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## Memo

**Date:** October 18th, 2017; Revised

**To:** Harvard University Researchers

**From:** David Cantor, Susan Chibnall

**Subject:** Revision to Estimates for the AAU Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Misconduct

Recently, in working with one of the universities that participated in the 2015 AAU Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct, an error was found for two estimates cited in the report:

- Penetration by physical force only since enrolling in college (PPFO)
- Attempted penetration by physical force since enrolling in college (APPF)

The error potentially affects estimates in tables 3.1a to 3.1f of your report. These tables include the above estimates for each of six gender/enrollment groups (undergraduate females, undergraduate males, graduate females, graduate males, undergraduate TGQN, graduate TGQN). For many schools, the estimates for those identifying as TGQN were suppressed because of small sample sizes. When these estimates were suppressed, the revision affects estimates in Tables 3.1a to 3.1d.

A third variable representing a different type of assault on the data-set was also affected (nonconsensual sexual contact by force since entering college). This variable used the “attempted penetration” variable in its derivation. However, this variable was not cited in either the report or included in the tables. The error affected the empirical estimates at the second decimal place. Because this variable was not used in any analyses and the error had no significant empirical effect, it is not discussed below. The corrections proposed below, however, will also include this corrected variable.

The error occurred in the portion of the SAS code which checked whether reports of different behaviors/tactics were for the same incident. This check was done to create estimates that followed the hierarchical counting rules of the FBI and Clery Act. The error resulted in double counting some incidents of PPFO and APPF.

This memo provides: (1) the corrected estimates and a brief discussion of the magnitude of the error, (2) our suggestions to correct the report, data-sets and codebook, and (3) a description of the reasons why the error occurred.

We apologize for the error. We have re-checked all of the code that created these and any related variables. We appreciate the feedback that raised the problem and welcome similar feedback as you analyze the data.

### Corrected Estimates

Tables 1 and 2 provide the original and revised estimates for your institution for each of the six gender/enrollment groups. In a separate file, we have provided the revised report text. These revisions occur in section 3.3 of the report and are tracked with editorial marks when the estimate changed. Since not all of the estimates in Tables 1 and 2 were cited in the report, there are some schools where the text does not change at all.

The PPFO estimate was generated to provide readers comparative perspectives of the magnitude of penetration by force versus incapacitation. For males and females, the error changed the estimate from 0 to .3 percentage points, depending on the school. Given the size of the revision, we do not believe it has a noticeable effect on substantive conclusions about the level or the relative prevalence of penetration by physical force versus incapacitation. But you, as the individual analysts, are in the best position to make this judgement. The size of the change is greater for the two TGQN groups (undergraduates; graduate students). However, the small number of students in this group made it difficult to make any substantive statements about them in the reports. None of the school reports cited these TGQN numbers. For undergraduates identifying as TGQN, many of the estimates are suppressed because of small sample sizes. There are a few schools for which the correction shifts the estimate by several percentage points and is not suppressed. These estimates have very large relative standard errors and are difficult to use for substantive analysis.

The largest difference is for APPF (Table 2). One reason for publishing estimates of APPF is to provide the reader with the relative magnitude of completed versus attempted forced penetrations. While APPF meets legal and university definitions of sexual misconduct, it is not as easily measured as completed acts.<sup>1</sup> Some surveys, for example, do not include this in their measure of misconduct.<sup>2</sup> We recognized this when producing the summary measures for the different types of misconduct by generating estimates that did not include attempted penetration (see tables 4.6 to 4.11 in the AAU report).<sup>3</sup>

For females and males, the error ranged from 0 to 1.2, with the largest changes occurring for undergraduate females. This has the effect of reducing the relative size of attempts as compared to completed acts of penetration. For TGQN, most of the estimates were suppressed because of small sample sizes. There are a few schools for which the correction shifts the estimate by several percentage points and is not suppressed. Similar to PPFO, the standard errors on these estimates are so large, it is difficult to use these data for most substantive analyses.

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<sup>1</sup>Testa, M., VanZile-Tamsen, C., Livingston, J.A., & Koss, M.P. (2004). Assessing women's experiences of sexual aggression using the Sexual Experiences Survey: Evidence for validity and implications for research. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 29, 345-352.

<sup>2</sup>Krebs, C., Lindquist, C., Berzofsky, M., Shook-Sa, B., Peterson, K., Planty, M., Langton, L., & Stroop, J. (2016). *Campus climate survey validation study final technical report*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, R&DP-2015:04, NCJ 249545.

