

No. 123910

**In the Supreme Court of Illinois**


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|                             |   |                               |
|-----------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF      | ) |                               |
| ILLINOIS,                   | ) | Appeal from the Circuit Court |
|                             | ) | of the Twenty-Second Judicial |
| <i>Plaintiff-Appellant,</i> | ) | Circuit, McHenry County,      |
|                             | ) | Illinois                      |
| v.                          | ) | _____                         |
|                             | ) |                               |
| BETHANY AUSTIN,             | ) | No. 16 CF 935                 |
|                             | ) | _____                         |
| <i>Defendant-Appellee.</i>  | ) | The Honorable Joel D. Berg,   |
|                             | ) | Judge Presiding               |
|                             | ) |                               |

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**APPENDIX OF *AMICUS CURIAE*  
CYBER CIVIL RIGHTS INITIATIVE**

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Maryanne C. Woo (ARDC 6270844)  
M. Patrick Yingling (ARDC 6325099)  
Stephanie A. Gerstetter (ARDC 6329724)  
REED SMITH LLP  
10 S. Wacker Dr., 40th Fl.  
Chicago, IL 60606  
Tel: (312) 207 6517  
Fax: (312) 207-6400  
mwoo@reedsmith.com

*Counsel for Amicus Curiae  
Cyber Civil Rights Initiative*

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3/20/2019 2:26 PM  
Carolyn Taft Grosboll  
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# **2017 NATIONWIDE ONLINE STUDY OF NONCONSENSUAL PORN VICTIMIZATION AND PERPETRATION**

## **A SUMMARY REPORT**

**Dr. Asia A. Eaton, Dr. Holly Jacobs, and Yanet Ruvalcaba**  
June 2017

**Cyber Civil Rights Initiative, Inc.**  
**Florida International University, Department of Psychology**

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## **I. Executive Summary**

Digital sexual interactions have become increasingly prevalent in the last decade in the U.S. Sexting is common among young adults in the U.S., with about half of all young adults age 18-26 today having sent nude or seminude photos of themselves to others (Benotsch, Snipes, Martin, & Bull, 2012; Dir, Coskunpinar, Stiner, & Cyders, 2013; Drouin & Landgraff, 2012; Gordon-Messer, Bauermeister, Grodzinski, & Zimmerman, 2012) and two-thirds having received sexually-explicit photos of others (Dir et al., 2013). However, little is known about how digital communications are used in the perpetration of sexual violence or harassment among young adults (Henry & Powell, 2015).

Nonconsensual pornography (NCP) is a growing form of digital sexual violence (McGlynn, Rackley, & Houghton, 2017; Reed, Tolman, & Ward, 2016) defined as the distribution of sexually graphic images of individuals without their consent (also known as “revenge porn,” “cyber rape,” and “involuntary porn”; Citron & Franks, 2014). This includes images obtained without consent (e.g., hidden recordings) as well as images obtained and intended for a private or confidential relationship and later distributed beyond that relationship. While many state laws criminalize the viewing or recording of a person’s intimate parts without permission (Solove & Schwartz, 2013), or the disclosure of records containing individually-identifying information (5 U.S.C. § 552), not all ban NCP.

To date, published studies on the prevalence, correlates, and consequences of NCP are lacking. In late 2016, Lenhart and colleagues published a data memo describing, for the first time, the prevalence of NCP victimization in the U.S. (Lenhart et al., 2016). Using a nationally-representative sample of 3,002 internet users age 15 or older living in the U.S., these researchers conducted phone-based interviews asking participants about their experience with a variety of

forms of “cyberabuse,” including whether anyone had ever threatened to or did “post nearly nude or nude photos or videos of you online to harm or embarrass you” (Lenhart et al, 2016, p. 14). Results of this research found that 4% of all participants, or about 1 of every 25, had someone threaten to post and/or post sexually-explicit images of them without their consent. However not all nonconsensual porn is perpetrated with the explicit intent to “...harm or embarrass...” as was stipulated in the question prompt from Lenhart and colleagues (2016). Indeed, the multiple potential motivations behind the perpetration of NCP, which can range from bragging, to arousal, to amusement, is why researchers have moved away from using the term “revenge porn” and now use the term “nonconsensual porn” (Franks, 2017).

Politicians, government agencies, and advocacy groups desperately need more meaningful data on NCP prevalence, risk factors, consequences, and experiences for their efforts on behalf of the American public, and are therefore calling for systematic research on nonconsensual porn. For example, Senator Franken of the Senate Subcommittee on Privacy, Technology and the Law wrote to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in 2015 expressing concern about limitations in the law around “revenge porn,” and requesting a detailed breakdown of the Bureau's plans to fight nonconsensual porn (Geller, 2015). The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and other free-speech groups have also asked for a broad examination of the state laws around nonconsensual porn for the purpose of more systematic and targeted legislation (Rugg, 2015). These appeals are congruent with and inspired by the nation’s current efforts to prevent and address violence-related behaviors that harm people and tax the legal system.

The present study is the *first ever* nation-wide study to profile the rates of nonconsensual pornography victimization and perpetration, including motives for perpetration, deterrents to

perpetration, and health outcomes for victims. This document is a summary report of the study methods and a subset of aggregated results from participants.

## II. Survey Creation and Administration

The 2017 Nationwide Online Study of Nonconsensual Porn Victimization and Perpetration was conducted by the Research Team at the Cyber Civil Rights Initiative, including Drs. Asia Eaton, Holly Jacobs, Dionne Stephens, Amy Bonomi, Tameka Gillum, and Ph.D. student Yanet Ruvalcaba, with support from Natalie Webb, CCRI's Communications and Digital Media Director. The study survey was constructed using input from experts in survey and questionnaire design, intimate partner violence and sexual abuse, criminal law, and victim support services. Participants were asked about their lifetime experience with nonconsensual pornography, both as perpetrators and victims, their health, motives for and consequences of their perpetration and victimization, respectively, and a number of demographic questions.

The 2017 Nationwide Online Study of Nonconsensual Porn was open to participants from November 2016 through March 2017 on the social media platform Facebook. Adult participants (age 18 and older) were recruited using Facebook advertisements with copy such as "Help us understand more about what American think about sharing nude images online. Take our survey and voice your opinion." Images that accompanied the advertisement copy were non-sexual in nature, and included images of computer screens, mail envelopes, and raised hands or simple, colorful geometric designs with one line descriptors such as "Share Your Opinion" or "Your Opinion Matters." See the Appendix for four examples of advertisements.

