

# **Rape Myth Acceptance in Japanese university students**

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# Introduction

Rape victims have suffers from not only  
(1) direct physically and psychological wound  
but also  
(2) stigma which harms them indirectly.

The victims often accused as they will provider they  
have and they are victimize twice. This is called the  
secondary victimization.

“The rape myth can be engraved people’s  
consciousness which facilitates them to accuse  
victims.”

(by Asian Woman’s Fund) 2

# What is Rape Myth ?

- ❁ “Rape myths are attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women.” (Lonsway & Fitzgerald,1994)
- ❁ Rape myths usually include the following items :
  - victims deserve, cause, invite, ask for, or want to be raped.
  - victims who get raped could have avoided it and therefore are at fault.
  - victims are sexually promiscuous, or they are sexually active with the offender, and thus she/he was a willing partner in a sex act.
- ❁ These myths are learned through cultural socialization by our family, peers, religious instruction, schools, media, and community. (Schmid, H., 2004).

# Rape myth studies in U. S. : Burt (1980)

- ❁ Burt (1980) made the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (RMA) and found that RMA correlates with various attitudes, personalities, and other background characteristics.
- ❁ Her results indicated that the higher the sex role stereotyping, adversarial sexual beliefs, and acceptance of interpersonal violence, the greater a respondent's acceptance of rape myths.
- ❁ The results also reported that many Americans believe rape myths and RMA is connected to other deeply held and pervasive attitudes.

# RMA studies in Japan : Ohbuchi.et.al.(1985)

- ❁ They made a questionnaire survey by using Burt (1980)'s original questionnaire = *Japanese version of rape myth acceptance scale* (RMA scale) with four subscales: ① Acceptance of sexual aggression, ② Women's latent desire to be raped, ③ Women's carelessness causes rape, ④ Rape story as made up by women .
- ❁ Subjects were university students and prisoners (rapist and others)
- ❁ Results indicated:
  - (1) Degree of RMA : Rape prisoners > General prisoners > Male students > Female students
  - (2) RMA was supported widely by Japanese university students including even women students
  - (3) *Acceptance of sexual aggression* was more often believed by men than women.
  - (4) *Women's latent desire to be raped* was more often supported by with experience of sex than without such experience.

# Background

- ❁ During these 21 years in Japan, the consciousness of women's right become more activated such as movement activity toward implementation of women's human rights.
- ❁ Equal Employment Opportunity Law (1997) was revised and employers responsibility to prevent sexual harassment (2006), Stalker Control Law (2003), Domestic Violence Prevention Law (2002), and perseverance of anonymity during the court process of victims of sex crime.
- ❁ Psychological and psychiatric studies for rape victims has increased and revealed the significance of psychological care in the assistance of victims.
- ❁ The rape victims number are not decreasing in Japan and there are more necessity to assist those victims.
- ❁ Reduction of Rape Myth Acceptance is an important task, but there had been few studies since 1985 in Japan.
- ❁ This study is trying to see the 21 year change of rape myth acceptance today in Japan by comparing it with data by Ohbuchi et al (1985) .6



# Purpose of present study

- ❁ Purpose of present our questionnaire study is to replicate the Ohbuchi's rape myth acceptance scale and compare their results with today's data.
- ❁ Factors: sex, sexual intercourse experience and the contact frequency to violent sexual media

## *Hypotheses:*

- ❁ Hypothesis 1: Rape myth acceptance has reduced since 1985.
- ❁ Hypothesis 2: Men often believe rape myth than women.
- ❁ Hypothesis 3: Without sexual experience latent support rape myth.
- ❁ Hypothesis 4: The more contact of sexual violent media are more support violence sexual acceptance women's latent desire to be raped.

# Method

- ❁ Participants: a survey was conducted 209 students. Valid answers were 189 students (male 130, female 59). The average of male subject 19.2 years old (SD=1.13), female subject 19.2 years old (SD=1.45) During university class time, the questionnaire survey was conducted.

