



Sexual Assault  
Treatment Units

# SATU Annual Report 2023



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# Introduction

## i. Welcome from the Clinical Lead



This is the 15th Annual Report of Key Service Activities from the six HSE funded Sexual Assault Treatment Units (SATUs), 15 years during which the service has continued to grow and develop to respond to people who need to access it. Over that time the service has enhanced the suite of available care options, in terms of offering a number of pathways of care, according to the person's individual circumstances and preferences. The SATUs are located in Dublin, Cork, Waterford, Mullingar, Galway and Letterkenny and, in 2023, these units provided care for 1062 people – a similar number to the previous year but more than double the number that were cared for in 2009 (529), the first year we collated national metrics. We are very aware of the recently published CSO data highlighting the prevalence of sexual violence across society. As well as fostering a zero-tolerance approach to sexual crime in this country, it remains imperative that people can access responsive care in a timely fashion and that all aspects of society are aware of this prevalence, and the impact it may have.

2023 was a positive year for the service. All 6 SATUs continued to build on a range of initiatives including education and outreach while remaining committed to provision of high-quality patient care. We increased our Clinical Nurse Specialist cohort, with new staff joining the services in Donegal, Galway and Cork. We continued to collaborate closely with other members of the Sexual Assault Response Team, including colleagues from An Garda Síochána, allied Rape Crisis & Sexual Violence Centres and Forensic Science Ireland as well as with colleagues who provide care for people under 14 years.

Five years on from the Department of Health SATU Policy Review, we undertook a staff survey which highlighted how people feel this has impacted on SATU structures, care, support and governance. As well as the monthly peer review, we have also introduced a quarterly professional network meeting to ensure staff remain apprised of developments and proposals, and to ensure all units have an opportunity to highlight any challenges, successes or issues that present. We also wish the statutory agency 'Cuan' the best of luck with their initiatives and look forward to working closely with them as they continue their valuable work.

### SATU Updates

Unfortunately, 2023 did not deliver any capital development for the SATU services. While the units in Galway and Donegal have undergone recent redevelopment, the services in Cork, Waterford, Dublin and Mullingar continue to provide care on a small footprint that is insufficient for service need.

We continue to advocate for developments in this context and look forward to strategic commitments in this regard. It is proposed that the Cork SATU will be collocated with Barnahus South, with the Cork SATU very involved with many discussions and plans with this in mind. We look forward to 2024 bringing further announcements regarding the location of Barnahus South and Barnahus East which will impact on future SATU developments.

Despite the infrastructural gaps however, in 2023 90% (553/615) of people were seen within 3 hours of a request for a Forensic Clinical Examination (where relevant). However, in 48% of cases where there was a delay beyond 3 hours this was because the 'satu was unavailable for use' (which generally means another case is in progress). This highlights the infrastructural need for additional forensic suites, particularly in busier units.

We were delighted to continue to offer our SATU staff emotional support programme in 2023 and acknowledge Dr Nicola O'Sullivan and Dr Anne Golden for their commitment to this. This programme focusses on reflective practice, wellbeing and emotional support at work and its link to staff development, wellbeing and retention. We now offer a blended programme of some group workshops, but mainly individual, online Professional Therapeutic Spaces to support wellbeing at work and more information on this project is included in this report.

### **GREVIO**

In January 2023, The Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) visited Ireland to monitor the implementation of the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CETS No. 210, "the Istanbul Convention"). This was the first baseline evaluation, and members of the SATU team met them, and also showed them around the SATU at the Rotunda. (Appendix 1)

Based on their assessment they produced a report which highlighted positive legal and policy measures that have been taken by the Irish authorities prior to and following Ireland's ratification of the convention, demonstrating the firm resolve to prevent and combat domestic violence and violence against women while also making recommendations for sustained action & improvements. They also acknowledged the quality of the National Guidelines on Referral and Forensic Clinical Examination Following Rape and Sexual Assault and noted that they can be considered 'an example of best practice in this area'. They observed, however, that their standard of 'one sexual violence referral centre or rape crisis centre per 200 000 inhabitants is not met' in Ireland and advocated for improvements in this context. It was valuable to meet with this highly experienced team.

### **SATU Education**

In 2023 an additional cohort of clinical nurse specialists (CNS) joined the SATU team, and we look forward to all they will bring. All candidates completed the course on time and to a high standard and it is wonderful to have new team members in their various units. Congratulations to them all, and special mention to Leah O'Regan from the Donegal SATU who was awarded a RCSI academic prize. The next course will run in either Autumn 2024 or January 2025. There is currently a procurement process in place to establish a more modular, flexible, but equally as comprehensive a, training programme which could be accessed by other members of the Sexual Assault Response team, and indeed by specialist nurses in allied healthcare areas who wish to upskill as forensic nurse examiners. Making the course accessible and responsive to people who wish to access it will reap benefits for people who need to attend SATU.

Training of aspiring forensic medical examiners is also ongoing, but currently separate from forensic nurse examiner training. This programme now takes the form of a suite of online resources, in conjunction with onsite observation in a host SATU combined with a day of simulation-based training hosted at The Irish Centre for Applied Patient Safety and Simulation (ICAPSS) at the University of Galway in order to support participants to achieve the relevant competencies. We hope to run a recruitment campaign for additional forensic medical examiners in 2024, please contact your local SATU if you wish to complete training in this context. Thanks, as always, to Dr Andrea Holmes, clinical lead for the Galway SATU for her ongoing commitment to this significant project.

As well as the Annual Study Day, which takes place in the Autumn every year (see Section 3), each SATU offers significant educational outreach in their locality – in terms of professional education (e.g. emergency and other healthcare departments, interagency education (prison services, An Garda Síochána) as well as outreach education to local schools and colleges. This is a valuable way of highlighting the work of SATU, signposting how and where to access services as well as providing plentiful opportunities for discussions on consent, health promotion and risk reduction.

This year, SATU outreach continued to include attendance at a number of concerts and festivals, including Electric Picnic. Engagement and collaboration in our communities is increasingly recognized as an important factor in creating awareness, reducing incidents, facilitating disclosure, and providing a swift care response for those who have experienced sexual violence, and we look forward to continuing and expanding this initiative. Thanks to a number of CNSs and ANPs for leading and contributing to this in 2023.

Many thanks to Sarah O'Connor for her commitment to coordinating a comprehensive professional development programme for the SATU services, and we look forward to many more excellent learning opportunities in this context.



Congratulations to Christine Pucillo who was awarded the Rose Lanigan Medal on achieving 1st place in the Nurse/Midwife Prescribing programme (RCSI). Congratulations also to Margo Noonan who was awarded a prize at the Integrated Care Conference in Autumn 2023 and to Connie McGilloway who won 1st prize for a poster presentation at the Cervical Check Colposcopy Conference.

### Thanks and Acknowledgments

As always, I would like to take this opportunity to thank every member of the SATU team. This report of key service activity is only possible because of the commitment to collation and inputting of relevant data into the database to ensure accurate presentation of service activities and key performance indicators. 95% of first SATU visit attendances were entered on the database within 10 working days of the first visit, which demonstrates the commitment of the entire team.

I would particularly like to acknowledge Noelle Farrell from Rotunda SATU and Prof Michael Gannon from Mullingar SATU, both are retiring and have contributed so much to service provision, training and staff support in their respective units.

I would also like to thank a number of key personnel within the Health Service Executive, including Killian McGrane, Tracy McAuley, Davinia O'Donnell and Dr Cliona Murphy (NWIHP). Their commitment to SATU services despite multiple demands on their time and resources is greatly appreciated. I acknowledge the support we receive from Masters, Clinical Directors, Directors of Midwifery/Nursing and hospital & network managers who advocate for us despite frequent, competing and important demands on their valuable resources.

As always, it is important to acknowledge the people who attend SATUs around the country. Nobody ever 'wants' to attend a SATU and we never cease to be amazed by the strength that our service users display, despite significance of the events they have experienced. We really value the feedback that they provide, in order that we can critically appraise our service through the lens of a service user. This underpins continuous quality improvement and is really valuable in informing ongoing staffing and infrastructural developments.

Please contact me directly or [nwihp.corporate@hse.ie](mailto:nwihp.corporate@hse.ie) if you have any questions or comments on this Executive Summary of Key Service Activity.



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## ii. Foreword



Much work has been done under the leadership of Professor Eogan to develop the SATU Network. It is worth reflecting that sexual violence is not rare in our society and how we respond to those affected reflects on us all. Person centred supportive care is essential to reduce the long-term effects. With more than one in two women experiencing sexual violence in their lifetime and more than 1 in 4 of young people between the ages of 18 -24 reporting experience as an adult and as a child it is important that all those working in health and ancillary areas have appropriate awareness of SATU services.

Providing education on trauma informed care for those working in obstetrics and gynaecology and indeed other areas of medicine is critical.

Those working in the area are to be commended for their commitment to integrated multidisciplinary care and demonstrate the value of competency-based training. Support for those willing to participate in the area needs support by training bodies and the HSE to ensure ongoing service.

The Sexual Assault Treatment Units (SATU) Policy Review, commenced in 2018 as a proactive response to issues highlighted by those directly using and operating SATU services. In order to address the issues identified, the SATU Policy Review Team set out clear, practical actions that could make tangible differences for staff and patients in this critical service. Four short term, ten medium term and two long term AFAs were established. A SATU Implementation Group was established in 2019 to oversee the implementation of the recommendations arising from the Policy Review.

A review of the SATU Implementation group was undertaken in 2023 to establish if the needs of its members have been met all the objectives set out in the original Terms of Reference had been achieved. The review also afforded members of the implementation group an opportunity to provide their input and recommendations regarding the future remit and objectives of the Group. Feedback from the Group was largely positive, with the majority of those who participated agreeing that:

- ▶ The Group has achieved the objectives as set out in the Policy Review.
- ▶ The Areas for Action identified in the SATU Policy Review were sufficiently addressed.
- ▶ SATU services have improved as a direct result of same.
- ▶ The multi-agency, multi-stakeholder structure of the group worked well.
- ▶ The Group, in its current format, should be stood down but opportunities for ongoing collaboration should be explored.

**Specific areas of focus in 2024 will include:**

A key focus of the National SATU Management Team in 2024 will be establishing appropriate mechanisms, opportunities and structures for inter-agency, multi-stakeholder collaboration, including, amongst others, The Department of Health, Department of Justice, Department of Children, The Barnahus Steering Group and the Statutory Agency for Domestic Sexual and Gender Based Violence (DSGBV).

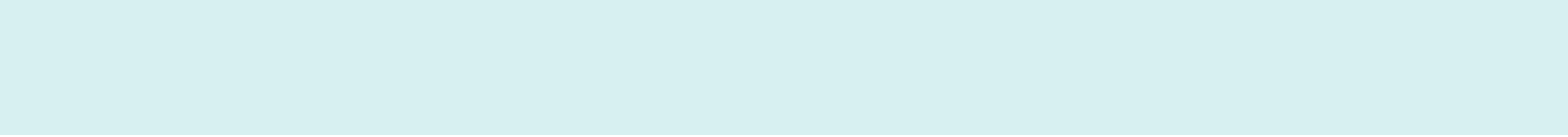
**Infrastructure** – With the continued roll out of the Barnahus project it is ultimately anticipated that the Cork and Dublin SATUs will benefit infrastructurally as they will be co-located with the new units. However while the projects move forward in 2024, it could be some time before collocated units exist. This will be kept under review. Waterford SATU requires significant infrastructure development and NWIHP will continue to advocate for this.

**Co-ordination of Care** – Continued engagement with paediatric services to optimise care for people under the age of 14 years under the Barnahus model and to integrate care for adolescents 14-17 years in the most appropriate clinical site for their needs. The Barnahus model has been adopted as best practice within this country and the SATU National Management Team will continue to work together with the Barnahus Steering Group and other stakeholders to ensure delivery of a coordinated, interagency response.

At NWIHP we are extremely proud of our association with the SATUs, and I would like to once again acknowledge the continued dedication, commitment and hard work of the SATU National Clinical Lead, Professor Maeve Eogan and the entire SATU team nationally who provide specialist professional and compassionate care, on a 24/7 basis, to people who have been subject to a sexual crime.



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# Section 1

## Key Service Activity

This section will look at the key service activity throughout 2023. The areas looked at include numbers of attendance, details of the incident, the referral source, type of attendance, drug and alcohol use, and pregnancy and STI prophylaxis.

## i. Attendance

The first set of metrics relate to attendances at the 6 SATUs as well as the attendance type.

