



Comparing Sexual Assault Survey Prevalence Rates at Military Service Academies and U.S. Colleges

Executive Summary

The Association of American Universities (AAU) *Campus Survey of Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct* was designed to assess the prevalence of sexual assault and misconduct at several U.S. Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs). Similarly, the *2014 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey (2014 SAGR)* was designed to assess the prevalence of sexual assault and misconduct at Department of Defense Military Service Academies (MSAs). This report provides a preliminary comparison of results of these two studies, with differences in methodology and metrics noted. Future analyses will be performed based on the upcoming *2016 SAGR* study planned for spring 2016.

These studies were not designed to be comparable and differ in many important ways, including survey administration, weighting, design, and populations. Due to the differences detailed in this report, there is no way to directly statistically compare the results from the two surveys. As such, caution must be taken when comparing the results and comparisons cannot be made beyond the broadest measures. With those caveats noted, examining results from the two studies side by side indicates that MSAs compare favorably to the campuses surveyed by the AAU study. Results for MSAs were similar to or more positive than results for the AAU IHEs surveyed in every relevant comparison. Most broadly, prevalence rates for the academic year in which the survey was carried out¹ for nonconsensual or unwanted sexual contact² appear lower at MSAs than at AAU IHEs for undergraduate women (MSAs: 8.2%; IHEs: 17.0%) and undergraduate men (MSAs: 1.1%; IHEs: 4.4%)³ as illustrated in Figure 1.

¹ The SAGR study was carried out in spring of 2014, while the AAU study was carried out in spring of 2015. Comparisons for the 'current year' refer to the academic year in which the survey was carried out.

² Nonconsensual sexual contact here refers to nonconsensual sexual contact by any tactic. This is the closest comparison to the definition of unwanted sexual contact used by DMDC. Nonconsensual sexual contact by any tactic is defined as being the result of physical force or threat of physical force; being incapacitated because of drugs, alcohol or being unconscious, asleep or passed out; coercive threats of non-physical harm or promised rewards; or failure to obtain affirmative consent.

³ Table 3-21, AAU Report

Figure 1.
Overall Comparisons of Prevalence Rates for the Academic Year Surveyed

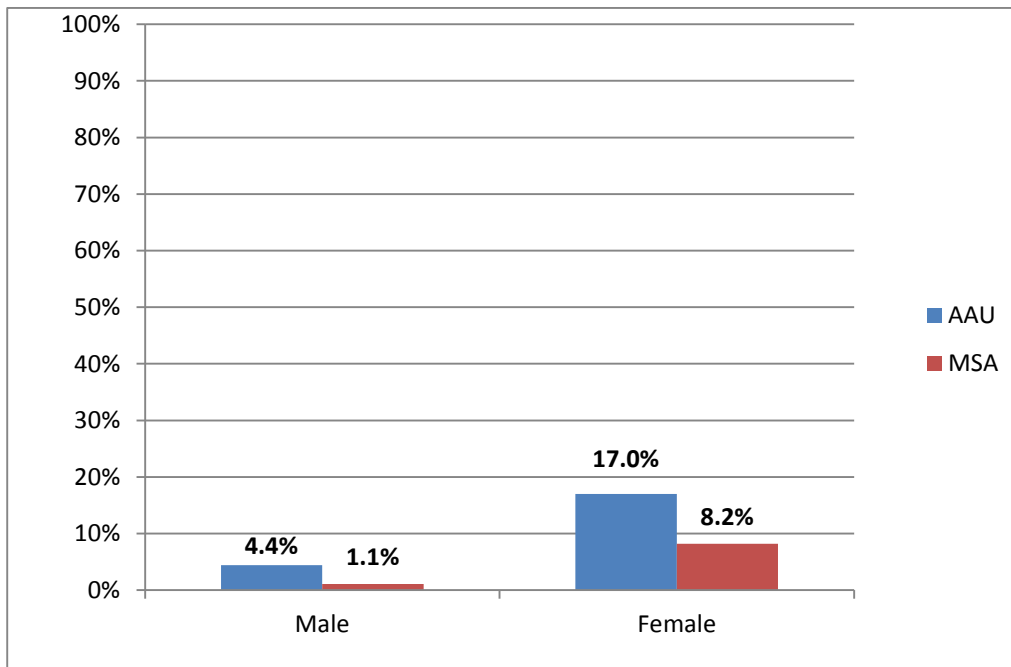


Chart compares rates at AAU IHEs and DoD MSAs. Results refer to instances of nonconsensual/unwanted sexual contact for all undergraduates for the academic year ending in 2014.

Prevalence rates for such behaviors since students entered the IHE or MSA also appear to be lower at MSAs than at AAU IHEs for undergraduate women (MSAs: 16.8%; IHEs: 28.5%) and undergraduate men (MSAs: 2.1%; IHEs: 7.1%)⁴ as illustrated in Figure 2.