Three thousand forty-four adult participants were recruited using a stratified sampling technique in which advertisements were shown to equal numbers of men and women in each of the 50 states in the U.S. proportional to the representation of each state in the total population of the nation. For example, the data from the 2016 U.S. Census estimated that 3.99% of the U.S. population resides in Illinois. Therefore, using Facebook analytics, we recruited 4% of our

sample of 3,044 participants from the state of Illinois, and ceased data collection for this state once that quota was reached. Our respondents, however, do not constitute a nationally-representative sample of U.S. adults, making generalizations beyond this sample inappropriate. For instance, our findings cannot be applied to individuals who do not use the internet, or who do not have Facebook accounts. Though, considering researchers have found that 87% of all Americans use the internet (Anderson & Perrin, 2016), and of these 71% use Facebook (Duggan, Ellison, Lampe, Lenhart, & Madden, 2015), participants in our sample do reflect the typical characteristics of a large number of U.S. adults.

Eligibility criteria for participants included being 18 years of age or older and residing in the U.S. Two checks were implemented to help ensure the accuracy of participants' self-reports on these two eligibility criteria. To ensure participants were age 18 or older, we asked participants to report their birth year immediately upon starting the survey and again at the end of the survey. Participants whose birth years at both points did not match, or who had one birth year that indicated they were under age 18, were excluded from analyses. To ensure participants were living in a particular U.S. state, we used Facebook analytics to target individuals whose self-reported profiles indicated living in a U.S. state, as well as asking participants to report their state of residence in the survey.

Unlike some previous surveys of cyber harassment or abuse, which looked exclusively at rates of "revenge porn" (aka the non-consensual dissemination of sexually-explicit images for the purpose of harming or exacting revenge on the victim), this survey examined all forms of NCP victimization and perpetration in this population. We aimed to capture the NCP rates of any kind, in any context, spurred by any motives. For this reason, the primary question we used to assess victimization was broad, and read: "Has anyone ever shared a sexually-explicit image or




video of you without your consent?” We further clarified these terms as follows: “by ‘sexually-explicit’ we mean images or videos of full or partial nudity, or of sexual acts (such as penetration/intercourse, oral sex, masturbation, and the use of sexual toys). Sharing could include distributing or uploading images or videos via email, text message, social media, apps, websites, DVDs, or printed photos. This does NOT include commercially-distributed pornography.” Those who did not report having their images shared were also asked “Has anyone ever threatened to share a sexually-explicit image or video of you without your consent?” All individuals were additionally asked whether they had ever perpetrated NCP using the question: “Have you ever knowingly shared a sexually-explicit image or video of someone without his/her consent?”

Study materials and procedure were approved by the Institutional Review Board at Florida International University (FIU) to ensure adequate protection of human subjects in research. Participation was entirely voluntary, as outlined in a consent form proceeding the survey items, and participants did not receive compensation for their effort. No identifying information on participants was collected, making the surveys completely anonymous, with the exception of a small subset of individuals who gave their email addresses and volunteered to be contacted about future studies. At the end of the survey, all participants were directed to a host of online and offline resources related to NCP and sexual violence.

## II. Participant Characteristics

| <b>Total participants (N) = 3,044</b> |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Gender                                | 46.2% male ( $n = 1,405$ )<br>53.8% female ( $n = 1,639$ )   |
| Ethnicity                             | 82% White ( $n = 2,499$ )<br>8.2% selected multiple ethnic categories ( $n = 250$ )<br>3.4% selected “other” ( $n = 104$ )<br>2% Hispanic ( $n = 66$ )<br>1.3% African American ( $n = 40$ )<br>1.2% Asian ( $n = 36$ )<br>0.8% Alaskan Native/Native American ( $n = 25$ )<br>0.3% Middle Eastern ( $n = 9$ )<br>0.07% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander ( $n = 2$ )<br>0.4% missing ( $n = 13$ )   |
| Nationality                           | 98.8% U.S. Citizen ( $n = 3,006$ )<br>0.9% non-U.S. Citizen ( $n = 28$ )<br>0.3% Missing ( $n = 10$ )  |
| Age                                   | $M = 40.31$ ( $SD = 19.02$ )<br>Range = 18-97  |
| Sexual orientation                    | 70.4 heterosexual ( $n = 2,138$ )<br>7.5% gay or lesbian ( $n = 228$ )<br>16.5% bisexual ( $n = 501$ )<br>5.7% other ( $n = 172$ )<br>0.2% missing ( $n = 5$ )   |
| Education                             | 2.1% Some high school ( $n = 63$ )<br>13.4% High school graduate ( $n = 407$ )<br>39% Presently in college; 1 <sup>st</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup> year ( $n = 1,198$ )<br>8% Associates degree ( $n = 253$ )<br>16.7% Bachelor's degree ( $n = 507$ )<br>6% Completed some postgraduate ( $n = 184$ )<br>8.6% Master's degree ( $n = 263$ )<br>3% Doctorate, law, or medical degree ( $n = 92$ )<br>0.5% Other advanced degree beyond a Master's degree ( $n = 14$ )<br>2% Other ( $n = 61$ ) |
| Annual Income                         | 25.5% “Less than \$10,000” ( $n = 776$ )<br>15.1% “\$10,000 - \$19,999” ( $n = 460$ )<br>12.7% “\$20,000 - \$29,999” ( $n = 386$ )<br>11.2% “\$30,000 - \$39,999” ( $n = 341$ )<br>9.1% “\$40,000 - \$49,999” ( $n = 276$ )  |



|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | 11.1% “\$50,000 - \$74,999” ( <i>n</i> = 338) |
|  | 7.1% “\$75,000 - \$99,999” ( <i>n</i> = 215)  |
|  | 4% “\$100,000 - \$149,999” ( <i>n</i> = 123)  |
|  | 2.5% “\$150,000 or more” ( <i>n</i> = 77)     |
|  | 1.7% Missing ( <i>n</i> = 52)                 |

## IIV. Key Findings

### A. Overall victimization, threat, and perpetration rates

1. **Victimized or threatened with NCP.** 12.8% of all participants reported having been victims of NCP (having had a sexually-explicit image of themselves shared without their consent) or having been *threatened* with NCP.
2. **NCP Victims.** 8% of all participants reported having been victims of NCP (having had a sexually-explicit image of themselves shared without their consent) at some point in their lives.
3. **Only threatened with NCP.** 4.8% of all participants reported having only been *threatened* with NCP, *without it ever being distributed*.
4. **NCP Perpetrators.** 5.2% of all participants reported having perpetrated NCP (having shared a sexually-explicit image of someone without their consent) at some point in their lives.

|   | Yes              | No                |
|---|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Has anyone ever shared or threatened to share a sexually-explicit image or video of you without your consent?  | 12.8% (389/3044) | 87.2% (2655/3044) |
| 2. Has anyone ever shared a sexually-explicit image or video of you without your consent?   | 8% (244/3044)    | 92% (2800/3044)   |
| 3. Has anyone ever <i>threatened</i> to share sexually-explicit image or video of you without your consent, <i>without it ever being distributed</i> .? | 4.8% (145/3044)  | 95.2% (2899/3044) |
| 4. Have you ever knowingly shared a sexually-explicit image or video of someone without his/her consent?  | 5.2% (159/3044)  | 94.8% (2885/3044) |

