

A STUDY OF ALLEGED RAPE CASES IN SINGAPORE

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SYNOPSIS

This study reveals an increase in the incidence rate of the alleged rape cases in Singapore. This increase was mainly due to the increase in our younger female population and might also be due to an increase in the permissiveness of our teenagers. It could also be due to an increase in the rate of reporting by these alleged victims. Also the incidence rate was highest in the Indians, next the Malays, and lowest in the Chinese. Thus, it will be interesting to pursue the investigation into the possible underlying factors. Majority of the alleged rape victims were aged 20 years and below. The low incidence of medical evidence of sexual assault was mainly due to the delay in the victims seeking gynaecological examination. Thus, the public should be advised to lodge a police report as soon as possible.

INTRODUCTION

Since the first of January 1964, all (or almost all) alleged rape cases in Singapore were registered and seen in Kandang Kerbau Hospital. However, after the 'Hospital Catchment Rezoning' in February 1975, some of the cases could have been seen in the Obstetric and Gynaecological Units of Toa Payoh Hospital and Alexandra Hospital, although the majority of the cases were still seen in Kandang Kerbau Hospital. Between 1964 and 1976 a total of 2,158 cases were seen in Kandang Kerbau Hospital.

Table 1 shows the yearly and racial distribution of the alleged rape cases. In 1964 there were 86 cases and this figure rose gradually over the years to 220 cases in 1976. This increase was due mainly to the increase in our young female population and might also be due to the increase in the permissiveness of our teenagers. It could also be due to an increase in the rate of reporting by these alleged victims.

1404 cases or 65.0% were Chinese, 449 or 20.9% were Malays, 265 or 12.2% were Indians, and 40 or 1.9% were of other racial origin.

Table 2 shows the racial distribution of the Singapore female population from 1964 to 1976. The proportion of the female

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TABLE 1: The racial distribution of the alleged rape cases (1964 — 1976)

Number of cases									
Race \ Year	Chinese	%	Malays	%	Indians	%	Others	%	Total
1964	48	55.8	17	19.7	20	23.2	1	1.3	86
1965	87	63.5	26	18.9	21	15.3	3	2.3	137
1966	92	64.3	30	20.9	20	13.9	1	0.9	143
1967	99	68.7	21	14.5	23	15.9	1	0.9	144
1968	104	65.8	25	15.8	27	17.0	2	1.4	158
1969	93	62.8	29	19.5	20	13.5	6	4.2	148
1970	104	66.2	39	24.8	11	7.0	3	2.0	157
1971	118	62.7	42	22.3	20	10.6	8	4.4	188
1972	128	65.9	45	23.1	18	9.2	3	1.8	194
1973	129	66.4	39	20.0	23	11.8	3	1.8	194
1974	119	64.6	43	23.3	19	10.3	3	1.8	184
1975	138	67.3	49	23.9	13	6.3	5	2.5	205
1976	145	65.9	44	20.0	30	13.6	1	0.5	220
Total	1404	65.0	449	20.9	265	12.2	40	1.9	2158

TABLE 2: The racial distribution of the Singapore female population (1964 - 1976)

Population (Female)									
Race \ Year	Chinese	%	Malays	%	Indians	%	Others	%	Total
1964	693200	77.8	130300	14.6	48600	5.4	18000	2.2	890100
1965	710000	77.7	135600	14.8	50000	5.4	17500	2.1	913100
1966	727100	77.4	141200	15.0	51500	5.4	18800	2.2	938600
1967	742300	77.3	145400	15.1	52900	5.5	19600	2.1	960200
1968	756700	77.3	147900	15.1	53800	5.5	19500	2.1	977900
1969	770100	77.3	150400	15.1	54600	5.4	20500	2.2	995600
1970	783400	77.3	153000	15.1	57600	5.6	18400	2.0	1012400
1971	796900	77.3	155900	15.1	59000	5.7	18900	1.9	1030700
1972	810900	77.2	158800	15.1	60300	5.7	19400	2.0	1049400
1973	825400	77.2	161700	15.1	61600	5.7	19800	2.0	1068500
1974	838600	77.2	164300	15.1	62700	5.7	20400	2.0	1086000
1975	850400	77.1	166600	15.1	63800	5.7	20900	2.1	1101700
1976	861400	77.1	168600	15.1	64700	5.7	21500	2.1	1116200

population who were Chinese ranged from 77.1% to 77.8%, Malays from 14.6% to 15.1%, Indians from 5.4% to 5.7%, and other races from 1.9% to 2.2%. The racial distribution of the female population was fairly steady over the years.

