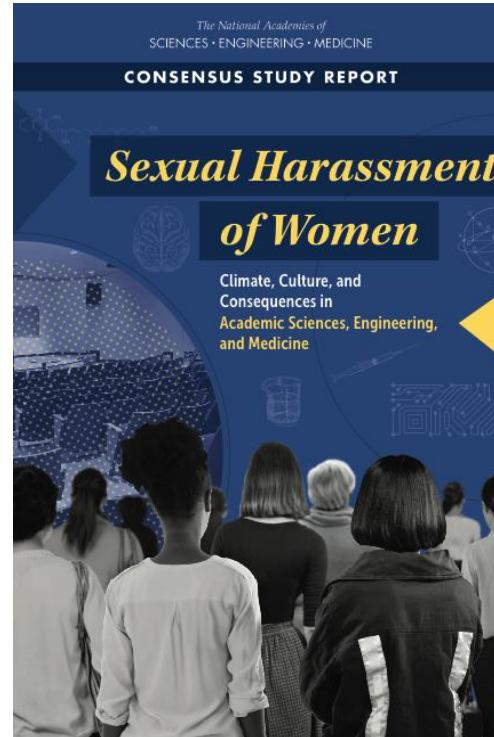


Sexual Harassment of Women: Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine



<http://nationalacademies.org/SexualHarassment>
#ScienceToo

Background

Study Committee Members

Co-Chair: **Paula Johnson**¹, Wellesley College

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Study Statement of Task

The Committee will undertake a study of the influence of sexual harassment in academia on the career advancement of women in the scientific, technical, and medical workforce, which will include the following:

- Review of the research on the extent to which women in the fields of science, engineering, and medicine are victimized by sexual harassment on college and university campuses, in research labs and field sites, at hospitals/medical centers, and in other academic environments;
- Examination of existing information on the extent to which sexual harassment in academia negatively impacts the recruitment, retention, and advancement of women pursuing scientific, engineering, technical, and medical careers, with comparative evidence drawn from other sectors such as the military, government, and the private sector;
- Identification and analysis of policies, strategies, and practices that have been the most successful in preventing and addressing sexual harassment in these settings.