## *Structure of the questionnaire:*

- ❁ Rape myth acceptance scale :(1) Acceptance of sexual aggression, (2) Women's latent desire to be raped, (3) Women's carelessness causes rape, , and (4) Rape story as made up by women .
- ❁ Personality variables (such as sexual stereotype, conservatism on sex, hostility toward women, sexual self esteem, contact to sexual violent media and sexual experience.)



# RMA questionnaire items

## *(1) Acceptance of sexual aggression*

k71. It is sexual excitement for most women to be treated rudely by men.

k72. Mostly, women make a show of not desiring to have sexual intercourse, as she a loose women, they desire to be raped really.

k73. The way to excite frigid women is to rape violently.

## *(2) Women's Latent desire to be raped*

k81. A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on their first date implies that she is willing to have sex.

k82. If a healthy women will resist desperately, she can't to be raped.

k83. Many woman have an unconscious wish to be raped, and may then unconsciously set up a situation in which they are likely to be attacked.

## *(3) Women's carelessness causes rape*

k91. Any female can get raped.

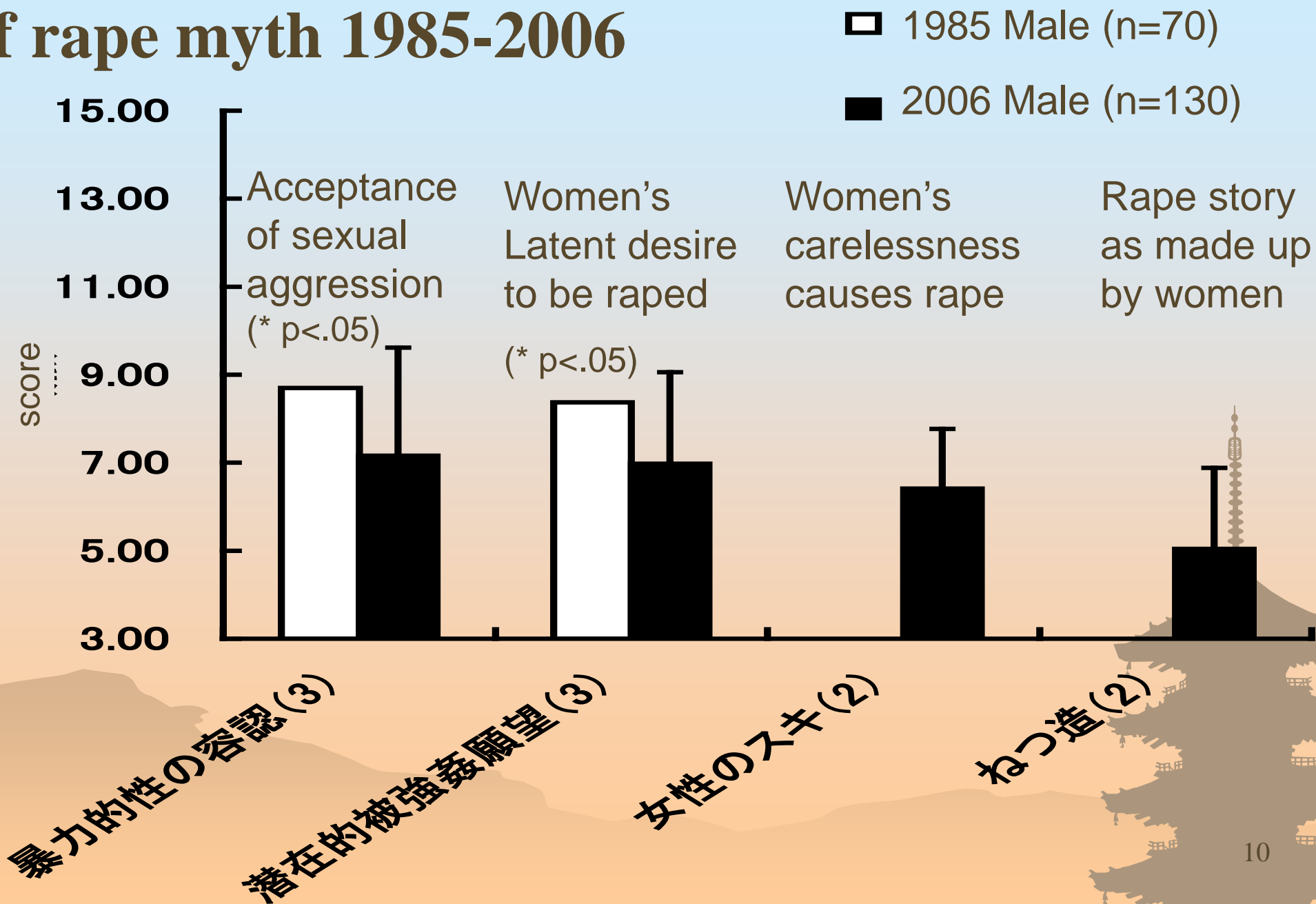
k92. When woman go around braless ,they are just asking for trouble.

