

# **PACIFIC JOURNAL OF MEDICAL SCIENCES**

**{Formerly: Medical Sciences Bulletin}**

**ISSN: 2072 – 1625**



**Pac. J. Med. Sci. (PJMS)**

[www.pacjmedsci.com](http://www.pacjmedsci.com). Email: [pacjmedsci@gmail.com](mailto:pacjmedsci@gmail.com).

---

## **ASSESSING THE KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) AMONG FEMALE STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITY OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

**\*<sup>1</sup>MELISSA LOIS RIVEN, <sup>2</sup>VICTOR J. TEMPLE and <sup>3</sup>FLORENCE MUGA**

1. Division of Health Sciences, School of Medicine and Health Sciences (SMHS), University of PNG (UPNG)
2. Division of Basic Medical Sciences, SMHS UPNG
3. Division of Clinical Sciences, SMHS UPNG

\*Corresponding author: [melissarivs98@gmail.com](mailto:melissarivs98@gmail.com)

*Submitted: July 2020; Accepted: August 2020*

## ASSESSING THE KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) AMONG FEMALE STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITY OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

\*<sup>1</sup>MELISSA LOIS RIVEN, <sup>2</sup>VICTOR J. TEMPLE and <sup>3</sup>FLORENCE MUGA

4. Division of Health Sciences, School of Medicine and Health Sciences (SMHS), University of PNG (UPNG)
5. Division of Basic Medical Sciences, SMHS UPNG
6. Division of Clinical Sciences, SMHS UPNG

\*Corresponding author: [melissarivs98@gmail.com](mailto:melissarivs98@gmail.com)

*Submitted: July 2020; Accepted: August 2020*

### ABSTRACT:

Several studies have been carried out on the existence and prevalence of gender based violence (GBV) in Papua New Guinea (PNG). However there are no published data on the prevalence of GBV among female students in the universities in PNG. The purpose of this study was to assess the knowledge, awareness and prevalence of GBV among female students at the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG). This was an institution-based, cross-sectional, observational, descriptive study. The target population was residential and non-residential female students. The study was carried out during the 2019 academic session. All registered female students in their second year or higher were eligible to participate in the study. Simple random sampling was used to select 450 consented students. A structured self-designed, pre-tested self-evaluating questionnaire with mostly close-ended questions was used for data collection. The completed questionnaires were checked, coded and entered into Excel Spreadsheet. A total of 217 questionnaires were completed and returned. The response rate was 48.2%. The age range of the respondents was 18 to 39 years. A total of 97.7% of respondents have heard about GBV and 89.9% knew about GBV. However, 92.2% did not know if UPNG has policy about GBV. Some of the respondents have personally experienced violence. Verbal violence (25.8%) was the highest, followed by psychological violence (19.8%), sexual violence (19.7%) and physical violence (11.0%). However, the sequence and prevalence were different with regards to their knowledge of the occurrence of violence against their colleagues. Physical violence (70.0%) was the highest, followed by verbal violence (62.7%), psychological violence (58.0%) and sexual violence (22.6%). Male students were the main perpetrators in all the forms of violence, with minimal involvement of the lecturers.

In conclusion, awareness workshops and campaigns should be carried out in the university to educate both female and male students about GBV and its negative impacts. The GBV policies in the university should be enforced. A GBV center should be established where students can seek medical attention, counseling and other related services. Risk-reduction and health-promoting programs should be developed and implemented to ensure safety on campus through strict non-tolerance policies and appropriate penalties for perpetrators of GBV.

**Keywords:** Gender based violence (GBV), Female students, University of Papua New Guinea.

**INTRODUCTION:**

Recognition of Gender Based Violence (GBV) or Violence Against Women (VAW) as a public health issue as well as a human right issue was strengthened by declarations and agreements at key international conferences during the 1990s [1-3]. These included the World conference on Human Rights in Vienna (1993) [1], the Fourth World conference on Women in Beijing (1995) [2] and the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo (1994) [3].

Recognizing the urgent need for the universal application to women of the rights and principles with regard to equality, security, liberty, integrity and dignity of all human beings, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly proclaimed the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women [4]. It was agreed that the declaration made up of six separate articles should become generally known and respected in all member states who are signatories to the declaration [4]. The first three of the six articles clearly stated the nature of these complex problems.