Sponsors

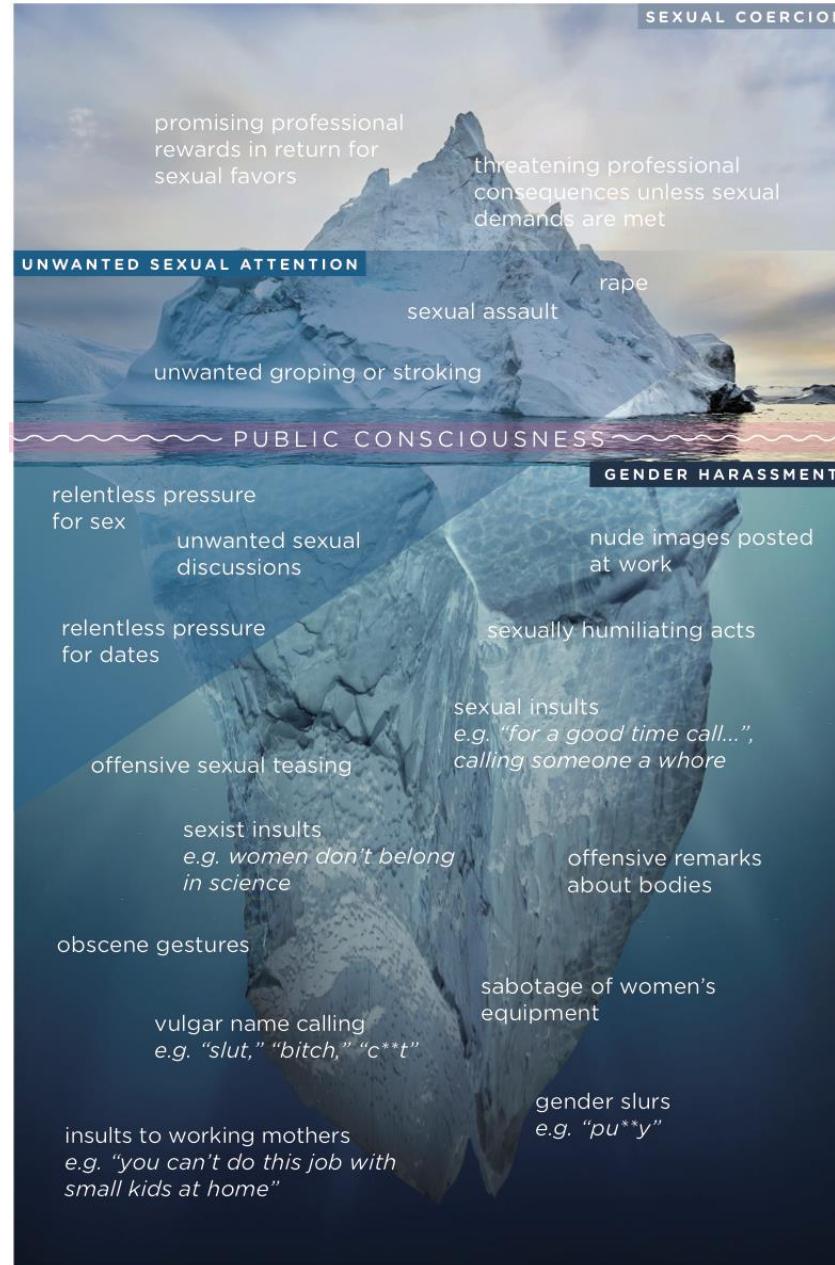


Findings and Recommendations

Findings

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination that consists of three types of harassing behavior:

1. sexual coercion,
2. unwanted sexual attention, and
3. gender harassment.



Findings

Sexually harassing behavior can be either direct (targeted at an individual) or ambient (a general level of sexual harassment in an environment) and is harmful in both cases.

Gender harassment that is severe or occurs frequently over a period of time can result in the same level of negative professional and psychological outcomes as isolated instances of sexual coercion.

Recommendation

Recommendation: Leaders in academic institutions and research and training sites must pay increased attention to and enact policies that cover gender harassment as a means of addressing the most common form of sexual harassment and of preventing other types of sexually harassing behavior.

Finding

Sexual harassment is common in academic science, engineering, and medicine.

- Best available analysis to date shows that 50 percent of women faculty and staff in academia experience sexual harassment.
- Student surveys at a couple universities shows that between 20-50 percent of students in science, engineering, and medicine experience sexual harassment from faculty or staff.

Findings

Women of color experience more harassment (sexual, racial/ethnic, or combination of the two) than white women, white men, and men of color do. Women of color often experience sexual harassment that includes racial harassment.

Sexual- and gender-minority people experience more sexual harassment than heterosexual women do.

Findings

Sexual harassment undermines women's professional and educational attainment and mental and physical health.

Sexual harassment has adverse effects that affect not only the targets of harassment but also bystanders, co-workers, workgroups, and entire organizations.

The cumulative effect of sexual harassment is significant damage to research integrity and a costly loss of talent in academic sciences, engineering, and medicine.

Findings

The two characteristics most associated with higher rates of sexual harassment are (a) male-dominated gender ratios and leadership and (b) an organizational climate that communicates tolerance of sexual harassment

Organizational climate is, by far, the greatest predictor of the occurrence of sexual harassment, and ameliorating it can prevent people from sexually harassing others.

Findings

The legal system alone is not an adequate mechanism for reducing or preventing sexual harassment.

Judicial interpretation of Title IX and Title VII has incentivized organizations to create policies, procedures, and training on sexual harassment that focus on symbolic compliance with current law and avoiding liability, and not on preventing sexual harassment.

Findings

Title IX, Title VII, and case law reflect the inaccurate assumption that a target of sexual harassment will promptly report the harassment without worrying about retaliation.

