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Author post-print (accepted) deposited in CURVE February 2016

Original citation & hyperlink:

Sleath, E. and Bull, R. (2015) A brief report on rape myth acceptance: differences between police officers, law students, and psychology students in the United Kingdom. *Violence & Victims*, volume 30 (1): 136-147.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1891/0886-6708.VV-D-13-00035>

Publisher statement: The final publication is available at Springer via <http://dx.doi.org/10.1891/0886-6708.VV-D-13-00035>.

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Rape myth acceptance: Differences between police officers, law students, and psychology students in the United Kingdom.

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Abstract

A common perception is that police officers hold very negative attitudes about rape victims. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to establish whether police officers do accept stereotypical rape myths at a higher level compared to members of other populations. Three comparison samples comprised of police officers, law students, and psychology students, completed the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance scale (IRMA). Male and female police officers accepted 'she lied' myths at a higher level than the student samples. Student samples were found to accept two types of rape myths ('she asked for it' and 'he didn't meant to') at a higher level compared to police officers. No significant differences were found in the other four sub-factors. Therefore, the pattern of results suggests that police officers do not adhere to stereotypical myths about rape victims more than do other populations.

Key words: police; rape myth acceptance; attitudes about rape; individual differences

Comparing rape myth acceptance: Differences between police officers, law students, and psychology students in the United Kingdom.

The continued acceptance of rape myths is one crucial issue in understanding the many challenges that face both the victims of rape and criminal justice systems. Rape myths can be defined as “prejudicial, stereotyped or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists” (Burt, 1980, p.217). A number of different types of rape myths exist including: the perception that rape victims frequently lie about their victimisation (Cuklanz, 2000), that victims can cause their rape by their behaviour or characteristics (Scully, 1990), and justifications for acquaintance rape (Johnson, Kuck, & Schander, 1997). These myths have been demonstrated to occur widely within society with a recent study by Sussenbach and Bohner (2011) showing that levels of acceptance of such rape myths ranged from 19% to 57%. Rape myth acceptance is considered to be a general cognitive schema that enables negative attributions to be made about rape victims (Grubb & Turner, 2012). Therefore, one function of such myths is to shift the focus and responsibility away from the perpetrator and direct it towards the victim (Anderson, Beattie, & Spencer, 2001). Such a process has been argued to contribute towards rape crimes having a very low reporting rate, high levels of attrition throughout the criminal justice process, and low conviction rates (Kelly, Lovatt, & Regan, 2005; Jordan, 2004; Temkin & Krahe, 2008). For example, in a recent analysis of crime statistics, only 15% of a sample of serious sexual offences victims in England and Wales had reported the crime to the police (Ministry of Justice, 2013). Furthermore, some rape victims have reported a fear that they will be blamed for their victimisation leading them to choose to not report their rape to the police (Jordan, 2001). Such findings underline the important role that criminal justice professionals’ rape related attitudes may have upon rape victims (see Kaukinen & DeMaris, 2009).

Torrey (1991) suggests that the acceptance of myths within our society is linked with the tolerance of the occurrence of rape. Furthermore, Burt (1980) argues that rape myths create an environment that is hostile to rape victims in which rape is tacitly condoned (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Grubb & Harrower, 2008). One group where the adherence of

these beliefs could be very problematic is police officers. As noted by Jordan (2004; 2008), some police officers may deal with rape victims in a manner that suggests disbelief and scepticism. This approach may be guided by their acceptance of rape myths. This is potentially very problematic as police officers have a gatekeeper role within criminal justice processes. Such a role can have a significant impact upon the progression of rape cases through the criminal justice system (Spohn & Tellis, 2012). However, there has been very little research examining police officer rape myth acceptance (Lonsway, Welch, & Fitzgerald, 2001; Page, 2008), demonstrating the importance of conducting research on this topic.

Although there currently exists only limited research related to police officer rape myth acceptance, previous research has identified that some police officer populations may adhere to potentially problematic attitudes related to rape (e.g., Krahe, 1991). For example, in relation to rape victim blaming, Sleath and Bull (2012) found, in a sample of police officers, that higher rape myth acceptance predicted increased victim blaming but decreased perpetrator blaming (see also Davies, Smith, and Rogers, 2009). Understanding adherence to these negative attitudes is an important issue, especially in light of Edward and MacLeod's (1999) suggestion that a police officer's belief in a female rape victim's allegation is based in his/her own individual beliefs about rape (see also Schuller & Stewart, 2000).