*Article One: For the purposes of this Declaration, the term "Violence Against Women" means any act of Gender Based Violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.*

*Article Two: Violence against women shall be understood to encompass, but not be limited to, the following: (i) Physical, Sexual and Psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation; (ii) Physical, Sexual and Psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution; (iii) Physical, Sexual and Psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.*

*Article Three: Women are entitled to the equal enjoyment and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, and civil or any other field. These rights include, inter alia: The right to life; the right to equality; the right to liberty and security of person; the right to equal protection under the law; the right to be free from all forms of discrimination; the right to the highest standard attainable of physical and mental health; the right to just and favourable conditions of work; the right not to be subjected to torture, or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment [4].*

According to recent modifications [5, 6], the acts of physical aggression include slapping, hitting, kicking and battering; psychological abuse include intimidation, constant belittling and humiliating whether in public or in private, controlling behaviors such as isolating the partner from his/her family and friends, observing and monitoring their movements and prohibiting their access to information as well as assistance from others around them. Verbal violence can be spoken words, written words, degrading comments, threatening, blaming or name calling. It encompasses a wide range of behaviors and although the damage cannot be physically seen, it affects a person mentally and psychologically, and reduces self-esteem and self-confidence [7, 8]. It is often confused with normal day-to-day talk among partners, friends or peers. As a result of the usual practice of using cuss words or telling a joke that is sarcastic and often belittling, it has already been instilled in the minds of people that it is actually condoned to verbally abuse a person [7, 8]. Verbal violence needs continuous check where every individual should be educated on what is considered to be unacceptable because only then will a person be responsible for their choice of words and thus not intentionally exercise verbal abuse [7, 8]. Despite the international collaborative efforts to combat GBV in countries around the world, recent reports indicate prevalence of various forms of violence against women in some UN member states. According to a recent

global report on the prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence, about 35% of women worldwide have experienced some form of physical and/or sexual violence that was committed either by an intimate partner or a non-partner. In addition, about 7% of women on a global level have been sexually abused by a non-partner and almost 30% of all women who have been in relationships were physically and sexually abused [5].

Many of the developing countries are at different stages of implementing the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. They have taken various steps towards gender equality and have declared that both females and males can hold similar job aspirations as well as be compatible in working environments [3, 9]. One of these countries is Papua New Guinea (PNG). The estimated population of PNG is about 8.5 million of which about 49.0% are females [10]. Several reports including the reports compiled by the Law Reform Commission in PNG indicated that the most common type of GBV in the country is domestic violence [7, 11 – 14].

The major impact of these reports led to the promulgation of the PNG National Strategy on GBV 2016 – 2025. It is the Government's framework to prevent and respond to GBV, which is viewed as an endemic problem affecting the lives of many individuals and communities in the country [15]. The reports indicated that one of the reasons why men in

PNG are so violent is because of the traditional mentality surrounding male control and superiority. A small sign of disrespect or disloyalty by women was met with harassment and violence by men or spouses. At most times these domestic matters are left alone because they are deemed to be “private” matters that should be sorted out within the family [11, 13, 14]. It was also stated that women may think that they deserve to get a beating because of some wrongdoing, while others may not report these incidences in fear of their partners or some because of the embarrassment of being branded as a “battered woman” [7, 11, 13, 14]. In PNG, when a selection of informants were asked the question; “*is it alright for a man to hit his wife?*” three out of four females answered that “*yes, at some point it is alright for a man to hit his wife*”. Based on these responses, the majority of women in PNG may have the same view and due to these instilled views of society, young women in the generation may not be aware that some of these characters that are portrayed by men, whether physically, verbally, psychologically or sexually, are actually forms of GBV [14, 16].

A study carried out by PNG National Department of Health (NDOH) in 2015 states that, in 2007, 400 women at health clinics confessed that the main trigger for violence in their homes was the woman’s refusal to have sex or asking their partners to use condoms [17]. About 50% of the women that were interviewed admitted that they cannot refuse

having sex without being punished. Another study carried out by WHO mentions that in PNG, 67% of women in rural areas and 57% of women in urban areas were abused by their partners on a daily basis [17]. A study carried out at the Angau hospital in Morobe province in PNG reported that out of 239 survivors of sexual violence, 98% were females; of these 28% were raped by more than one man and 57% of them were under 20 years old [17].

Although there are several reports to confirm the existence of domestic violence in PNG and the occurrence of GBV in business sectors, no studies have been carried out amongst students in any of the universities in PNG [18].

One of the major strategies for reducing the rate of GBV is to educate female as well as male students in the higher institutions on the effects that GBV can have in the lives of affected individuals, the forms of violence and the nature of these acts, as well as the importance of gender equality. One of the findings in a recent study on the prevalence of sexual violence against female university students in Ethiopia is that it contributes to the establishment of a non-conducive and intimidating learning environment [19]. Similar deductions have been made from studies carried out in universities in South Africa [20] and Nigeria [21].

GBV is inclusive of different forms of violence; however the focus of our present study is on physical, sexual, verbal and psychological/emotional violence experienced

by female students in the UPNG. A major justification for this study is that the university is a microcosm of society, and the societal culture always finds expression on university campuses [20]. For this reason, it is of utmost importance that the experiences of female students in the UPNG are investigated and the data obtained be used to fill in the existing gaps on the prevalence of GBV in PNG.