## B. Gender Differences

1. **Victimized or threatened with NCP by gender.** 12.8% of all participants ( $n = 389/3044$ ) reported having been victims of NCP (having had an image of them shared without their consent) or having been *threatened* with NCP. Women were significantly more likely (about 1.7 times as likely) to have been victims of NCP or to have been threatened with NCP compared to men, with 15.8% of all women reporting having been victimized or threatened vs. 9.3% of men across all age groups.

|   |     |                             | Participant gender |        | Total  |
|---|-----|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------|--------|
|   |     |                             | Male               | Female |        |
| <b>Has anyone ever shared a sexually-explicit image or video of you without your consent?</b>                                   | No  | Count                       | 1275               | 1380   | 2655   |
|   |     | % within participant gender | 90.7%              | 84.2%  | 87.2%  |
| <b><u>or</u><br/>Has anyone ever <i>threatened</i> to share a sexually-explicit image or video of you without your consent?</b> | Yes | Count                       | 130                | 259    | 389    |
|   |     | % within participant gender | 9.3%               | 15.8%  | 12.8%  |
| Total   |     | Count                       | 1405               | 1639   | 3044   |
|   |     | % within participant gender | 100.0%             | 100.0% | 100.0% |

## B. Gender Differences (contd.)

2. **NCP Victims by gender.** 8% of all participants ( $n = 244/3044$ ) reported having been victims of NCP (having had an image of them shared without their consent)<sup>1</sup> at some point in their lives. Women were significantly more likely (about 1.5 times as likely) to report having been victims than men, with 9.2% of all women reporting victimization vs. 6.6% of men across all age groups.

|   |                             | Participant gender          |        | Total  |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------|--------|
|   |                             | Male                        | Female |        |
| <b>Has anyone ever shared a sexually-explicit image or video of you without your consent?</b> | No                          | Count                       | 1312   | 1488   |
|   |                             | % within participant gender | 93.4%  | 90.8%  |
|   | Yes                         | Count                       | 93     | 151    |
|   |                             | % within participant gender | 6.6%   | 9.2%   |
| Total   | Count                       |                             | 1405   | 1639   |
|   | % within participant gender |                             | 100.0% | 100.0% |

<sup>1</sup> Of the 244 victims, 66 (27%) said they were under age 18 at the time the image(s) was taken. Most of those 66 participants were between the ages of 15 and 17 at the time the image(s) was captured (76%; 50/66).

## B. Gender Differences (contd.)

3. **Only threatened with NCP by gender.** 4.8% of all participants ( $n = 145/3044$ ) reported having only been *threatened* with NCP, *without it ever being distributed*. Women were significantly more likely (about 2.5 times as likely) to have been threatened with NCP than men, with 6.6% of all women reporting having been threatened vs. 2.6% of men across all age groups.

|  |                             |                             | Participant gender |        | Total  |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------|--------|
|  |                             |                             | Male               | Female |        |
| <b>Has anyone ever <i>threatened</i> [only] to share a sexually-explicit image or video of you without your consent?</b> | No                          | Count                       | 1368               | 1531   | 2899   |
|  |                             | % within participant gender | 97.4%              | 93.4%  | 95.2%  |
|  | Yes                         | Count                       | 37                 | 108    | 145    |
|  |                             | % within participant gender | 2.6%               | 6.6%   | 4.8%   |
| Total  | Count                       |                             | 1405               | 1639   | 3044   |
|  | % within participant gender |                             | 100.0%             | 100.0% | 100.0% |

## B. Gender Differences (contd.)

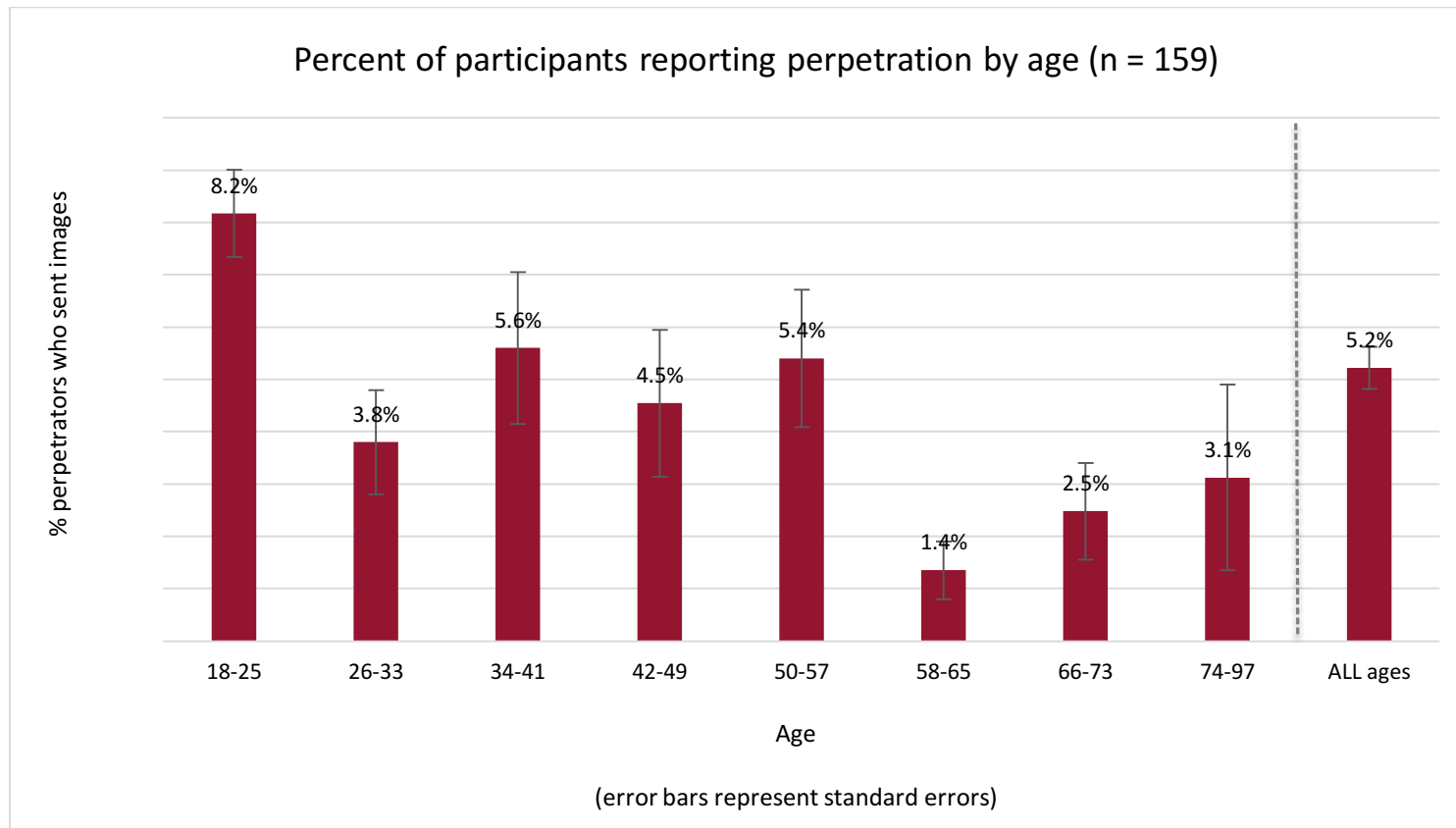
4. **NCP Perpetrators by gender.** 5.2% of all participants ( $n = 159/3044$ ) reported having perpetrated NCP (having shared a sexually-explicit image of someone without their consent) at some point in their lives. Men were significantly more likely (twice as likely) to report having been perpetrators of than women, with 7.4% of all men participants reporting perpetration vs. 3.4% of all women across age groups.