Page (2010) provided us with the only thorough recent evaluation of police officer rape myth acceptance. In this study, American police officers indicated levels of agreement with several rape myths. For example, 22.7% agreed that any victim can resist a rapist if she or he really wants to and 20.1% agreed that women who dress provocatively are inviting sex. However, lower levels of acceptance were found for some myths (e.g., only 4.1% agreed many women secretly wish to be raped, 6.0% agreed a woman that goes to the home of a man on their first date, implies she is willing to have sex, 6.6% agreed that in the majority of rapes, the victim is promiscuous or has a bad reputation). The latter is reflected by LeDoux and Hazelwood (1985) who found that police officers had in general a low adherence to some rape myths. Page (2008) also found that police officers who were higher in rape myth acceptance were less likely to believe a victim who did not match the 'real' rape stereotype

compared to police officers who had lower or moderate rape myth acceptance (see also Lee, Lee, & Lee, 2012). Furthermore, male police officers have been demonstrated to accept rape myths at a higher level than do female police officers (Brown & King, 1998; Page, 2007). These studies have been useful in gaining some understanding of police officer rape myth acceptance, but without a comparison sample they do not help us to understand whether these levels are higher than those held by other populations (e.g., the general public, student samples from relevant professions).

The general perception of police officers is that they hold much more negative attitudes towards rape victims than other populations within society. For example, Feldman-Summers and Palmer (1980) found in a comparison of several relevant professional groups that police officers gave the lowest estimates of the percentage of reported rapes as being true. Furthermore, judges, prosecuting attorneys, and police officers tended to endorse beliefs about the causes of rape as being male sexual frustrations, that rapists were mentally ill, or poor judgements by women. However, Koppelaar, Lange, and van de Velde (1997) compared law students and detectives working in the vice squad and found that law students demonstrated more bias than police officers, with police officers being more sympathetic to the victim, less stereotypical in their view of rape, and more severe in their judgement of the perpetrator. This more negative perception of rape victims by law students was also found by Krahe, Temkin, Bieneck, and Berger (2008) who demonstrated that higher rape myth acceptance was associated with lower defendant liability and increased victim blame (in a law student sample). Brown and King (1998) found no difference between students and police officers regarding attitudes about rape, attitudes towards women, and acceptance of interpersonal violence (see also Field, 1978). Research providing support for the point made by Brown, Hamilton, and O'Neill (2007) that police officer attitudes about rape victims may be similar to those of the general public. However, this conclusion is largely based upon dated research, recent years have represented significant change in the way in which some police forces deal with rape cases.

Against the background of high levels of attrition in relation to rape, new policies within many countries have been introduced regarding rape within criminal justice systems. Within England and Wales, these changes have included: Crown Prosecutors, as opposed to the police, making decisions about whether a defendant should be charged with rape; changes in the definitions of some sexual offences via the Sexual Offences Act (2003); as well as new guidance for the Crown Prosecution Service and the Police in investigating and prosecuting cases of rape (HMCPSP/HMIC, 2007). Given that there is no recent comparison of police officers' rape myth acceptance with other populations and that these changes may have affected the attitudes that police officers adhere to in relation to rape, suggests that a more recent comparison is necessary. This would be particularly useful in gaining an understanding of adherence to different types of rape myths.

Furthermore, in examining who adheres to rape myths, gender differences are frequently found. Suarez and Gadalla's (2010) meta-analysis found a moderate effect size for gender, where men demonstrated a higher level of acceptance of rape myths than women (see also Anderson, Cooper, & Okamura, 1997; Frese, Moya, & Megias, 2004). However, other studies have found no gender differences (e.g., Abrams, Viki, Masser, & Bohner, 2003; Sussenbach & Bohner, 2011). Johnson, Kuck, & Schander (1997) found gender differences in rape myth endorsement for three dimensions. The largest of these was found in the 'blaming the woman' dimension where a significantly higher proportion of men agreed that most rapes could be prevented if women did not provoke them and if women secretly did not want to be raped. In the 'excusing the man' dimension, a significantly greater proportion of men agreed that "men have sexual urges they can't control". Finally, regarding the justifying acquaintance rape dimension, a higher proportion of male respondents believed (i) a man had a right to assume a woman wants to have sexual intercourse with him if she allows him to touch her in a sexual way, (ii) a man has a right to assume a woman wants to have sexual intercourse with him if she has an oral sexual encounter with him, and (iii) if the woman has had previous sex with a man, she cannot claim that she was raped if the same man has sex with her again without her consent.