The purpose of the present study is to assess the knowledge, awareness and prevalence of GBV among female students in the University of Papua New Guinea.

#### **METHODOLOGY:**

This study was carried out in the UPNG, which is the premier university in PNG. The university has two campuses; the Waigani and Taurama campuses. Students in the Taurama campus complete their foundation year in the Waigani campus before moving over to Taurama to pursue the degree in medicine, dentistry or health sciences.

This was an institution-based cross-sectional observational descriptive study. The target population was current female students whether residential or non-residential in both campuses (Waigani and Taurama) of the UPNG. The study was carried out during the 2019 academic session. All registered female students in their second year or higher were eligible to participate in the study. Simple random sampling was used for selection of the participants.

The sample size was calculated using a design effect of one, relative precision of 10% and confidence level of 95% [22]. As there was limited data on likely prevalence of GBV in UPNG, a prevalence rate of 25% was used. With a predicted non-response rate of 15%, the total sample size of about 450 female students was obtained. This sample size was considered adequate for a mini-survey with limited resources.

A structured self-designed questionnaire with mostly close-ended questions was used for data collection. The questionnaire was pretested among 20 randomly selected female students that were not included in the final cohorts of participants in the study. Suggested changes and modifications were made, after which a second pre-test was done among another group of 15 female students. The final questionnaire was approved after the additional changes and modifications were made. The questions were categorized under the following subsections; socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, experience and awareness of physical, psychological, verbal, sexual violence, and gender stereotypes. Apart from the questions on the socio-demographic characteristics, the questionnaire contained a total of 33 closed-ended and two open-ended questions. Some questions were used to elicit perceived causes of violence and also to suggest ways of preventing GBV in the university.

A consent form containing a brief background of the problem and explaining the purpose of the study was attached to each of the questionnaire. A total of 450 questionnaires were randomly distributed. In order to ensure confidentiality, each of the participants was requested not to include their name, student identification number and degree program in the questionnaire. They were however, requested to complete the questionnaire honestly and truthfully, and then drop it in one of the collection boxes placed at different sites on campus including the university libraries. This precaution was taken because of anecdotal evidence that female students may be afraid to answer questions related to violence against women.

All female students in the foundation year and those that matriculated in 2019 were excluded from the study.

The questionnaires were collected checked, coded and entered into Excel Spreadsheet. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software (version 20) and the Microsoft Excel Data Pack 2010 were used for statistical analyses of the data. Categorical variable were presented as frequencies and percentages. Bivariate analysis involving the use of Chi-square tests was used as appropriate. A p-value of less than 0.05 was considered as statistically significant.

The ethical clearance for this study was obtained from the Ethics and Research committee in the SMHS UPNG. Informed

consent was obtained from each of the female students that participated in this study. Their participation was completely voluntary.

## RESULTS:

In the present study, a structured self-administered anonymous questionnaire was used for data collection. A total of 217 questionnaires were completed and returned. The response rate was 48.2% (217/450). The age range of the respondents was 18.0 to 39.0 years, mean age was  $21.7 \pm 2.56$  years (Mean  $\pm$  standard deviation), the 95% confidence interval (95% CI) was 21.4 to 22.0 years. Distribution of the respondents according to age groups show that 18.0% (39/217) were below 20 years of age, 73.7% (160/217) were between 20 to 25 years and 8.3% (18/217) were above 25 years of age. Of the 217 respondents 177 (81.6%) were resident on-campus and 40 (18.4%) were living in accommodations off-campus. A total of 51.2% (111/217) of respondents were currently in a relationship but not married, 29.5% (64/217) were not married but had past relationships, 12.4% (27/217) had never been in any relationship and 6.9% (15/217) were currently married.

The responses to the 33 closed-ended questions are presented in Table 1. A total of 97.7% (212/217) of respondents have heard about GBV and 89.9% (195/217) knew about GBV. This indicated good knowledge about the

existence of GBV among the female students. However, 92.2% (200/217) did not know if UPNG has any policy about GBV. This raises questions about the information sharing and communication procedures in relation to policies on GBV within the UPNG campuses.

With regards to physical and psychological abuses, 70.0% (152/217) were aware of female students that have been physically abused by their partners on campus. However, 88.5% (192/217) said that they have not been abused or punished by their partners; although 19.8% (38/192) of them said that they have experienced continuous ridicule directed at them by their partners; furthermore, 33.0% (30/91) of those that have not been ridiculed directly said that their partners have prohibited them from seeing their friends on campus. When asked if their partners have emotionally threatened them into doing what they do not want to do, 80.6% (175/217) responded in the negative. When answered if they are aware of other female students that have been psychologically abused, 58.1% (126/217) said yes. In relation to verbal abuse, 25.8% (56/217) of respondents have been verbally threatened by their partners; 36.4% (79/217) have partners that have used foul/inappropriate language against them either in public or in private.