⁴ Table 3-22, AAU Report

Figure 2.
Overall Comparisons of Prevalence Rates Since Entering College

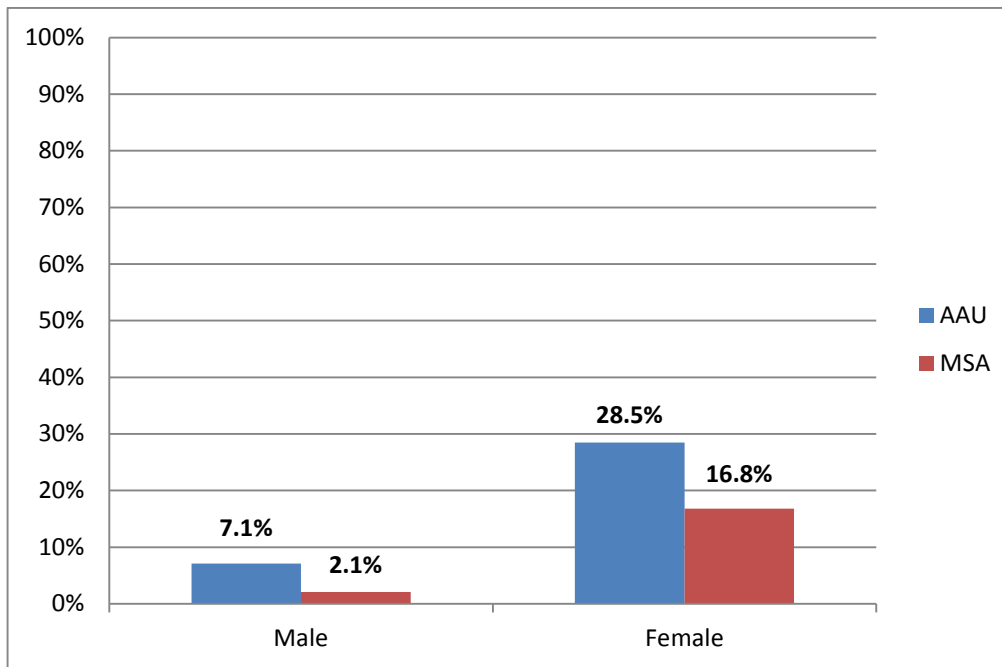


Chart compares rates at AAU IHEs and DoD MSAs. Results refer to instances of nonconsensual/unwanted sexual contact for all undergraduates since entering the IHE or Academy/Preparatory School.

Introduction

The comparison between the *Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) for the Association of American Universities (AAU)* (Westat, 2015) conducted by Westat and the *2014 Service Academy Gender Relations (2014 SAGR)* (Defense Manpower Data Center, 2014) survey conducted by Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) first examines the extent to which the results of these studies can be compared. As such, it examines whether we can answer the question “How do the Military Service Academies (MSAs) compare to civilian colleges?” using these two survey reports. Table 1 below provides a brief overview of the characteristics of the two studies taken into consideration in the comparability analysis.

Table 1.
Study Characteristics

2014 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey	AAU Report on Institutes of Higher Education
Census of 3 DoD MSAs	Census of 26/62 AAU IHEs, plus Dartmouth
Pen and Paper Survey	Online Survey
Population: 12,800	Population: 780,000
Average response rate: 66%	Average Response Rate: 19.3%
Weighting by gender and class year	Weighting by several variables
No incentive offered	Respondents given incentives to participate ⁵
Undergraduates only surveyed; no graduate students surveyed	Undergraduate and graduates surveyed
Two gender categories reported	Three gender categories reported
Results mainly reported for current academic year	Results mainly reported for experience since entering college
Metric: Unwanted Sexual Contact (USC)	Metric: Nonconsensual Sexual Contact

This Survey Note looks at three aspects of the studies that will allow the reader to understand the comparability of the results: survey sampling, administration, and weighting; survey populations; and the survey questions. MSAs are compared to AAU IHEs to the extent possible. Results for MSAs were similar to or more positive than results for the AAU IHEs surveyed. Most broadly, prevalence rates for nonconsensual or unwanted sexual contact were lower at MSAs than at AAU IHEs for undergraduate women (MSAs: 8.2%; IHEs: 17.0%) and undergraduate men (MSAs: 1.1%; IHEs: 4.4%) for the current academic year. However, such comparisons must be interpreted cautiously, as the studies were not designed to be comparable and direct statistical comparisons are not possible.

Survey Sampling, Administration, and Weighting

Sampling

Surveys of large populations generally gather data on a statistical sample of the population rather than trying to gather data on the entire population. Often this sample is chosen to be representative of the whole population, based on certain demographics deemed to be important and relevant. For smaller populations, or in instances where sampling is insufficient to provide needed information, researchers may survey everyone in the population of interest. This “sample of everyone” is called a census and can also be done when the population is smaller and more accessible such as at a college, university, or MSA.

Both approaches have the same challenge: the results may not be representative of the full population because not everyone responds to the survey. For this reason, the survey results are statistically adjusted once the data have been collected, and each response is weighted in order to make the overall results representative of its population.

⁵ Incentives varied by institution and not all students received an incentive to participate. Details can be found in Appendix C.

The study conducted by Westat invited all members of the population of interest to complete the survey in order to estimate the frequency of nonconsensual sexual contact at U.S. colleges and universities (except for one university, where a sample of the university population was chosen). The *2014 SAGR* study conducted by DMDC used a similar approach to estimate the frequency of unwanted sexual assault at the MSAs. As such, both studies surveyed a census rather than a sample of their target populations.

The population of interest for the Westat study was the 26 AAU IHEs⁶, plus Dartmouth (not a member of AAU), that participated in the study.⁷ However, the AAU IHEs are not representative of all U.S. colleges and universities. The AAU represents 60 prestigious research universities in the U.S., and as such represents the undergraduate experience of a relatively small percentage of all U.S. college students. The IHEs surveyed may be quite different in many ways, including unwanted gender-related experiences, compared to the many small colleges, satellite campuses, and regional universities that many U.S. undergraduates attend. In addition, it is not clear that the 26 of the 60 U.S. AAU IHEs surveyed are representative of the AAU members in general.

The population of interest for *2014 SAGR* was cadets and midshipmen at the three DoD MSAs (U.S. Military Academy [USMA], U.S. Naval Academy [USNA], and U.S. Air Force Academy [USFA]).

Administration

The AAU study used an online platform for its survey for completion on the Internet, while the *2014 SAGR* study used a pen and paper questionnaire and administered the survey on-site in large group sessions. The AAU population is much larger than the MSA population and the study was interested in all students at 27 IHEs (N = 779,170), whereas the *2014 SAGR* study was interested in all students at the DoD MSAs (N = 12,880).⁸ Both studies made the questionnaire available to all members of these populations. The AAU study had an average response rate of 19.3%, while the *2014 SAGR* study has a much higher response rate of 66%. The response rates for the AAU study ranged from a low of 7% for some IHEs to a high of 53%. For the *2014 SAGR*, response rates ranged 63% to 71%. While weighting can account for nonresponse, difference in response rates may nonetheless impact comparability between the two efforts.