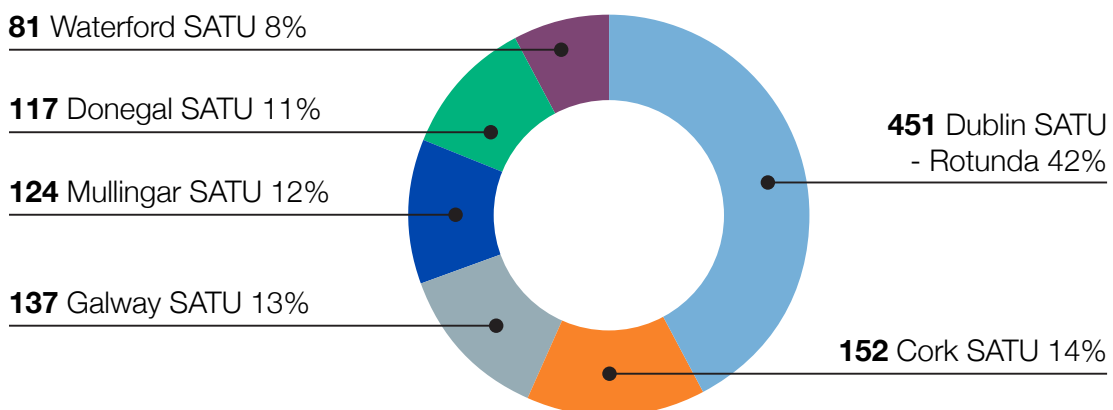
### National Attendances

2023 saw 1062 attendances at the 6 SATUs. This is a similar number to the previous year. The table outlines attendances over the last 5 years.

Year	Attendances (number)	Difference from previous year (number)
2023	1062	-10
2022	1072	+213
2021	859	+125
2020	734	-209
2019	943	+4

### Local Attendances

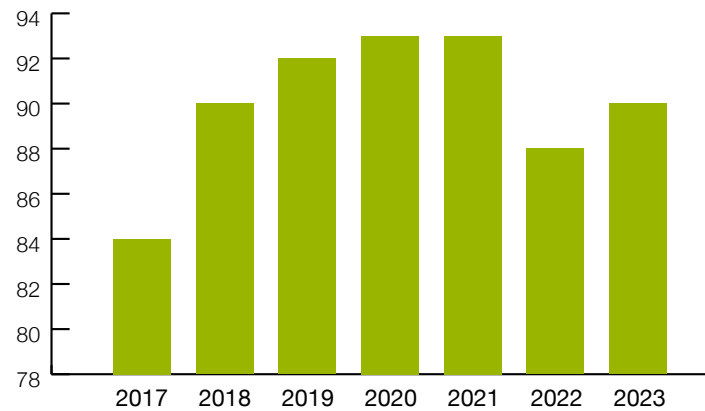
These 1062 attendances were seen across the 6 SATUs, with the chart (below) demonstrating the proportion of attendances per site. The Rotunda, Galway and Waterford all experienced a slight increase in number of attendances. Galway saw the highest percentage increase of 28% (137 attendances in 2023 from 107 in 2022). Cork, Mullingar, and Donegal experienced a small decrease in numbers from the previous year, with attendances to Cork SATU falling by almost 20%.



### Seen within 3 hours

**90% (553/615)** of people were seen within 3 hours of a request for a Forensic Clinical Examination. This KPI has a target of 90%, this was not met in 2022 which was the first time since 2017. Although the KPI came in on target in 2023 in 48% of cases where there was a delay beyond 3 hours this was because the 'SATU was unavailable for use' (i.e. generally means another case in progress). This highlights the infrastructural need for additional forensic suites, particularly in busier units.

% Seen within 3 hours



### Attendance type

The SATU offers people a health check, medication, and a forensic examination. The person's healthcare is priority, and they will always be offered a health check whether they decide to have a forensic exam or not. The service currently offers **3 core options of care:**

**Option 1** When a person is aged 14 years or over, discloses sexual violence and wants to make a complaint to An Garda Síochána. A forensic clinical examination will be offered by SATU if the incident happened within 7 days of the disclosure.

**Option 2** When a person is over 16 years of age, has experienced unwanted sexual activity either within the last 7 days, in recent weeks, months or years but does not want to report to An Garda Síochána and is requesting a health check. Depending on the duration of time since the incident a sexual health screen is offered. No forensic samples are taken.

**Option 3** When a patient is over 16 years of age, has experienced sexual violence in the last 7 days and is undecided if they want to report to An Garda Síochána (Storage of Evidence). Patients can attend for a forensic clinical examination and the forensic samples are securely stored for a period of up to one year in SATU.

## Section 1: Key Service Activity (continued)

In all options, patients are offered medications (e.g. emergency contraception, preventative treatment for infectious diseases), follow up appointments to return to SATU for a sexual health screen and psychological support from the RCC, where applicable. Child protection obligations are complied with, regardless of the option of care chosen.

A breakdown of the attendance type can be seen below. There has been an increase of 5% for patients receiving the health check option to 26% for 2023. There is a corresponding increase in the number of patients attending the SATU more than 1 month after an incident.

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Option 1: Garda Forensic Exam Kit	561	53%
Option 2: Health check	274	26%
Option 3: No Garda - Forensic exam & stored evidence	141	13%
Garda no kit	58	5%
Other	28	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1062</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Rape Crisis Centre (RCC) Input

66% (687/1037) of attendees had the opportunity to meet with a Psychological Support worker at their first SATU attendance. 79 people (7%) declined this support.

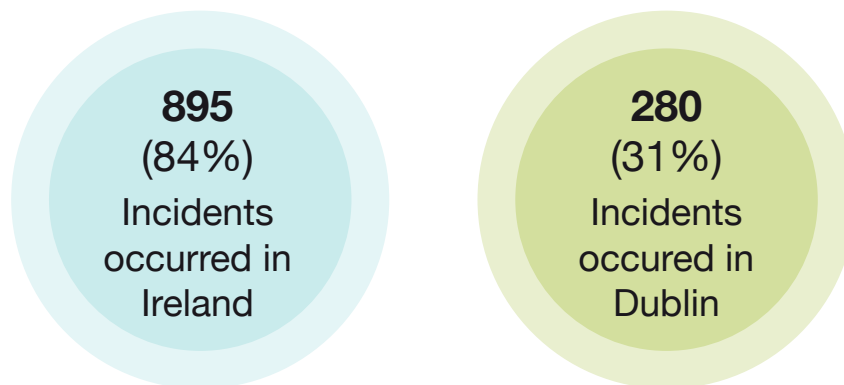
We strive to have a support worker from the Rape Crisis Centre, Sexual violence Centre (SVC) or ASSC available for support either in person or remotely (phone or video call). This offers survivors/victims access to practical and emotional support, including counselling and court accompaniment service (if required). The psychological support worker gives information on other services available and how they can be accessed. The accompaniment service provided by the RCC is free and confidential. It is important that the SATUs and partner agencies continue to provide ongoing information about all allied supports in order that they can be accessed subsequently if required.



## ii. Details of incident

The next set of metrics look at the details of the incident, including the location, time, assailant and injury to the patient.

The percentage of incidents that occurred in Ireland in 2023 was the same as the previous year at 84%. However the number of incidents that occurred in Dublin rose by 6% to 31%.



### Timing of incident

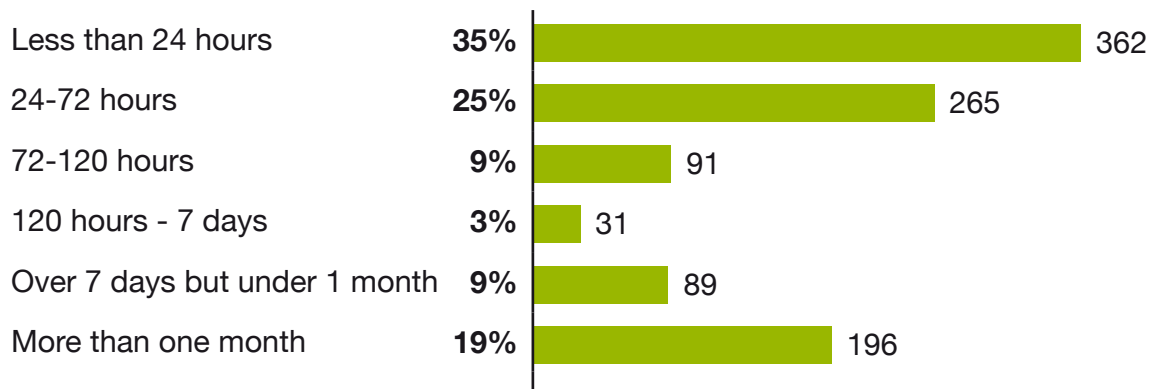
**August** was the busiest month of the year with **10%** of all presentations taking place in this month. The weekend days accounted for the largest proportion of incidents with **Friday, Saturday and Sunday** incidents making up **613 cases (58%)**. The majority of incidents **837 (79%)** took place at night between **8pm-8am**.

### Timing of SATU attendance from incident

Regarding the timing of SATU attendances, **Tuesday and Wednesday** remain the busiest days with 35% of attendances. There were 368 (35%) of attendances on Friday/Sat/Sun. With 35% weekend attendance and 25% of patients attending within 24-72 hours along with Tuesday and Wednesday being the busiest days, this indicates that a high portion of the weekend incidents are being reported within a few days of the incident.

The majority of incidents occurred between 8pm and 8am, and the attendances to the SATUs between these hours were 300 cases (28%). The high percentage of cases being seen between these hours emphasises the importance of 24-hour SATU availability.

**Duration of time between the incident and the attendance at SATU (all cases)**

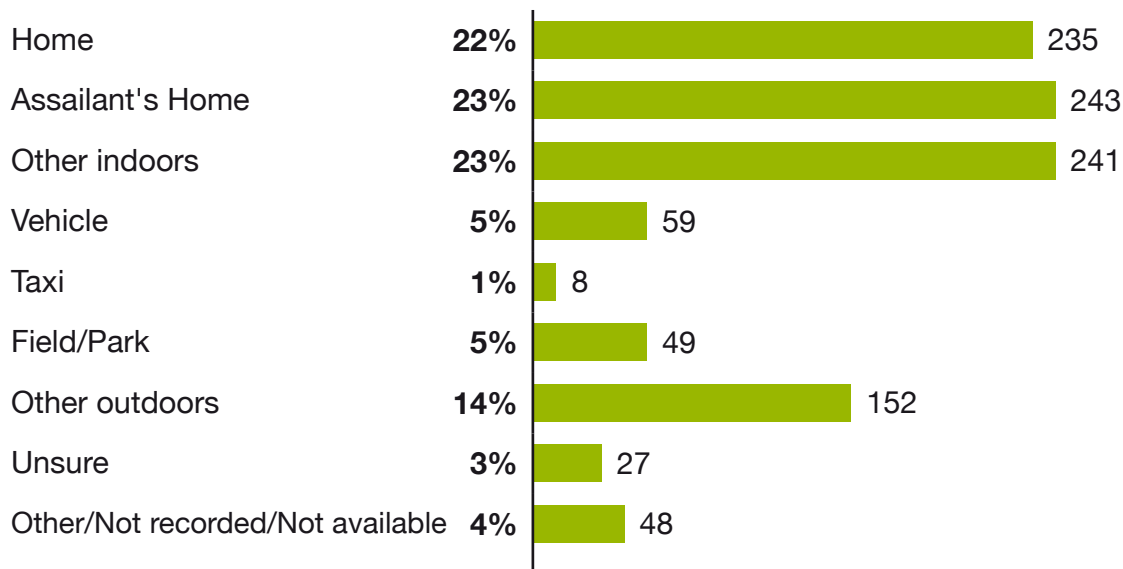


The graph above shows the breakdown of the duration of time between incident and attendance to SATU. Early attendance facilitates prompt access to forensic sampling, but also to the health aspects of care including emergency contraception and infectious disease prophylaxis.

**Location of incident**

The statistics on the location of the incident are almost identical to 2022. In 2023, **68%** of incidents occurred in an **indoor setting, with 22% being in the patient’s own home and 23% in the assailant’s home. 19%** occurred in various outdoor settings.