A larger percentage (62.7%; 136/217) of respondents knew of other female students that have been verbally abused.

When asked if the male students usually treat them respectfully, 43.8% (95/217) answered in

the affirmative, and 55.3% (120/217) said sometimes but not always. When asked if the male students allow them the opportunity to share their opinion in the university public forum, 29.5% (64/217) said “always”, but 59.9% (130/217) said “sometimes”.

A majority of the respondents (77.0%; 167/217) said that their opinions were sometimes respected and valued; but in response to another question, 71.9% (156/217) said sometimes they were made to feel inferior to the male students.

In relation to sexual violence, 35.0% (76/217) of respondents had experienced sexual intercourse; of these 19.7% (15/76) had not given their consent at that time. A total of 22.6% (49/217) of respondents are aware of female students who were forced to have sex by someone in the university, and 6.5% (14/217) said that they have been forced to have sex by someone in the university. In addition, 13.3% (29/217) of respondents knew female students from whom male staff demanded sex in exchange for something. The respondents knew female students (39.2%; 85/217) who have been sexually harassed on campus; but they do not know if any formal complaint was made by any of the female students.

Additional questions indicated that 30.4% (66/217) of the respondents were also sexually harassed on campus, but only 6.0% (13/217) were in relationships that have been sexually abusive.

The responses to the two open-ended questions that required the opinions and recommendations of the respondents were analyzed into themes and presented in Tables 2 and 3.

In response to the first open-ended question (Table 2), 56.7% (123/217) said the male students were respectful / well-mannered and knew a bit about GBV; 16.6% (36/217) said male students were ignorant of issues related to GBV and 12.4% (27/217) said they tend to express male superiority on campus.

In response to the second open-ended question (Table 3), 29.0% (63/217) suggested that the university should “*enforce/ implement the current GBV policy*”; 22.1% (48/217) suggested “*Improve awareness /empowerment /educate students on issues of GBV*”. A total of 20.7% (45/217) of the respondents did not answer this question. This strongly suggests the need for more effective awareness campaign, education and enhanced communications among the female students in the University of Papua New Guinea.

**Table 1: Distribution of the frequency (%) of the responses to questions in the questionnaire**

QUESTIONS	RESPONSES	RESPONDENTS n = 217 (%)
<b>Knowledge and awareness of GBV</b>		
Q1. Have you ever heard about GBV?	Yes	212 (97.7%)
	No	5 (2.3%)
Q2. Do you know about GBV?	Yes	195 (89.9%)
	No	22 (10.1%)
Q3. Do you know if UPNG has any policy about or on GBV?	Yes	17 (7.8%)
	No	200 (92.2%)
<b>Physical violence</b>		
Q4. Do you have someone that you call / have called your partner, in UPNG or outside of UPNG?	Yes	128 (59.0%)
	No	89 (41.0%)
Q5. Are you aware of any female(s) in UPNG who has been physically abused by a partner?	Yes	152 (70.0%)
	No	65 (30.0%)
Q6. Have you ever been physically punished or abused by any of your partner/partners?	Yes	24 (11.0%)
	No	192 (88.5%)
	No response	1 (0.5%)
<b>Psychological violence</b>		
Q7. If No to Q6, have you experienced continuous ridicule directed to you by your current/previous partner(s), in public or in private? [N = 192]	Yes	38 (19.8%)
	No	91 (47.4%)
	No response	63 (32.8%)

