

Idaho's Sexual Assault Kit Initiative: The Effect of HB528 on Sexual Assault Clearance Rates

Preliminary Findings

Most common crime classification among sample

Rape (60%)

Lewd & Lascivious Conduct with a Child (25%)

Victims assaulted by friend or acquaintance

61%

Higher prevalence of documented physical injury in Post-HB528 cases and among cases with a SAK compared to those without one.

Cases with delayed reporting

58%

Officers connecting victims to victim services

32% at initial response

23% offered to contact advocate or VWC

36% referred the victim to those services

Victim Cooperation

98% of victims cooperated at the scene

72% of victims cooperated throughout the investigation

Officer noted victim credibility issues in

48% of cases

Most common issue: victim reluctance to cooperate

No significant differences on response characteristics between Pre-HB528 and Post-HB528 cases

Outcomes

Cases where officers noted victim credibility issues were connected to shorter disposition times and had fewer arrest dispositions (32%) than cases without officers noting victim credibility issues (68%)

Average time to case clearance **44 days**

Pre-HB528 cases took significantly longer to clear than Post-HB528 cases.

Having a sexual assault kit did not have a statistically significant effect on case clearance.

Policing Professionals' Perceptions & Use of SAK evidence

72% SUPPORT the Test-All statute

55% reported SAK evidence is very important in sexual violence investigations

"It is important they all get tested as nobody should have an incident like they experienced occur & it may prevent others from becoming a victim"

Factors that contribute to investigator evaluations of victim credibility according to police professionals' perceptions

Victim Statements	29%
Corroboration	25%
Victim Cooperation	18%
Prior history of victim and/or suspect	12%

Characteristics most associated with arrest according to policing professionals' perceptions

Victim Factors	39%
Physical/Forensic Evidence	29%
Suspect Factors	29%
Interviews	4%

Policing professionals indicated that the value of any physical evidence is dependent on the specific characteristics of each case.

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Study Overview

What is a Sexual Assault Kit (SAK)?

A sexual assault kit contains both physical and biological evidence that is sometimes collected by medical personnel following a sexual assault.

2016 House Bill NO. 528

Required the testing of SAKs, except in circumstances where the victim requests the **kit not be tested, the case is not being actively investigated as a crime, or it has been deemed unfounded**, as well as new auditing and reporting metrics for any SAK not sent for testing

What, if any, effect did HB528 have on investigations of sexual violence crimes across the state?

SAK Study Characteristics

Total SAK Population

*As of 11.30.2019



Pre-HB528 SAK Cases in Study

07/01/2015 - 06/30/2016



Post-HB528 SAK Cases in Study

07/01/2016 - 06/30/2017



Total Cases in Study



All Cases in Sample Pre-HB528



All Cases in Sample Post-HB528



23 out of 100 policing agencies who submitted SAK's to the crime lab are represented in the sample.

Each of the 23 agencies contributed an average of 3 cases to the study, two of which were SAK cases.

Almost one third of participating agencies appeared in both the Pre-HB528 subsample & the Post-HB528 subsample.

Survey Sample Characteristics



Policing Professionals

General perspectives on sexual violence cases & investigations, as well as, information on the policing professional's demographics.

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Below are 6 recommendations following the preliminary study on the effects of Idaho's initial SAK testing statute on sexual violence crimes.



1

Expansion of Victim Services

It is recommended that the legislature fund an expansion of all forms of victim services in Idaho with particular attention to more rural/remote locations and smaller communities.



2

Modify Statute 39-6316

Under Idaho statute, it is currently required that, at the time of reporting, policing agencies provide information on available services to victims of domestic violence. It is recommended that this statute be modified to include victims of sexual violence.



3

Connecting Victims to Services

It is recommended that 39-6316 be modified to require policing agencies to put victims in touch with available services at the time of reporting. Additionally, it is recommended that victim service agencies such as the ICASDV and ICDVVA provide assistance in developing these partnerships between victim service and policing professionals.



4

Training

In 48% of the cases in our sample, policing professionals noted victim credibility issues, which were shown to have a possible effect on case clearance. Given these findings, it is recommended that all policing professionals receive specialized training on the neurobiological effects of trauma, rape myths, societal stigma faced by sexual violence victim, and active strategies they can use in their response.



5

Continue to prioritize the testing of SAKs

There was overwhelming support for requiring the testing of all SAKs among policing professionals in our survey and a majority of these professionals indicated that forensic evidence was the most critical type of physical evidence in sex crime investigations.



6

Invest in a Statewide Victimization Survey

Following the major tenants of the National Crime Victimization Survey, it is recommended that the State of Idaho invest in a scientifically-rigorous statewide survey on victimization in Idaho. Due to small sample sizes in locations like Idaho, the national survey does not provide us with local data to understand Idaho residents' experiences with victimization.