

**Centennial Honors College
Thomas E. Helm Undergraduate Research Day 2024**

ABSTRACT

Major: Psychology (Forensic Psychology)

Poster

Faculty Mentor(s): Kristy Keefe

Anger, Sexual Assault, Trauma, and True Crime; A Correlational Study

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Introduction: Over the past decade, the true crime genre has surged in popularity, prompting research into its audience. Vicay and Fraley (2010) found women constitute a significant portion, driven by self-defense knowledge and fear of crime. McDonald et al. (2021) countered, suggesting women use it for rape avoidance strategies. Limited research exists on how true crime consumption relates to emotional regulation, especially for sexual violence survivors. This study aims to explore these associations.

Method: The current study examined 115 student responses from a midwestern university SONA pool. Participants completed the True Crime Consumption Survey, Traumatic Life Events Questionnaire, Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale, and the Multidimensional Anger Scale. Amount of true crime media consumption, sexual assault history, emotional dysregulation, and anger items were identified for analysis.

Results: Results showed two groups of people—those that consume true crime media on a regular basis and those that do not. We found a positive correlation between true crime consumption and ACE scores. Within the 115 participants, we had 15 participants indicate a history of sexual assault. Those participants had a significantly wider breadth of true crime than those without a sexual assault history. Additionally, those who consume true crime have a higher multidimensional anger score than those who do not consume the genre. Further results showed that within the reported sexual assault survivors, they had lower scores in emotional dysregulation and lower anger scores than those without a reported sexual assault history.