



Are there any patterns in the types of sexual assault experienced by clients with learning disabilities presenting to Saint Mary's Sexual Assault Referral Centre?

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BACKGROUND

- Approximately 2% of people in the UK are thought to have a learning disability (MENCAP, 2018).
- From 31st May 2017 to 1st June 2018, 7.47% of adult clients attending Saint Mary's SARC scored below 43% on the Learning Disability Screening Questionnaire (LDSQ) (McKenzie and Parton, 2006), suggesting that they were likely to have a learning disability.
- Other studies have also reported an overrepresentation of people with learning disabilities amongst those reporting sexual assault.
- There is still a lack of literature on trends within sexual assaults reported by people with learning disabilities.

METHOD

- 55 adult clients seen at Saint Mary's SARC during 2017 for forensic medical examination had LDSQ score below 43%
- 52 of these cases were reviewed and compared against the data of 62 adult clients with an LDSQ score over 43%, who were seen at Saint Mary's SARC over the same time period.
- Where responses were 'unclear', 'not recorded' or 'not applicable', they were excluded from analysis.

CONCLUSIONS

Clients with a learning disability were **more likely** to have:

- Reported sexual assault within their own home
- Self-harmed
- Attempted suicide
- Reported being currently prescribed psychiatric medication

Clients with a learning disability were **less likely** to:

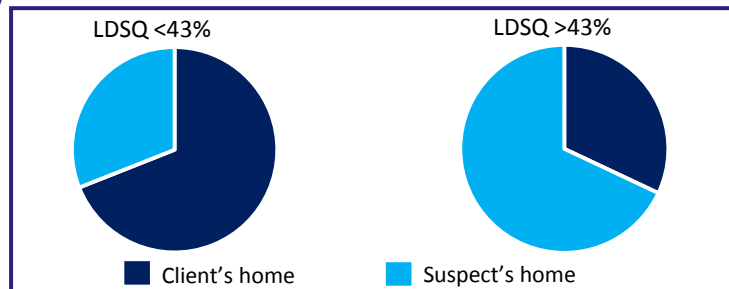
- Report alcohol or drug use at the time of sexual assault

IMPLICATIONS

- As clients with a learning disability had a higher prevalence of self-harm and suicide attempts, it may be beneficial to provide tailored follow-up support, perhaps via a specialist learning disability independent sexual violence advocate.
- People with learning disabilities are especially vulnerable in their own homes. Consideration should be given to any measures which may improve safeguarding e.g. training for carers and close liaison with learning disability teams.

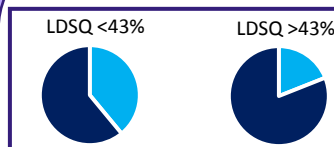
FINDINGS

Location of abuses



- Of these cases, 69% of clients with a learning disability reported that they were assaulted in their own home, compared to 32% of those without.

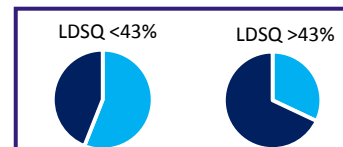
Suicide attempts



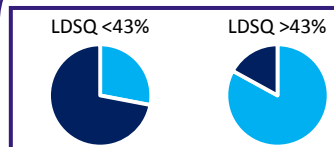
■ Yes ■ No

- 39% of clients with a learning disability had attempted suicide either recently or in the past, in comparison to 19% of clients who did not have a learning disability.
- Self-harm was also more common in the learning disability group, with 56% of clients having self-harmed at some point, compared to 32% of clients with an LDSQ over 43%.
- 49% of those with a learning disability reported taking psychiatric medication, in comparison to 35% of those without.

Self-harm



Alcohol use



■ Yes ■ No

- Alcohol and drug use related to the time of the alleged sexual assault were more commonly reported by clients scoring over 43% on the LDSQ.
- Only 28% of clients with a learning disability reported using alcohol at the time of the alleged assault, in comparison to 83% of those without a learning disability.
- 40% of clients scoring over 43% reported drug use, compared to 21% of clients scoring under 43%.

Drug use