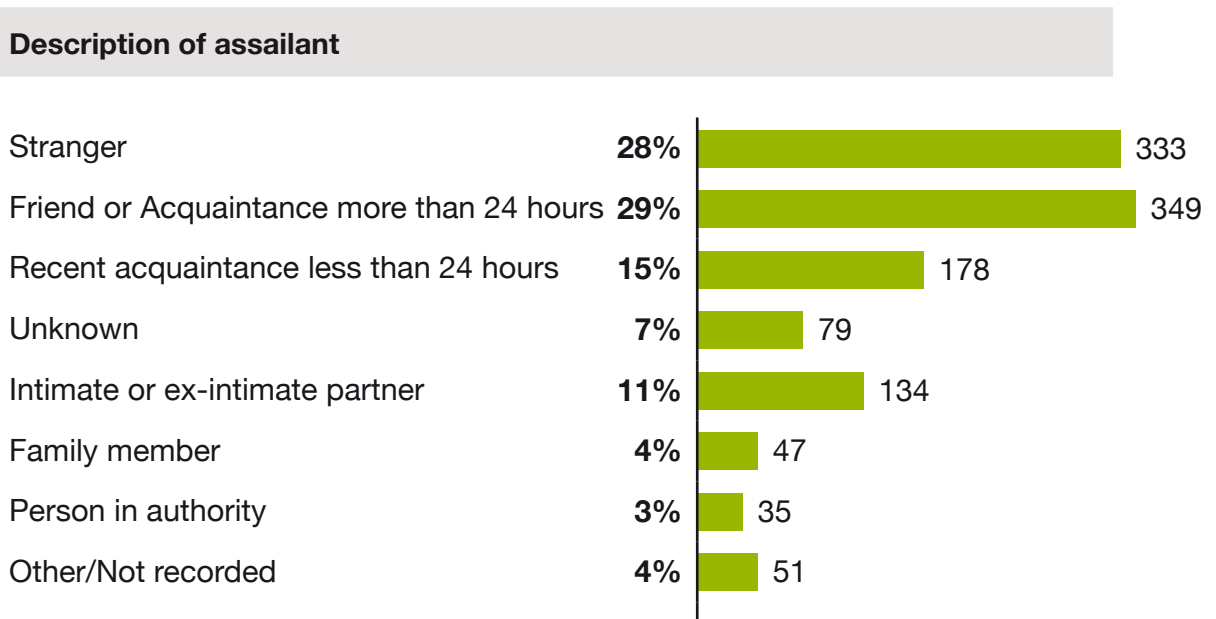
**Location of the Incident**



### Description of assailant

**90%** of assaults were perpetrated by a **single assailant** (a reduction of 2% from 2022, the same reduction in this statistic from 2021), while **9%** (97) were perpetrated by **multiple assailants**, this is an increase of **2%** compared with 2022. This is a further increase in this metric as there was also an increase in disclosures of multiple assailant assaults of 2% between 2021 and 2022.

In 2023 there was a slight increase of 2% in incidents where the perpetrator was described as a stranger, this rose to 28%. There was a significant increase of 10% where the perpetrator was described as a recent friend or acquaintance of more than 24 hours, this proportion was 29% in 2023 compared with 19% in 2022.



### Physical restraint use

Physical restraints were used in **38%** of incidents in 2023, this is an **increase of 6%** compared with 2022. Restraint by the throat was recorded in **77 (7%)** of attendances. Weapons were used in **4%** of incidents, which is a **decline of 3.5%** from 2022.

### Injury at time of examination

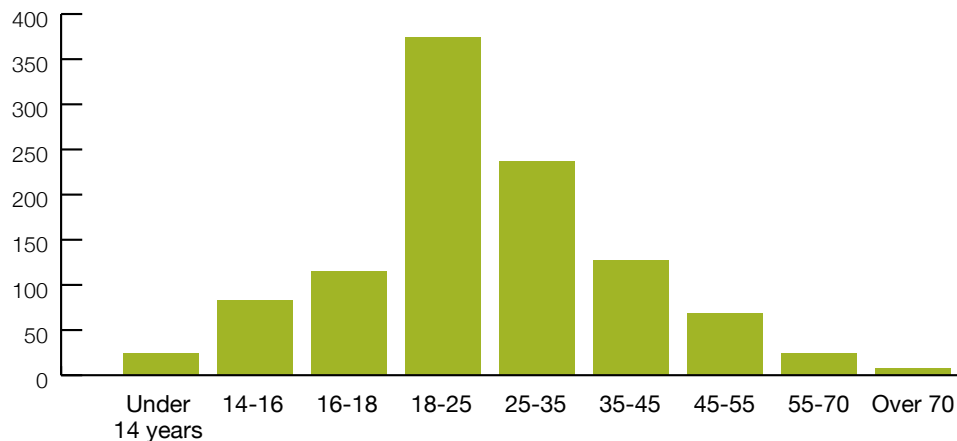
The number of attendees with no injuries increased by 8% to 61% in 2023. Although less than 1% of patients were hospitalised after their SATU attendance, **27%** had a genital or non-genital injury, this is a **decrease of 9.3%** compared with 2022. A total of **14 (1%)** of patients required a referral for an injury follow-up.

Physical Injury Outcome	Number	Percentage
No injuries	647	61%
Injury - No follow up	274	26%
Referral - Injury follow up required	14	1%
Other	12	1%
Hospitalised due to injury	3	0.33%
Hospitalised due to Mental Health	3	0.33%
Pre-existing injury	3	0.33%
Not recorded	71	7%
Not applicable	35	3%

### iii. Gender / Age / Nationality / Occupation

Following on from the previous year the majority of attendees in 2023 were again **under 25 years** of age at **596 (56%)**, with **374 (35%)** between 18-25 years of age. There was an **increase of 3.3%** in the age group of **45-55** which was **69 (7%)** in 2023.

#### Age of Attendees



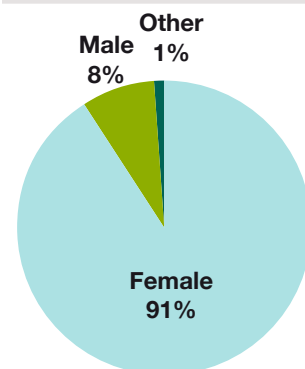
Percentage	2%	8%	11%	35%	2%	12%	7%	2%	1%
<b>No. of Attendees</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>8</b>

▶ **91%** of attendees were **female**, **8%** were male and **1%** identified as another gender or none. These figures also follow an almost identical trend to the previous two years.

▶ **77%** of people who attended SATU identified as Irish. People of 58 other nationalities attended SATU in 2023 and interpreters were required to assist with communication for **2%** of attendances. Portuguese was the commonest language for which interpretation services were required.

▶ School or third level students made up the largest demographic group totaling 34%, although this has been the largest cohort of attendees for a number of years, the absolute percentage was slightly lower in 2023 compared with 2022 (38%) and 2021 (35%). 29% of those who attended identified as persons in employment, while 23% described themselves as 'unemployed'.

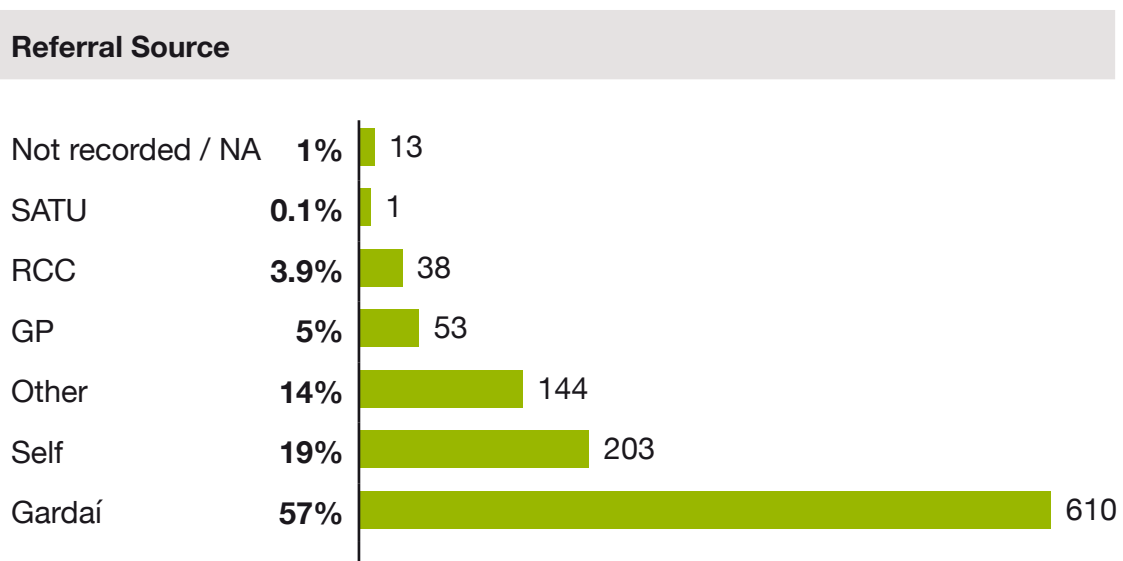
#### Gender



## iv. Referral Source and Options of Care

The next set of metrics look at the referral source into the SATU and which option of care they chose.

The majority of cases – **57%** were referred into the SATU by An Garda Síochána, with self-referrals the next most common presentation at **19%**.



Of the 1062 SATU attendances, 633 (59%) of those reported to An Garda Síochána, while 429 (41%) chose not to. There is however no statute of limitations on sexual crime, so a person can still choose to make a complaint to An Garda Síochána at some time remote from the incident and their SATU attendance.

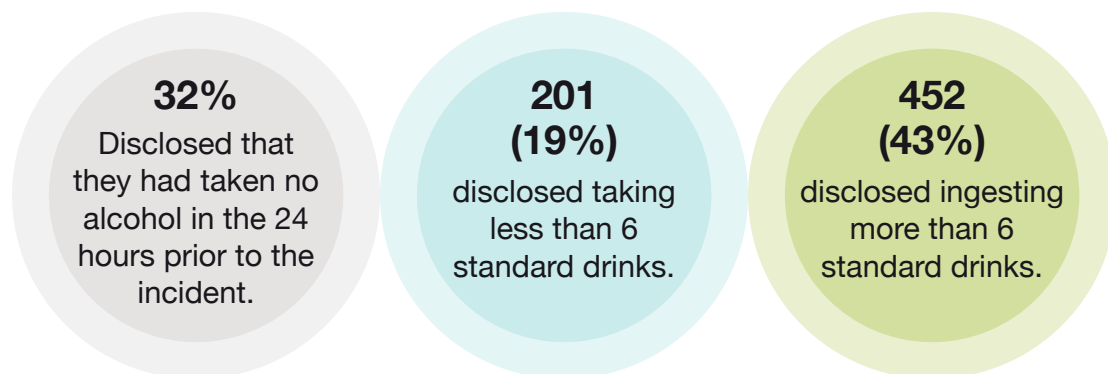
The tables below demonstrates the types of SATU attendance in each group.

<b>Disclosures to An Garda Síochána</b>	<b>633</b>	
Option 1: Garda with kit	561	89%
Garda no kit	58	9%
Option 3 who then reported	14	2%

<b>Did not report to An Garda Síochána</b>	<b>429</b>	
Option 2: Health check	274	64%
Option 3	127	30%
Advice/other	28	6%

## v. Alcohol and Drug use

The next set of metrics look at whether there was drug or alcohol use at the time of the incident.



In relation to drugs, **789 (74%)** reported **not haven taken any drugs**, **186 (18%)** had taken recreational drugs, **7 (1%)** having taken prescription drugs and **16 (2%)** having taken recreational and prescription drugs, in the 24 hours prior to the incident.

**201 (19%)** were concerned that the incident may have been a drug (including alcohol) facilitated assault. **174 (16%)** were unsure if a DFSA (Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault) had occurred.

## vi. Pregnancy and STI Prophylaxis

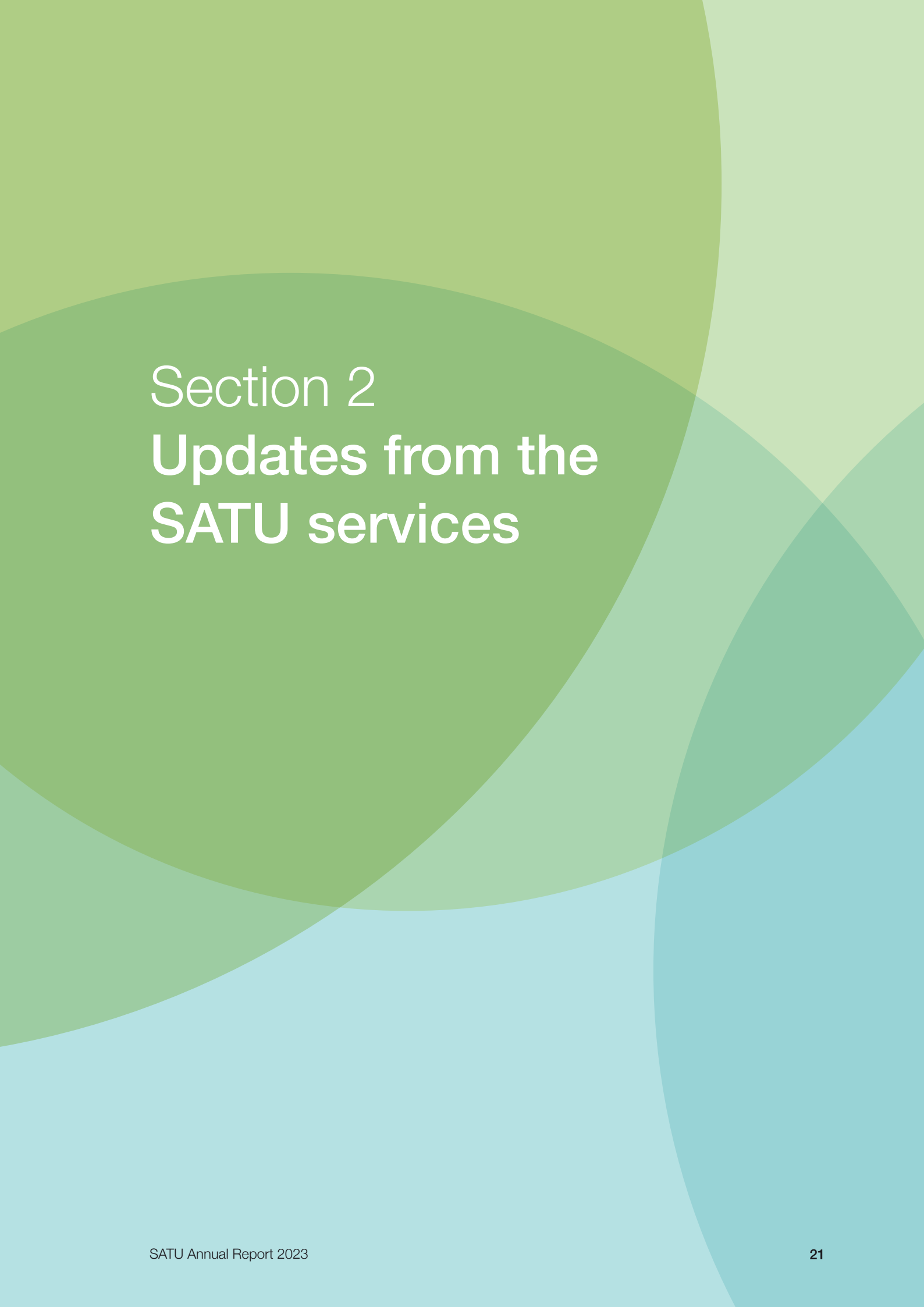
SATUs offer a health check to all people presenting to the service. The final set of metrics look at whether there were pregnancy or STI related preventative measures taken following the incident.