Table 3 and Figure 1 show the incidence rate of alleged rape cases per 100,000 female population from 1964 to 1976. The crude incidence rate from 1964 to 1976 was 13.81 per 100,000 Chinese female population, 24.54 per 100,000 Malay female population, 35.76 per 100,000 Indian female population and

15.80 per 100,000 female population of other racial origin. The incidence rate for all ethnic groups was 16.42 per 100,000 female population. It was observed that the Indians had the highest incidence rate, followed by the Malays and lowest in the Chinese. This was statistically significant.

386 or 77.2% of the alleged rape victims were aged between 10-19 years. As the majority of the alleged rape victims were aged 10-19 years, the incidence rate of the alleged rape cases per 10,000 females aged 10-19 years was calculated.

TABLE 3: Incidence rate of rape cases per 100,000 female population

Year \ Race	Chinese	Malays	Indians	Others	All Ethnic Groups
1964	6.92	13.05	41.15	5.56	9.66
1965	12.25	19.17	42.00	17.14	15.00
1966	12.65	21.25	38.83	5.32	15.24
1967	13.34	14.44	43.48	5.10	15.00
1968	13.74	16.90	50.19	10.26	16.16
1969	12.08	19.28	36.63	29.27	14.87
1970	13.28	25.49	19.10	16.30	15.51
1971	14.81	26.94	33.90	42.33	18.24
1972	15.78	28.34	29.85	15.46	18.49
1973	15.63	24.12	37.34	15.15	18.16
1974	14.19	26.17	30.30	14.71	16.94
1975	16.23	29.41	20.38	23.92	18.61
1976	16.83	26.10	46.37	4.65	19.71
Crude Rate	13.81	24.54	35.76	15.80	16.42



Fig. 1 Incidence of Reported Rape Cases among Different Ethnic Groups in Singapore, 1964 to 1976
(Incidence Rates per 100,000 Female Population)

TABLE 4: Female population aged 10 — 19 years

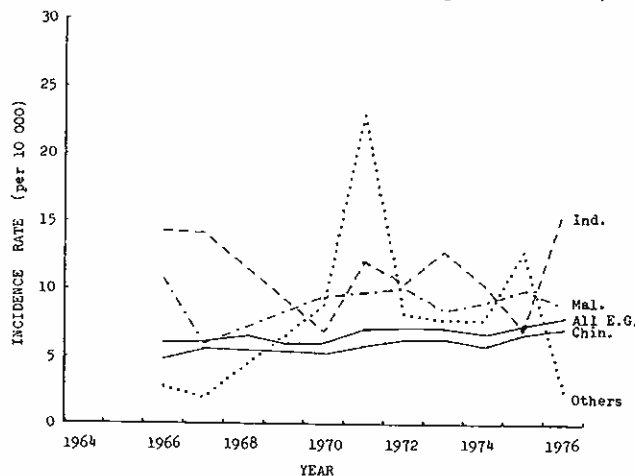
Year \ Race	Chinese	Malays	Indians	Others	All Ethnic Groups
1964					
1965					
1966 +	191566	28006	14003	3719	237294
1967 x	178461	35384	16302	5211	235358
1968*					241900
1969					250100
1970	199800	41100	16100	3400	260400
1971	202800	43100	16700	3500	266100
1972	204800	44800	17300	3700	270600
1973	205400	46300	18000	3900	273600
1974	206100	47800	18400	3900	276200
1975	204700	49100	18600	3900	276300
1976	202800	50000	18800	4000	275600

+ Singapore Sample Household Survey, 1966, Report No. 1, p. 24
 x The Malayan Economic Review, Vol. XV, No. 1, April 1970, p. 704
 * 1968 onwards, Yearbook of Statistics

TABLE 5: Incidence rates of rape cases per 10,000 females aged 10 — 19 years

Year \ Race	Chinese	Malays	Indians	Others	All Ethnic Groups
1964					
1965					
1966	4.80	10.71	14.28	2.69	6.03
1967	5.55	5.93	14.11	1.92	6.12
1968					6.53
1969					5.92
1970	5.21	9.49	6.83	8.82	6.03
1971	5.82	9.74	11.98	22.86	7.07
1972	6.25	10.04	10.40	8.11	7.17
1973	6.28	8.42	12.78	7.69	7.09
1974	5.77	9.00	10.33	7.69	6.66
1975	6.74	9.98	6.99	12.82	7.42
1976	7.15	8.80	15.96	2.50	7.98
Crude Rate	5.97	9.13	11.48	7.95	6.76

Fig. 2 Incidence of Reported Rape Cases among Different Ethnic Groups in Singapore, 1964 to 1976 (Incidence Rates per 10,000 Females aged 10-19 Years)



Tables 4 and 5, and Figure 2 show the racial distribution of the female population aged 10-19 years and the number of alleged rape cases per 10,000 females aged 10-19 years.