In measuring rape myth acceptance, the earliest measure was Burt's (1980) Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (RMAS). This 19 item scale largely focusses on rape myths associated with the victim, e.g., "In the majority of rapes, the victim is promiscuous or has a bad reputation". Reliability measures of this scale have been satisfactory but limitations have been found (see Oh & Neville, 2004; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1995; Norton & Grant, 2008; Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999; Ward, 1988). In light of these limitations with the RMAS, Payne et al. developed the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance scale (IRMA). This measure provides more in-depth assessment of rape myth acceptance through its 45 items (40 rape myth items, five filler items) that measure seven rape myth factors. The importance of this scale is in its efforts to distinguish between different types of rape myths, as Payne et al. note that different types of rape myths may function in different ways for various individuals. The seven factors that this scale measures are 'she asked for it', 'it wasn't really rape', 'he didn't mean to', 'she wanted it', 'she lied', 'rape is a trivial event', and 'rape is deviant event'. Reliability analyses of this scale also demonstrate higher levels of reliability in comparison with the RMAS (e.g., Harrison, Howerton, Secarea, & Nguyen, 2008). However, Gerger, Kley, Bohner, and Siebler (2007) argue that rape myth acceptance scales (including the IRMA) suffer from low mean scale responses, which may affect the reliability of the scale. However, in comparison to the IRMA, other measures (e.g., Acceptance of Rape Myth Scale – Gilmartin-Zena, 1988; Acceptance of Modern Myths about Sexual Aggression – Gerger et al., 2007; Attitude toward Rape Victims Scale – Ward, 1988) do not have the same depth and range of established factors demonstrated within the IRMA. As the present study aims to gain the greatest breadth of information about police officers' rape myth acceptance, the IRMA was chosen as the most appropriate scale to assess rape myth acceptance.

The purpose of the present study is to examine police officer rape myth acceptance in comparison with two samples of law and psychology students. These comparison samples were used as findings from student samples have frequently been found to parallel the findings from studies that have used general populations (e.g., Davies & McCartney, 2003). For example, Foley and Pigott (2000) found no differences in between a student and non-

student population in their attributions of responsibility towards a rape victim. We have a limited knowledge of current police officer rape myth acceptance (Page, 2010) and where the research has examined these attitudes, there has been no comparison group to understand whether police officer attitudes are more negative than other populations (e.g., Lee et al., 2012; Sleath & Bull, 2012). Also, previous research that has compared police officers attitudes about rape (e.g., blame) with other samples is very dated (e.g., Feldman-Summers & Palmer, 1980; Field, 1978; Koppelaar et al., 1997). Therefore, it is clear that there is scope to achieve a more current understanding of police officer rape myth acceptance in comparison with other samples. Furthermore, Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) suggest that it is important to assess acceptance of specific types of myths as examining only a summative scale may disguise more specific effects. Therefore, the current study will examine differences in rape myth acceptance across the seven factors of the IRMA. It is hypothesised that police officers may demonstrate different levels of acceptance of these seven myths ('she asked for it', 'it wasn't really rape', 'he didn't mean to', 'she wanted it', 'she lied', 'rape is a trivial event', and 'rape is deviant event') in comparison to psychology and law students. These two student groups were chosen because of graduate pathways may lead some to work in professions that are also likely to encounter rape victims (e.g., in therapeutic environments, in justice systems).

Method

Design

This study had a between groups design where rape myth acceptance and subscales of the IRMA ('she asked for it', 'it wasn't really rape', 'he didn't mean to', 'she wanted it', 'she lied', 'rape is a trivial event', and 'rape is deviant event') were compared across three samples: police officers, law students, and psychology students.

Participants

Data were gathered from three groups. One sample consisted of 147 psychology undergraduates (73 males and 74 females). Age range was 18 to 37 years ($M = 19.30$, $SD = 2.10$). The response rate for this sample was 91%. The law student sample consisted of 82 law students (60 females and 22 males). Age range was 19 to 32 ($M = 20.92$, $SD = 1.46$). The response rate for this sample was 95%. The police sample consisted of 123 police officers (60 males and 63 females) from two U.K. police forces. Age range was 21 to 54 years ($M = 36.14$, $SD = 6.55$). Their years of service ranged from 2 to 27 years ($M = 12.57$, $SD = 6.44$). A response rate for the police group could not be calculated due to the use of a gatekeeper (see below).

Materials

Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance scale (IRMA)(Payne et al., 1999).

