Study Examines the Sex Practice Known as Stealthing

April 25, 2017

A new study on sex and violence published in the Columbia Journal of Gender and Law is warning about a practice called “stealthing”— the removal of a condom by a man during intercourse without his partner’s consent. The article formally defines the phenomenon as rape and explores how victims can seek justice, The HuffPost reports.

The study, written by Alexandra Brodsky, a Skadden fellow at Washington, DC’s National Women’s Law Center featured interviews with victims of stealthing and explored the online communities that encourage it.

According to the report, victims of this practice suffered from the repercussions of condomless sex, including pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and HIV. The study also investigated the reactions of those who had been sexually assaulted in this way and reported the same feelings of confusion, shame and stigma that often accompany rape. (The findings also noted that earlier this year, authorities in Switzerland convicted a man in Switzerland of rape for this very act.)

In addition, Brodsky’s paper cited the online communities that defend stealthing as a sort of male “right.” The study quoted from comments in threads and forums where men shared with other males their best practices for perpetrating such an attack against a male or female partner.

“Survivors experience real harms—emotional, financial and physical—to which the law might provide remedy through compensation or simply an opportunity to be heard and validated,” Brodsky wrote. The report also highlighted preexisting tools in the legal systems for victims of a stealthing attack and noted that current systems in place to support sexual violence victims often fall short in the United States.

Findings of the assessment concluded that a new statute specifically focused on stealthing may be the best way to fight back against this troubling phenomenon. Additionally, Brodsky said that naming and defining the problem would also provide the vocabulary victims need in order to discuss more forms of gender violence, which could help prevent an attack and empower them to seek help after an attack.

If you, or a loved one needs help after a sexual assault, call 866-331-9474 or text “loveis” to 22522 for the National Dating Abuse Hotline. To learn more about the effects of sexual violence

and how to heal from this trauma, click here.

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