



**OPERATIONAL  
RESEARCH  
SNAPSHOT**

## ***Providing Access to Care for Male Victims of Sexual Violence in Africa***

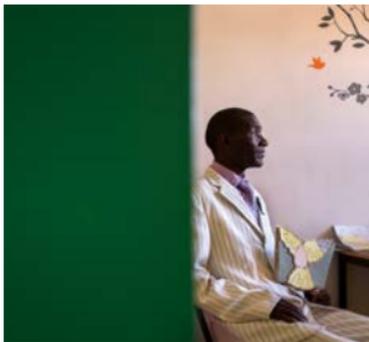


**While most victims of sexual violence are women and girls, men and boys are also affected. Long neglected as victims of sexual violence, males are gradually gaining much-needed attention and better-adapted care.**

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) provides care for both male and female victims of sexual violence in many of its projects around the world. Victims are offered a comprehensive package of care, including treatment of injuries, infection prevention, and legal, psychological, and social support. Yet most of these programs are aimed at women. Combined with social stigma, this setup poses barriers for male victims to come forward and seek assistance.

Two operational research studies analyzed data from over 13,000 sexual violence cases in Africa treated by MSF and highlighted key differences between male and female victims in terms of access to care, as well as characteristics of the assaults and their perpetrators.





**U**p to 7.5% of sexual violence victims were males. They are more likely to go to programs offering gender-neutral entry routes, which do not require patients to immediately disclose the type of violence suffered. Once disclosed, men and women received the same care.



**Y**ounger male victims were more likely to have been assaulted by a civilian who they knew, and they presented for care earlier. Older male victims were more often faced with highly aggressive sexual violence perpetrated by authority figures.



**A**dult men were at much higher risk of being forced to rape another person. There is limited documentation on this type of assault, resulting in a large gap of appropriate medical, psychosocial, and legal responses.



## IMPLEMENTATION

A gender-neutral entry point to sexual violence services is a crucial factor in encouraging more males to seek care. Clinics need to ensure an access route which does not require patients to immediately disclose that they have been victims of sexual violence.

Appropriately trained medical staff, increased psychosocial support in clinics, and health promotion activities in the community promise to further improve male patients' access to care by ensuring victims are identified and referred as early as possible for adapted and specialized care.

Original Studies: Broban, A; Van den Bergh, R; Russell, W; Benedetti, G; Caluwaerts, S; Owiti, P; Reid, A; De Plecker, E (2019) Accessing sexual violence care for males versus females in Africa. PLoS One; Sexual violence assaults against males versus females in Africa. PLoS One.

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