Weighting

Data were weighted in both studies to account for the people who were invited to partake, but declined, or did not answer a sufficient number of questions. However, while Westat weighted the data based on several demographic variables, the *2014 SAGR* weighting was based on gender and class year only, given the very limited number of demographic items included on the anonymous *2014 SAGR* survey. Data on race and age were not collected from the MSA survey respondents.

Although both sets of responses were weighted to match their populations, the response rate for the AAU study is lower than similar studies carried out on the subject of sexual assault on college

⁶ Participating IHEs are listed in Appendix A.

⁷ For the sake of simplicity, Dartmouth is included in results that refer to AAU IHEs, rather than repeatedly referring to "AAU IHEs plus Dartmouth."

⁸ The *2014 SAGR* study also surveyed and reported results for students at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy (USCGA). However, as USCGA is not a DoD MSA, these results are not referred to in this report.

campuses such as the Campus Sexual Assault Study (Krebs, Lindquist, Warner, Fisher, & Martin, 2007), National College Woman's Sexual Violence Survey (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000), and the MIT Community Attitudes on Sexual Assault.⁹ To assess the impact, scientific survey groups follow industry standards to conduct Nonresponse Bias Analyses when response rates are considered low and may result in nonresponse bias. The nonresponse bias analysis conducted by Westat indicates that the low response rates may result in estimates being higher than they actually are. Specifically, the AAU study reports that Westat carried out three nonresponse bias analyses.

Two of these three analyses provide evidence that non-responders tended to be less likely to report victimization. This implies that the survey estimates related to victimization and selected attitude items may be biased upwards (i.e., somewhat too high).¹⁰

DMDC also conducted a Nonresponse Bias Analysis of *2014 SAGR* concluding there was little evidence of bias in the estimates.

It should also be pointed out that participants in the AAU study were offered monetary incentives or the chance to win money for participating. These incentives were not consistent across all IHEs.¹¹ Participants in the *2014 SAGR* study were not offered incentives to participate.

Population

While the populations studied are different in one obvious way—student at MSAs are members of the military, while students at AAU IHEs are generally not—there are also other demographic differences. The *2014 SAGR* surveyed undergraduate students only, as the MSAs do not have graduate or professional students. However, AAU IHEs do, and these students were considered part of the population of interest and also surveyed.

Therefore, any statistic from the AAU report that refers to the population generally contains a large number of students (graduate and professional) that does not exist in the population of the MSAs. The response rate was different for undergraduate (17.4%) and graduate professional students (23.2%). However, this survey note references results for undergraduates only, as graduate/professional students were not surveyed for the *2014 SAGR* study.

The IHEs surveyed in the AAU study also varied greatly in size and included both public and private universities. This is important as MSAs have relatively small enrollment numbers and should be compared very cautiously to large universities that have several times more undergraduate students. Indeed, the size of the IHE had an effect on several outcomes of interest. There also seem to be some differences between public and private universities. For example, the response rate for private universities was 34.2%, while it was 16.5% for public universities.

The AAU report points out the significance of these differences for rates of unwanted sexual contact.

⁹ See two releases provided at <http://web.mit.edu/surveys/health/>

¹⁰ AAU Report, p vi.

¹¹ Details on the incentives offered to students in the AAU IHE study are included in Appendix C.

With respect to the IHE characteristics, these results show small, but statistically significant, differences between different types of schools. For undergraduate females, IHEs with a lower proportion of females had a rate of 21.9 percent compared to campuses with the highest proportion of females (23.8%). For undergraduate females, there were also small differences by the size of the enrollment, with smaller institutions having a rate of 24.4 percent compared to 22.5 percent for larger institutions. Private universities had a higher rate of 25.3 percent compared to public universities at 22.8 percent. Universities with a low proportion of undergraduates had a higher rate than those with a higher proportion of undergraduates (25.7% vs. 21.6%).¹²

The AAU study also has a wider range of categories for the gender of the respondent. While the 2014 SAGR study classifies respondents as either male or female, the AAU study includes a category for “TGQN,” representing all respondents who answered as “transgender,” “genderqueer,” “questioning,” “nonconforming,” or as something not listed on the survey. This group had high rates of being victims of nonconsensual sexual contact and harassment. However, it is worth noting that only 1.5% of AAU respondents identified as TGQN. Because the AAU sample is so large overall, it was possible for Westat to include results for this category in the AAU study.

In trying to compare prevalence rates at MSAs to AAU IHEs, it would be helpful to have pooled data on all IHEs in order to compare MSAs to AAU IHEs on all relevant factors. However, the AAU report was not written with the goal of comparing MSAs and AAU IHEs. Only statistically significant differences that are thought to be relevant for the AAU are reported. Differences that would allow for easier comparison with MSAs are often not included, but such differences must be kept in mind when comparing rates at MSAs with rates at AAU IHEs.

It is not clear to what extent MSAs can or should be compared to other IHEs, or which variables are most relevant when conducting comparisons. Although MSAs are public, in many ways they may be more similar to private schools. MSAs do not have to worry about state funding cuts, or about donors and influencers (parents, guardians, etc.) in the way other IHEs do. MSAs are military run, and the students are members of the military, having gone through military training. All students at DoD MSAs effectively have full scholarships. The best comparison IHEs for MSAs would likely be IHEs with small enrollment, with a high proportion of men to women in the undergraduate population, and no graduate students. On these three measures alone, there is no IHE in the sample to which we can effectively compare the MSAs. Looking solely at the size of enrollment, the closest comparison is Dartmouth College. Caltech is similar to MSAs in that it is a small, predominantly male college with a technical focus. Comparisons between Dartmouth, Caltech, and the MSAs are presented in the in the main report below.

Survey Questions

Perhaps the most important differences between the two studies are the definitions of what is being measured, the time frame of interest, and consequently the questions asked of survey respondents.

The AAU study is concerned with nonconsensual sexual contact involving both penetration and sexual touching (see Appendix B for the questions used by AAU to measure nonconsensual sexual contact).

¹² AAU Report, p16.