Q8. If No to Q 7, has your current/previous partner(s) ever prohibited you from seeing friends/family? [N = 91]	Yes	30 (33.0%)
	No	60 (65.9%)
	No response	1 (1.1%)
Q9. Has your current/previous partner(s) ever intentionally ignored you or dismissed you from his social activities?	Yes	59 (27.2%)
	No	157 (72.3%)
	No response	1 (0.5%)
Q10. Has your current/previous partner(s) ever emotionally threatened you into doing something that you did not want to do?	Yes	42 (19.4%)
	No	175 (80.6%)
Q11. Have you ever been in a situation where your current/previous partner(s) imposed suicidal threats on himself if you did not comply with his request?	Yes	42 (19.4%)
	No	175 (80.6%)
Q12. Do you know of any female students at UPNG who have experienced any of the actions described in Q8-11?	Yes	126 (58.1%)
	No	91 (41.9%)
<b>Verbal violence</b>		
Q13. Have you ever been verbally threatened by any of your current/previous partner(s)?	Yes	56 (25.8%)
	No	161 (74.2%)
Q14. Have you been insulted & shouted at by your current/previous partner(s) in public or in private?	Yes	65 (30.0%)
	No	152 (70.0%)
Q15. Has any of your current/previous partner(s) ever used foul /inappropriate language against you in public or in private?	Yes	79 (36.4%)
	No	138 (63.6%)
Q16. How do you usually handle / respond to the situations in Q14 and 15?	Reply in a similar manner	23 (10.6%)
	Walk out or away while he is talking	56 (25.8%)
	Sit still and listen	29 (13.4%)
	Ignore him	109 (50.2%)
Q17. Do you know of any female UPNG students who have experienced any of the actions described in Q13 to 15?	Yes	136 (62.7%)
	No	81 (37.3%)
Q18. Do male students in UPNG treat you with respect?	Yes	95 (43.8%)
	No	2 (0.9%)
	Sometimes	120 (55.3%)
Q19. Do the male students allow you the opportunity to share your opinion in the public forum?	Always	64 (29.5%)
	Sometimes	130 (59.9%)
	Never	21 (9.7%)
	No response	2 (0.9%)
Q20. Do you think that your opinion is respected, valued and considered when in discussion with male students?	Always	45 (20.7%)
	Sometimes	167 (77.0%)
	Never	5 (2.3%)
Q21. Have you ever been made to feel inferior by the	Always	6 (2.8%)

male students around you?	Sometimes	156 (71.9%)
	Never	55 (25.3%)
<b>Sexual violence</b>		
Q22. Have you already experienced sexual intercourse?	Yes	76 (35.0%)
	No	140 (64.5%)
	No response	1 (0.5%)
Q23. If Yes (to Q22), how old were you when you first engaged in sexual intercourse? Please give approximate age: [N = 76]	14-19.9 years	37 (48.7%)
	20-24.9 years	37 (48.7%)
	25-29.9 years	1 (1.3%)
	No response	1 (1.3%)
Q24. If Yes (to Q22) did you give your consent at that time? [N = 76]	Yes	61 (80.3%)
	No	15 (19.7%)
Q25. Do you know of any female students who have been forced to have any form of sex by anyone at school in UPNG?	Yes	49 (22.6%)
	No	166 (76.5%)
	No response	2 (0.9%)
Q26. Have you ever been forced to have any form of sex by anyone in the UPNG?	Yes	14 (6.5%)
	No	201 (92.6%)
	No response	2 (0.9%)
Q27. Do you know of any female students from whom a male staff in UPNG demanded sex in exchange for anything?	Yes	29 (13.3%)
	No	187 (86.2%)
	No response	1 (0.5%)
Q28. Has any male staff in UPNG ever demanded sex from you in exchange for anything?	Yes	1 (0.5%)
	No	215 (99.0%)
	No response	1 (0.5%)
Q29. Has any male student in UPNG ever demanded sex from you in exchange for anything?	Yes	5 (2.3%)
	No	211 (97.2%)
	No response	1 (0.5%)
Q30. Do you know of female students who have been sexually harassed in the UPNG campuses?	Yes	85 (39.2%)
	No	130 (59.9%)
	No response	2 (0.9%)
Q31. If yes to Q 30, do you know if any formal complaint was made by any of the female students? [N = 85]	Yes	0 (0%)
	No	85 (100%)
	Not sure	0
Q32. Have you ever experienced sexual harassment or was at the receiving end of sexual comments when in UPNG campuses?	Yes	66 (30.4%)
	No	150 (69.1%)
	No response	1 (0.5%)
Q33. Does any of the relationships that you have been in sexually abusive?	Yes	13 (6.0%)
	No	203 (93.5%)
	No response	1 (0.5%)

**Table 2:** Responses to the open ended question Q 34:  
What is your general opinion of most of the male students around you?

Answer theme	Frequency (%)
Respectful/well-mannered and knows a bit about GBV	123 (56.7%)
Ignorant of issues related to GBV	36 (16.6%)
Tends to express male superiority	27 (12.4%)
Disrespectful when intoxicated	17 (7.8%)
No opinions	14 (6.5%)

**Table 3:** Responses to open ended question: What suggestions, if any, would you like to make to the university authorities about GBV? Q 35

Answer theme	Frequency (%)
Enforce/ implement the current university GBV policy	63 (29.0%)
Improve awareness/empowerment/educate students on issues of GBV	48 (22.1%)
Increase security in female dormitories; encourage female students to report cases of violence on campus	24 (11.1%)
Engage more counselors to help female students on campus	17 (7.8%)
Establish the GBV center/ Support groups in university campus	12 (5.5%)
Prohibit drinking of alcohol by strongly implementing the zero tolerance policy on campus, especially in the Waigani campus	8 (3.7%)
No recommendations	45 (20.7%)

## DISCUSSION:

The non-response rate of 51.8% (233/450) obtained in the present study was significantly higher than the predicted 15.0% non-response rate used in calculating the sample size. One of the major reasons for the very low response rate was because it was optional for each of the consenting respondents to complete and return the questionnaire. It indicates one of the difficulties encountered in carrying out research involving obtaining information about issues considered as private and personal to the respondents in such studies.