|  |     | Participant gender          |        | Total  |
|--|-----|-----------------------------|--------|--------|
|  |     | Men                         | Women  |        |
| <b>Have you ever knowingly shared a sexually-explicit image or video of someone without his/her consent?</b> | No  | Count                       | 1301   | 2885   |
|  |     | % within participant gender | 92.6%  | 94.8%  |
|  | Yes | Count                       | 104    | 159    |
|  |     | % within participant gender | 7.4%   | 5.2%   |
| Total  |     | Count                       | 1405   | 3044   |
|  |     | % within participant gender | 100.0% | 100.0% |



### C. Age Differences

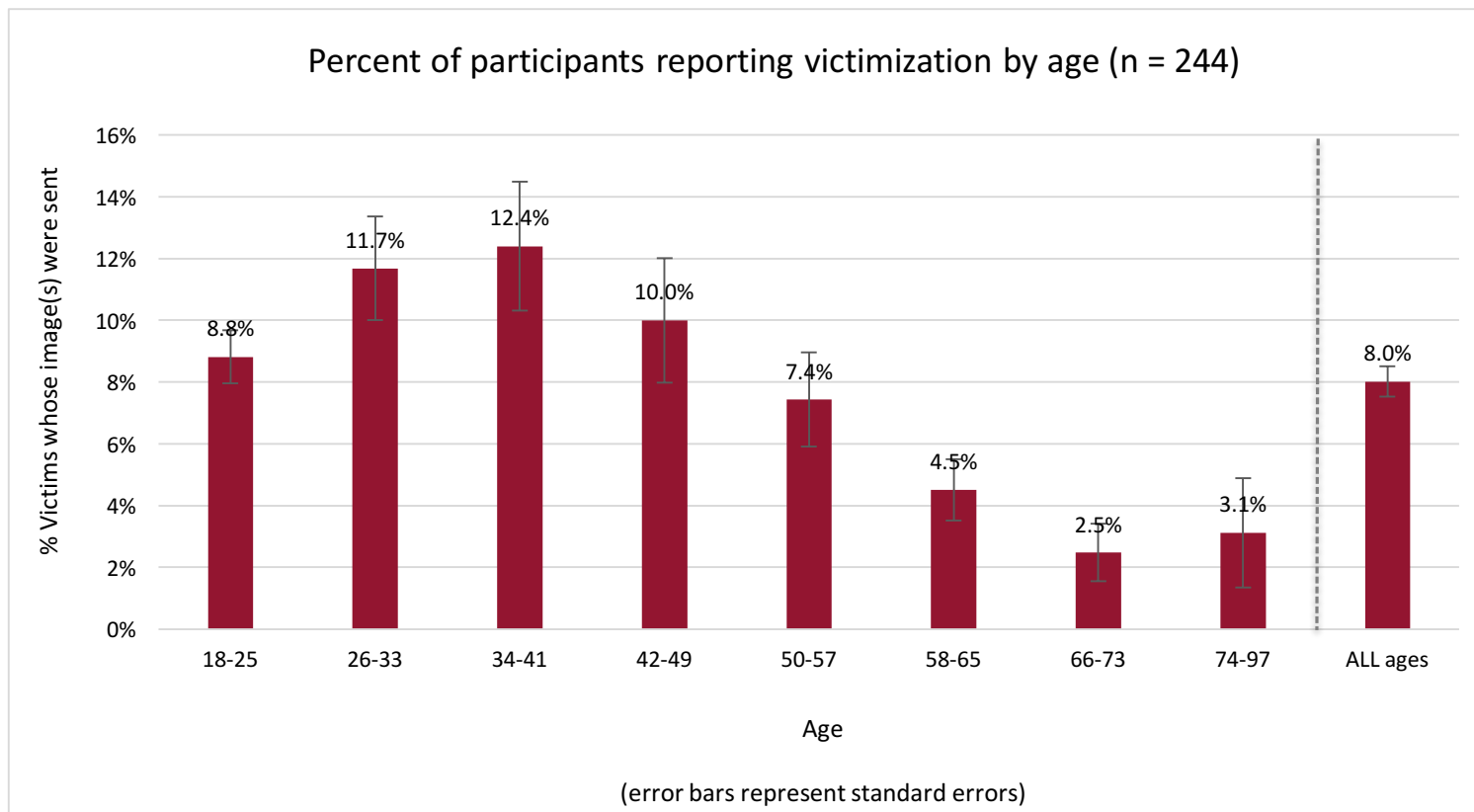
1. **Perpetration by age.** Participants between the ages of 18-25 reported the highest levels of NCP perpetration compared to other age groups, with 8.2% of participants in this age group reporting having shared sexually-explicit images of another person(s) without consent at some point in their lives.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup> The age distribution for participants was skewed, with very few participants age 74 and older in the sample ( $n = 96$ )