## *(4) Rape story as made up by women*

ka1. What percentage of women who report a rape would you say are lying because they are angry and want to get back at the man they accuse ?

ka2. What percentage of reported rapes would you guess were merely invented by women who discovered they were pregnant and wanted to protect their own reputation ?

# Male students' acceptance of rape myth 1985-2006

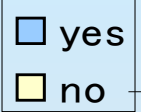


# Male students' acceptance of rape myth 1985-2006

1985 male (n=70)

2006 male (n=130)

\*p<.05 \*\*p<.01 n. s.: non-significant



0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

k71. To be treated rudely by men is sexually exciting.

**k72. Mostly, women desire to be raped in reality.**

**K73. Rape excites frigid**

**K81. A woman who goes to the man's home at first date is willing to have sex.**

k82. A healthy women who resist desperately can't be raped.

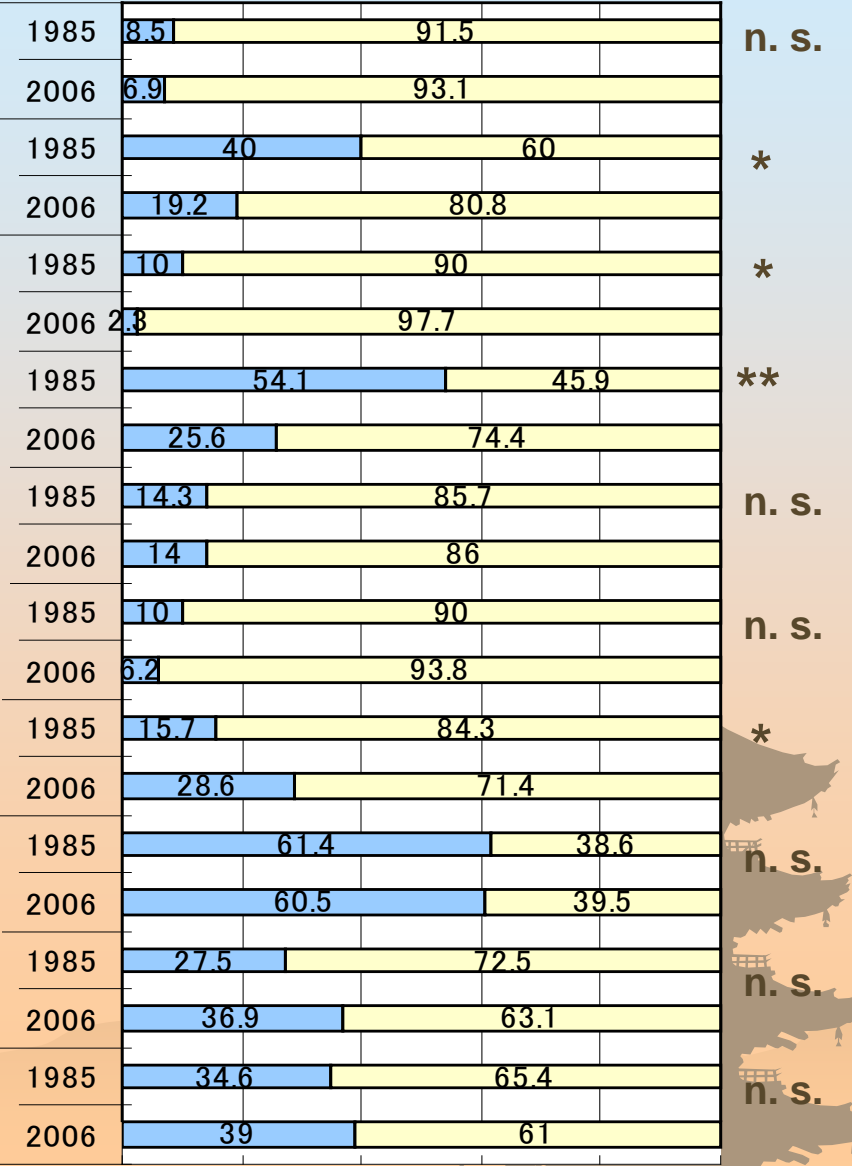
k83. Many woman have an unconscious wish to be raped, and may set up a situation in which they are likely to be attacked.