Nonconsensual sexual contact is categorized as being the result of 1) physical force or threat of physical force, 2) being incapacitated because of drugs, alcohol or being unconscious, asleep or passed out, 3) coercive threats of non-physical harm or promised rewards, or 4) failure to obtain affirmative consent. The study also collected data on sexual harassment, stalking, and intimate partner violence. Although the questionnaire asks about both experiences in the current academic year and experiences since entering the IHE, the AAU report focuses on the latter.

The 2014 SAGR study also measured unwanted sexual contact using a behaviorally based measure of various actions, including penetration of any orifice, attempted penetration, and unwanted sexual touching (without penetration). However, the 2014 SAGR does not measure the frequency of other conditions of consent, or the use of alcohol/drugs, threats, or force across all experiences.¹³ The 2014 SAGR respondents were classified as having experienced unwanted sexual contact if they replied yes to the following question:

In the past 12 months, have you experienced any of the following intentional sexual contacts that were against your will or occurred when you did not or could not consent where someone...

- Sexually touched you (e.g., intentional touching of genitalia, breasts, or buttocks) or made you sexually touch them?
- Attempted to make you have sexual intercourse, but was not successful?
- Made you have sexual intercourse?
- Attempted to make you perform or receive oral sex, anal sex, or penetration by a finger or object, but was not successful?
- Made you perform or receive oral sex, anal sex, or penetration by a finger or object?

There are also differences in how the two studies define consent. The DMDC study uses the Department of Defense definition. DoDD 6495.01 defines “consent” as, “A freely given agreement to the conduct at issue by a competent person. An expression of lack of consent through words or conduct means there is no consent. Lack of verbal or physical resistance or submission resulting from the use of force, threat of force, or placing another person in fear does not constitute consent. A current or previous dating or social or sexual relationship by itself or the manner of dress of the person involved with the accused in the sexual conduct at issue shall not constitute consent. A sleeping, unconscious, or incompetent person cannot consent” (p. 18).

The AAU study focuses on force or threat, incapacitation, coercion, and the absence of affirmative consent. Several instances are categorized as the absence of affirmative consent: initiating sexual activity despite a person’s refusal; ignoring a person’s cues to stop or slow down; going ahead without checking in or while a person is still deciding; otherwise failing to obtain a person’s consent.¹⁴ Several

¹³ The 2014 SAGR does ask about the use of alcohol/drugs and/or force or threats of force for the one situation that had the greatest effect on the student. This designation helps to reduce the burden on a respondent.

¹⁴ The questions used can be found in Appendix B. Questions G4-G7 refer to inability to consent. Questions G9 and G9 refer to absence of affirmative consent.

actions that are considered to be nonconsensual under the DoD definition—for example, intercourse with a person who is incapacitated due to alcohol—would be considered nonconsensual sexual contact by incapacitation under the AAU categorization.

Overall, the broadest measure for which results are reported is unwanted sexual contact (*2014 SAGR*) and nonconsensual sexual contact by any tactic (AAU). Although these broad measures are somewhat less informative because they include a range of events from groping to violent rape, broad measures are likely the most suitable for comparison between studies, as they avoid the nuance of specific technical definitions. The AAU definition of nonconsensual sexual contact and the *2014 SAGR* definition of unwanted sexual contact are generally similar.¹⁵

Comparisons

Overall prevalence rates of nonconsensual sexual contact from the AAU study and unwanted sexual contact from *2014 SAGR* are shown in Table 2. According to the *2014 SAGR* results, 2.5% of all students at DoD MSAs experienced unwanted sexual contact in the 2013/2014 Academic Program Year (APY), defined as any experiences since June 2013 up to the time of the survey administration in late March and April 2014. However, this low overall percentage is driven by the high percentage of men at the MSAs (in the academic year 2013-2014 men represented 80.1% of the DoD MSA population). For men, 1.1% experienced unwanted sexual contact in the *2014 SAGR* survey. For women, this number was 8.2% in 2014. For women, this was a significant decrease from 2012 (12.4%) and 2010 (12.9%), but statistically the same as 2008. For men, the rates were statistically similar in 2012 (2.0%), 2010 (1.9%), and 2008 (1.4%).

¹⁵ The AAU definition of nonconsensual sexual contact is similar to that recently adopted as the standard measure of sexual assault by the Department of Defense. In 2014, Senate leadership and an independent, Congressionally-mandated panel of DoD and civilian experts requested that the Department update its survey methodology to be more specific with regard to the types of crimes military members experience. RAND developed this new measure of sexual assault that incorporates Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ)-prohibited behaviors and consent factors to derive incidence rates of crimes committed against military members (CITE). This new 96-item measure of sexual assault aligns with the language used in the elements of proof required for sexual assault under Article 120, UCMJ, and meets the requirements outlined by Congress and the panel of experts. This measure was not approved in time to be included in the *2014 SAGR* survey that used a historical measure of unwanted sexual contact. Although the term unwanted sexual contact does not appear in the UCMJ, it is used to refer to a range of activities that the UCMJ prohibits, including uninvited and unwelcome completed or attempted sexual intercourse, sodomy (oral or anal sex), penetration by an object, and the unwanted touching of genitalia and other sexually related areas of the body. As originally developed, the goal of the USC question was to act as a proxy for behaviors which indicated “sexual assault” while balancing the emotional burden to the respondent.

Table 2.
Overall Comparisons of Prevalence Rates

Overall Nonconsensual/Unwanted Sexual Contact			
		<i>Female</i>	
Current School Year	AAU 17.0%		MSA 8.2%
Since Entering College	AAU 28.5%		MSA 16.8%
		<i>Male</i>	
Current School Year	AAU 4.4%		MSA 1.1%
Since Entering College	AAU 7.1%		MSA 2.1%

Although direct statistical comparisons are not possible, results from the AAU report for students who experienced nonconsensual sexual contact during the current academic year are higher than that for students at the MSAs. Overall, in the academic year in which the survey was fielded, the percentage of female undergraduate students experiencing nonconsensual penetration or sexual touching involving any tactic was 17.0%, while the rate for men was 4.4%.¹⁶

