age. Joke, Christophe & Tom (2018) agreed that, female sexual victimization has been steadily

increasing, with negative implications for psychological, health, and educational performance, posing an imminent danger to the future development of the female child and the country as a whole. Female sexual harassment is one of among the most painful experiences in life, with numerous negative repercussions, encompassing social, physical, and psychological issues. According to Clark (2014), Female students sexual abuse has been linked to some negative exploitation outcomes, such as depression, anxiety, dissociative disorders, low self-esteem, disordered eating, sensory overload, schizophrenia, difficulties with learning, adult illicit activity, and suicidal tendencies. The physical effects of victimization range from genital damage with resultant hemorrhage to the spread of infections such as infections transmitted via sexual contact and unintentional pregnancies.

Sexual victimization can have terrible and long-term repercussions. Victimization has a direct influence on victims' mental and physical well-being, including both immediate and long-term bodily injury, anxiety, trepidation, despair, PTSD, low self-worth, social issues, and thoughts of committing suicide (Emily & Maureen, 2010). It additionally coincides with a higher likelihood of sexual and reproductive health problems, as well as various socioeconomic implications such as inability to work, skipping out of school, stigma, and ostracism from the neighborhood (Aluede, 2000). It is widely assumed that men are less affected by sexual victimization. However, there is some evidence that sexual victimization causes psychological distress in female victims and may even be related with inferior results (Shalini & Seema, 2015).

According to Agbonna (2008), female victims are considerably more likely to be assaulted by a friend or coworker, a dating partner, an ex-boyfriend, or an intimate partner than by a complete stranger. According to Davies, Walker, Archer & Pollard (2013), female sexual victimized victims had more physical trauma, were more likely to have been victims of several sexual victimizations, and were held hostage for a longer period of time. According to Ilene, Goodwin, Lisa, Clyde & Rogers (2008), the psychological damage is typically very severe when sexual abuse is performed by parents against children because of the incestuous character of the victimization.

Sexual victimization has such severe implications for secondary school learners that it may result in a lack of concentrate on academic tasks, absenteeism, diminished efficiency, including decreased engagement in activities with others. This effort to commit an unethical act might render the victim's prospective future look bleak, foreboding, and frightening except the laws prohibiting victimization of sexuality are strictly adhered to by all those charged with enforcement (Davies and Rogers, 2006). The consequences of sexual victimization for the victim could be depicted diagrammatically, as discussed in the sub-variables.



Source: Atah 2022

Psychological Effect: Sexual victimization has both short-term and long-term psychological impacts on victims. Self-pity is a common psychological outcome of sexual victimization. Victims adopt blame on ourselves as a deterrent strategy. Sleep disorders, melancholy, anger, eating disorders, anxiety, and depression are all frequent emotional psychological repercussions of sexual trauma. Victims of sexual victimization have both early physical damage and deep psychological distress. The most prevalent and long-lasting consequences of sexual victimization include psychological issues

and lowered self-esteem.

Victims of the physical effects of sexual victimization develop when males victimize female counterparts forcibly and without their consent. Forcing sexual intercourse often results in obvious bruising or bleeding in and around the vaginal or anal area, as well as marks on other parts of the female body. Other effects of these behaviors include painful intercourse, sexually transmitted infections (STDs), HIV, and urinary infection. Sexual harassment includes a variety of harmful actions, such as sexual misconduct, non-penetration sexual activities, and intended and successfully carried out sexual assault. Basile and Saltzman (2002) define sexual victimization as "a sexual act that is committed or attempted by another person without the freely given consent of the victim or against someone who is unable to consent or refuse." According to Basile and Smith (2011), sexual victimization is a critical public health issue that is of enormous public, social in nature and judicial significance. According to Janssen (2011). research, more than 27% of men and 32% of women had suffered sexual victimization at some time in their life. This study, on the other hand, focuses on sexual victimization among female secondary school students in Nigeria's south-south geopolitical zone.

2. Objective of the Study

The objective of the investigation intended to identify sexual victimization among female secondary school students in Nigeria's south-south geopolitical zone, specifically to:

1. The extent of sexual victimization among female secondary school students
2. The psychological consequences of sexual victimization among female secondary school students
3. The social effect of sexual victimization among female secondary school students
4. The physical effect of sexual victimization among female secondary school students

3. Research Questions

To guide the research, the following four research questions were posed:

1. What is the extent of sexual victimization among female secondary school students?
2. What are the psychological consequences of sexual victimization among female secondary school students?
3. What is the social effect of sexual victimization among female secondary school students?
4. What is the physical effect of sexual victimization among female secondary school students?