**k91. Any female can get raped.**

K92. Braless woman are just asking for trouble.

ka1. Percentage of women who report a rape are lying because they are angry and want to get back at the man

Ka2. Percentage of reported rapes invented by pregnant women who wanted to protect their own reputation



# Change of RMA 1985-2006 in male students

In male subjects, the subscales of *Acceptance of sexual aggression* and *Women's Latent desire to be raped* were significantly decreased.

The support rate of “K72. *Mostly, women make a show of not desiring to have sexual intercourse*” was declined from 40.0% to 19.2%.

The support rate of “K81. *A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on their first date implies that she is willing to have sex,*” significantly changed from 54.1% to 25.6%.

The support rate of “K91 *Any female can get raped,*” increased from 15.7% to 28.6%, which means decrease of RMA in this item..

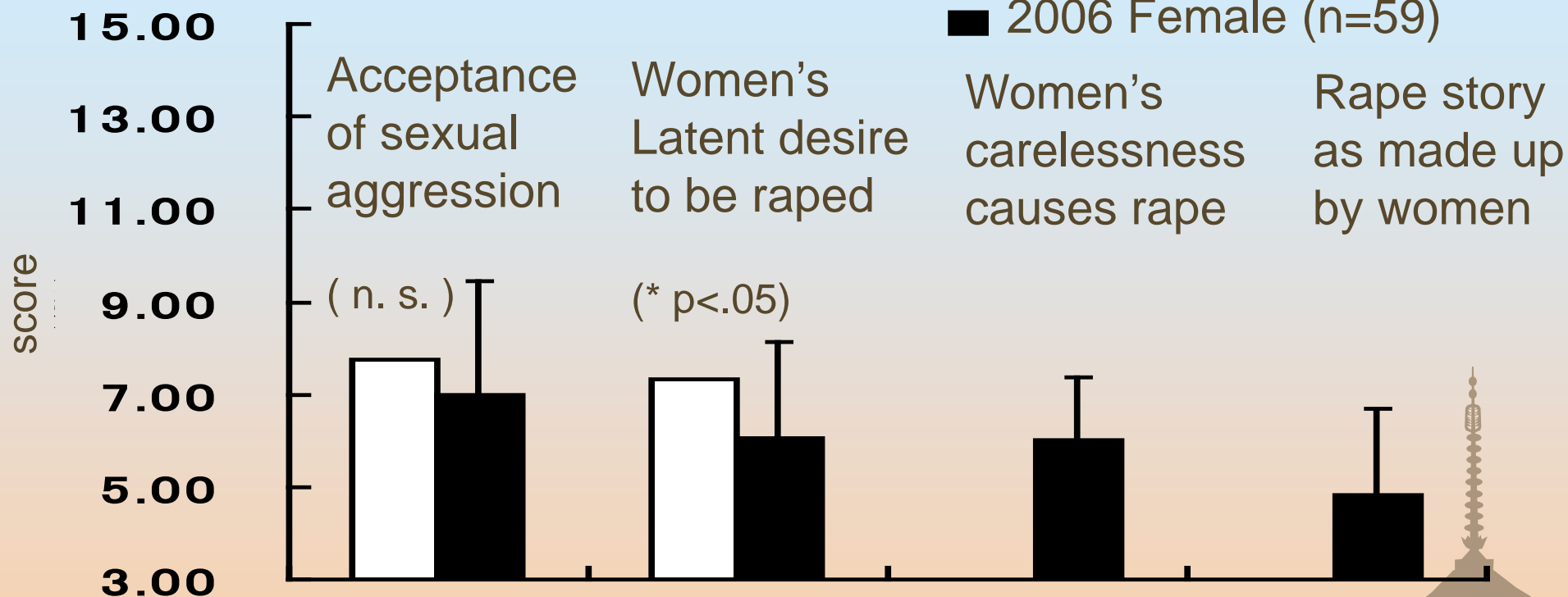
The decrease of RMA in male students was shown in the results of four items out of ten items.