The AAU also asked respondents whether they experienced nonconsensual sexual contact involving any tactic since entering college. For female undergraduates, 28.5% had experienced some form of nonconsensual sexual contact since entering college.¹⁷ For male undergraduates, 7.1% had experienced some form of nonconsensual sexual contact since entering college. By comparison, at the DoD MSAs, 16.8% of women and 2.1% of men reported unwanted sexual contact since entering the Academy/Preparatory School.¹⁸

Both the 2014 SAGR and the AAU studies report the experiences of all students since entering college. That is, the experiences of all students, regardless of how long they have been at the college, since entering that college. This means that freshmen through seniors are asked about their experiences since entering college, even though seniors have spent much more time as college undergraduates than have freshmen. In effect, some of the respondents have had much more time to experience nonconsensual sexual contact and other unwanted behaviors. One way of overcoming this is to look at the rate for seniors only. Assuming the rate for seniors is representative of what all undergraduates will have experienced (by the time they too are seniors), this approach may give a better understanding of the real rates of nonconsensual sexual contact. The AAU rate for seniors experiencing nonconsensual sexual contact involving any tactic since entering college is 33.1% for senior women and 8.6% for senior men.¹⁹

¹⁶ Table 3-21 AAU Report

¹⁷ Table 3-22 AAU Report

¹⁸ The question was phrased to include entry into the Academy or Preparatory School because the military has authority over cadet/midshipman candidates at the Preparatory Schools.

¹⁹ Table 3-20 AAU Report

At the MSAs, the prevalence rate for seniors since entering the MSA or Preparatory School is 25.3% for women and 3.3% for men. This means that, on this measure, both female and male students at DoD MSAs appear to fare better than undergraduates at AAU IHEs. Of course, while we cannot compare these numbers directly as there are many differences in the survey administration, weighting, question wording, type of college, etc., it does seem that MSAs fare similarly to, or better than, AAU IHEs on this measure of experiences by seniors since entering college.

The AAU study uses the nonconsensual sexual contact rates since entering college for all students (not just seniors) for other analyses and comparisons among the colleges and universities. However, the AAU study only reports nonconsensual sexual contact by all tactics (force or threat, incapacitation, coercion, absence of affirmative consent) for undergraduates for the current year, and since entering the IHE. The report does not report nonconsensual sexual contact by all tactics, for several factors that affect the rates of nonconsensual sexual contact, such as the size of the enrollment at the IHE. Therefore, the results presented here for IHEs that take into account enrollment size and gender ratios are only for nonconsensual sexual contact by force or threat, and coercion. The results presented for the MSAs continue to refer to all unwanted sexual contact. While this would appear to disadvantage MSAs by including some forms of unwanted sexual contact at MSAs that are not included in the corresponding results for IHEs, MSAs nonetheless fare better than IHEs in this comparison.

There are several factors that affect the rate between IHEs and MSAs. Comparisons based on these factors are summarized in Table 3. One of the main factors is the size of the institution. As MSAs are relatively small, the best comparison is IHEs with enrollment rates of 2,000 to 13,000. For IHEs of this size, nonconsensual sexual contact involving physical force or incapacitation is experienced by 24.4% of undergraduate women since entering college.²⁰ This drops slightly to 22.5% for the IHEs with the largest enrollment (41,000 to 61,000). At IHEs with enrollment rates of 2,000 to 13,000, nonconsensual sexual contact involving physical force or incapacitation is experienced by 6.7% of male undergraduates since entering college. This drops to 5.1% for IHEs with the largest enrollment. Nonconsensual sexual contact is higher at private IHEs, relative to public, for both women (25.3% private, 22.8% public) and men (6.4% private, 5.2% public). This compares to 16.2% of MSA women and 2.1% of MSA men who have experience unwanted sexual contact since entering the Academy or Preparatory school.

A higher ratio of female undergraduates relative to male undergraduates results in higher levels of nonconsensual sexual contact involving physical force or incapacitation for both women and men. The reported rate is 21.9% for women and 5.2% for men in IHEs where women make up 30% to 49% of the enrollment. This increases to 23.8% for women and 5.5% for men for IHEs where women make up 52% to 57% of the enrollment.²¹ This may go against predictions made in SAGR focus groups where MSA students indicate that they believe the problem of unwanted sexual contact will decrease as more women are admitted to the Academies.²²

²⁰ Table 3-13 AAU Report

²¹ Table 3-13 AAU Report

²² See DMDC (2015).

Table 3.
Prevalence Rates Since Entering College²³

Nonconsensual/Unwanted Sexual Contact Since Entering College or Academy/Preparatory School			
<i>AAU IHEs with enrollment rates of 2,000 to 13,000</i>			
AAU Women	24.4%	MSA Women	16.2%
AAU Men	6.7%	MSA Men	2.1%
<i>AAU IHEs where women make up 30% to 49% of the enrollment</i>			
AAU Women	21.9%	MSA Women	16.2%
AAU Men	5.2%	MSA Men	2.1%
<i>AAU IHEs where the undergraduate enrollment is 73% to 87%</i>			
AAU Women	21.6%	MSA Women	16.2%
AAU Men	5.1%	MSA Men	2.1%

Universities with a low proportion of undergraduates had a higher rate than those with a high proportion of undergraduates. For IHEs where the undergraduate enrollment is 73% to 87% the rate is 21.6% for women and 5.1% for men.²⁴ Although this rate of undergraduate enrollment is lower than that at MSAs (100% undergraduate), this is the category that most closely approximates MSAs.

Comparisons between 2014 SAGR and the AAU study become more difficult when trying to compare specific behaviors. The results for completed sex and unwanted sexual touching are not comparable across studies. The AAU study reports that 3.9% of women and 1% of men experienced penetration, completed using physical force or incapacitation, since entering college. Additionally, 10.5% of women and 2.4% of men experienced sexual touching, completed using physical force or incapacitation since entering college.²⁵

The 2014 SAGR study shows that 2.3% of women at DoD Academies indicated they experienced unwanted completed sex, *in the previous APY*. The number for men is 0.3% for the previous APY. Additionally, 2.4% of women and 0.6% of men indicated they experienced unwanted sexual touching in the previous APY. However, as these numbers are for the previous APY and not since entering college, they cannot be compared to the AAU results. Although the 2014 SAGR study has a rate for unwanted sexual contact since entering the Preparatory school or Academy, the report does not detail the type of unwanted sexual contact experienced.