### C. Age Differences (contd.)

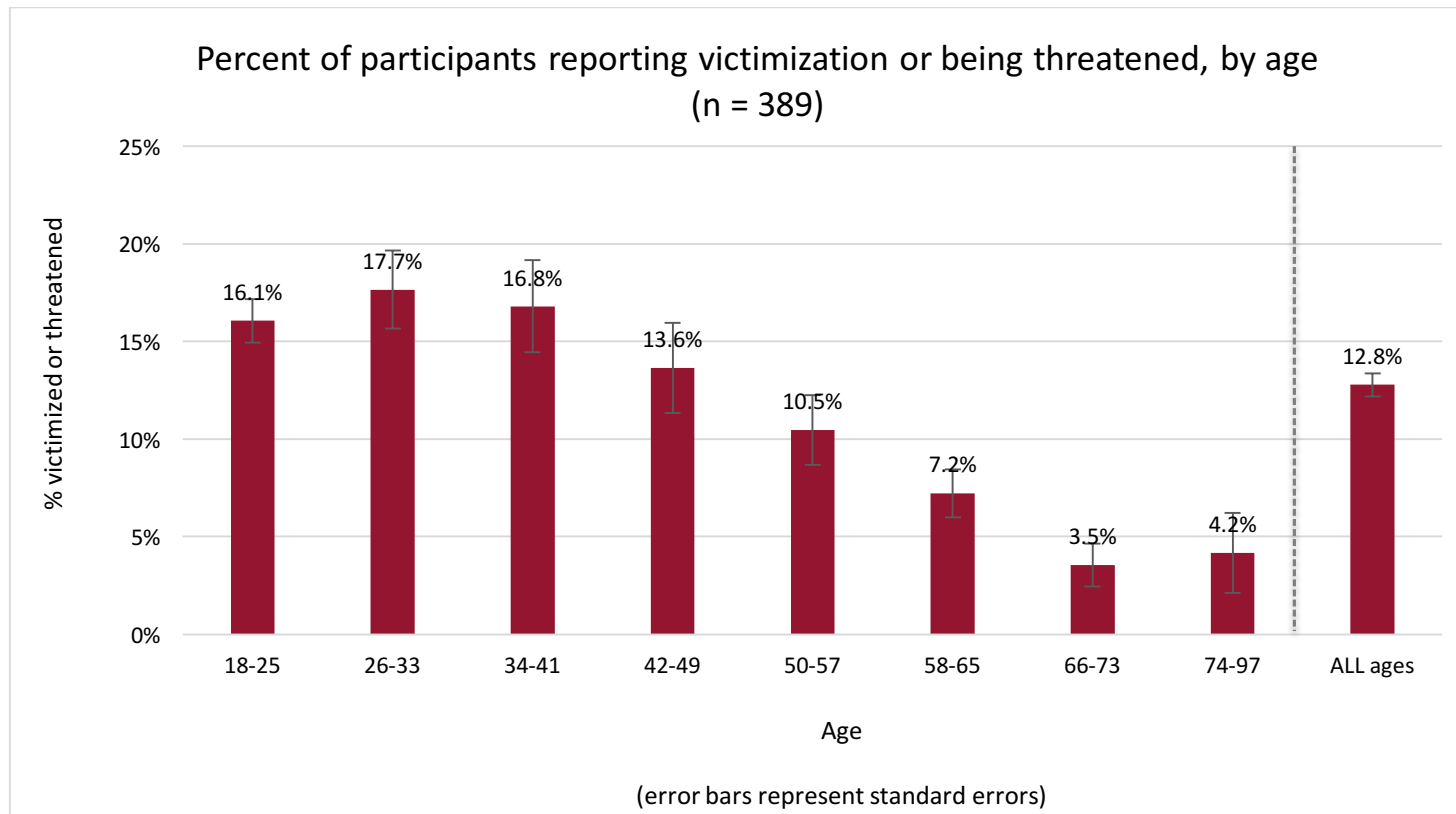
2. **Victimization by age.** Participants between the ages of 34-41 reported the highest levels of lifetime NCP victimization compared to other age groups, with 12.4% of participants in this age group reporting having been victims of NCP at some point in their lives.<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> The age distribution for participants was skewed, with very few participants age 74 and older in the sample ( $n = 96$ )

### C. Age Differences (contd.)

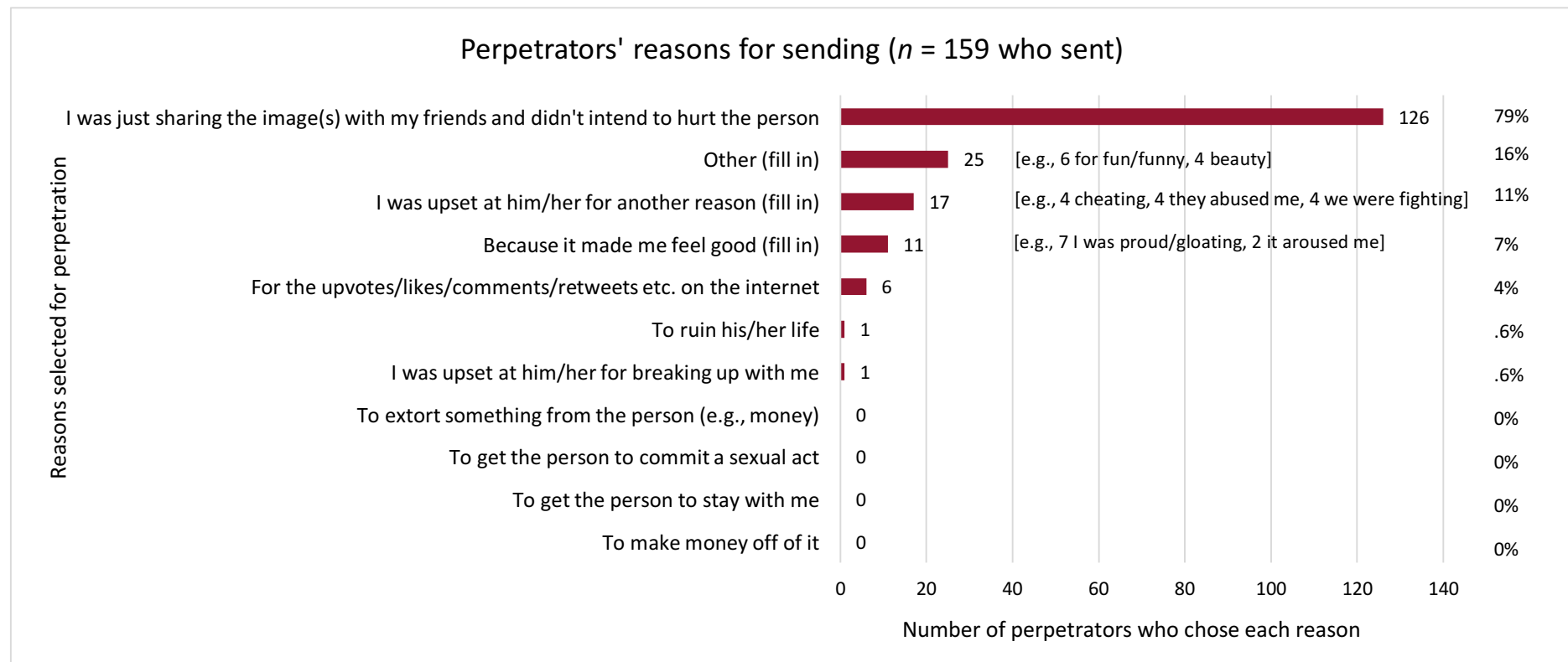
3. **Victimized or threatened with NCP by age.** Participants between the ages of 26-33 reported the highest levels of lifetime victimization or being threatened with NCP compared to other age groups, with 17.7% of participants in this age group reporting having been victimized by or threatened with NCP at some point in their lives.<sup>4</sup>



<sup>4</sup> The age distribution for participants was skewed, with very few participants age 74 and older in the sample ( $n = 96$ )