Hypothesis 1 was generally supported.

# Female students' acceptance of rape myth 1985-2006

□ 1985 Female (n=73)

■ 2006 Female (n=59)



暴力的性の容認(3)

潜在的被強姦願望(3)

女性のスキ(2)

なつ造(2)

# Change of RMA 1985-2006 in female students

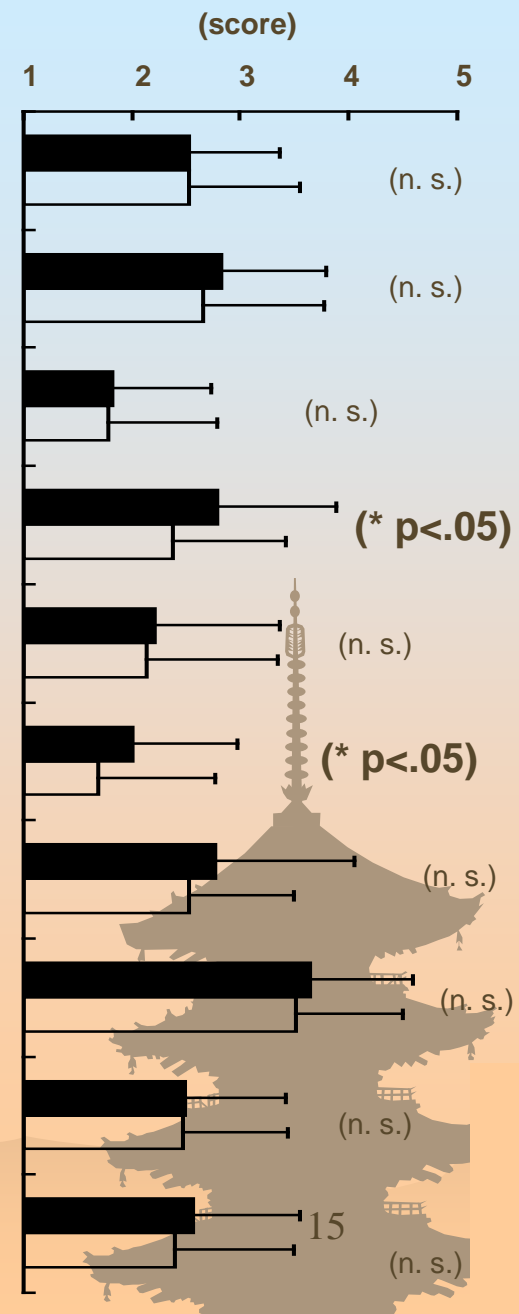
As for women, *Women's Latent desire to be raped* is significantly lower than in 21 years ago. Women also had less belief on the item that “k81. A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on their first date implies that she is willing to have sex.”