²³ Prevalence rates for MSAs are for all unwanted sexual contact. Prevalence rates for IHEs are for nonconsensual sexual contact involving physical force or incapacitation, but do not include nonconsensual sexual contact involving coercion and absence of affirmative consent.

²⁴ Table 3-13 AAU Report

²⁵ Table 3-21 AAU Report

Other Gender-Related Behaviors

The AAU study provides results on sexual harassment since the student entered college or university: 61.9% of undergraduate women and 42.9% of undergraduate men report experiencing harassment since entering college or university.²⁶ This is a broad category, including incidents such as hearing an offensive story and being repeatedly asked to engage in sexual intercourse. This is not directly comparable to the 2014 SAGR study, which reports sexual harassment experienced *in the previous APY* and which is directed to the respondent. The 2014 SAGR measure of sexual harassment includes crude/offensive behavior, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion.²⁷ In 2014, 48% of women at MSAs indicated experiencing sexual harassment in the academic year in which the survey was carried out. For men, 10% indicated experiencing sexual harassment.

The AAU study provides results on stalking since the student entered university. Overall, 6.7% of undergraduate women reported experiencing stalking since entering college, while 2.2% of undergraduate men reported this.²⁸ This is also not comparable to the 2014 SAGR study, which reports stalking experienced in a given year. For the 2014 APY, 1.3% of students at MSAs reported experiencing stalking (5% of women, 0.4% of men).

Both the AAU report and the 2014 SAGR report deal with reporting of unwanted behaviors. However, the wording of the questions is different. While the 2014 SAGR survey asks whether the victim discussed the incident with someone, or reported it to someone, the AAU asks whether the victim reported the incident to an agency or program. Issues regarding bystander intervention are also not comparable between the two studies for the same reason.

Results regarding knowledge of resources related to unwanted sexual contact and harassment are not comparable because the structures of the MSAs are different from the structure of the IHEs. In addition, students at MSAs are exposed to regular required briefings on unwanted sexual contact and harassment related issues.

Dartmouth College

Most of the IHEs surveyed by Westat are much larger than the MSAs. As such, the closest comparison may be Dartmouth College. While Dartmouth is a private university, it does have a small enrollment of approximately 4,200 undergraduates. This is similar to the enrollment at the MSAs: USMA, 4,414; USNA, 4,511; USAFA, 3,952.²⁹ Because of the comparable size, Dartmouth is a worthwhile comparison for MSAs. However, Dartmouth also differs from MSAs in many important ways.

Although Dartmouth has a small number of graduate students in absolute terms (about 2,000), the small overall enrollment rate means that a third of the student body is made up of graduate students. MSAs do not have graduate students.

²⁶ Table 4-1 AAU Report

²⁷ The measurement of these behaviors is derived from the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (SEQ; Fitzgerald et al., 1988; Fitzgerald, Gelfand, & Drasgow, 1995), which has been adapted for a military population (referred to as the SEQ-DoD). The SEQ-DoD consists of 12 behaviorally stated items measuring sexual harassment and four behaviorally stated items measuring sexist behavior.

²⁸ Table 4-5 AAU Report

²⁹ Data on acceptance rates and college demographics are for 2015, taken from US News and World Report online. <http://www.usnews.com/>, accessed on 11/10/2015.

Dartmouth is selective, with a 10% acceptance rate. MSAs are similarly selective: USMA, 9.5%; USNA, 7.9%; USAFA, 17%. Dartmouth's undergraduate enrollment is 51% female. This is very different from the percentage of the MSAs that is female: USMA, 17%; USNA, 23%; USAFA, 22%.

Dartmouth's response rate was relatively high, at 44% for undergraduates. As mentioned above, the 2014 SAGR study had a response rate of 66% for DoD MSAs. Specific comparisons of prevalence rates are shown in Table 4.

Table 4.
Comparisons of Similar-Size Colleges: Dartmouth

Overall Nonconsensual/Unwanted Sexual Contact				
		<i>Female</i>		
Current School Year	Dartmouth	13.5%	MSA	8.2%
Since Entering College	Dartmouth	29.7%	MSA	16.8%
		<i>Male</i>		
Current School Year	Dartmouth	2.6%	MSA	1.1%
Since Entering College	Dartmouth	6.1%	MSA	2.1%

The specific Dartmouth results are taken from the Dartmouth report.³⁰ As with the main AAU report, the focus is on instances of unwanted sexual contact by any tactic experienced by students since entering college. Results given here are for undergraduates only.

Among female undergraduates at Dartmouth, 29.7% report nonconsensual sexual contact by any tactic since entering college (broadly similar to the 2014 SAGR unwanted sexual contact).³¹ This is higher than the average for all AAU IHEs surveyed (28.5%) and higher than the average for unwanted sexual contact reported by women at MSAs (16.8%).

Among male undergraduates at Dartmouth, 6.1% report nonconsensual sexual contact by any tactic since entering college.³² This is lower than the average for all AAU IHEs surveyed (7.1%) and higher than the average for unwanted sexual contact reported by men at the MSAs (2.1%).

Overall, Dartmouth is the IHE surveyed that is the closest in enrollment size to the MSAs. For the results that are most comparable between studies—nonconsensual sexual contact and unwanted sexual contact—the MSAs report lower rates for both men and women, than do undergraduates at Dartmouth.

³⁰ <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~oir/aaudartmouth/aaudartmouthreport2015.pdf>,
<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~oir/aaudartmouth/aaudartmouthreporttables2015.pdf>, accessed on 11/10/2015.

³¹ Table 4.6 AAU Dartmouth Report Tables

³² Table 4.9 AAU Dartmouth Report Tables

California Institute of Technology

Most of the IHEs surveyed by Westat are much larger than the MSAs. A close comparison is California Institute of Technology (“Caltech”), which has an undergraduate enrollment of 983 undergraduates. This is actually smaller than the enrollment at the MSAs: USMA, 4,414; USNA, 4,511; USAFA, 3,952.³³ However, because Caltech is a small, selective, predominantly male, technically focused institution, it provides a valuable comparison for the MSAs.