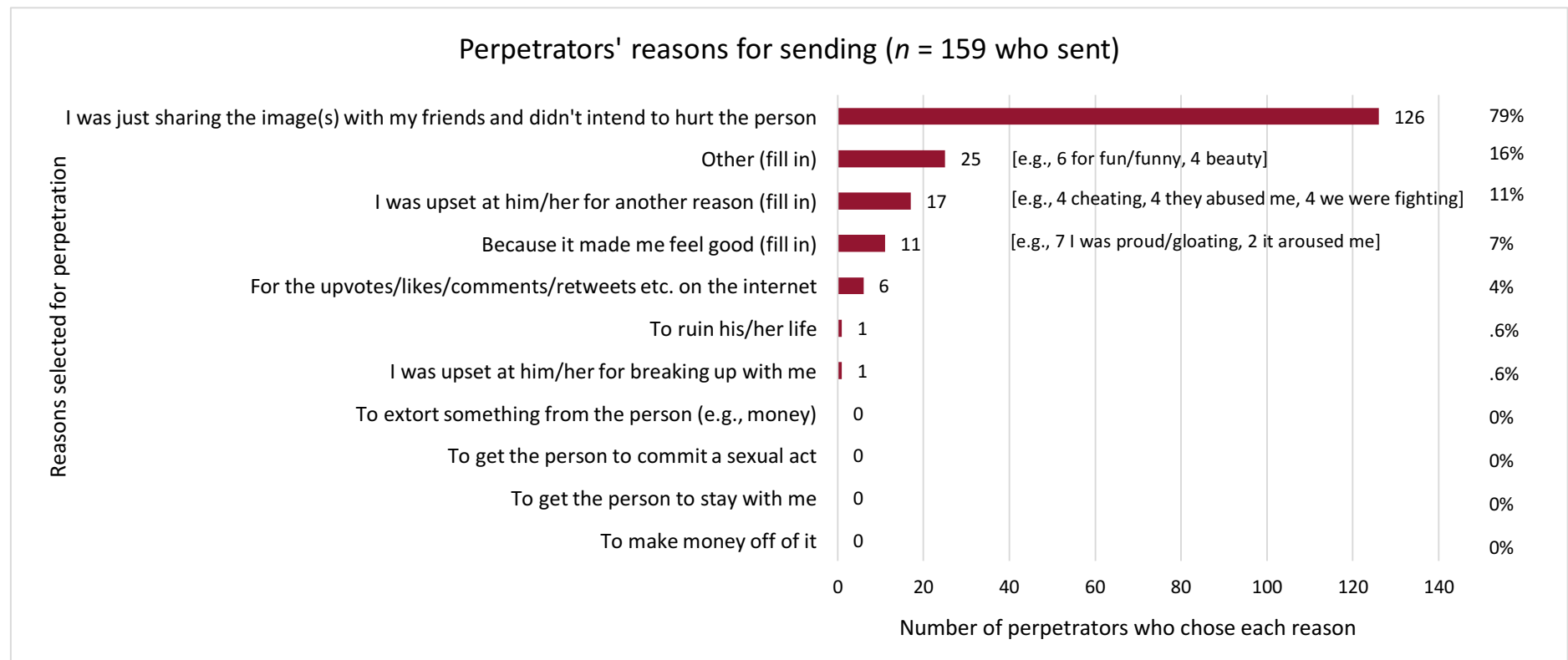
## D. Perpetrator Motives

Of the 159 individuals who reported having perpetrated NCP by sharing sexually-explicit images of another person without his/her consent (5.2% of the entire sample, 159/3044), the most commonly chosen reason for perpetration was just to share “with friends” without the intention “to hurt” the person (79% of all self-identified perpetrators selected this option). Only 12% of perpetrators reported having committed NCP because they were upset with the victim and/or wanted to harm them. Participants were permitted to choose multiple reasons for having sent the image(s), though most chose only one reason ( $M = 1.18$ ,  $SD = 0.44$ ).