4. Research Hypothesis

In order to direct the study, the null hypothesis was developed and tested at the 0.05 level of significant.

1. There is no substantial disparity in age within mean evaluations of the level of sexual victimization among female secondary school students.
2. There is no statistically significant disparity in mean ratings of the level of sexual victimization between family types among female secondary school students.
3. There is no significant difference in mean ratings of the level of sexual victimization between school types among female secondary school students.

5. Methodology

This study was carried out in Nigeria, specifically in all 2375 public secondary schools in Nigeria's South-South Geopolitical Zone. Bayelsa, Edo, Delta, Akwa-Ibom, Cross River, and Rivers State are among the six states in the zone. A descriptive survey research design was used in this study, which included 65,600 female secondary school pupils in the study area. Three thousand, two hundred and eighty (3280) female secondary school pupils were chosen as the sample size for this study. The

sample size was calculated by applying 5% of the entire population to the study. A questionnaire titled "Sexual Victimization among Female Secondary School Students" (SVFSCS) scale was used to collect data. The instrument was divided into two parts. Section "A" contained the responses from the respondents' bio-data, such as gender, age, school, and zone, whereas Section "B" had items designed to generate data used to answer the research questions and evaluate the study hypotheses. All thirty-three (33) items were scored on a range of "agree" (A) to "disagree" (D). Three professionals validated the instrument. The University of Calabar employs two specialists from the department of vocational education and one expert from the department of evaluation and measurement. The reliability of the instrument was determined through the test-retest method. The questionnaire was administered to 50 female secondary school students in Ebonyi State who were not part of the study. The collected data were analyzed using Cronbach's alpha. Reliability coefficients: the overall reliability coefficient of 0.77 was obtained. This shows that the instrument was reliable. The data was analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, and the research hypotheses were tested using an independent t-test and ANOVA at the 0.05 level of significance.

6. Result of the Findings

6.1 Research question one

What is the extent of sexual victimization among female secondary school students?

Table 1: Mean rating of responses on respondents' decision on sexual victimization of female secondary school students (N = 3280)

S/NO	Items on sexual victimization on female secondary school students	Agree	Disagree	Remarks
1	I have been harassed sexually by some guys before	2486 (75.79%)	794 (24.21%)	Victimized
2	I have been ambushed on a lonely place in my village for sex	2109 (64.30%)	1171 (35.70%)	Victimized
3	My school mates attempted to touch my body without my consent	2912 (88.78%)	368 (11.22%)	Victimized
4	Most times, some people use style to caress my breast	2008 (61.22%)	1272 (38.78%)	Victimized
5	I have suffered rape before	800 (24.39%)	2480 (75.61)	Not Victimized
6	I have not experienced any sexual abuse in my life	458 (13.96%)	2822 (86.04%)	Not Victimized
7	I am sometimes afraid to tell of the threats I get for not sleeping with some guys	1984 (60.49%)	1296 (39.51%)	Victimized
8	Has any man displayed sexual photos to lure you into sex?	2011 (61.31%)	1269 (38.69%)	Victimized
9	Most people use sexual sound as sucking noise, winks, or pelvis thrusts on me to get me attracted to sex	1591 (48.51%)	1689 (51.49%)	Not Victimized
10	Sometimes, some guys use money to get me attracted to unwarranted sex	2428 (74.02%)	852 (25.98%)	Victimized
11	I have been raped just once	1936 (59.02%)	1344 (40.98%)	Victimized
12	I have been failed examination by my teacher who wanted to sleep with me	2374 (72.38%)	906 (27.62%)	Victimized
13	I am sometimes told that I will be killed if I don't agree to have sex with them	1805 (55.03%)	1475 (44.97%)	Victimized
	Total	58.40%	41.60%	Victimized

As shown in Table 1 above, items related to sexual victimization yielded a total score of 58.40%, indicating that female secondary school students are sexually victimized. While 41.60% of

respondents disagree with sexual victimization among female secondary school students, On a general note, this implies that the respondents agreed that female secondary school students in the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria are sexually victimized. This decision is taken based on the respondents' agreement with their responses to the questionnaire, which indicated 58.40% of agreement and 41.60% of disagreement, respectively.