In 2023, **362 out of 364** women attending a SATU appropriately received emergency contraception. This constitutes 99% of the eligible population.

In 2023, **23%** of those who attended a SATU received chlamydia prophylaxis, this is a lower number than previous years as the guidelines underpinning this recommendation changed mid-2023. **45%** commenced a Hepatitis B Vaccination programme and **6%** received HIV post exposure prophylaxis (PEPSE).





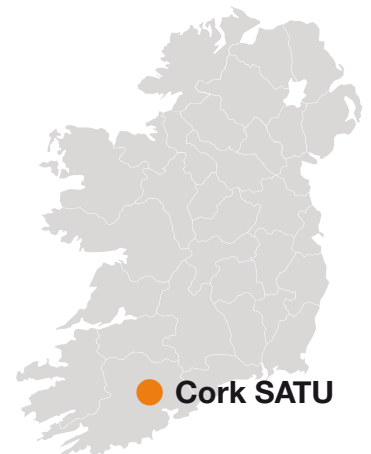


# Section 2

## Updates from the SATU services

## i. Cork SATU

Year	Attendances (n)	Difference from previous year (n)	% Increase / Decrease
2023	152	-38	-20%
2022	190	+42	+29%
2021	148	+37	+33%
2020	111	-33	-23%
2019	144	-21	-13%



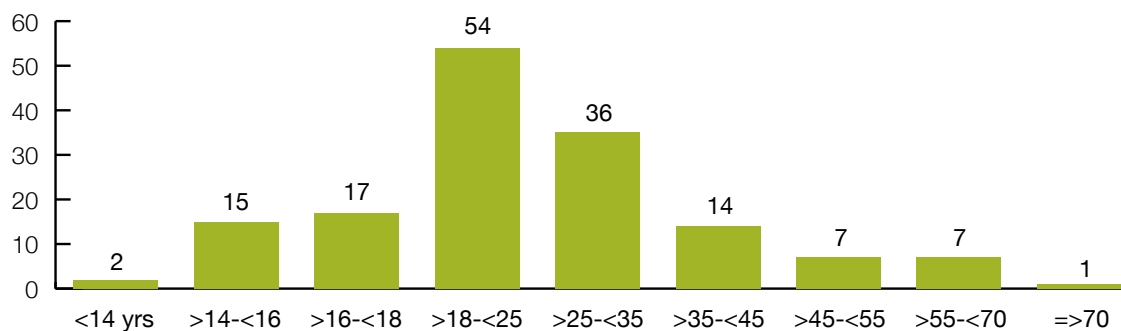
### LOCAL STATISTICS

2023 saw less acute attendances to the Cork SATU with attendances down by 38 from 190 to 152. 92% of those who attended SATU identified as female and 7% identified as male and 1% identified as other.

#### Age Range

In 2023, Cork saw a change in the age profiles attending SATU with an increase in numbers between the ages of 35 to 45 from 5% in 2022 up to 9% in 2023, an increase in patients between the ages of 14 to 16 from 5% in 2022 up to 10% in 2023 and between the ages of 55 to 70 from 2% in 2022 up to 5% in 2023. There was a decrease in numbers seen in the age group 18- to 25-year-olds from 48% in 2022 down to 36% in 2023.

#### Age Range of Attendees



### Patients seen within 3 hours of a request for a Forensic Clinical Examination

- ▶ In acute cases, Cork SATU saw 92% (67) patients within 3 hours of a request for services, an increase of 1% on 2022. Once again it is important to note that in 5 cases where there was a delay, Cork SATU was already in use at the time.

In 2023, Cork SATU provided on-call assistance to our colleagues in Waterford when requested ensuring patients had access to a 24/7 service.

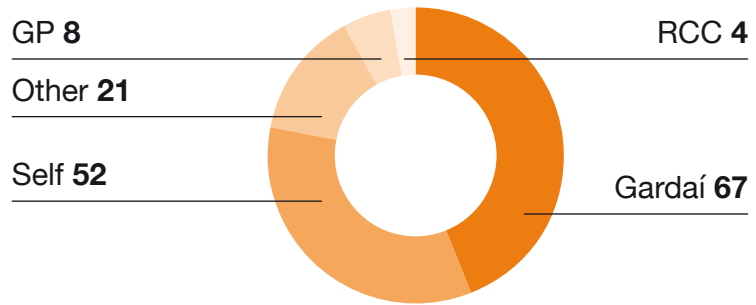
Duration of time since reported incident	Number	%
< 24 hours	44	29%
24 hrs – 72 hrs	49	32%
72 hrs – 120 hrs	13	8%
120 hrs – 7 days	7	5%
7 days – 1 month	16	11%
>1 month	15	10%
Long term abuse	6	3%
Forced Prostitution	1	1%
Unrecorded	1	1%

### Type of attendance

75% (114) of patients attended SATU within 7 days of the incident, with 54% (61) attending in the presence of An Garda Síochána and 46% (53) opting for either no Gardaí presence and storage of evidence, or a health check. Of the 114 patients who attended within 7 days of the incident occurring, 44 of these attended within 24 hours and 70 attended between 24hrs-7 days. Furthermore, of those who availed of a storage of evidence option (37), ultimately giving them more time to report the incident to Gardaí, 4 went on to report and have their kits collected with a further 33 remaining in storage.

Type of attendance including number of patients who reported incident to An Garda Síochána	Number	%
Option 1 - Garda Forensic Exam Kit	61	40%
Option 2 - Health check	47	31%
Option 3 - No Garda - Forensic exam & stored evidence	37	24%
Garda no kit	6	4%
Other	1	1%

**Source of Referral**



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## Key Achievements in 2023

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### Awards

In 2023, Margo Noonan, Advanced Nurse Practitioner (SAFE) won 1st prize at the RCSI Nursing and Midwifery conference 2023 under the theme ‘leading the world to better health’ Margo secured the prize with a poster for her research on ‘The Impact of an Educational Program on Challenging Rape Myths and Consent Misconceptions in Adolescent Males- the ASSUME Program’. Margo also won first prize for her poster at the NMPDU Cork Kerry Conference on the 11th of May 2023 in Páirc Uí Chaoimh and at the Integrated Care for the Child and Family “Where Do We Begin” the Centre of Nursing and Midwifery Galway Conference on the 19th of September 2023.

Sinead Maher CNS (SAFE) won 1st prize at the Cork University Hospital Child and Family Annual Nursing Conference 2023 for her poster on forensic nursing in Ireland.

Louise Tiernan CNS (SAFE) presented a poster on “The Collection and Storage of Forensic Evidence after Sexual Assault without immediate reporting to An Garda Síochana” at the NMPDU Cork Kerry Conference in Páirc Uí Chaoimh.

### Training

Cork SATU facilitated CPD training on managing disclosures of Sexual Violence to local and national units of An Garda Síochána and were involved in the development of policies, procedures and guidelines relating to disclosures in University College Cork, Munster Technological University Cork and Munster Technological University Kerry.

In 2023, Cork SATU continues to work with the HSE–South and HSE-East Emergency Management Officers through training and advice regarding pre-hospital emergency management care for victims of sexual violence and provided talks to enable providers the tools to deal with disclosures of victims of sexual violence.

### Assistance with provision of child services

Cork SATU continued to provide assistance to Cork Family Centre on the provision and forensic care to children under the age of 14 years were needed. We continue to work closely with a number of agencies on the establishment and co-location of Barnahus in the Southern region to ensure services were available to the most vulnerable in a timely manner.

### Staffing

In 2023, we welcomed three new Forensic Examiners, we saw Niamh Whooley and Catherine O'Brien qualify from RCSI as CNS Forensic Examiners and welcomed Dr Jill Mitchell to the on-call rota. We also welcomed three new support nurses Amy Cooney, Renju Matthews and Ally Henchin to our on-call rota and said our goodbyes to colleagues Máire Healy and Eileen Cotter (support nurses), who had given so much of themselves to our patients and service.



### Staff training

In September 2022, Niamh Whooley and Catherine O'Brien started their course in the RCSI to become Clinical Nurse Specialists and we were delighted in September 2023 when they graduated with flying colours and were able to join the team here in the South Infirmary Victoria University Hospital on a full-time basis. Niamh Whooley and Catherine O'Brien have both been a fantastic addition to the team here in SATU Cork and we are looking forward to working closely with them into the future.

In October 2023, Niamh and Catherine attended a Child and Youth Participation Training Day in the Glen Resource Centre, Cork. Both Niamh and Catherine also undertook training in the Mediscan operation at the Family Centre.

In September 2023, Niamh Whooley and Catherine O'Brien commenced a Certificate in Nurse Prescribing through University College Cork.

In November 2023, Nicola O'Sullivan attended the Cork SATU for an in-person group reflection session. This was found to be very beneficial by the SATU team and it is planned to continue these reflection sessions in 2024.

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## Key Objectives for 2024

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### **Barnahus**

Cork SATU is continuing to work towards co-location with Barnahus in the Southern region. Under Barnahus, children and their families are provided with specialist interviews, medical check-ups, child protection and therapy all in one child friendly space. Cork SATU will continue to work with all the relevant parties in developing the Barnahus model for Cork including TUSLA and An Garda Síochána. Cork SATU will continue to provide professional practical and peer support to medical nursing and interagency staff during the development and provision of this service. The Cork SATU Team are involved in the following groups relating to Barnahus, Margo Noonan is involved in the Barnahus Interagency Project Process Mapping, Barnahus Estates and Barnahus Child and Youth Participation. Sinead Maher is involved in the Barnahus Referrals Group. Louise Tiernan is involved in the Barnahus Risk Group. Niamh Whooley and Catherine O'Brien are involved in the Barnahus Child and Youth Participation Group.

### **Committee Involvement**

The Cork SATU team are involved in many different committees both nationally and locally. Margo Noonan continues to Chair the CYPSC subgroup for Children and Young people affected by DSGBV. She also continues to work with the Domestic Violence Network and the Sexual Health Network. Sinead Maher is involved with the National DSGBV group developing a HSEland programme. Louise Tiernan is involved in the local Children's First Committee and the Sexual Safety in Approved and Designated Centres Task and Finish Group (SSTFG) and also the SATU Documentation working group and SATU Database Group. Niamh Whooley is also on the local Children's First Committee and Catherine O'Brien is also involved in the Sexual Safety in Approved and Designated Centres Task and Finish Group (SSTFG).

### **Rural Initiatives**

Cork SATU are committed to providing support in the development of the West Cork Beacon - Sexual Violence Community Response and Support Service which aims to develop services for those who disclose sexual violence experiences in rural areas and provide support to current service providers.

Cork SATU are also continuing to provide monthly follow up clinics in Tralee and a clinic in Bantry on a as needed basis to facilitate people from these areas to attend their follow up appointments.

### **Collaborations**

Cork SATU are committed to working with and providing education and support to different organisations and schools.

Progress collaboration with local services ensuring those that experience DSGBV are provided with optimal holistic quality care.