It was observed that the Indians again had the highest incidence rate, followed by the Malays and lowest in the Chinese. This was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). This difference might be attributed to the differences in the cultural and socio-economic status of the different races.

Five hundred of the 609 cases seen between 1974 and 1976 were further analysed in detail.

Figure 3 shows the age distribution of the alleged

rape victims. Two hundred and sixty four or 52.8% were between the ages of 11 and 15, while 119 or 23.8% were between the ages of 16 and 20 years. Sixty seven or 13.4% were aged 10 and below. A total of 450 or 90% were aged 20 years or less. The youngest alleged victim was aged 2 years and the oldest alleged victim was a spinister aged 74 years. The youngest victim with positive evidence of attempted intercourse was a 4-year old girl, whose urethral smear showed spermatozoa.

Figure 4 shows the marital status of the alleged victims. Four hundred and seventy six or 95.2% were single while 17 or 3.4% were married. Three were divorced, three were separated and one was a widow.

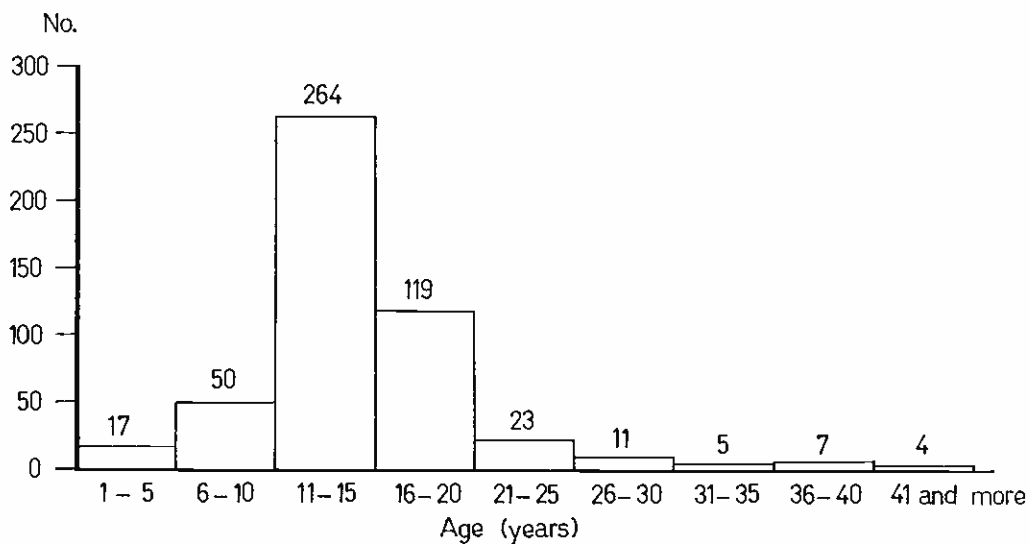


Fig 3 Age distribution of the 500 alleged rape cases

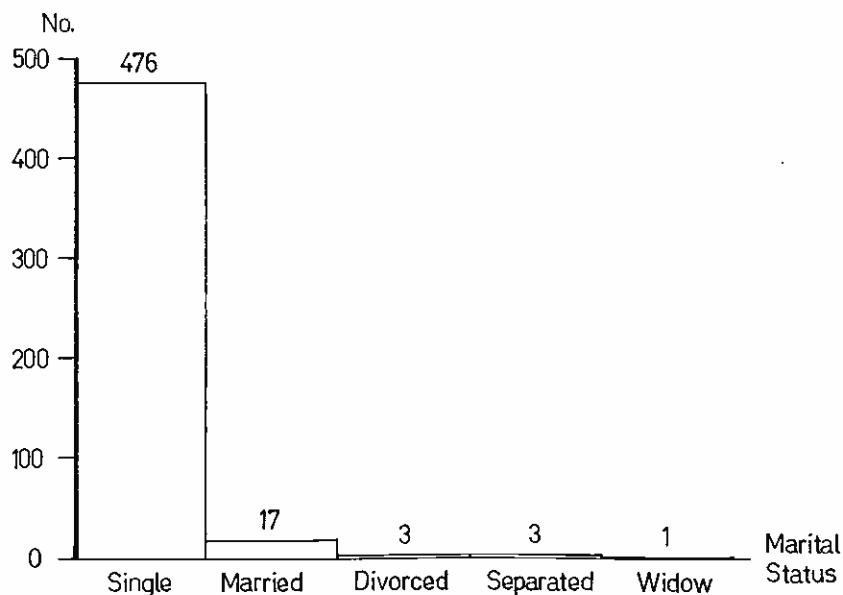


Fig. 4 Marital Status of the 500 alleged rape cases

TABLE 6: Occupation of the alleged rape victims

Occupation	No. of Cases
Student	118
Factory Worker	27
Domestic servant	15
Salesgirl/Waitress	19
Clerk/secretary	2
Bargirl/dance hostess	5
Prostitute	2
Manager	1
Unemployed	187
Occupation unrecorded	124
TOTAL	500

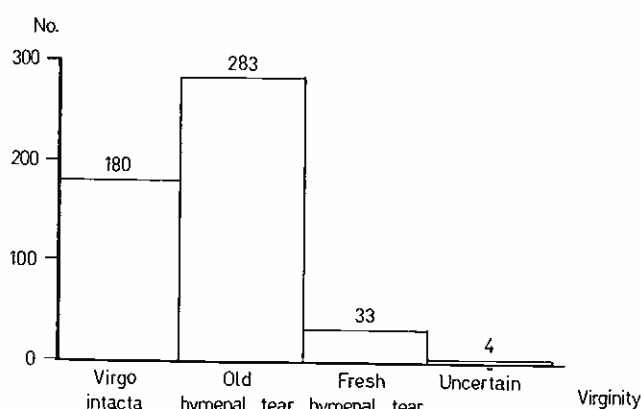


Fig. 5 Virginity of the 500 alleged rape cases

TABLE 7: Relationship between the accused and the Rape Victim

Relationship Between Accused and Victim	No. of cases				
	Chinese	Malays	Indians	Others	Total
Natural father	2	3	3	—	8
Natural brother	2	—	—	—	2
Natural uncle	—	—	2	—	2
Step father/foster father	6	5	1	—	12
Brother-in-law	5	—	—	—	5
TOTAL	15	8	6	—	29

Table 6 presents the occupation of the 500 alleged rape victims. Occupation was not stated in 124 cases, and 187 were unemployed. Two were prostitutes and 5 were bar girls or dance hostesses. Eighteen alleged victims had venereal disease. Eleven of them had gonorrhoea and 7 of them had a positive VDRL and FTA. All these patients were referred to the Venereal Diseases Hospital.