Our data shows that rape myth acceptance rate has decreased both in men and women.

Hypothesis 1 was partly supported.

# Gender difference of the acceptance rape myth 2006

■ Male (n=130)  
 □ Female (n=59)



k71. It is sexual excitement for most women to be treated rudely by men.

k72. Mostly, women make a show of not desiring to have sexual intercourse, as she a loose women, they desire to be raped really.

K73. The way to excite frigid women is raping violently.

**K81. A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on their first date implies that she is willing to have sex.**

k82. If a healthy women will resist desperately, she can't to be raped.

**k83. Many woman have an unconscious wish to be raped, and may then unconsciously set up a situation in which they are likely to be attacked.**

k91. Any female can get raped.

K92. When woman go around braless ,they are just asking for trouble.

ka1. What percentage of women who report a rape would you say are lying because they are angry and want to get back at the man they accuse ?

Ka2. what percentage of reported rapes would you guess were merely invented by women who discovered they were pregnant and wanted to protect their own reputation ?

# Gender difference of RMA 2006

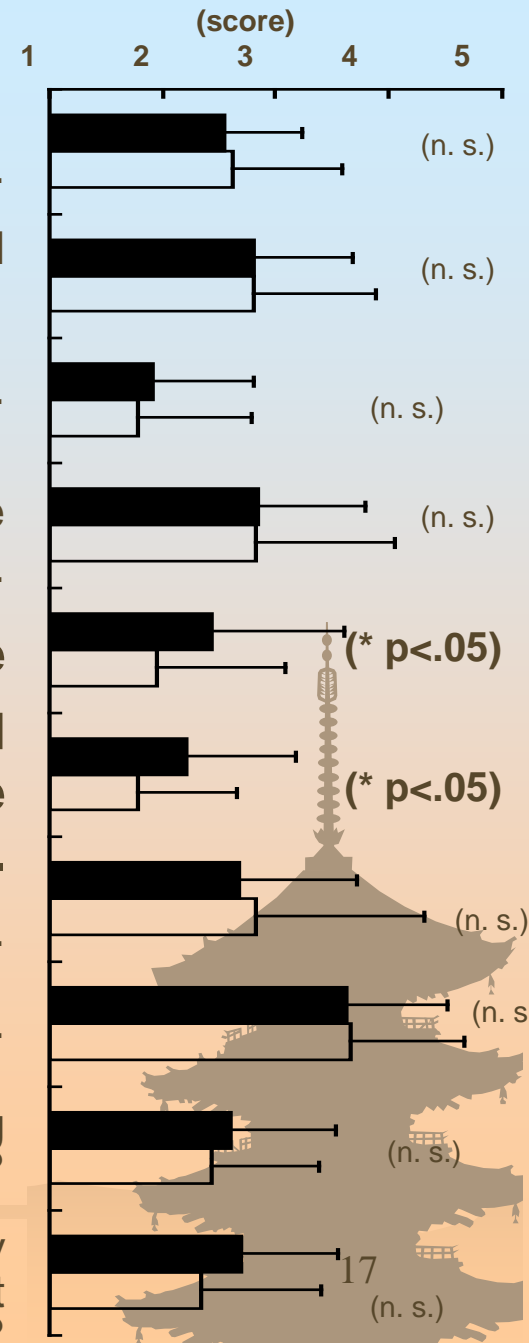
- ❁ The support rates of the item *“K81. A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on their first date implies that she is willing to have sex”* and the item *“k83. Many woman have an unconscious wish to be raped.”* were significantly higher in male than in female.
- ❁ Other items had no gender difference.
- ❁ Hypothesis 2 was partially supported only in the subscale of *“Women’s Latent Desire to Be Raped”*, and not in other subscales.