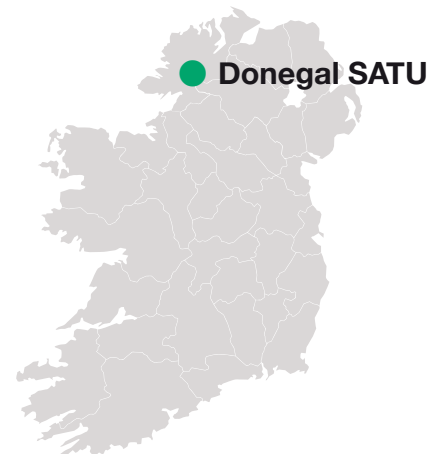
### Cork SATU Team

<b>Clinical Lead</b>	Dr John Coulter
<b>ANP Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner</b>	Ms Margo Noonan
<b>CNS Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners</b>	Ms Louise Tiernan
	Ms Sinead Maher
	Ms Niamh Whooley
	Ms Catherine O'Brien
<b>Administrator</b>	Angela Brosnan
<b>On Call Forensic Examiners</b>	Dr Suzanne Cremin
	Dr Emer O'Flynn
	Dr Emily Rutherford
	Dr Jill Mitchell
<b>On Call RGN SATU Support Staff</b>	Ms Sharon Quinn
	Ms Gobnait McGrath
	Ms Siobhan Cahill
	Ms Claire Hawe
	Ms Carol Mills
	Ms Teresa O'Farrell
	Ms Gillian Daunt
	Ms Déirdre Fitzgerald
	Ms Renju Matthews
	Ms Amy Cooney
	Ms Ally Henchin

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all SATU staff, with special mention to the our support nurses, Gobnait McGrath, Sharon Quinn, Claire Hawe, Siobhan Cahill, Teresa O'Farrell, Carol Mills, Déirdre Fitzgerald, Gillian Daunt, Amy Cooney, Renju Matthews and Ally Henchin Forensic examiners, Dr Suzanne Cremin, Dr Emer O'Flynn, Dr Emily Rutherford, Dr Jill Mitchell, local management, hospital staff in the South Infirmity Victoria University Hospital, and Dr John Coulter Medical Director of Cork SATU. The continued commitment, support and dedication shown to the unit and our patients does not go unnoticed.

We aim to continue to represent victims at a local and national level through research and collaboration with other agencies. We will continue to deliver, develop and expand the Education programme.

## ii. Donegal SATU



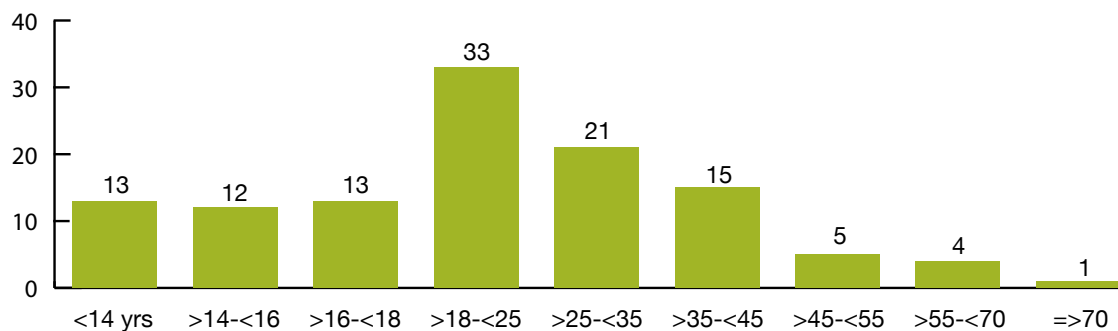
Year	Attendances (n)	Difference from previous year (n)	% Increase / Decrease
2023	117	-8	-6%
2022	125	+24	+24%
2021	101	+23	+30%
2020	78	-32	-29%
2019	110	+26	+31%

### LOCAL STATISTICS

#### Age Range

The age range of 18-25 accounted for just over one third of attendees to the Donegal SATU. This follows on from the previous year with this same age group having the highest attendance. Under 14 attendees saw an increase of 4% on the previous year.

#### Age Range of Attendees



#### Patients seen within 3 hours of a request for a Forensic Clinical Examination

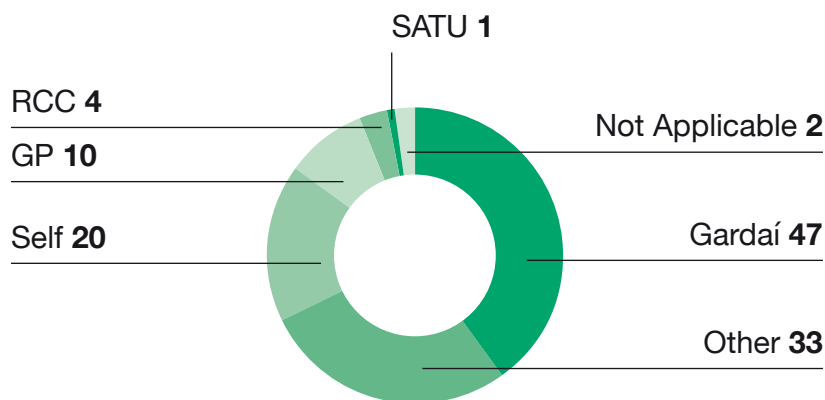
- ▶ Letterkenny SATU saw **93%** (28) patients who contacted their service **within 3 hours** of request to SATU for Forensic Clinical Examination. This is an increase of 2% on the previous year.



Duration of time since reported incident	Number	%
< 24 hrs	21	18%
24hrs - 72 hrs	15	13%
72 hrs - 120hr	11	9%
120hrs – 7 days	13	11%
7 days – 1 month	0	0%
> 1 month	57	49%

Type of attendance including number of patients who reported incident to An Garda Síochána	Number	%
Option 1 - Garda Forensic Exam Kit	26	22%
Option 2 - Health check	43	37%
Option 3 - No Garda - Forensic exam & stored evidence	13	11%
Garda no kit	30	26%
Other	3	3%
Advice	2	2%

**Source of Referral**



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## Key Achievements in 2023

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2023 continued to be a busy year for the Donegal SATU. The staff of the SATU undertook not only personal education and training but also facilitated a lot educational and training events nationally and in the community.

### Staff training and Achievements:

- ▶ In September 2023, Kellyann Moore and Leah O'Regan successfully completed the Postgraduate Diploma in Nursing (Sexual Assault Forensic Examination) with Distinction. In September 2023, both nurses commenced the Nurse Prescribing course for completion in March 2024.
- ▶ Leah O'Regan was awarded the RCSI 'Class of Nursing and Midwifery 2023 Sustainability Award' for achieving 1st place in the Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Specialist Programmes.
- ▶ The RANP Connie Mc Gilloway presented an 'Abstract' of the Donegal Cervical Screening Programme at the national Colposcopy Conference in May 2023 and was awarded **1st place** in the Poster Abstract competition.
- ▶ Leah O'Regan completed the 'Best Practice in Cervical Smear Taking' in January 2023. All WTE Nursing staff in the Donegal SATU are now proficient in Cervical Smear Taking aligned to the National Cervical Screening Programme.
- ▶ The RANP Connie Mc Gilloway was invited to be a member of the Educational Advisory Group of the National Cervical Screening Programme.
- ▶ The RANP Connie Mc Gilloway was invited to write an article for the Irish Examiner 'Working Life'. This was published in January 2023. It documented a day in the life of Connie and gave an insight into the working day of the Donegal SATU.

### Education and Training

The Donegal SATU team had an extremely busy 2023, they hosted multiple training events, as well as presenting at various events and engaged with several bodies such as AkiDwA, An Garda Siochana and local supports services such as Donegal Alcohol Forum. Some of the key learning events throughout 2023 are listed below.

- ▶ The RANP Connie facilitated online workshops for the RCSI Postgraduate SAFE nursing participants on SATU KPI's and database, CNS role in relation to hospital organization and community education, SAFE patient discharge, domestic violence, child protection and vulnerable adults.
- ▶ The RANP Connie was invited to facilitate a national webinar for the National Cervical Screening Programme on 'Trauma Informed Care and Cervical Screening' in May 2023.

- ▶ The RANP Connie was invited to present at ‘Shaping the Future of Intellectual Disability Nursing in Ireland’ in May 2023 and subsequently invited to facilitate a lunchtime Webinar through the Donegal CNME on ‘Challenging the Barriers faced by Adults with Intellectual Disability who have experienced Sexual Assault’ in September 2023.
- ▶ The RANP Connie was invited to facilitate a workshop as part of the Military Police Investigation course in May 2023.
- ▶ The RANP Connie presented an update on the National SART Guidelines and the Deaf ISL Pilot project at the national SATU Conference in September 2023.
- ▶ Collaborative (SATU, An Garda Síochána, Donegal RCC) Education workshops for Law and Humanities undergraduate students, Nursing and Health and Social Care Students were facilitated throughout the year.
- ▶ The SATU Staff facilitated inter-agency educational sessions with DVAS in Sligo, Emergency Department Staff in LUH and SUH, Intellectual Disability services, Practice nurses and the Clinical Society in Donegal.
- ▶ SATU Staff facilitated workshops with migrant and marginalized communities in Donegal and Sligo working in close collaboration with the Intercultural Platform and AkiDwA.
- ▶ Members of the SATU team attended the ‘Women and Addiction’ conference and created stronger links with the Donegal Alcohol Forum.
- ▶ The SATU team collaborated with ATUs Donegal and Sligo throughout the year at various events such as the ‘Sexual Violence Day’ and ‘Consent Workshops’ facilitating workshops with students during these events.
- ▶ Garda Workshops ‘The Journey of the patient/injured party following a report of sexual assault’ were facilitated for Student Garda, Regular Garda, Sergeants, Inspectors and Specialist Garda throughout 2023 in Donegal and Sligo/Leitrim Garda divisions.
- ▶ The RANP participated in facilitating a ‘Joint Tusla & An Garda Síochána Children’s First Workshop’ highlighting changes in the care of 16 & 17 year olds attending SATU.
- ▶ Placements for General, Intellectual Disability and Psychiatric pre-registration nurses were facilitated throughout the year. This programme commenced in 2012 aligned to ATU Donegal.
- ▶ The SATU Team continued to broaden their scope of practice and continuing professional development throughout the year; attending various online and face-face webinars and conferences specific to SATU and Women’s Health such as; female genital mutilation workshops, genital and non-genital injuries webinar, reproductive coercive control, human trafficking, child sexual exploitation and Termination of Pregnancy.

- ▶ The RANP facilitated in-house training for members of the Donegal SATU team; Forensic Examiners and SATU Support Staff regarding updates in the National SART Guidelines 2023.
- ▶ Members of the SATU team attended a Garda/SATU Deaf awareness and Interpreters Training facilitated by Trinity College Dublin Centre for Deaf Studies.
- ▶ The SATU Team attended and maintained all Mandatory Training in 2023.
- ▶ Peer review of cases and Medico/legal reports continued in 2023, promoting collaboration and quality assurance within the Unit.
- ▶ The RANP and Administrator in the Donegal SATU continued to be the clinical and administrative interface for the national Database.

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## Key Objectives for 2024

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### Recruitment

A position for a third CNS (Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner) continues to be vacant, with the planned commencement of a Postgraduate Diploma SAFE course in January 2025, a recruitment campaign will be planned for the 3rd quarter.

### Infrastructure

Discussions will continue with Estates regarding the installation of a back-up generator for the SATU.

### SATU Database

Connie Mc Gilloway (RANP) and Sharon Curran, Donegal SATU Administrator will coordinate a national SATU Database Working Group aiming to consolidate, progress and further develop key metrics. The Database is due to be upgraded in 2024 and Sharon and Connie are key members of this project.

### Outreach and Education Projects

By the end of the 3rd quarter the Deaf Project will be officially launched.

Following discussion with partner agencies a post primary schools programme will re-commence in 2024 as part of a wider collaborative school's programme.

The Advanced Nurse Practitioner (Forensic Examiner, Donegal SATU), initiated a collaborative project with the Irish Deaf Society, Trinity College Dublin: Deaf Studies, the Rape Crisis Centre (RCC) and An Garda Síochána to improve access to SATUs for the Deaf community through the use of ISL. A text system will enable a timely response to care. A SATU Online-Guide with ISL translations explaining the SATU process following a sexual assault. The aim will be by the end of

the 3rd quarter that a Deaf person in need of SATU assistance will be able to access information on SATU through ISL on the SATU website with more detailed information when the patient attends a SATU.

Throughout 2024, the Donegal SATU team will endeavour to ensure the quality and safety standards in the care we provide align to the Health Information and Quality Authority National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare.

### Donegal SATU Team

<b>Clinical Director</b>	Dr Matthew Mc Kernan
<b>RANP/Forensic Clinical Examiner/ Unit Manager</b>	Ms. Connie Mc Gilloway
<b>CNS/Forensic Clinical Examiners</b>	Ms. Kellyann Moore
	Ms. Leah O'Regan
<b>Administrator</b>	Ms. Sharon Curran
<b>On Call Forensic Examiners</b>	Dr Mairead Brogan
	Ms. Lisa Crossan
	Ms. Brídín Bell
<b>On Call SATU Support Staff</b>	Ms. Deirdre Rooney (RGN)
	Ms. Billie Ní Riada (RM)
	Ms. Michelle Burns (RGN)
	Ms. Sinead McLean (HCA)
	Ms. Aoife Price (HCA)
	Ms. Donna Black (HCA)
	Ms. Victoria Stewart (HCA)
	Ms. Erin Gallagher (HCA)
	Ms Carol Stewart (HCA)
	Ms Marjorie Mc Hugh (HCA)

We thank you all for your contribution and commitment to the SATU service.