6.2 Research question Two

What are the psychological consequences of sexual victimization among female secondary school students?

Table 2: Mean rating of respondents' responses on psychological effects of sexual victimization on female secondary school students (N = 3280)

S/NO	Items on psychological effect of sexual victimization on female school students	Agree	Disagree	Remarks
14	I have some emotional disorder because of sexual victimization	1847 (56.31%)	1433 (43.69%)	Victimized
15	I sometimes I feel afraid of going out of the house	2112 (64.39%)	1168 (35.61%)	Victimized
16	I feel that my teachers will punish me for not accepting to sleep with them	1984 (60.49%)	1296 (39.51%)	Victimized
17	I find it difficult to think of my life because of sexual threat	1711 (52.16%)	1569 (47.84%)	Victimized
18	I don't even feel esteemed again in my life	1768 (53.90%)	1512 (46.10%)	Victimized
19	I sometimes think of compromising to the dictates of the oppressor	1593 (48.57%)	1687 (51.43%)	Not Victimized
20	I have lacked concentration in my school activities	2211 (67.41%)	1069 (32.59%)	Victimized
21	I Lack of Concentration in my personal pursuit	1432 (43.66%)	1848 (56.34%)	Not Victimized
	Total	55.86%	44.14%	Victimized

As shown in Table 2 above, items related to the psychological effects of sexual victimization yielded a total score of 55.86% agreeing that there are psychological effects for female secondary school students when they are sexually victimized, of which 44.14% disagree with the psychological effects of sexual victimization among female secondary school students. On a general note, this implies that the respondents are of the opinion that there are psychological effects on female secondary school students in the South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria because of sexual victimization. This decision is taken based on the respondents' agreement with their responses to the questionnaire, which indicated 55.86% of agreement and 44.14% of disagreement, respectively.

6.3 Research three

What is the social effect of sexual victimization among female secondary school students?

Table 3: Shows the mean rating of respondents on social effects of sexual victimization on female secondary school students (N = 3280)

S/N	Items on social effect of sexual victimization on female students	Agree	Disagree	Remarks
22	I feel like staying away from people	1655 (50.46%)	1625 (49.54%)	Victimized
23	Sometimes, I don't stay away from school	1765 (53.81%)	1515 (46.19%)	Victimized
24	Most of the students have dropped out from school	2494 (76.04%)	786 (23.96%)	Victimized
25	I cannot participate in any social function in my school	1783 (54.36%)	1497 (45.64%)	Victimized
26	I stay indoors for fear of been harassed sexually	1984 (60.49%)	1296 (39.51%)	Victimized
27	I do my social functions without caring about who wants to harass me sexually	2528 (77.07%)	752 (22.93%)	Victimized
	Total	62.04%	37.96%	Victimized

As shown in Table 3 above, items related to the social effects of sexual victimization yielded a total score of 62.04% agreeing that there are social effects for female secondary school students when they are sexually victimized, and 37.96% of the respondents disagree with the psychological effects of sexual victimization among female secondary school students. On a general note, this implies that

the respondents are of the opinion that there are social effects on female secondary school students in the South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria because of sexual victimization. This decision is taken based on the respondents' agreement with their responses to the questionnaire, which indicated 62.04% agreement and 37.96% disagreement, respectively.

6.4 Research Four

What is the physical effect of sexual victimization among female secondary school students?

Table 4: Showing the mean rating of respondents' responses on the physical effects of sexual victimization on female secondary school students (N = 3280)

S/N	Items	Agree	Disagree	Remarks
28	I have bruises in my body because of sexual victimization	1968 (60.00%)	1312(40.00%)	Victimized
29	I have broken parts of my body because of the struggle to resistance to sexual assault	2230 (67.99%)	1050 (32.01%)	Victimized
30	I have lost valuables because of escapes from sexual victimizations	2263 (68.99%)	1017 (31.01%)	Victimized
31	I have not suffered any bruises because of sexual intimidations	2296 (70.00%)	984 (30.00%)	Victimized
32	I am clean as I was born	1279 (38.99%)	2001 (61.01%)	Not Victimized
33	Most times, I enjoy what I do with the opposite sex	2033 (61.98%)	1247 (38.02%)	Victimized
	Total	52.18%	47.82%	Victimized

As shown in Table 3 above, items related to the physical effects of sexual victimization yielded a total score of 52.18% agreeing that there are physical effects for female secondary school students when they are sexually victimized, and 47.82% of the respondents disagree with the physical effects of sexual victimization among female secondary school students. On a general note, this implies that the respondents are of the opinion that there are physical effects on female secondary school students in the South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria because of sexual victimization. This decision is taken based on the respondents' agreement with their responses to the questionnaire, which indicated 52.18% of agreement and 47.82% of disagreement, respectively.