The IRMA contains 45 items of which five are filler items. The scale includes seven subscales which assess specific rape myths: 'she asked for it', 'it wasn't really rape', 'he didn't mean to', 'she wanted it', 'she lied', 'rape is a trivial event', and 'rape is deviant event'. Responses are on a 7 point scale from 1-very strongly disagree to 7-very strongly agree with a neutral midpoint of 4-neither agree nor disagree. An example item would be "If a woman doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say that it was rape". Reliability analyses for the total score on the IRMA in the current study revealed an alpha of .95 demonstrating an excellent level of reliability. Reliability analyses for each of the subscales also demonstrated acceptable levels of reliability: 'she asked for it' - .88, 'it wasn't really rape' - .84, 'he didn't mean to' - .78, 'she wanted it' - .86, 'she lied' - .85, 'rape is a trivial event' - .75, and 'rape is deviant event' - .82. The mean response (i.e., all 352 participants) across the scale items was 2.44. This mean value is similar to mean item values reported in Sussenbach and Bohner (2011) using the AMMSA, suggesting that low mean totals are not an issue within this sample (e.g., Gerger et al., 2007).

Procedure

Psychology student participants were recruited as part of Experimental Participation Research where research is advertised to students to take part for course credit. Law students were recruited via announcements within Law lectures. Both of the student samples completed questionnaire packs and returned them to the researcher. Police officers were recruited via a gatekeeper. The gatekeeper identified potential police officer participants and then acted as the contact point for the sending out and return of the questionnaires, in each of the police forces. These police participants were provided with a questionnaire pack and a return date by which they should return the questionnaire to the gatekeeper. Within the questionnaire pack, participants provided relevant demographic information before completing the IRMA. This study was approved by the School of Psychology's Ethics Committee following the guidelines as laid down by the British Psychological Society. Participants were informed as to their right to withdraw from the study and were also fully informed as to the content of the study prior to the completion of the materials. Previous victims of serious crime were strongly recommended to not take part. No identifying information was gathered with participants identified by a self chosen participant number.

Results

A descriptive assessment of the data was first carried out as part of the analysis process (see Table 1).

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

A two (male vs. female) by three (psychology students vs. law students vs. police officers) between-subjects ANOVA was carried out with the total IRMA scores as the dependent variable. This revealed a significant main effect of gender [$F(5, 344) = 5.18, p = .02$; partial $\eta^2 = .02$]. Males ($M = 100.23, SD = 26.56$) accepted myths at a higher level than

females ($M = 95.12$, $SD = 30.12$). There was no significant main effect of group or a significant interaction ($p > .05$).

The seven subscales of the IRMA were all moderately positively correlated, therefore a MANOVA analysis was appropriate (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2005). A two (male vs. female) by three (psychology students vs. law students vs. police officers) between-subjects MANOVA was carried out with the seven subscales of the IRMA as dependent variables ('she asked for it', 'she wanted it', 'he didn't mean to', 'rape is a trivial event', 'she lied', 'rape is a deviant event', and 'it wasn't really rape'). There was a statistically significant difference between males and females regarding the combined dependent variable (all of the subscales combined) and between the different groups. There was also a statistically significant interaction between gender and group.

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

When the data regarding the dependent variables (i.e., subscales) were considered separately, a Bonferroni correction was applied due the number of follow up ANOVAs being conducted, therefore, $p < .007$ for these tests. Regarding participant gender, a significant main effect was found for 'he didn't mean to' with males ($M = 16.03$, $SD = 5.15$) accepting these myths at a higher level than females ($M = 14.93$, $SD = 5.31$). No other IRMA subscales demonstrated significant gender effects.

With regards to group, significant main effects were found for 'she asked for it', with post-hoc Tukey tests ($p = .01$) indicating that law students ($M = 22.00$, $SD = 8.82$) accepted these myths at a higher level than police officers ($M = 18.80$, $SD = 7.57$). A second significant difference ($p = .001$) showed that psychology students ($M = 22.39$, $SD = 7.79$) accepted these myths at a higher level than police officers ($M = 18.80$, $SD = 7.57$). A significant main effect was also found for 'he didn't mean to', with post-hoc Tukey tests ($p = .001$) indicating that psychology students ($M = 16.35$, $SD = 5.29$) accepted these myths at a higher level than police officers ($M = 14.07$, $SD = 5.10$). Another significant main effect was

also found for 'she lied', with post-hoc Tukey tests indicating that police officers ($M = 18.63$, $SD = 4.49$) accepted these myths at a higher level than law students ($p < .001$) ($M = 15.86$, $SD = 5.26$) and psychology students ($p < .001$) ($M = 16.10$, $SD = 4.49$).