### iii. Dublin SATU

Year	Attendances (n)	Difference from previous year (n)	% Increase / Decrease
2023	451	+24	+5.6%
2022	427	+118	+38%
2021	309	+32	+10.5%
2020	277	-116	-30%
2019	393	+74	+23%

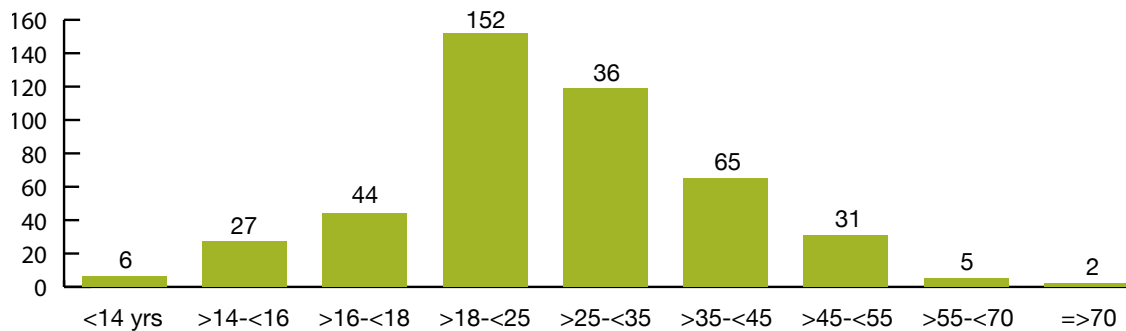


#### LOCAL STATISTICS

##### Age Range

There was an overall increase of 5.6% in attendances to the Dublin SATU service. The age range of 18-25 accounted for almost 34% of attendees to the Dublin SATU. This follows on from the previous year with this same age group having the highest attendance. There was an increase of 2% of attendees in the >35-<45 and an increase of 3% in the >45-<55 age ranges.

##### Age Range of Attendees



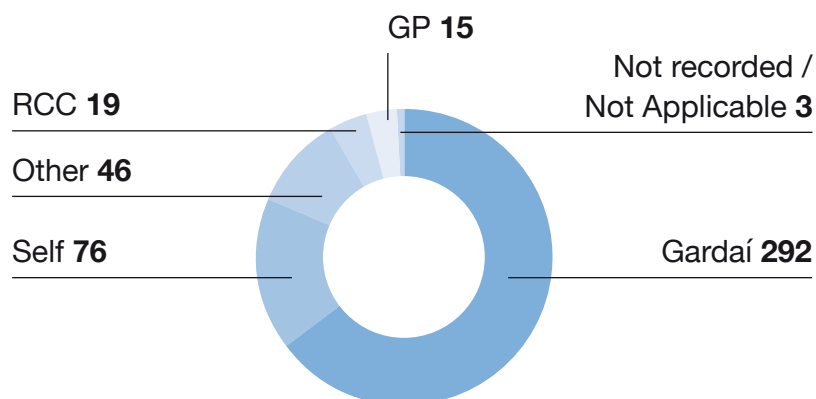
##### Patients seen within 3 hours of a request for a Forensic Clinical Examination

- ▶ The Rotunda SATU saw 85% of patients who contacted their service within 3 hours of request to SATU for Forensic Clinical Examination. The increase in attendance has highlighted infrastructural challenges related to having access to a single forensic suite. Steadily increasing numbers means that being limited to conducting one case at a time could compromise our ability to provide timely care. As it was, some of our attendances in 2023 were delayed access to forensic care due to no forensic suite being available at the time.

Duration of time since reported incident	Number	%
< 24 hrs	178	39%
24hrs - 72 hrs	117	26%
72 hrs - 120hr	30	6%
120hrs – 7 days	13	3%
7 days – 1 month	32	7%
> 1 month	70	16%
Unrecorded	11	3%

Type of attendance including number of patients who reported incident to An Garda Síochána	Number	%
Option 1 - Garda Forensic Exam Kit	292	65%
Option 2 - Health check	103	23%
Option 3 - No Garda - Forensic exam & stored evidence	40	9%
Garda no kit	5	1%
Other	10	2%
Advice	1	1%

### Source of Referral



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## Key Achievements in 2023

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2023 marked another year of unprecedented numbers. This continued surge challenges our ability to see patients within three hours, although the vast majority of patients still had access to timely forensic care.

To increase awareness of SATU services, there has been continued commitment by the Dublin SATU team members to engage in outreach opportunities. Forensic examiners and support staff participated in numerous initiatives, including the Debunking the Myths educational initiative, GP training sessions, transition year educational programmes, training of An Garda Síochána Divisional Protective Services Units, and volunteering at Longitude and Electric Picnic festivals.

Early in the year, representatives from the Polish women's support and advocacy organisation, Feminoteka, visited the Dublin SATU to exchange ideas regarding the establishment of a similar sexual assault treatment service in Poland. CMM Noelle Farrell and CNS Christine Pucillo were then invited to Warsaw to participate as panellists at their conference to mark the opening of the first Help Point for Women after Rape in Poland. It was inspiring to take part in such a momentous occasion alongside our Polish counterparts.

Dr Daniel Kane, a senior registrar in the Rotunda Hospital and an established member of the on-call SATU forensic examiner team, has been working toward his PhD titled, "Sexual Assault Treatment Units: The Irish Experience." Throughout the year, he has generated a large volume of research focused on sexual violence and patient access to care in the SATU setting, an invaluable contribution for patients and the wider service alike.

### Staffing

This year, we bid a sad farewell to our long-standing midwifery manager CMM Noelle Farrell. Noelle's impact on the Rotunda SATU, its staff and service users, as well as staff from many other SATUs who attended the Rotunda for training, has been immense. She was always a wonderful advocate for the SATU, and we are delighted that she will continue to provide occasional on-call shifts.

Recruitment and training efforts continued to ensure that our on-call rotas were adequately staffed. As always, we appreciate the steadfast support of the doctors, nurses, and midwives who ensure that we can maintain a 24-hour service.



### Staff Training

Two of the Rotunda CNS/CMSs completed the nurse/midwife prescribing course with the RCSI and are now qualified nurse/midwife prescribers, a great addition to the service.

CNS Christine Pucillo was awarded the Rose Lanigan award by the RCSI School of Nursing and Midwifery for achieving first place in the Nurse/Midwife Prescribing programme.

Supported by the HSE and the Rotunda Hospital, CMS Kate O'Halloran also completed the Advanced Health Assessment and Practice course, achieving First-Class Honours.

Toward the end of the 2023, the SATU nursing and midwifery team registered with Cervical Check- The National Cervical Screening Programme and commenced online and in-person training to become registered smear takers. We hope to be able to provide this care to SATU patients by the close of 2024.

We continued to work closely with the SAFE students who attended the SATU in the Rotunda Hospital through the completion of the SAFE program in August. We wish them every success as they settle into their new roles in their local SATUs.

We also accommodated forensic medical examiners in training, both for the Rotunda SATU and for other SATUs, hosting a successful weekend of training facilitated by Rotunda SATU team members in September.

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## Key Objectives for 2024

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The Dublin SATU looks forward to welcoming the new SATU unit manager, CNM Oonagh Farrell, who is due to start in the role in January 2024.

In the coming year, SATU core staff will work closely with members from the HSE Spark Innovation Programme, to establish a pilot of the Cortexflow photo documentation system, using it to capture forensic photography of bodily injuries. Photographs can provide a visual record of scars and injuries, augment and corroborate written medical reports, and may serve as crucial forensic evidence in legal proceedings. Our aim is to rollout the use of the photo documentation system in forensic cases for this pilot by mid-2024.

We will also commence a pilot in conjunction with the Rape Crisis Centre (RCC), during which a member of the RCC support staff is on-site once a week to facilitate support of patients attending for follow-up care. While we aim to have RCC members present for all relevant acute forensic cases, we also recognise the benefit of offering access to psychological and emotional support upon return to the unit for further care. We look forward to the patients' feedback in relation to this pilot.

We anticipate there may be a further increase in numbers in 2024 and recognise the challenges that may bring from both a staffing and infrastructure point of view. We look forward to successfully recruiting an advanced nurse/midwife practitioner (AN/MP) to the Rotunda in 2024. There is no doubt that a second forensic suite would enable the busiest unit in the country to improve on our key performance of providing timely forensic care to victims of sexual assault. We continue to advocate for this space to enable all of our patients to receive the excellent timely care they deserve.

### Dublin SATU Team

<b>Clinical Director</b>	Dr Nicola Maher
<b>Clinical Midwife Manager</b>	Ms Noelle Farrell
<b>Clinical Midwife Specialists</b>	Ms Deirdre Richardson
	Ms Kate O'Halloran
	Ms Naomi Finnegan
<b>Clinical Nurse Specialist</b>	Ms Christine Pucillo
<b>Maternity Care Assistant</b>	Ms Laura Doherty
<b>Administrators</b>	Ms Moira Carberry
	Denise Rogers

The core team in Dublin are supported by the on-call team of Forensic Examiners and Support Nurses along with our multi-disciplinary colleagues and other members of the Sexual Assault Response Team. These include the following Forensic Examiners: Prof Maeve Eogan (national clinical lead SATU), Dr Daniel Kane, Dr Wendy Ferguson, Sarah Farrelly, Dr Elzahra Ibrahim, Dr Haroon Khan, Dr Ciara Luke, Dr Jill Mitchell, Dr Cathy Monteith, Sarah O'Connor, Sue Roe, Aideen Walsh and Dr Amy Worrall. They also include the following support nurses; Juliet Aimuanmwosa, Shelley Carlyle, Sarah Cass, Leanne Costello, Basia Czwerko, Noelle Farrell, Oonagh Farrell, Shiby Joseph, Maureen Kington, Ciara Muddiman, Danielle Parkinson, Eleanor Power, Janice Reyes and Priscilla Shanley. Thank you all for your contribution and commitment to the SATU service.

## iv. Galway SATU

Year	Attendances (n)	Difference from previous year (n)	% Increase / Decrease
2023	137	+30	+28%
2022	107	+7	+7%
2021	100	+11	+13%
2020	89	-13	-13%
2019	102	+5	+5%

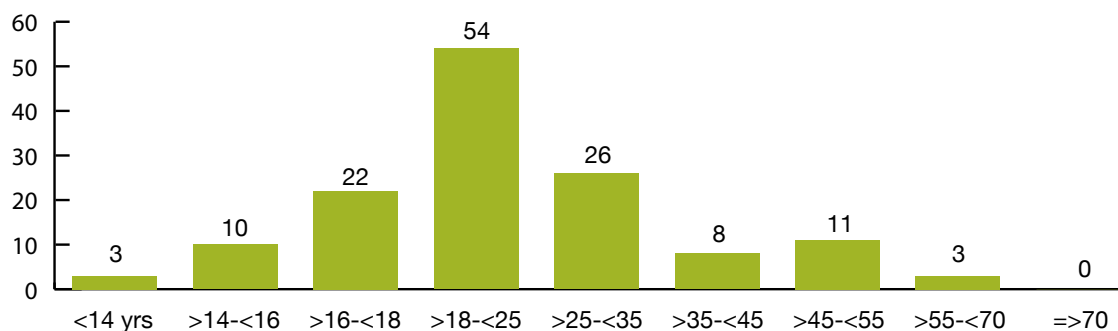


### LOCAL STATISTICS

#### Age Range

In 2023 there was an increase of 28% of attendees to the Galway SATU. The mean patient age at time of assault was 25 years of age. The age group 18-25 accounted for 39% of attendees in 2023, and whilst this is down on the previous year of 47% the overall figure increased in this group from 47 to 54. The age group of 14-16 increased from 4% in 2022 to 8% in 2023. There was a significant rise in the age range of 14-18 which in 2022 accounted for 14% (15 patients) increased in 2023 to 24% (32 patients).

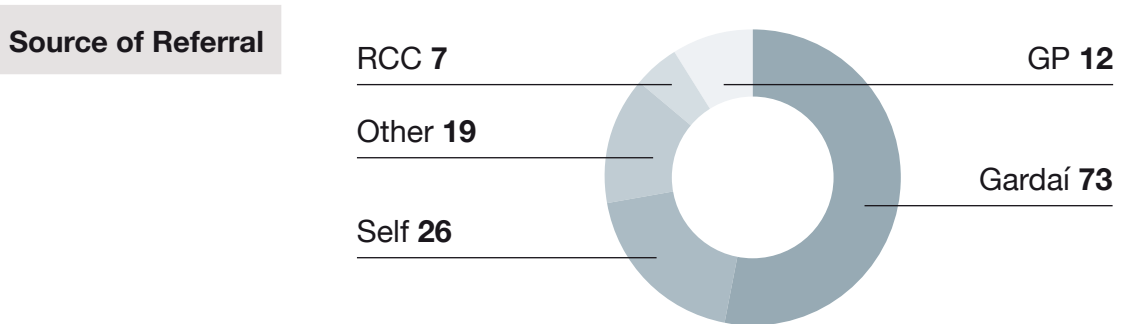
#### Age Range of Attendees



#### Patients seen within 3 hours of a request for a Forensic Clinical Examination

- ▶ The Galway SATU saw 95% (73) of patients who contacted their service within 3 hours of request to SATU for Forensic Clinical Examination.

