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Presentation title: Rape myth acceptance among Danish youths: Implications for sexual assault prevention

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Sexual assault is one of the most serious types of crime and is associated with many harmful consequences for both victims and society. Systematic knowledge regarding the nature and extent of local rape myths can inform prevention efforts. This presentation outlines results from a recent survey study using the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMA-DK) conducted by the Danish Crime Prevention Council and Aarhus University, which was designed to provide such information. Analysis of 2.202 survey responses from youths aged 16-30 indicate that while most young people report low levels of rape myth acceptance, a considerable minority express a number of problematic beliefs towards rape situations, rape victims and rape perpetrators, including myths surrounding perpetrators' (lack of) personal responsibility and victims' (lack of) credibility. In this sample, rape myth acceptance was highest among young men aged 16-20, identifying this group as an especially important target for intervention. In line with international research, these results point to crime prevention potential in launching Danish initiatives that aim to dispel rape myths. Evidence-based development, targeting, and evaluation of such initiatives should be an integrated part of a holistic prevention strategy against sexual assault.