



## Personality traits in women victims of sexual violence

### Rasgos de personalidad en Mujeres víctimas de violencia sexual

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#### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** to analyze personality traits in women victims of sexual violence. **Method:** A descriptive documentary review was carried out with the support of the systemic review technique. **Results and Conclusion:** It was found that these women usually experience low self-esteem, anxiety and depression, post-traumatic stress disorders, difficulties in establishing relationships and trust problems. Risk factors associated with these traits include previous traumatic experiences, lack of social support, stigmatization and victim blaming, economic insecurity and lack of access to mental health services.

**Descriptors:** personal autonomy; rape; compulsive personality disorder. (Source, DeCS).

#### RESUMEN

**Objetivo:** analizar los rasgos de personalidad en Mujeres víctimas de violencia sexual. **Método:** Se realizó revisión descriptiva documental con apoyo de la técnica de revisión sistémica. **Resultados y conclusión:** Se ha evidenciado que estas mujeres suelen experimentar una baja autoestima, ansiedad y depresión, trastornos de estrés postraumático, dificultades en el establecimiento de relaciones y problemas de confianza, se encontró que los factores de riesgo asociados a estos rasgos incluyen experiencias traumáticas previas, falta de apoyo social, estigmatización y victim blaming, inseguridad económica y falta de acceso a servicios de salud mental.

**Descriptores:** autonomía personal; violación; trastorno de personalidad compulsiva. (Fuente, DeCS).

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Brief original



## INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence is a serious and widespread problem in our society today. Throughout history, it has existed in different forms and contexts, affecting mainly women and girls. Its roots lie in entrenched cultural patterns, gender inequalities and social norms that perpetuate women's subordination and control. Factors such as lack of sexuality education, discrimination, poverty and limited access to health services contribute to its prevalence.<sup>1 2 3</sup>

Armed conflict, forced migration and other crisis situations can significantly increase the risk of sexual violence. Understanding these roots is essential to adequately address the problem and to promote social changes that prevent and protect women from this violence. The impact of sexual violence cannot be underestimated, as it leaves physical, emotional and psychological scars on victims. These wounds can last a lifetime, affecting their overall well-being, their ability to have healthy relationships and their participation in society.<sup>4 5</sup>

Sexual violence also negatively affects the wider community, undermining trust in institutions, perpetuating harmful gender stereotypes and hindering social and economic development. To address this problem, it is necessary to implement comprehensive strategies that promote gender equality, respect and education at all levels of society. This involves not only punishing perpetrators, but also working to change attitudes and beliefs that support sexual violence. It is essential to provide adequate support and services to victims, including specialised medical care, counselling and access to justice.<sup>6</sup>

In this order, personality refers to the set of emotional, cognitive and behavioural patterns that characterise a person and are relatively stable over time. In the context of women victims of sexual violence, the definition of personality may be particularly



relevant to understanding the impact of violence on their psychology and development. Personality may influence how women cope with and process the traumatic experience of sexual violence, as well as how they relate to others and how they view themselves. Exploring personality traits in these women can provide valuable information for designing effective and personalised therapeutic interventions.<sup>7 8</sup>

In consideration of the above, the objective of analysing personality traits in women victims of sexual violence is presented.

## **METHOD**

A descriptive documentary review was carried out using the systemic review technique.

The documentary population consisted of 15 scientific articles published in PubMed.

The data collected were processed by means of documentary content analysis.

## **RESULTS**

The personality of women victims of sexual violence is a determining factor in their recovery process. Understanding how each of them faces and processes trauma, as well as understanding the characteristics that define their way of relating and seeing themselves, will allow us to design more effective and personalised therapeutic interventions.<sup>9</sup>

The study of personality traits in these women is key to providing them with the necessary help, improving their emotional wellbeing and supporting them on their path to healing. Low self-esteem is a common trait in women who have been victims of sexual violence. This traumatic experience can negatively affect their self-perception, diminishing their confidence and self-worth.<sup>10</sup>



These women often feel guilty or ashamed of what happened, which contributes to a negative self-image. In addition, they may experience feelings of devaluation and lack of self-worth as a result of the abuse they have suffered. To overcome this, it is essential to provide emotional and psychological support to help them rebuild their self-esteem and strengthen their sense of self-worth. <sup>11</sup>

Sexual violence can have a significant impact on the mental health of affected women, with anxiety and depression being two common personality traits in these situations. After experiencing sexual violence, many women experience high levels of anxiety, manifested through symptoms such as nervousness, fear, restlessness and irritability. Depression is another common emotional response, characterised by feelings of deep sadness, loss of interest in daily activities, and problems sleeping and concentrating. <sup>12</sup>

These traits can persist over the long term and affect women's quality of life, so it is essential to offer comprehensive support, including psychological therapy and pharmacological treatments if necessary. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is common in women who have experienced sexual violence. This type of trauma can leave a deep emotional imprint, causing symptoms characteristic of PTSD, such as intrusive memories of the traumatic event, nightmares, avoidance of situations reminiscent of the trauma, hypervigilance and mood swings. PTSD symptoms can hinder women's ability to function in their daily lives and maintain healthy relationships. <sup>13</sup>

Women victims of sexual violence often face difficulties in establishing healthy interpersonal relationships. The trauma experienced can lead to mistrust and fear of others, which hinders the formation of close and meaningful bonds. These women may experience fear of being hurt again or difficulty trusting people's intentions. In addition, they may have difficulty setting healthy boundaries in their relationships, which exposes them to repeated abuse or violence. <sup>14 15</sup>



## CONCLUSION

There is evidence that these women often experience low self-esteem, anxiety and depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, relationship difficulties and trust issues, and risk factors associated with these traits were found to include previous traumatic experiences, lack of social support, stigmatisation and victimisation, economic insecurity and lack of access to mental health services. It is critical to identify and address these personality traits in women victims of sexual violence, as this will enable them to be offered appropriate treatment and psychological support for recovery.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest with persons or institutions involved in the research.

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