Type of attendance including number of patients who reported incident to An Garda Síochána	Number	%
Option 1 - Garda Forensic Exam Kit	69	50%
Option 2 - Health check	40	29%
Option 3 - No Garda - Forensic exam & stored evidence	24	18%
Garda no kit	4	3%
Other	0	0%
Advice	0	0%



## Key Achievements in 2023

### Infrastructure

With thanks to funding from the National Women and Infants Health Programme, and Ms Clóra O’Neill who donated her interior design expertise, the Willow Centre now has some lovely artwork. Ms Juliette Viodé painted a specially commissioned mural on the long entrance corridor which decreases the clinical look of the unit, aiming to make the space feel more inviting and safer for patients.

### Staffing

- ▶ In October 2023 two new Clinical Nurse Specialists, Ms Caitríona Freeney and Ms Catherine Conroy, completed their Postgraduate Higher Diploma in Sexual Assault Forensic Examination in the Royal College of Surgeons, Ireland.
- ▶ Ms Mary Mahoney was appointed Advanced Nurse Practitioner
- ▶ Several new assisting nurses joined on-call roster
- ▶ Ms Cathy Bergin changed roles from CNS to CNM2

We bid farewell to CNS Cathy Shortt in January 2023, and we wish her well on her new path in UHG. We also sadly said goodbye to Dr Therese O’Reilly who had been on the SATU on-call roster for more than a decade.

### Education and Development

- ▶ Galway Forensic Physicians and Clinical Nurse Specialist gave presentations, undertook clinical audits, facilitated training and professional examinations with a variety of colleagues and allied professionals.
- ▶ The Galway team are now embedded in multiagency work as part of Barnahus West, which benefits our 14–17-year-old patients
- ▶ The Introduction to SATU course for doctors was held at University of Galway Irish Centre for Applied Patient Safety and Simulation in January and October 2023 and 22 doctors attended.

### Key Objectives for 2024

- ▶ Recruitment and training of new forensic medical and nurse examiners for Galway SATU.
- ▶ Increased outreach into the community.

### Galway SATU Team

<b>Clinical Director</b>		Dr Andrea Holmes
<b>Advanced Nurse Practitioner</b>		Ms Mary Mahony
<b>Clinical Nurse Specialist</b>	Ms Caitríona Freeney	Ms Catherine Conroy
<b>Senior Administrator</b>		Ms Maeve Geraghty
<b>CNM2</b>		Ms Cathy Bergin
<b>On-call Support Nurses</b>	Ms Pamela Bartley	Ms Teresa Hynes
	Ms Mags Bourke	Ms Mary Rooney Hynes
	Ms Eileen Coen	Mr Raj Karamala
	Ms Lorraine Courtney	Ms Ann Marie Mc Garry
	Ms Caroline Farrell	Ms Kathy O'Loughlin
	Ms Orela Ryan Fox	Ms Yvonne O'Donovan
	Ms Deirdre Gallagher	Ms Jincy Scaria
	Ms Fiona Gilmore	Ms Heather Stanley
	Ms Monica Gudza	
<b>On-Call Forensic Examiners</b>	Dr Andrea Holmes	Ms Susan Hogan
	Ms Mary Mahony	Dr Lia Kyranoudi
	Ms Cathy Bergin	Dr Claire Harrison
	Ms Cathy Shortt	Dr Neasa Conneally

We are indebted to our colleagues across the SATU network, but particularly in our nearest unit, Mullingar, for cross-cover when there are roster gaps in Galway.

## v. Mullingar SATU

Year	Attendances (n)	Difference from previous year (n)	% Increase / Decrease
2023	124	-24	-16%
2022	148	+28	+24%
2021	120	+19	+19%
2020	101	-21	-17%
2019	122	-81	-40%



### LOCAL STATISTICS

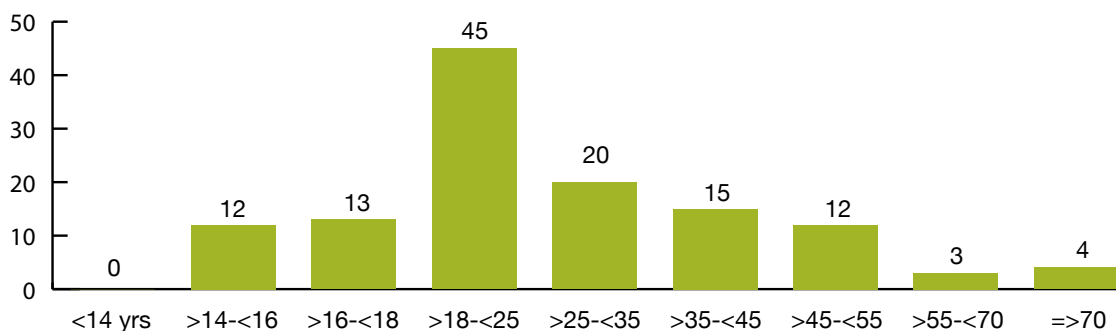
SATU Mullingar because of its geographical location receives referrals from a wide geographical location. We retain a commitment to accessibility through the provision of Outreach services for initial visits and for follow up.

#### Age Range

There were 124 attendances in SATU Mullingar in 2023 a decrease of 24 cases from 2022. The mean age of attendees to the Mullingar SATU was 26 years; the youngest patient was 14 years, the eldest was over 70 years.

The age group 18-25 accounted for 36% of attendees and the over 70 age group accounted for 3% in 2023.

#### Age Range of Attendees



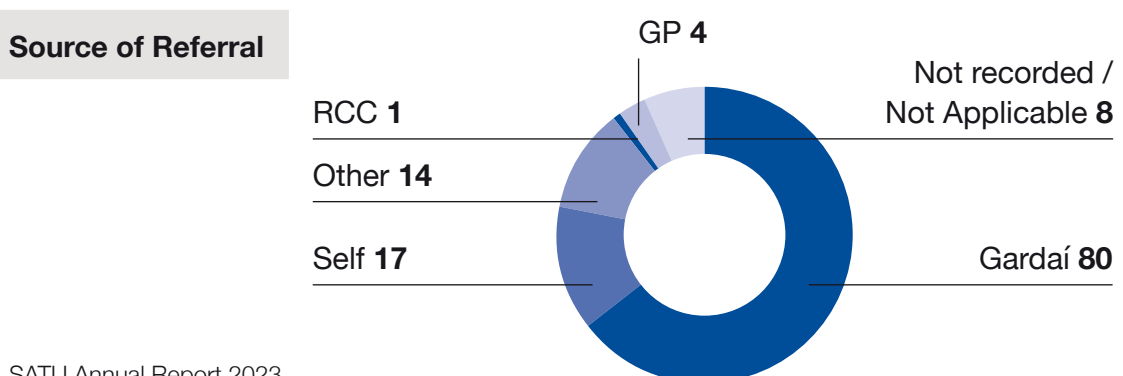
#### Patients seen within 3 hours of a request for a Forensic Clinical Examination

- ▶ Whilst the report shows 100% of patients who required Forensic Clinical Examination cases in the Mullingar SATU were seen within 3 hours of initial referral, the Mullingar SATU was required to avail of cover from other units during the year due to staffing issues which may have impacted National figures.

Duration of time since reported incident	Number	%
< 24 hours	40	32%
24 hrs – 72 hrs	28	23%
72 hrs – 120 hrs	16	13%
120 hrs – 7 days	3	3%
7 days – 1 month	12	9%
>1 month	9	7%
Long term abuse	3	3%
Forced Prostitution	1	1%
Unrecorded	12	9%

Type of attendance including number of patients who reported incident to An Garda Síochána	Number	%
Option 1 - Garda Forensic Exam Kit	65	52%
Option 2 - Health check	21	17%
Option 3 - No Garda - Forensic exam & stored evidence	12	10%
Garda no kit	16	13%
Other	10	8%
Advice	1	1%

As per previous years the greatest number of presentations 52% (n=65) were for Forensic Clinical Examination which had been reported to An Garda Síochána. It is interesting to note that 13% (n=16) of attendances at SATU were for patients who did not have a forensic examination but had reported the incident to An Garda Síochána. This highlights the recognition of the additional services that the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit offers in particular injury mapping and medical treatment as well as the supports that the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit offers and the benefit this may provide in the investigation of reported sexual violence.



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## Key Achievements in 2023

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Highlights of 2023 included:

- ▶ Continuation of the delivery of RCNME Course on Domestic Sexual and Gender Based Violence accredited course for Healthcare professionals.
- ▶ Nessa Gill received Fellowship of the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery by Examination of Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
- ▶ Successful launch of Healthy Relationships program for Secondary Schools in the Laois Offaly area in association with CYPSE
- ▶ Longitude Festival and Electric Picnic SATU Awareness and Information Presence

2023 saw The Sexual Assault Treatment Unit in the Regional Hospital Mullingar have a very successful and productive year with our attendances of 124 a decrease of 24 cases on 2022. These patients were referred from a wide geographical area and saw us see patients from thirteen counties. In keeping with other years the majority of our patients were referred via An Garda Siochana with 52% receiving a forensic examination within seven days of the reported incident.

The Secondary Schools Education program continued to develop and be delivered by Clinical Nurse Specialist Catherine Marsh is important in providing education and awareness to students at Transition Year level. A significant investment in time in Schools Education was carried out with thirteen school talks given.

This commitment to preventative work and education in relation to sexual violence is hoped to increase awareness and contribute to the reduction in harm associated with sexual violence.

Our commitment to the provision of accessible timely care through outreach clinics continued in 2023. We provide this care to our patients in order that each person receives equitable care regardless of their geographical location. Whilst the majority of our patients attend SATU RHM for various reasons including economic, time, childcare difficulties as well as supporting those patients who experience Domestic Sexual and Gender Based Violence for whom accessing appointments is difficult as well as unsafe an Outreach Service is provided on a need's basis.

In 2023 we carried out Outreach services in Cavan, Monaghan, Tullamore, Portlaoise, Longford and Navan and this accessibility has ensured that we uphold the central tenet of making our services easily accessible and responsive to our patient's needs.



## **Domestic Sexual and Gender Based Violence Program for Healthcare Professionals**

SATU Mullingar in association with the Regional Centre for Nursing and Midwifery Education based in Tullamore devised accredited and delivered this multi-agency program for Healthcare professionals. This program was initially delivered for nursing staff and this year has been expanded to include all healthcare professionals. This program was accredited by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) and includes presentations by An Garda Siochana and Rape Crisis Centre. Running approximately three to four times per year the feedback on this program has been overwhelmingly positive.

## **Research and Audit**

The annual Regional Hospital Mullingar Research and Audit Study day took place in November and three posters were submitted from the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit. One of these was selected for presentation and received very positive feedback. The commitment to driving on-going quality initiatives in the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit demonstrates the knowledge and commitment of staff working in the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit to the provision of excellence in service provision.

## **Follow up**

2023 saw a concentrated effort into patient follow up for sexual health screening with 62% of our patients attending for follow up screening an improvement on 2022 figures of 38%. Given the wide geographical area that is covered by SATU Mullingar distance remains a factor in non-attendance at follow up visits. This has been mitigated by the provision of Outreach clinics for follow up care for our patients which has proved very successful. Whilst the number of follow up outreach visits has been small it has enabled patients to receive the full package of care and ensure completeness of care including completion of vaccination schedules and onward referral to support services

## **Education and Training Provided by SATU Staff**

SATU RHM is committed to the provision of ongoing education and training. A sample of the education and training provided is detailed below.

- ▶ Midwifery Services Education Sessions
- ▶ Technological University of the Shannon Presentation on Sexual Health Module
- ▶ Midlands Domestic Violence Forum
- ▶ Domestic Sexual Gender Based Violence in Pregnancy to Maternity Services
- ▶ Presentation to Homeless Services
- ▶ Presentation to Domestic Violence Services
- ▶ Training provided to Longford Women's Link Counselling Course
- ▶ National Divisional Protective Services Unit Training provided.
- ▶ Presentation to TUS "Risk Awareness"

## Key Objectives for 2024

- ▶ Ongoing engagement in audit and research to ensure robustness of service.
- ▶ Focus on recruitment and retention of both Forensic Examiners and Support Nursing Staff.
- ▶ Continuing engagement in Outreach services as it has a proven value to patients by noting increased attendance at follow up appointment.
- ▶ Continuing awareness campaigns and ensure that those campaigns are measurable and value adding to the service.
- ▶ Exploration of other clinical initiatives that SATU patients require for example extension of RANP Service to include assessment of patients who have experienced Domestic Violence.
- ▶ Noting of age profile of patients, a targeted approach to those patients is recommended.
- ▶ Ongoing engagement in communication through monthly peer review and education sessions with the SATU Team
- ▶ Provision of designated SATU Car Parking Space
- ▶ Addressing the need for appropriate discrete SATU accommodation to ensure patient privacy.