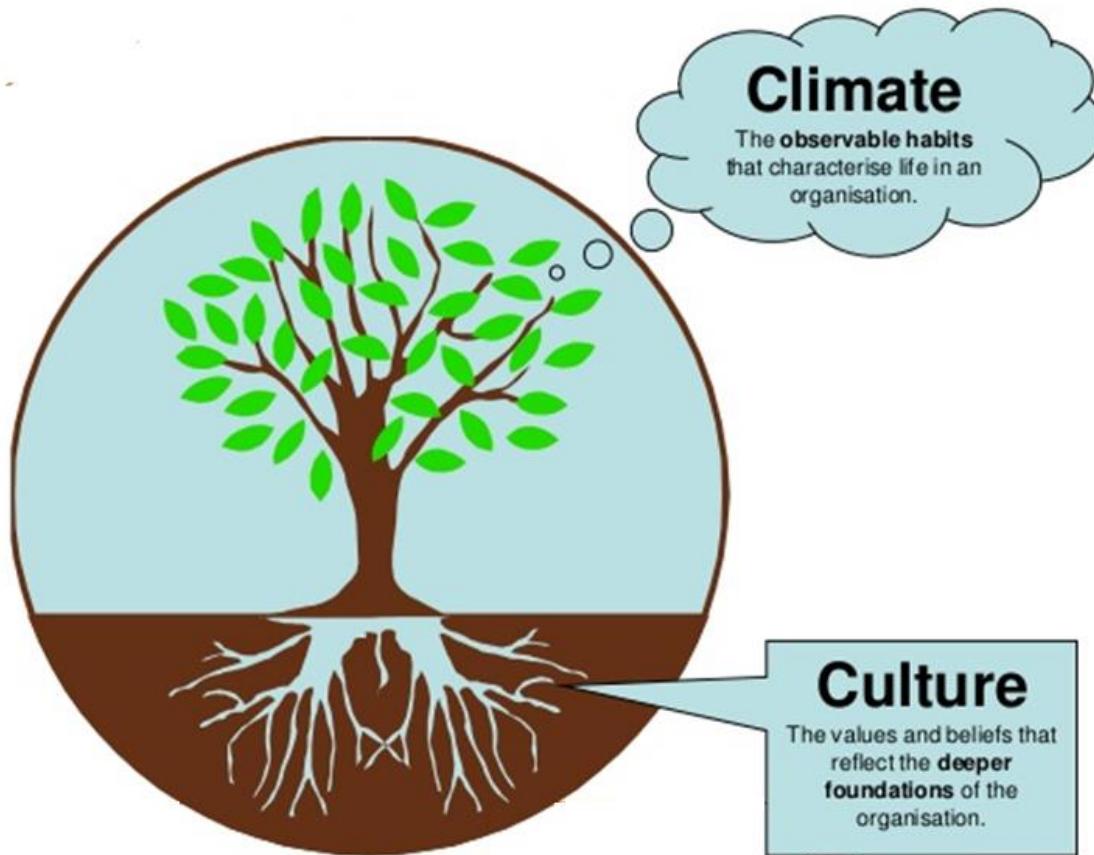
The least common response for women is to formally report the sexually harassing experience. For many, this is due to an accurate perception that they may experience retaliation or other negative outcomes associated with their personal and professional lives.

Recommendation

Recommendation: Move beyond legal compliance to address culture and climate. Academic institutions, research and training sites, and federal agencies should move beyond interventions or policies that represent basic legal compliance and that rely solely on formal reports made by targets.

Finding

A system-wide change to the culture and climate in higher education is required to prevent and effectively address all three forms of sexual harassment.



Finding

Organizational climate is, by far, the greatest predictor of the occurrence of sexual harassment, and ameliorating it can prevent people from sexually harassing others.

The characteristics of organizations with a permissive climate toward sexual harassment include the following:

- Perceived risk to victims for reporting harassment,
- Lack of sanctions against offenders, and
- The perception that one's complaints will not be taken seriously.

6 Key Recommendations for Institutions

1. Create diverse, inclusive, and respectful environments
2. Diffuse the hierarchical and dependent relationship between trainees and faculty
3. Provide support for targets

6 Key Recommendations for Institutions (cont.)

4. Improve transparency and accountability
5. Strive for strong and diverse leadership
6. Make the entire academic community responsible for reducing and preventing sexual harassment



A Convening of Leaders in Academia to Prevent Sexual Harassment

Friday, November 9, 2018

Fred Kavli Auditorium

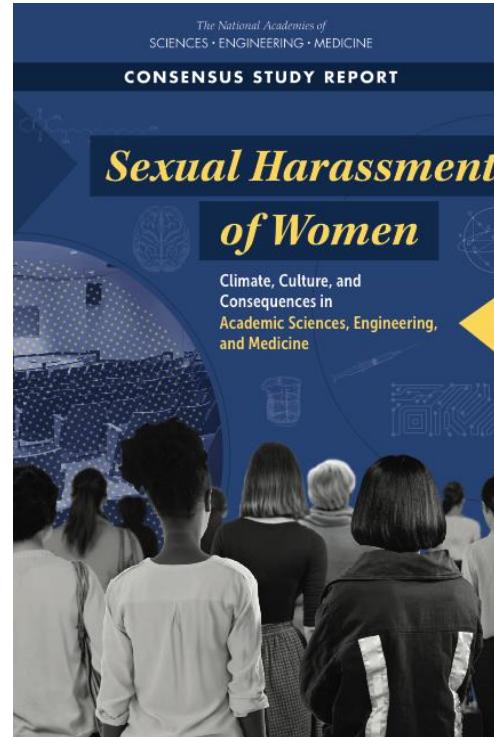
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