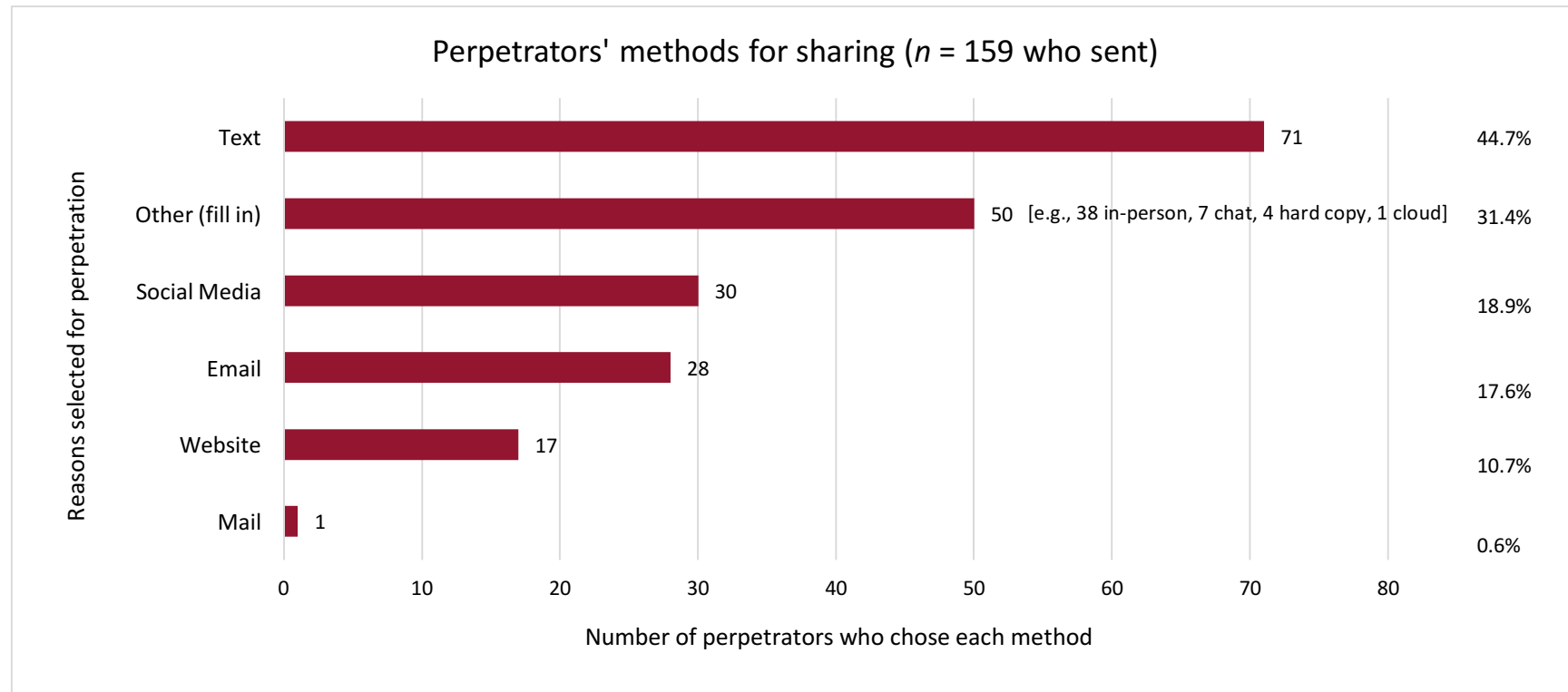
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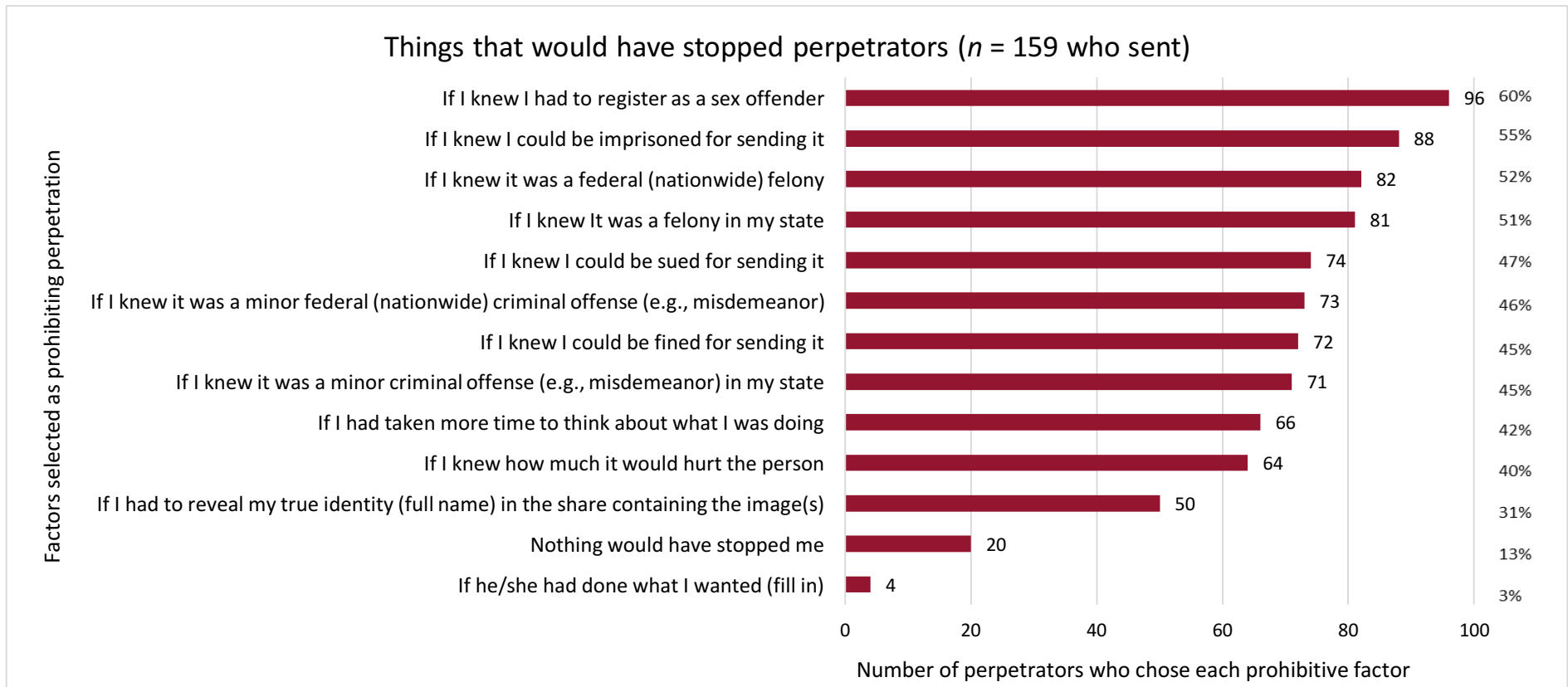
### E. Perpetrator Methods

Of the 159 individuals who reported having perpetrated NCP by sharing images (5.2% of the entire sample, 159/3044), the most commonly chosen method for sharing the image(s) was via text message (44.7% of all perpetrators reported having used this method). The second most common method was “other” (31.4% of perpetrators selected this option) with most of this category representing in-person sharing. Participants were permitted to choose multiple methods for sharing, and most chose only one method ( $M = 1.24$ ,  $SD = 0.57$ ).