Figure 5 shows the virginity of the 500 alleged rape cases. One hundred and eighty or 36% of the alleged victims were found to be virgo intacta. Two hundred and eighty three or 56.6% had old hymenal tears while 33 or 6.6% had fresh hymenal tears. The examining doctors were uncertain about the virginity of four victims.

Besides the fresh hymenal tears, the other evidences of recent sexual assault were the presence of spermatozoa in 43 cases. Injuries to the genitalia were noted in 15 cases. In one victim, there were extensive tears of the vagina requiring stitching.

A total of 50 cases had medical evidence of recent sexual assault. Extragenital injuries were noted in 43 cases. Injuries to the breasts, lips and neck were common. Four of these patients had head injuries. There were no mortality in these 500 cases.

This low incidence of medical evidence of sexual

assault was probably due to the delay in the victims seeking gynaecological examination. Only 218 or 43.6% of the victims were seen within 72 hours. One hundred and ninety four or 38.8% of the alleged victims were seen and examined more than a week after the alleged incident. Thirty one cases or 6.2% gave a positive history of taking drugs before the alleged incident. There were 20 pregnancies in these alleged victims and 14 of them had their pregnancies terminated. One patient aborted spontaneously and 5 patients had normal vaginal deliveries at term.

Twenty nine victims were allegedly raped by a family member. Table 7 displays the relationship between the victims and the accused.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors wish to thank Assoc Prof Tye Cho-Yook, Department of Social Medicine and Public Health, University of Singapore, Prof S S Ratnam, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, University of Singapore and Clin. Prof Y Salmon, Head "B" Unit, Kangar Kerbau Hospital for their help in the preparation of this paper.

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