

Sexual aggression in the São Paulo nightlife scenarios: a public health concern

Zila M Sanchez¹, Claudia Masur Carlini¹, Adriana Sanudo¹, Gabriela Arantes Wagner¹

¹ Departamento de Medicina Preventiva. Escola Paulista de Medicina. Universidade Federal de São Paulo. São Paulo, SP, Brasil

Brazil withstood a national uproar by a case of mass rape of a 16-year-old girl, broadly addressed on social networks, after leaving a “funk party” on May 25th, 2016. The fact was widely reported on the national and international media¹ and aroused a motion on social networks with the hashtag #*EstuproNuncaMais* (“No more rape”)².

Between 2013 and 2015, a mixed methods study – which included a cross-sectional survey that interviewed 2,422 people, by systematic sampling, entering or leaving 31 nightclubs in São Paulo selected using a probability proportional to size sampling method³, 307 hours of ethnographic observation⁴, eight focus groups with nightclub patrons, and 31 in-depth interviews with employees of such clubs – showed these places are a risky environment for sexual abuse. In this scenario, 11.5% (95%CI 7.9–16.2) – weighted prevalence –, of the patrons interviewed at the exit of the nightclubs reported to have suffered sexual aggression, characterized by a perceived sexual abuse that night, from being victim of groping or forced kissing (9.8%; 95%CI 7.2–13.1) to non-consensual sex attempted or executed (1.1%; 95%CI 0.6–2.2). Focus groups statements showed that some nightclubs are more permissive and prone to sexual abuse occurrences, such as funk party nightclubs.

According to a 25-year experienced nightclub manager: “A nightclub is an environment where everything leads to drinking and sex; mainly guys, who believe they can go after girls without ‘excusing’ themselves (...)”. In the terms of a female patron: “Aggression occurs if you say no and the guy grabs you hard by your arm, tries to kiss you without permission, gropes you, and there are some big bullies and if they want something else, they will do it (...)”. The ethnographic observation on funk party nightclubs showed an exclusive presence of sensual dances, and lyrics that stimulate women’s sexual submission, such as “(...) we put it [penis] in her. The gang arrived! The pussy predators!”(...)”. However, it should be noted that this type of sexually aggressive behavior does not occur only in funk nightclubs. According to the university students focus group, lyrics of different musical styles stimulate sexual abuse: “The lyrics say that the girls will screw around or that men must go around to grope (...) that you have to drink a lot and fuck”.

The definition of a sexual crime in Brazil is “someone who embarrasses another by violence or serious threat, to have sexual intercourse or to perform or allow him to practice other lewd acts”⁶. This document is intended to make the scientific community aware for the need to assist stakeholders in the development of public policies aiming at rape prevention in nightclubs or just after leaving these venues. Considering that our study exposes the occurrence of sexual crimes in nightclubs, it may favor the first step to deconstruct the Brazilian rape culture, by alerting national and international audience about the need of an immediate intervention.

Correspondence:

Zila M Sanchez
Departamento de Medicina Preventiva
Escola Paulista de Medicina – Unifesp
R. Botucatu, 740 Vila Clementino
04023-062 São Paulo, SP, Brasil
E-mail: zila.sanchez@unifesp.br

Received: 25 Jul 2016

Approved: 2 Aug 2016

How to cite: Sanchez ZM, Carlini CM, Sanudo A, Wagner GA. Sexual aggression in São Paulo nightlife scenarios: a public health concern. Rev Saude Publica. 2016;50:84.

Copyright: This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided that the original author and source are credited.



The diagnosis of what occurs in São Paulo's nightlife is the first step towards preventive actions, based on data from the local reality. Effective preventive approaches to reduce sexual violence in nightlife establishments involve understanding individual behaviors within these places, the nightlife environment structure, and the way behaviors and environment interact to each other.

REFERENCES

1. Paiva G. 'Não dói o útero e sim a alma' diz menina vítima de estupro coletivo. *Folha de São Paulo*. 26 maio 2016 [cited 2016 Nov 28]; Cotidiano. Available from: <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/cotidiano/2016/05/1775535-nao-doi-o-utero-e-sim-a-alma-diz-menina-de-estupro-coletivo-no-rio.shtml>
2. Women in the World Staff. Brazil shocked as video of "mass rape" of teenage girl surfaces on social media. *The New York Times*. 27 May 2016 [cited 2016 Nov 28]. Available from: <http://nytlive.nytimes.com/womenintheworld/2016/05/27/brazil-shocked-as-video-of-mass-rape-of-teenage-girl-surfaces-on-social-media/>
3. Sanchez ZM, Ribeiro KJ, Wagner GA. Binge drinking associations with patrons' risk behaviors and alcohol effects after leaving a nightclub: sex differences in the "Balada com Ciência" Portal Survey Study in Brazil. *PLoS One*. 2015;10(8):e0133646. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0133646.
4. Carlini C, Andreoni S, Martins SS, Benjamin M, Sanudo A, Sanchez ZM. Environmental characteristics associated with alcohol intoxication among patrons in Brazilian nightclubs. *Drug Alcohol Rev*. 2014;33(4):358-66. doi:10.1111/dar.12155.pmid:24975881
5. MC Jhey. Predador de perereca [lyrics]. 2015 [cited 2016 Nov 30]. Available from: <https://www.vagalume.com.br/mc-jhey/predador-de-pererecas.html>
6. Brasil. Código Penal: Decreto-Lei nº 2.848, de 7 de dezembro de 1940. 34. ed. São Paulo: Saraiva; 1996.