Finally, the ANOVA also found a significant interaction between group and participant gender for 'she lied'. Post-hoc analysis of this interaction was carried out, with a Bonferroni correction applied ($p < .01$). This demonstrated that for males, there was also a significant difference between groups [$F(2, 152) = 7.94$, $p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .10$], with Tukey post-hoc tests indicating that male police officers ($M = 18.70$, $SD = 4.20$) accepted 'she lied' myths at a higher level than male psychology students ($M = 15.96$, $SD = 4.69$) as did male law students ($M = 18.90$, $SD = 3.43$) ($p = .02$). For females, there was a significant difference between the groups [$F(2, 193) = 9.45$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .09$] with Tukey post-hoc tests indicating that female police officers ($M = 18.57$, $SD = 4.78$) accepted 'she lied' myths at a higher level than female psychology students ($M = 16.25$, $SD = 4.31$) ($p = .02$) and female law students ($M = 14.85$, $SD = 5.39$) ($p < .001$). Furthermore, male law students ($M = 18.90$, $SD = 4.43$) accepted 'she lied' myths at a higher level than female law students ($M = 14.85$, $SD = 5.39$) ($p = .002$). No other significant effects or interactions were found.

INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

Discussion

The main aim of the current research was to examine police officer rape myth acceptance in comparison with law and psychology students. This is an important issue as police officers hold crucial, relevant roles within rape investigations. As noted by Spohn and Tellis (2012), police officers are often gatekeepers to criminal justice processes for victims of this crime and therefore can impact upon the successful progression of a rape case. One key point regarding the current study is to emphasise is that rape myth acceptance was generally low across all three samples. When examining total rape myth acceptance, a significant effect was only found for gender with males accepting rape myths at an overall higher level than

females. This is consistent with much of the literature (e.g., Frese et al., 2004; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010) but it is important to highlight that not all studies have found significant gender effects (e.g., Abrams et al., 2003; Sussenbach & Bohner, 2011). No significant difference was found between the three groups for total rape myth acceptance scores, which supports Brown et al. (2007) who contended that the beliefs of police officers may not be different from the general public/other groups.

However, the current study also contributes a more detailed analysis of the acceptance of rape myths across different samples. As argued by Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994), various rape myths may function differently across individuals. This more detailed analysis did reveal group differences plus an interaction between group and gender. This revealed that for 'she lied' myths, male police officers and male law students accepted these types of myths at a significantly higher level than did male psychology students. A similar but slightly different effect was found for females where female police officers accepted 'she lied' myths at a higher levels than female law and psychology students. (Both of these differences demonstrated large effect sizes.) This myth emphasises scepticism towards the female rape victim where rape is normalised by suggesting that victims 'lead' the perpetrator on, that victims use accusations of rape as revenge, that women 'cry' rape when caught having an affair, and that women have consensual sexual intercourse and 'change' their mind afterwards (see Cuklanz, 2000). It is particularly noteworthy that these myths have now been found to be accepted at higher levels amongst the police officer and law students (males only) than by the other group. Police officers and law students either currently work in a field where they may encounter rape victims or have the potential to work with rape victims within the future. Such findings provide a potential explanation for the culture of scepticism that Jordan (2004; 2008) suggests exists in the treatment of rape victims within criminal justice systems. The previous literature has provided practical examples of how this scepticism may manifest itself in real life. For example, Feldman-Summers and Palmer (1980) found that police officers gave the lowest percentage estimates of the number of reported rapes being true. These low estimates may represent an example of how rape myth acceptance may

guide police officer perceptions as argued by Edward and MacLeod (1999). The implications of such findings are particularly problematic in cases of rape, Jordan (2001) found that rape victims frequently choose not to report their victimisation because they feel that they will not be believed. The findings from this new study suggest that this may be a relevant issue with the higher adherence to beliefs that suggest that victims of rape lie. Such findings may provide one important explanation for why rape continues to experience a number of challenges within criminal justice systems around the world (e.g., high levels of attrition) (Temkin & Krahe, 2008).