6.5 Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings on the extent of sexual victimization among female Secondary School Students based on age.

Table 5: ANOVA shows respondents decision on the extent of sexual victimization among female Secondary School Students based on age

Study Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Sexual victimization	Between Groups	195.646	2	97.823	.567	.567
	Within Groups	493081.996	2857	172.587		
	Total	493277.642	2859			
Psychological Effect	Between Groups	115.095	2	57.547	1.198	.302
	Within Groups	157466.544	3277	48.052		
	Total	157581.639	3279			
Social Effect	Between Groups	5.838	2	2.919	.511	.600
	Within Groups	18689.587	3273	5.710		
	Total	18695.425	3275			
Physical Effect	Between Groups	3.883	2	1.941	.451	.637
	Within Groups	14115.893	3277	4.308		
	Total	14119.776	3279			

The result in Table 5 shows that there is a significant influence of sexual victimization on female secondary school students (F =.567, p<.05), which showed a high influence. Similarly, there is no

significant difference in the mean ratings on the extent of sexual victimization among female secondary school students based on age. This could be because all categories of female students could suffer from the psychological, social, and physical effects of victimization. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected because all the categories are affected by sexual victimization in secondary schools in Nigeria, especially in the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

6.6 Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings on the extent of sexual victimization among female Secondary School Students based on family type.

Table 6: ANOVA Shown the result of respondents on the extent of sexual victimization among female Secondary School Students based on family type.

Study Variables		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Sexual victimization	Between Groups	488226.775	3	162742.258	92022.203	.000
	Within Groups	5050.867	2856	1.769		
	Total	493277.642	2859			
Psychological	Between Groups	141401.587	3	47133.862	9543.266	.000
	Within Groups	16180.052	3276	4.939		
	Total	157581.639	3279			
Socia	Between Groups	1826.565	3	608.855	118.098	.000
	Within Groups	16868.860	3272	5.156		
	Total	18695.425	3275			
Physical	Between Groups	470.445	3	156.815	37.637	.000
	Within Groups	13649.331	3276	4.166		
	Total	14119.776	3279			

The findings in Table 6 showed a significant influence of sexual victimization on female secondary school students ($F = 92022.203, p < .05$). Similarly, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings on sexual victimization among female secondary school students based on family type. This could be that all levels of family types are influenced by sexual victimization. In other words, when sexual victimization takes place, all female students are affected by the attack. Therefore, the null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings on the extent of sexual victimization among female secondary school students in the South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria based on family type, which is disregarded.

6.7 Hypothesis Three

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings on the extent of sexual victimization among female secondary school students based on school type.

Table 7: Shown One sample t-test result on respondents' responses on the extent of sexual victimization among female secondary school students based on school type.

	School Type	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	P-val	Dec.
Sexual victimization	Private school	1308	32.8150	13.16708	3278	-.733	.206	NS
	Public School	1552	33.1765	13.11034	3278	-.733		
Psychological Effect	Private school	1503	22.8782	6.93563	3278	-1.168	.627	NS
	Public School	1777	23.1621	6.92891	3278	-1.168		
Social Effect	Private school	1501	20.8794	2.39432	3278	.054	.924	NS
	Public School	1775	20.8749	2.38563	3278	.053		
Physical Effect	Private school	1503	17.4744	2.07206	3278	1.021	.641	NS
	Public School	1777	17.4001	2.07768	3278	1.022		

The result in Table 7 shows that there is a significant increase in sexual victimization among female secondary school students ($F = .206, p < .05$). Similarly, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings on the extent of sexual victimization among female secondary school students in the South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria based on school type. This is to say that both the public and private secondary schools are affected when sexual victimization takes place. Based on that, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings on the extent of sexual victimization among female secondary school students based on school type is rejected.