The low response rate also indicates the lack of interest on issues related to GBV among female students in the UPNG. This is not unique to university students in PNG, because low response rates have been reported by other authors that conducted similar studies in other countries [19, 20, 21]. This strongly indicate the need to carry out intensive advocacy and awareness campaign among female students in UPNG about the need to be pro-active in supporting the implementation of the United Nations policy to reduce the negative impact of GBV [4] and the PNG National Strategy on GBV 2016 – 2025 [15].

The very low percentage (7.8%) of respondents that are aware of the UPNG policies should be of concern to the authorities. It indicates the need for effective communication strategies with the students. The importance of awareness and advocacy is to ensure that female students are able to recognize the different forms of GBV and can readily report these acts to the appropriate authorities in the university without fear of intimidation.

In the present study 11.0% of respondents said that they have experienced physical violence; this result was lower than the 22.8% reported among female university students in Northern Nigeria [21], and 28.1% among female students in Kenya [22]. It was higher than the 8.9% among female students in Wolaita Sodo University in Ethiopia [23].

The respondents in the present study were aware of a higher percentage (70.0%) of their colleagues that have been subjected to physical violence. It is therefore possible to assume that in the present study, the 11.0% may be due under-reporting because of the low response rate. The fear of physical abuse by their partners may have prevented some of the respondents that collected the questionnaires from completing and returning them. Physical violence or threat of physical violence is one of the methods used in the university campuses to intimidate and manipulate female students [21, 22, 23].

Although 19.4% of the respondents had experienced psychological or emotional violence, they are aware of a higher percentage (58.1%) of their colleagues that have experienced this form of violence. This further strengthens the earlier suggestion that intimidation may have prevented some of the students that collected the questionnaires from completing and returning them. A similar study in Kenya [22], states that threats from partners are one of the major types of psychological abuse that is seen among university students; it shows that students can be psychologically intimidated to keep them from participating in research which may be regarded as an invasion of private matters. Alcohol consumption pattern was not included in our present study. However, alcohol consumption is a risk factor for emotional violence on university campuses [22, 24]. Thus it can be considered as a contributing factor to emotional violence in our present study.

Over 25.0% of the respondents have experienced verbal violence on campus and they are aware of about 63.0% of their colleagues with similar experience. This should be of great concern to the authorities in UPNG, because of the negative impact on the moral and self-esteem of the female students. It is a violation of the fundamental rights and privileges of these students; it strips them of their right to freedom of speech as well as

expression and hinders their ability to openly communicate with others. Verbal violence is as intimidating as physical violence; it is a secret weapon that causes depression, mood changes and low self-confidence that can affect the academic performance of female students.

The 6.5% of respondents in the present study that have been forced to have any form of sex by anyone in the university was lower than the 22.2% reported for female students in Northern Nigeria [21], and the 24.4 to 36.1% reports for female students in Ethiopia [19]. Several other studies in universities have presented higher prevalence of sexual violence [24-27]. The 6.5% may be due to under-reporting because of the low response rate in our present study. However, 22.6% of the respondents were aware of their female colleagues that have been forced to have sex by someone in the university. In addition, 30.4% of the respondents and 39.2% of their colleagues have been sexually harassed on campus. Having a regular boyfriend where there is intimacy involved can increase the risk of sexual violence. The marital status of respondents indicate that a higher percentage were currently in a relationship but were not married. These are strong evidence indicating high rate of sexual violence on campus that urgently needs the attention of the appropriate authorities in the University of Papua New Guinea. Sexual violence is one of the worst

forms of GBV and leaves a person mentally and emotionally scarred [24, 25].

The results show that male students were the main perpetrators in most cases of all the forms of violence, with minimal involvement of the lecturers in the present study. In addition, about 43.3% of the male students were said to be often disrespectful. There was also indication of alcohol consumption by male students on campus. These findings were different from other studies in which some lecturers were involved in sexual violence. Studies in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Nigeria, Malawi reported that male students and lecturers were involved in abuse and sexual harassment of female students [20-23; 25-27].

Verbal violence (25.8%) was the highest, followed by psychological violence (19.8%), sexual violence (19.7%) and physical violence (11.0%) that the respondents have experienced personally in our present study. These values were lower than the corresponding values reported for Northern Nigeria, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Sub-Saharan Africa in general [21-27]. However, the sequence and prevalence were different with regards to their knowledge of the occurrence of violence against their colleagues. Physical violence (70.0%) was the highest, followed by verbal violence (62.7%), psychological violence (58.0%) and sexual violence (22.6%).