Although Caltech has a small number of graduate students in absolute terms (about 1,000), the small overall enrollment rate means that half of the student body is made up of graduate students. MSAs do not have graduate students.

Caltech is selective, with an 8.8% acceptance rate. MSAs are similarly selective: USMA, 9.5%; USNA, 7.9%; USAFA, 17%. Caltech’s undergraduate enrollment is 36% female. Although this means that Caltech’s undergraduate enrollment is predominantly male, this proportion of undergraduates that is female is still higher than the percentage of the MSAs that is female: USMA, 17%; USNA, 23%; USAFA, 22%.

Caltech’s response rate was relatively high, at 56% for undergraduates. As mentioned above, the 2014 SAGR study had a response rate of 66% for DoD MSAs. Specific comparisons of prevalence rates are shown in Table 5.

Table 5.
Comparisons of Similar-Size Colleges: Caltech

Overall Nonconsensual/Unwanted Sexual Contact		
	Female	
Current School Year	Caltech 7.4%	MSA 8.2%
Since Entering College	Caltech 16.6%	MSA 16.8%
	Male	
Current School Year	Caltech 1.9%	MSA 1.1%
Since Entering College	Caltech 4.8%	MSA 2.1%

³³ Data on acceptance rates and college demographics are for 2015, taken from US News and World Report online. <http://www.usnews.com/>, accessed on 12/04/2015.

The specific Caltech results are taken from the Caltech report.³⁴ As with the main AAU report, the focus is on instances of unwanted sexual contact by any tactic, experienced by students since entering college. Results given here are for undergraduates only.

Among female undergraduates at Caltech, 16.6% report experiencing nonconsensual sexual contact involving physical force, incapacitation, coercion or absence of affirmative consent since enrolling (broadly similar to the 2014 SAGR unwanted sexual contact).³⁵ This is lower than the average for all AAU IHEs surveyed (28.5%) and similar to the average for unwanted sexual contact reported by women at MSAs (16.8%). Female undergraduates at Caltech report slightly lower rates (7.4%) than do female undergraduates at MSAs (8.2%) for the current academic year.³⁶

Among male undergraduates at Caltech, 4.8% report experiencing nonconsensual sexual contact involving physical force, incapacitation, coercion or absence of affirmative consent since enrolling.³⁷ This is lower than the average for all AAU IHEs surveyed (7.1%) and higher than the average for unwanted sexual contact reported by men at the MSAs (2.1%). Reports for the current year are also slightly higher for male undergraduates at Caltech (1.9%) than for male undergraduates at MSAs (1.1%).³⁸

Overall, Caltech is the IHE surveyed that is the closest to the MSAs in proportion of male undergraduates enrolled. For the results that are most comparable between studies—nonconsensual sexual contact and unwanted sexual contact—the rates are lower for men at MSAs than for undergraduates at Caltech, and similar for women at MSAs and female undergraduates at Caltech.

Discussion

This report has outlined the similarities and differences between the AAU study of IHEs and the 2014 SAGR study of DoD MSAs. The differences between the studies are such that the results can be generally compared but not statistically. Therefore, these general comparisons must be interpreted cautiously. The studies have different populations of interest, were administered and weighted differently, and also ask different questions. Nonetheless, the AAU study does provide an opportunity to determine how MSAs compare to civilian universities on broad measures. When this was done, results for MSAs were similar to or more positive in every comparison than results for the AAU IHEs surveyed. Prevalence rates for the academic year in which the study was carried out for nonconsensual or unwanted sexual contact appear to be lower at MSAs than at AAU IHEs for undergraduate women (MSAs: 8.2%; IHEs: 17.0%) and undergraduate men (MSAs: 1.1%; IHEs: 4.4%). Prevalence rates for such behaviors since students entered the IHE or MSA also appear to be lower at MSAs than at AAU IHEs for undergraduate women (MSAs: 16.8%; IHEs: 28.5%) and undergraduate men (MSAs: 2.1%; IHEs: 7.1%). Indeed these results echo sentiments expressed by students at DoD MSAs, who

³⁴ https://s3-us-west-1.amazonaws.com/www-prod-storage.cloud.caltech.edu/AAU_Campus_Climate_Survey_on_Sexual_Assault_and_Sexual_Misconduct-Caltech_Final_Report.pdf, and https://s3-us-west-1.amazonaws.com/www-prod-storage.cloud.caltech.edu/AAU_Campus_Climate_Survey_on_Sexual_Assault_and_Sexual_Misconduct-Caltech_Final_Tables.pdf, accessed on 12/04/2015.

³⁵ Table 4.6 AAU Caltech Report Tables

³⁶ Table 4.9 AAU Caltech Report Tables

³⁷ Table 4.6 AAU Caltech Report Tables

³⁸ Table 4.9 AAU Caltech Report Tables

indicated during focus groups for the *2015 SAGR Focus Group Report* that they believe MSAs to have lower rates of unwanted sexual contact than civilian colleges and universities. The present study supports those contentions.

Because the AAU study was not designed to be comparable to the *SAGR* study, there are many measures which could not be compared. The AAU study focuses on reporting experiences that students have had since entering the IHE, while the *2014 SAGR* focuses on the experiences of students in one particular academic year. This means that measures of completed sex, unwanted touching, or other gender related behaviors could not be compared between the AAU and *2014 SAGR* studies.

While no IHE is similar to a DoD MSA in all, or most, of the factors which are likely important—size, gender ratio, military culture—the IHE that is most similar to a DoD MSA in undergraduate enrollment size is Dartmouth. We found that DoD MSAs compare favorably to Dartmouth's rates of nonconsensual sexual contact. While 29.7% of female undergraduates at Dartmouth report nonconsensual sexual contact since entering college, 16.8% of female students at DoD MSAs report unwanted sexual contact since entering the MSA. While 6.1% of male undergraduates at Dartmouth report nonconsensual sexual contact since entering college, 2.1% of male students at DoD MSAs report unwanted sexual contact since entering the MSA. However, these comparisons should be interpreted cautiously given the many differences between Dartmouth and the MSAs even with the similarities in enrollment size.