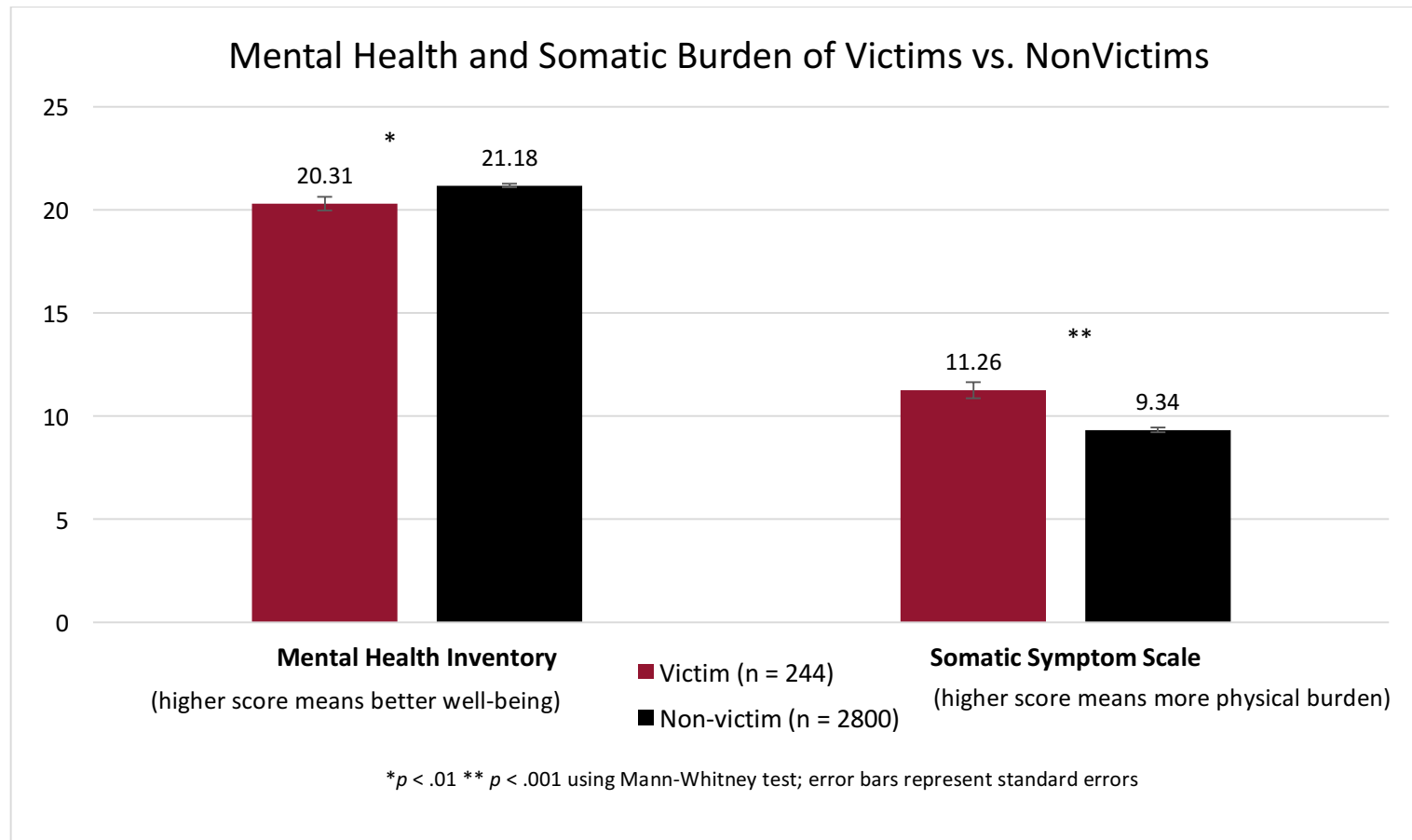
## F. Perpetrator Sanctions

Of the 159 individuals who reported having perpetrated NCP by sharing images (5.2% of the entire sample, 159/3044), the most commonly chosen prohibitive factor participants chose in response to the question “What might have stopped you from sharing the image(s)?” was if they knew they had to register as a sex offender (with 60% of all perpetrators selecting this reason). Participants were permitted to choose multiple factors that would have stopped them, and most chose about five ( $M = 4.88$ ,  $SD = 3.85$ ).



## G. Health Outcomes

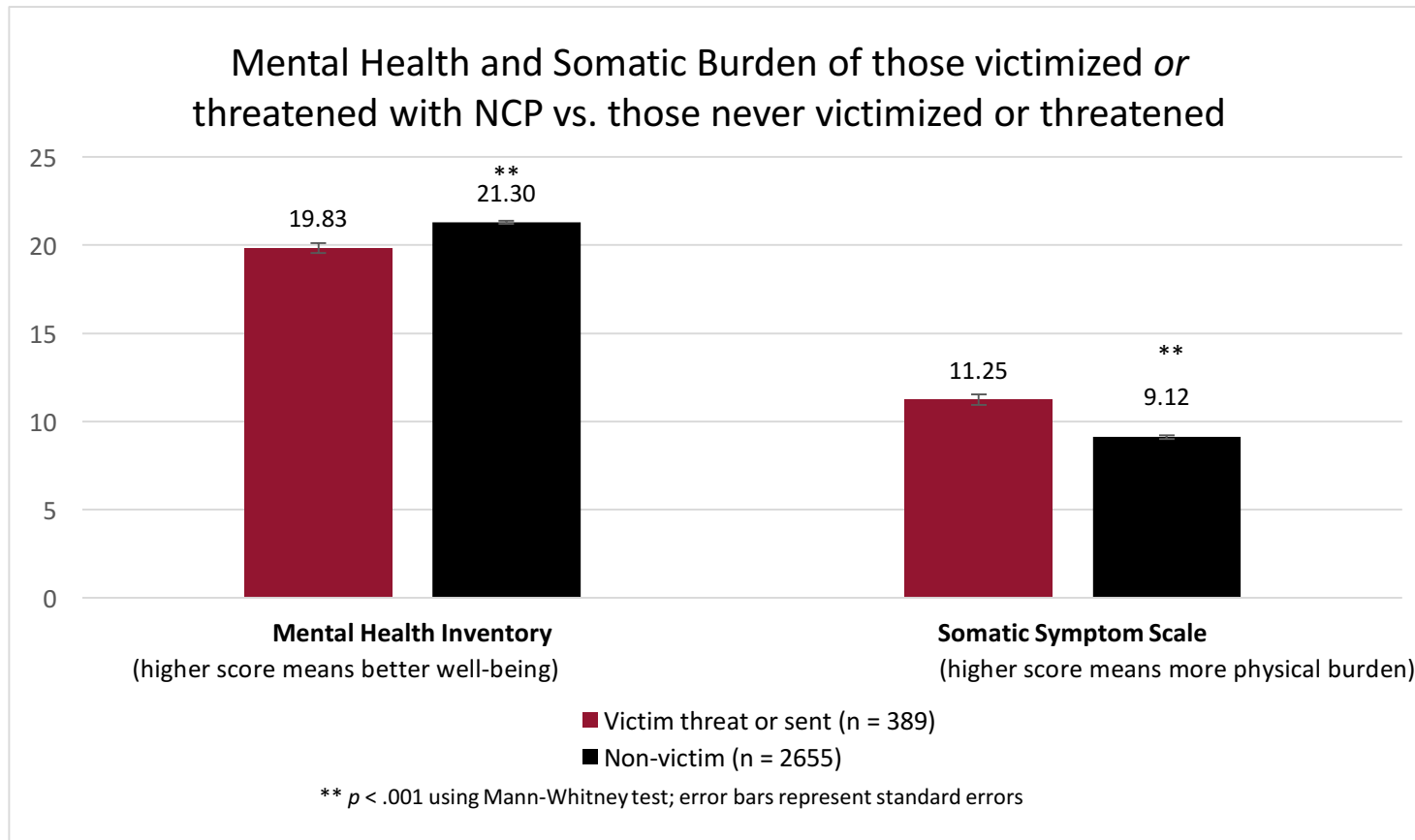
1. **Victims vs. NonVictims.** Those who reported having had their sexually-explicit image(s) shared without their consent at least once ( $n = 244/3044$ ) had significantly worse mental health outcomes and higher levels of physiological problems (i.e., somatic symptoms) than non-victims ( $n = 2800/3044$ ) as measured by the Mental Health Inventory 5-item Scale (MHI-5; Berwick et al., 1991) and the Somatic Symptom Scale-8 (SSS-8; Gierk et al., 2015), respectively.





## G. Health Outcomes (contd.)

**2. Health for those victimized or threatened with NCP vs. those never victimized or threatened.** Those who reported having had their sexually-explicit image(s) shared without their consent or having been threatened with the sharing of their images without consent ( $n = 389/3044$ ) had significantly worse mental health outcomes and higher levels of physiological problems (i.e., somatic symptoms) than non-victims ( $n = 2655/3044$ ) as measured by the Mental Health Inventory 5-item Scale (MHI-5; Berwick et al., 1991) and the Somatic Symptom Scale-8 (SSS-8; Gierk et al., 2015), respectively.



## V. References


5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(i)(1) (2012)

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## VI. Appendix

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