7. Discussion of the Findings

The finding of the study revealed that there is a high extent of sexual victimization among female secondary school students in the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria. This is because in the item analysis as shown in Table 1, many students opinion that, they have been harassed sexually, they have been ambushed in a lonely place in my village for sex; many female students affirmed that their schoolmates attempted to touch their bodies without my consent; that, most times, some people use style to caress their breast; they admit the fact that they have suffered rape before; they agreed to the fact that they have experienced sexual abuse; and now, they are even afraid to tell of the threats they get for not sleeping with some guys. May female students agree to the fact that men displayed sexual photos to lure them into sex, especially using sexual sounds such as sucking noise, winks, or pelvis thrusts on them to get them attracted to sex? This could be because the respondents agreed to the fact that they were sexually victimized in the process of carrying out the academic programme. The finding is support by Ilene, Goodwin, Lisa, Clyde, and Rogers (2008), whose findings revealed that female students are sexually victimized by males using sexually suggestive nicknames, using sexually explicit language, requesting sexual favors, expressing desire for sexual conduct, telling sexual jokes, speaking in a sexual tone, and commenting on a female person's appearance. The finding of the null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings on the extent of sexual victimization among female secondary school students in the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria based on age. This could be because all categories of female students have an effect, either psychologically, socially, or physically.

The finding of second objective showed that female students suffered psychological consequences from sexual victimization. The findings proved from the analysis that many students have some emotional disorder, are afraid of going out of the house, feel that my teachers will punish me for not accepting to sleep with them, find it difficult to think of their lives because of sexual threats. This finding is in consonance with Kathleen, Basile, Linda, and Saltzman (2002), whose findings revealed that many secondary school students are passing through psychological effects because of sexual harassment. Many could not hesitate to report the abuse because of the punishment that could be attached if they said no. However, the finding of the hypothesis state that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings on the extent of sexual victimization among female secondary school students in the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria based on family type. This could be that both female students, either from rich or poor families, are sexually psychologically affected when sexual victimization happens.

The finding of the third objective revealed that female secondary students suffered social effects from sexual victimization. This could be because the study findings revealed that many female secondary students feel like staying away from people, cannot participate in any social function in my school, and stay indoors for fear of being harassed sexually. The finding of the study is in agreement with Aluede (2000), whose finding revealed that many secondary students are not ready to relate to their male counterparts because of sexual victimization. The finding is also in consonance with Agbonna (2008), who study revealed that secondary students feel deprived and not related socially because of sexual victimization.

The finding of the fourth objective shows that female secondary school students suffered physical effects because of sexual victimization. The item-by item analysis revealed the fact that

respondents are in the opinion that they have bruises in their bodies because of sexual victimization; some said they have broken parts of their bodies because of the struggle to resist sexual assault; and many attest to the fact that they have lost valuables because of escapes from sexual victimization. The finding is in line with Johnson and Stahi's (2004) whose study revealed that unwanted sexual intercourse between female victims by male perpetrators often involved physical force, intimidation, deceiving tactics, the use of a weapon, and verbal pressure on the female counterpart to ascertain the full force of sexual victimization. The study is in agreement with Clark (2014), whose results revealed female counterparts are victims of sexual victimization in the following areas: unwanted trouncing, patting, grabbing, rubbing, hugging, and kissing. Parents should take it upon themselves to love and care for the female students and ensure the children are not victimized sexually. The finding of the hypothesis revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings on the extent of sexual victimization among female secondary school students in the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria based on school type. This may be because both public and private secondary students could be affected when sexual victimization.

8. Conclusion

The study revealed that sexual victimization has a significant effect on the lives of female secondary school students in the areas of psychological, sociological, and physical well-being. The victims are impaired in terms of safety and self-esteem and lack the ability to participate freely in society. Sexual victimization has negative consequences on the lives and development of female womanhood because of the sexual victimization they witnessed. When the male forces their female counterpart into or attempts to have sex without their consent, the emotional and psychological trauma remains in their lives throughout their entire journey on earth. Many women in this kind of trouble could become confused and live in fear even when they eventually get married.

9. Recommendations

The study recommended the following strategies to prevent sexual victimization in our society:

1. The federal and state governments should pass a law that could bring all the perpetrators of sexual victimization to book.
2. The victims of sexual victimization should be able to report the person who attempted to victimize them.
3. The male counterpart shouldn't allow their emotions to give them sexual direction.
4. Parents and guidance should establish friendly relationships with their female children to enable them to open up when they are sexually victimized.

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