Comparisons to Caltech also show MSAs to have similar rates. Caltech is a small, selective, predominantly male technical college and so is similar to the MSAs in many respects. While 16.6% of female undergraduates at Caltech report unwanted sexual contact, since entering college, 16.8% of women at MSAs report unwanted sexual contact since entering the Academy or Preparatory School. While 4.8% of male undergraduates at Caltech report unwanted sexual contact since entering college, 2.1% of men at MSAs report this. Again, these comparisons must be interpreted cautiously given the many differences between the two studies, and between Caltech and the MSAs.

Overall, DoD MSAs compare favorably to civilian IHEs based on the results of the *2014 SAGR* and AAU studies. These results also suggest a need for more direct future comparisons using common measures and methodologies.

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Appendix A: Participating Institutes of Higher Education

Brown University
California Institute of Technology
Case Western Reserve University
Columbia University
Cornell University
Dartmouth College
Harvard University
Iowa State University
Michigan State University
Ohio State University
Purdue University
Texas A&M University
University of Arizona
University of Florida
University of Michigan
University of Minnesota-Twin Cities
University of Missouri-Columbia
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
University of Oregon
University of Pennsylvania
University of Pittsburgh
University of Southern California
University of Texas at Austin
University of Virginia
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Washington University in St. Louis
Yale University

Appendix B: AAU Questions on Nonconsensual Sexual Contact

The first few questions ask about incidents that involved force or threats of force against you. Force could include someone holding you down with his or her body weight, pinning your arms, hitting or kicking you, or using or threatening to use a weapon against you.

G1. Since you have been attending [University], has someone used physical force or threats of physical force to do the following with you:

- **Sexual penetration.** When one person puts a penis, fingers, or object inside someone else's vagina or anus, or
- **Oral sex.** When someone's mouth or tongue makes contact with someone else's genitals
- Yes [GO TO Attachment 1]
- No

G2. Since you have been attending [University], has someone used physical force or threats of physical force in an unsuccessful attempt to do any of the following with you:

- **Sexual penetration.** When one person puts a penis, finger, or object inside someone else's vagina or anus
- **Oral sex.** When someone's mouth or tongue makes contact with someone else's genitals
- Yes [GO TO Attachment 1]
- No

G3. Since you have been attending [University], has someone used physical force or threats of physical force to do any of the following with you:

- kissing
- touching someone's breast, chest, crotch, groin or buttocks
- grabbing, groping or rubbing against the other in a sexual way, even if the touching is over the other's clothes
- Yes [GO TO Attachment 1]
- No

The next questions ask about incidents when you were unable to consent or stop what was happening because you were passed out, asleep, or incapacitated due to drugs or alcohol. Please include incidents even if you are not sure what happened.

G4. Since you have been attending [University], has any of the following happened to you while you were unable to consent or stop what was happening because you were passed out, asleep or incapacitated due to drugs or alcohol:

- **Sexual penetration.** When one person puts a penis, finger, or object inside someone else's vagina or anus
- **Oral sex.** When someone's mouth or tongue makes contact with someone else's genitals

- Yes [GO TO Attachment 1]
- No

G5. Since you have been attending [University], has any of the following happened to you while you were unable to consent or stop what was happening because you were passed out, asleep or incapacitated due to drugs or alcohol:

- kissing
- touching someone's breast, chest, crotch, groin, or buttocks
- grabbing, groping or rubbing against the other in a sexual way, even if the touching is over the other's clothes

Yes [GO TO Attachment 1]

No

The next questions ask about incidents when someone coerced you by threatening serious non-physical harm or promising rewards.

G6. Since you have been a student at [University], has someone had contact with you involving penetration or oral sex by threatening serious non-physical harm or promising rewards such that you felt you must comply? Examples include:

- Threatening to give you bad grades or cause trouble for you at work
- Promising good grades or a promotion at work
- Threatening to share damaging information about you with your family, friends or authority figures
- Threatening to post damaging information about you online

Yes [GO TO Attachment 1]

No

G7. Since you have been a student at [University], has someone had contact with you involving kissing or other sexual touching by threatening serious non-physical harm or promising rewards such that you felt you must comply? Examples include:

- Threatening to give you bad grades or cause trouble for you at work
- Promise good grades or a promotion at work
- Threatening to share damaging information about you with your family, friends or authority figures
- Threatening to post damaging information about you online

Yes [GO TO Attachment 1]

No

The next questions ask about incidents that occurred without your active, ongoing voluntary agreement.

G8. Since you have been a student at [University], has someone had contact with you involving penetration or oral sex without your active, ongoing voluntary agreement? Examples include someone:

- initiating sexual activity despite your refusal
- ignoring your cues to stop or slow down
- went ahead without checking in or while you were still deciding
- otherwise failed to obtain your consent

Yes [GO TO Attachment 1]

No

G9. Since you have been a student at [University], has someone kissed or sexually touched you without your active, ongoing voluntary agreement? Examples include:

- initiating sexual activity despite your refusal
- ignoring your cues to stop or slow down
- went ahead without checking in or while you were still deciding
- otherwise failed to obtain your consent

Yes [GO TO Attachment 1]

No

Appendix C: Incentives Offered for Participants in the AAU Survey

# Schools	Incentive plan	Alternative to incentive
18	Sample of 6,000 students eligible to receive \$5 Amazon gift card	Students not in the incentive sample eligible for \$500 cash drawing
4	All students eligible to receive \$5 Amazon gift card	No drawing
3	Sample of 6,000 students eligible to receive \$5 Amazon gift card	No drawing
1	No incentive plan	10 prizes of \$100 each
1	Sample of 6,000 students eligible to receive \$5 Amazon gift card	20 prizes of \$50 Amazon gift cards

Incentive plans offered at the 27 IHEs participating in the AAU survey (reproduced from Table 1-1, *Report on the AAU Campus Climate Survey*, p3).

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