<sup>3</sup>These tables were generated after similar comments were received from schools on the initial table shells. None of the estimates in these tables were affected

### Options for correcting the error

We delivered a report, data-set and codebook to each institution. This section describes our proposed procedures to correct the error for these three products. We understand the publicity surrounding the report makes correcting even a few estimates very sensitive. If these procedures are problematic for a particular institution, please contact us and we can discuss an alternative solution.

#### *Report*

As an addendum to this memo, we have provided revised text to the final report. These are revisions to the same files delivered to you in September 2015. The corrected numbers in Tables 1 and 2 can be used to revise the data tables that were also delivered to you.

#### *The data-set and codebook*

We will provide a revised data-set and codebook, in the same format as originally delivered, with the corrections to the affected variables.

### Description of the error

When a respondent answered ‘yes’ to one of the screening items on sexual contact (questions G1 – G9), a series of follow-up questions asked whether the behavior/tactic in question was part of an incident that had already been reported for that time period. For example, if someone reported penetration involving physical force in the academic year 2011 – 2012 and then reported sexual touching involving incapacitation in the same school year, he/she was asked if these were part of the same incident. This identified incidents that involved different types of sexual misconduct. This procedure allowed the analysis to create estimates using the hierarchy rules applied by the FBI and Clery reporting. For the above example, the incident would have been counted as one incident of forced penetration because the FBI/Clery hierarchy rules give this behavior a higher priority than sexual touching.

The error occurred when creating the variable for APPF. When counting the number of times this happened, one line of code was erroneously left out. This resulted in double counting some estimates in both the completed and attempted penetration by physical force categories.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, the estimate for APPF since enrolled was inflated.

The code to create PPFO relied on the APPF estimate. Consequently the PPFO estimate was also affected. However, because PPFO also includes completed forced penetration, the magnitude of the error was reduced.

If interested in reviewing the SAS code that generated the revised estimates, the variable that has the error is the count of the number of attempted forced penetrations (SA\_RAPE\_FORCE\_ATT\_SEC) (see documentation in the codebook). This variable was used to derive the prevalence estimates published in the report

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<sup>4</sup>This problem was limited to the variables for ‘since enrolling in college’. The estimates of ‘current school year’ were not affected.

(SA\_RAPE\_FORCE\_ATT\_SEC\_PREV). The number of penetrations by physical force only (SA\_RAPE\_FORCE\_SEC) used the counts for attempted penetrations, which led to the error in the prevalence estimate for this type of incident (SA\_RAPE\_FORCE\_SEC\_PREV).

**Table 1. Original and Revised Estimates of Penetration by Force Only Since Entering College by Gender and Enrollment (Revised)**

	Original		Revised		Difference of Percents
	Number <sup>†</sup>	Percent	Number <sup>†</sup>	Percent	
Undergraduates					
Females	207	6.1 (0.4)	205	6.1 (0.4)	0.0
Males	45	1.2 (0.2)	45	1.2 (0.2)	0.0
TGQN	4	8.3 (3.4)	4	8.3 (3.4)	0.0
Graduate Students					
Females	106	1.6 (0.1)	104	1.6 (0.1)	0.0
Males	17	0.2 (0.1)	15	0.2 (0.1)	0.0
TGQN	9	12.1 (3.8)	9	12.1 (3.8)	0.0

Standard errors in parentheses

\* Estimate would be suppressed using rules in the AAU report

'--' Indicates no reported victimizations

† Estimated number of victims

**Table 2. Original and Revised Estimates of Attempted Penetration by Force Only Since Entering College by Gender and Enrollment (Revised)**

	Original		Revised		Difference of Percents
	Number <sup>†</sup>	Percent	Number <sup>†</sup>	Percent	
Undergraduates					
Females	132	3.9 (0.3)	114	3.4 (0.3)	0.5
Males	27	0.7 (0.1)	27	0.7 (0.1)	0.0
TGQN	3*	6.2* (3.1)	3*	6.2* (3.1)	0.0
Graduate Students					
Females	69	1.1 (0.1)	54	0.8 (0.1)	0.3
Males	7	0.1 (0.0)	2*	0.0* (0.0)	0.1
TGQN	8	10.0 (3.5)	8	10.0 (3.5)	0.0

Standard errors in parentheses

\* Estimate would be suppressed using rules in the AAU report

'--' Indicates no reported victimizations

† Estimated number of victims