# Male students' sexual experience factor 2006

■ without (n=61)

□ with (n=54)



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**k83. Many woman have an unconscious wish to be raped, and may then unconsciously set up a situation in which they are likely to be attacked.**

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# Sexual experience of male students 2006

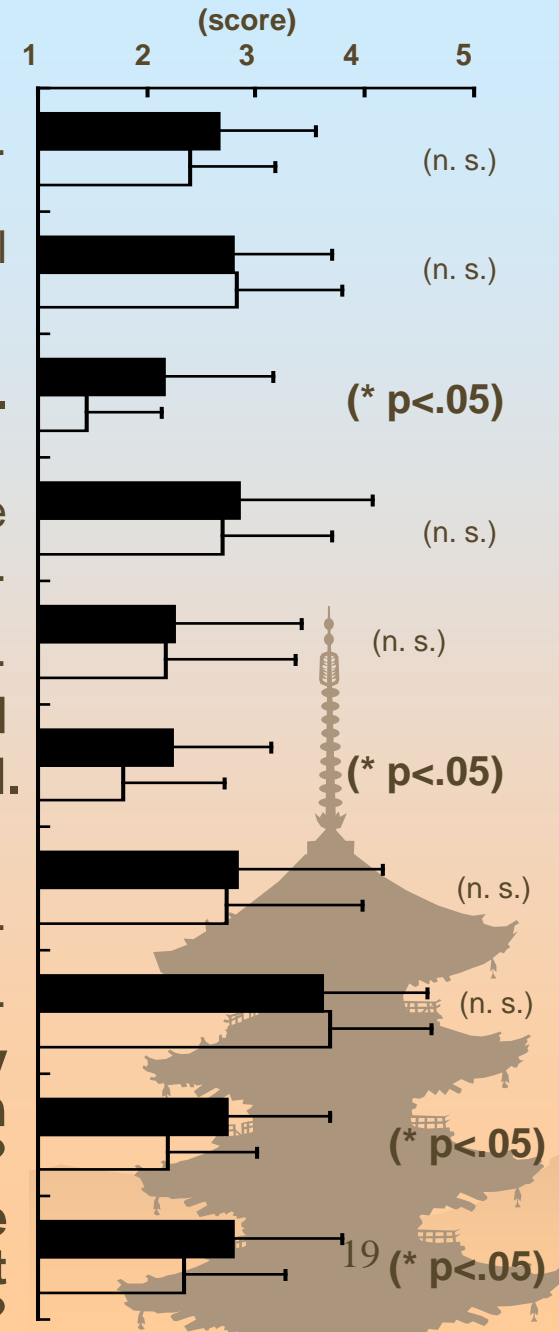
In the two items of *Women's latent desire to be raped* subscales, male students **without** sexual experience had higher RMA rate than those **with** experience.

Hypothesis 3 was supported. Without sexual experience, men tend to depend on fantasy or media influence.

# The contact of sexual violent media in male 2006

■ high media contact (n=64)

□ low media contact (n=64)



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k81. A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on their first date implies that she is willing to have sex.

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# The contact of sexual violent media in male 2006

Those who had high media contact had higher RMA rates in the item of “K73. The way to excite frigid women is raping violently.” and the item of “k83. Many woman have an unconscious wish to be raped, and may then unconsciously set up a situation in which they are likely to be attacked.”

And in *Rape story as made up by women* subscale items factor, those who had high media contact had higher RMA rates.

Hypothesis 4 was supported in several items.

# Conclusion

- ❁ Support for the *Acceptance of sexual aggression* and *Women's latent desire to be raped* have decreased in Japanese university students since 1985.
- ❁ There were no significant gender difference and time difference in the subscales of *Women's carelessness causes rape* and *Rape story as made up by women*.
- ❁ To remove stigma of rape victims, It is necessity to reduce rape myth acceptance in further time perspective.
- ❁ Concrete and correct information is important to be provided for sex education for young people.
- ❁ Sexual violent media contact such as by internet is harmful for teenagers . It is necessary for young people to give guidance or to have limited access to harmful violent media contents.

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