According to Beyene et al [24] studies on GBV are highly heterogeneous because of the definitions used, sample size, tools used and data collection methods. This makes it difficult to compare and to generalize the results in the various studies. In a recent systematic review and meta-analysis by Beyene et al [24], the overall prevalence of GBV ranged from 42.3% in Nigeria to 67.7% in Ethiopia. The prevalence of sexual violence ranged from 4.3 to 76.4%, physical violence ranged from 7.4 to 66.1%, and emotional violence prevalence ranged from 26.1 to 50.8%. The results obtained in our present study are within these ranges reported by Beyene et al [24].

Although the university can be considered as a microcosm of society, the results obtained in our present study should not be extrapolated to the general population in the other universities and in PNG as a whole. This is because of the highly selective nature of our study population. Apart from the small sample size the female university students are highly educated and may not be representative of the cross-section of females in the different social classes in PNG.

Our present study has a number of limitations. The actual non-response rate was higher than the predicted value used in the calculation of the sample size. A self-reporting questionnaire was used for data collection.

## CONCLUSION:

The results indicate the prevalence of GBV among female students in the UPNG. Verbal violence was the highest, followed by psychological violence, sexual violence and physical violence that the respondents have experienced personally. The sequence and prevalence were different with regards to the knowledge of the occurrence of violence against the colleagues of the respondents in that physical violence was the highest, followed by verbal violence, psychological violence and sexual violence. Male students were the main perpetrators in most cases of all the forms of violence, with minimal involvement of male lecturers. Proper awareness workshops and campaigns should be carried out in the university to educate both female and male students about GBV and its negative impacts. The GBV policies in the university should be enforced. A GBV center should be established where students can seek medical attention, counseling and other related services.

It is recommended that risk-reduction and health-promoting programs should be developed and implemented to ensure safety on campus through strict non-tolerance policies and appropriate penalties for perpetrators of GBV.

## REFERENCES:

1. Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action Adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna on 25 June 1993 UN Office of High Commission. [www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/vienna.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/vienna.pdf)
2. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: The Fourth World Conference on Women: Having met in Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995;

- [www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/Beijing\\_Declaration\\_and\\_Platform\\_for\\_Action](http://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/Beijing_Declaration_and_Platform_for_Action).
3. World Health Organisation. WHO Multi-country study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women. Geneva, Switzerland, 2005; [www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/violence/9241593512/en/](http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/violence/9241593512/en/)
  4. Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women Proclaimed by the UN General Assembly Resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993; [www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocitycrimes/Doc.21\\_declaration%20elimination%20vaw.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocitycrimes/Doc.21_declaration%20elimination%20vaw.pdf)
  5. World Health Organization. Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence. World Health Organization 2013. <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/85239>
  6. Borghini, A. Psychological Violence, 2019; [www.thoughtco.com/what-is-psychological-violence-2670714](http://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-psychological-violence-2670714).
  7. World Health Organization. Women's Health: Western Pacific Region. Geneva, Switzerland, pp. <https://iris.wpro.who.int/handle/10665.1/10413>; WHO 2001.
  8. Borghini, A. What is Verbal Violence? [www.thoughtco.com/what-is-verbal-violence-2670715](http://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-verbal-violence-2670715). 2019.
  9. Wu, J. Men- Leaders or Partners for change, 2018; [www.devpolicy.org/men-leaders-or-partners-for-change-20180507](http://www.devpolicy.org/men-leaders-or-partners-for-change-20180507).
  10. World Population Review, WPR 2018; <https://www.worldpopulationreview.com/countries/papua-new-guinea-population/>.
  11. Strathern, M. Introduction. In: S. Toft, ed. Domestic Violence in Papua New Guinea. Port Moresby: PNG Law Reform Commission, 1985, pp. 1-13 [www.paclii.org/pg/lawreform/PGLawRComm/1985/1.pdf](http://www.paclii.org/pg/lawreform/PGLawRComm/1985/1.pdf).
  12. Case Study: Addressing Gender-Based Violence with Companies in PNG [www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/c70d8db6-cacb-465d-b3a95068b54cd3c9/10953\\_Gender\\_Case\\_study\\_bcfw.pdf?mod=ajperes&cvid=lllleuh](http://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/c70d8db6-cacb-465d-b3a95068b54cd3c9/10953_Gender_Case_study_bcfw.pdf?mod=ajperes&cvid=lllleuh)
  13. Law Reform Commission of Papua New Guinea, Final Report on Domestic Violence: Report No. 14 1992 (Boroko: Papua New Guinea Law Reform Commission, 1992), [www.paclii.org/pg/lawreform/PGLawRComm/1985/1.pdf](http://www.paclii.org/pg/LRC/REP_14.htm)
  14. Jo Chandler; Analysis: Violence Against Women in PNG: How Men are getting away with murder. Lowy Institute for International Policy, August 2014. [www.files.ethz.ch/isn/183379/violence\\_against\\_women\\_in\\_png.pdf](http://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/183379/violence_against_women_in_png.pdf)
  15. Papua New Guinea national strategy to prevent and respond to gender based violence 2016–2025 [www.femilipng.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/PNG-GBV\\_Strategy-2016-2025\\_150816.pdf](http://www.femilipng.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/PNG-GBV_Strategy-2016-2025_150816.pdf). UNDP, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade;
  16. Bradley, C. S. Attitudes and Practices relating to Marital Violence among the Tolai of East New Britain, in: Domestic Violence in Papua New Guinea, Papua New Guinea Law Reform Commission, Port Moresby, 1985; pp. 32-71. [www.paclii.org/pg/lawreform/PGLawRComm/1985/1.pdf](http://www.paclii.org/pg/lawreform/PGLawRComm/1985/1.pdf)
  17. National Department of Health. Medical and Psychological care for Survivors of Sexual and Gender Based Violence, National Department of Health, Port Moresby, 2015, Papua New Guinea.
  18. Darko, E., Smith, W. & Walker, D. Gender violence in Papua New Guinea: The cost to Business, Overseas Development Institute, 2015. [www.odi.org/publications/9887-gender-violence-papua-new-guinea](http://www.odi.org/publications/9887-gender-violence-papua-new-guinea)
  19. Adinew, Y. M. and Hagos, M. A. Sexual Violence Against Female University students in Ethiopia: BMC International Health and Human Rights, Ethiopia 2017. [www.researchgate.net/publication/318669098\\_Sexual\\_violence\\_against\\_female\\_university\\_students\\_in\\_Ethiopia](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/318669098_Sexual_violence_against_female_university_students_in_Ethiopia)
  20. Nuraan Davids; Gender-based violence in South African universities: an institutional challenge: Council on Higher Education No.10, Nov 2019; pp 1-12. [www.researchgate.net/publication/339975323\\_Genderbased\\_violence\\_in\\_South\\_African\\_universities\\_an\\_institutional\\_challenge](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/339975323_Genderbased_violence_in_South_African_universities_an_institutional_challenge)
  21. Zubairulliyasu, A. I. S., Aliyu, M. H., Galadanci, H. S. & Salihu, H. M. Prevalence and correlates of gender-based violence among female university students in Northern Nigeria. African J of Reproductive Health, 2011; 15(3), pp. 123-134. [www.researchgate.net/publication/224937812\\_Prevalence\\_and\\_correlates\\_of\\_g](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/224937812_Prevalence_and_correlates_of_g)