Other group differences were demonstrated within the data and importantly these demonstrated that police officers, in fact, accepted certain myths at a lower level than psychology or law students. These medium effects were found for 'she asked for it' and 'he didn't mean to'. 'She asked for it' myths focus on the behaviour and character of the victim as an explanation for why the victim was raped. These suggest that women who wear revealing clothing, that drink alcohol to excess, or that go to the home of men that they have just met, are responsible for what happens to them in that situation. These myths function to shift the attention away from the perpetrator and place responsibility for the rape in the victim's domain (e.g., Anderson et al., 2001). Similarly, 'he didn't mean to' myths seek to further excuse the behaviour of the perpetrator. These suggest that men's sex drive is uncontrollable, that men get sexually carried away, and that rapists are sexually frustrated individuals. Previously, Koppelaar et al. (1997) demonstrated that law students demonstrated more negative attitudes than police officers. This is paralleled in the current study and it suggests that police officers do not always adhere to higher levels of negative attitudes about rape victims than do other groups. Previous, now, dated research suggested that police officers held some of the most negative attitudes about rape victims (e.g., Feldman-Summer & Palmer, 1980), however more current research suggests that the attitudes that police officers (at least in the U.K.) do not hold as negative a view as perceived by the general public (e.g., Brown et al., 2007).

The second issue is that as student populations have been found to demonstrate similar beliefs to the general population (Foley et al., 2000), these findings support the contention of Sussenbach and Bohner (2011) that rape myth acceptance needs to be considered as a societal issue and not just one that is isolated within certain populations. The findings of this new study certainly support this contention, but it is argued that rape myth acceptance within police officers is far more problematic, because of the key role that police officers hold in the criminal justice system. However, it is important to note that on only one of the seven subscales ('she lied') did police officers demonstrate a significantly higher level of rape myth acceptance than the other samples. For two other myths ('he didn't mean to' and 'she asked for it') police officers accepted these myths at a lower level than the other samples. For four out of the seven myth types ('rape is a deviant event', 'rape is a trivial event', 'she wanted it', 'it wasn't really rape') there were no group differences. However, given the special impact that police officers can have (Page, 2010) and the more negative outcomes for victims who encounter negative social reactions from them (Anderson, 1999, Filipas & Ullman, 2001), addressing these attitudes within police officers would still seem of importance.

As with the majority of psychological research, this study has limitations which should be considered when assessing its findings. It should be noted that findings from student samples may not apply to other populations. Furthermore, within this study the relatively small sample size of male Law students may have resulted in a lack of power regarding interactions. It must also be recognised that there was a difference in the age range of the sample between the student sample and police officer sample. However, analyses (not reported here) were carried out that demonstrated that age did not have a significant effect in this study. Age has been shown to have a mixed effect in relation to attitudes about rape with some studies demonstrating a significant effect (e.g., Sussenbach & Bohner, 2011), whereas Suarez and Gadalla's (2010) meta-analysis of the relationship between rape myth acceptance and demographic variables found that the effect for age was not statistically significant.

Overall, this study has demonstrated that modern day U.K. police officers accepted myths at a higher level that deny a rape occurred, whereas it was students who accepted myths which excuse the occurrence of rape at a higher level. This analysis has supported the argument that it is important to examine specific types of rape myth acceptance rather than just general rape myth acceptance (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). The pattern of the present data provides further confirmation that the acceptance of rape myths is a societal issue. This is an important point to make to provide a balanced viewpoint of the adherence to these very problematic attitudes about rape victims. It is clear that education is needed generally within our society to dispel such myths and more specifically within police officer samples, to ensure that rape myths are not adhered to and if they are, that they do not impact on the level of service care that they provide to actual victims of rape.

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Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of the IRMA including Total Scores and Subscales.

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Total rape myth acceptance	97.30	28.67
She asked for it	21.02	8.10
She wanted it	11.12	4.95
He didn't mean to	15.41	5.29
Rape is a trivial event	9.12	3.75
She lied	16.90	4.84
Rape is a deviant event	15.10	5.69
It wasn't really rape	8.73	3.97

Table 2

Manova Effects for the Combined Dependent Variable.

Independent variables	Wilks' Lambda	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Error <i>df</i>	partial η^2
Participant gender*	.94	2.95	7	342	.06
Group*	.66	11.13	7	342	.19
Participant gender x Group*	.91	2.34	7	342	.05

* $p < .05$

Table 3

ANOVA Effects for the Sub-factors of the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale.

Independent variables	Myth sub-factor	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Error <i>df</i>	partial η^2
Participant gender	He didn't mean to*	9.03	1	345	.03
Group	She asked for it*	9.57	2	345	.05
	He didn't mean to*	8.87	2	345	.05
	She lied*	10.26	2	345	.06
Participant gender x Group*	She lied*	5.02	2	345	.03