- enderbased\_violence\_among\_female\_university\_students\_in\_Northern\_Nigeria.
22. Ejakait, V. I., Effects of Gender Based Violence Among students in Masinde Muliro University. Degree Thesis, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Masinde Muliro University, Kakamega, Kenya, 2014; 62 [www.researchgate.net/publication/335014091\\_Effect\\_of\\_Gender\\_Based\\_Violence\\_among\\_students\\_in\\_Masinde\\_Muliro\\_University\\_of\\_Science\\_and\\_Technology\\_Kakamega\\_County](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/335014091_Effect_of_Gender_Based_Violence_among_students_in_Masinde_Muliro_University_of_Science_and_Technology_Kakamega_County)
  23. Tora A. Assessment of sexual violence against female students in Wolaita Sodo University, Southern Ethiopia. *J Interpers Violence*; 2013; 28(11):2351–67.
  24. AddisuShunu Beyene, Catherine Chojenta, Hirbo Shore Roba, Alemu Sufa Melka and Deborah Loxton Gender-based violence among female youths in educational institutions of Sub-Saharan Africa: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMC Systematic Reviews* (2019) 8:59 <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13643-019-0969-9>
  25. Bekele T, Deressa W. Experience of Sexual Coercion and Associated Factors among Female Students of Ambo University in Ethiopia. *Science Journal of Public Health*. Vol. 2, No. 6, 2014, pp. 532–538. doi:10.11648/j.sjph.20140206.16.
  26. Bekele T, Kaso M, Gebremariam A, Deressa W. Sexual violence and associated factors among female students of Madawalabu University in Ethiopia. *Epidemiology (sunnyvale)*. 2015;5:190. doi:10.4172/2161-1165-1000190.
  27. Jacquelyn D. Wiersma-Mosley, and Kristen N. Jozkowski. A Brief Report of Sexual Violence among Universities with NCAA Division I Athletic Programs. *Behav. Sci.* 2019, 9, 17; doi:10.3390/bs9020017 [www.mdpi.com/journal/behavsci](http://www.mdpi.com/journal/behavsci) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6406521/pdf/behavsci-09-00017.pdf>