### Mullingar SATU Team

<b>Clinical Lead</b>	Professor Michael Gannon
<b>ANP Forensic Clinical Examiner</b>	Ms Nessa Gill
<b>CNS Forensic Clinical Examiners</b>	Ms Catherine Marsh Ms Clare Mahon
<b>Administrator</b>	Irene Monaghan

The core team in Mullingar are supported by the on-call team of Forensic Examiners and Support Nurses along with our multi-disciplinary colleagues and other members of the Sexual Assault Response Team.

Mullingar SATU would like to acknowledge the resignation of Catherine Marsh in June 2023 and thank her for her contribution to the SATU.

As always, we could not do this job without the unstinting support of so many and for that we thank you. We respect the fortitude of those patients whom we are privileged to provide care to, and it is that which drives us forward into 2024.

## vi. Waterford SATU

Year	Attendances (n)	Difference from previous year (n)	% Increase / Decrease
2023	81	+6	+6%
2022	75	-6	-8%
2021	81	3	4%
2020	78	6	9%
2019	72	-1	-1.40%



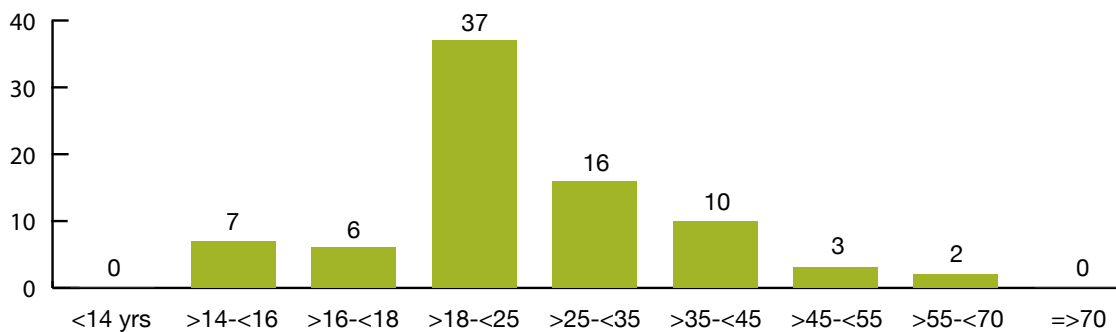
### LOCAL STATISTICS

#### Age Range

There were 81 attendances in the Waterford SATU 2023 which was a slight increase of 6%. The mean age of attendees to the Waterford SATU was 26 years; the youngest patient was 14 years old and the eldest was 57 years of age.

The age group 18-25 accounted for 46% of attendees which is up 15% from 2022.

#### Age Range of Attendees

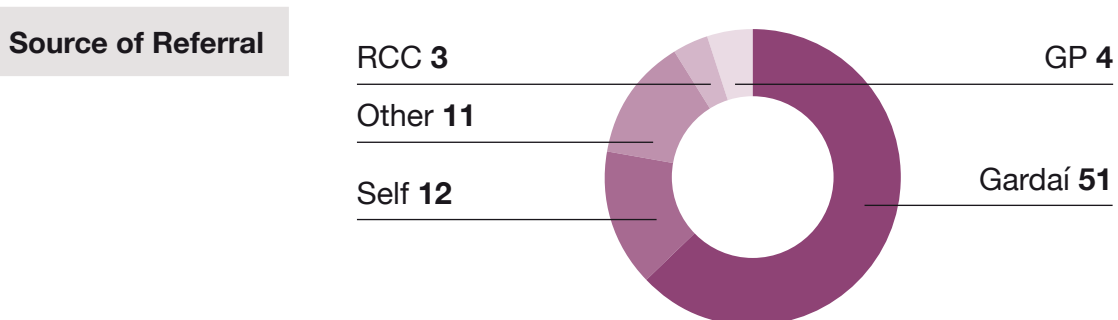


#### Patients seen within 3 hours of a request for a Forensic Clinical Examination

- ▶ 90% of patients who required Forensic Clinical Examination cases were seen within 3 hours of initial referral to SATU.

Duration of time since reported incident	Number	%
< 24 hours	36	44%
24 hrs – 72 hrs	18	22%
72 hrs – 120 hrs	10	12%
120 hrs – 7 days	2	3%
7 days – 1 month	6	7%
>1 month	7	9%
Long term abuse	2	3%

Type of attendance including number of patients who reported incident to An Garda Síochána	Number	%
Option 1 - Garda Forensic Exam Kit	47	58%
Option 2 - Health check	16	20%
Option 3 - No Garda - Forensic exam & stored evidence	16	20%
Garda no kit	1	1%
Advice	1	1%



## Key Achievements in 2023

- ▶ c/ANP Sinead Boyle successfully completed her master’s in advanced nursing Practice at UCC and will be in ANP role in early 2024.
- ▶ Sinead assisted with the national training module for the new support nurses.
- ▶ Sinead is currently undergoing training for IUD insertion which will be a huge benefit for our clients. Sinead also continues to offer cervical screening as SATU UHW is registered with cervical check for cervical screening.

- ▶ Ann Folan, CNS is currently undertaking nurse prescribing at RCSI.
- ▶ 2023 saw the establishment of a new 'Ending Sexual Violence', prevention and support committee for the South-East which both Sinead and Ann have been part of. Through this committee SATU Waterford have been involved with providing information, education and prevention workshops. This encompasses other initiatives including bystander training in both SETU campuses, Waterford and Carlow.
- ▶ SATU Advisory committee held quarterly meetings with all stakeholders represented.
- ▶ SATU UHW were represented at Waterford's International Women's Day celebrations.
- ▶ One new Medical Examiner and one Support nurse were trained and commenced on the on-call roster.

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### Key Objectives for 2024

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- ▶ For 2024 we hope to move to a new identified premises.
- ▶ We hope to hold more staff training and education workshops.
- ▶ We hope that funding will be allocated for another CNS should the higher diploma commence in 2024.

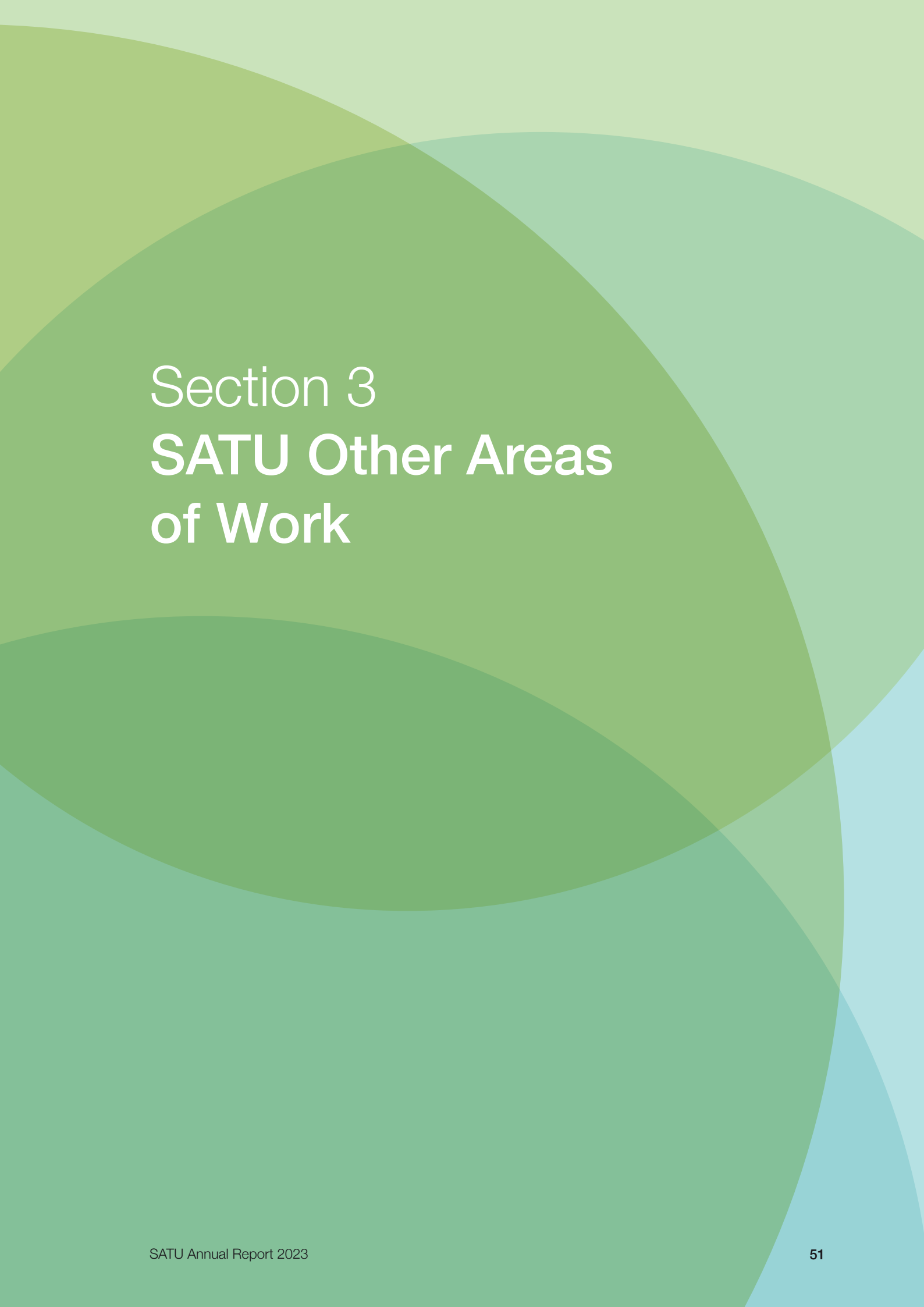
### Waterford SATU Team

<b>Clinical Director</b>	Dr John Bermingham
<b>ANP</b>	Ms Sinead Boyle
<b>Clinical Nurse Specialist</b>	Ms Ann Folan
<b>Administrator</b>	Ms Gemma Fitzgerald

Waterford is supported by the following Forensic Examiners; Dr Nell McGovern, Dr Pat Devlin, Dr Sarah Dorrian, Dr Helen Doyle and Dr Rebecca Howley. They also have a team of SATU support nurses working with them: Mary Doherty, Rhona Boland, Mary Whittle, Maria O'Neill, Claire Lalor, Emma, Blake and Margaret Power.

Two of our on-call Medical Examiners and two of our on-call Support nurses retired, we wish them a long and happy retirement and thank them for their years of service and commitment to SATU UHW.





Section 3  
**SATU Other Areas  
of Work**

## i. Annual Study Day

This year's (15th annual) interagency study day took place on the 28th of September 2023, and sincere thanks to our colleagues in the Department of Health for co-hosting this with us and providing the lovely environment of their 'Town Hall' in which to host the meeting. This year's event was held in-person, with over 100 attendees from the National Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) and other key agencies. As with previous years, this year's Study Day was extremely informative, with much discussion on a range of relevant topics from a wide variety of guest speakers. Strategy and Research in the areas of Sexual Violence formed a key element of the event, following the publication of the Sexual Violence Survey results by the Central Statistics Office on 11th April 2023. There were significant formal and informal discussions arising from this topic, coupled with engaging discussions raised by other topics and their speakers.



### Sexual Assault Treatment Unit – Annual Study Day 28th September 2023 | Department of Health

Start	Finish	Speaker	Title of Presentation
09:30	9:45	Professor Maeve Eogan	SATU Network - 2023 Updates
09:45	10:00	Minister Stephen Donnelly TD, Minister for Health	Opening Address
10:00	11:00	Dr. Anne Laking	Provision of Forensic and Therapeutic Care After an Alleged Sexual Assault in Metropolitan Cities in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany and New Zealand
11:00	11:20	<b>Morning Break</b>	
11:20	11:45	Ms. Noeline Blackwell	Reflections on time as CEO Dublin Rape Crisis Centre
11:45	12:05	Mr. Deaglan O'Briain	Implementation of the 3rd National Strategy on Domestic Sexual and Gender Based Violence
12:05	12:30	Helen McGrath	Sexual Violence Survey Results
12:30	12:55	All	Panel Discussion
12:55	13:40	<b>Lunch Break</b>	
13:40	14:00	Detective Inspector Danny Kelly	An Garda Síochána - Organised Prostitution Investigation Unit: An Update
14:00	14:15	ANP Connie McGilloway	Updates on the National Guidelines on Referral and Forensic Clinical Examination Following Rape and Sexual Assault
14:15	14:35	ANP Connie McGilloway	Silent Harm: Improving Access to the SATU Service for the Deaf Community
14:35	14:50	Helen Shortt	Barnahus Progress: Current Developments and Vision
14:50	14:55	Professor Maeve Eogan	<b>Closing Address</b>
<b>SATU Staff Only</b>			
15:00	16:00	Dr. Nicola O'Sullivan	Reflecting on the Emotional and Relational Impact of Working with Sexual Violence

Minister Donnelly opened the meeting, with an eloquent address on the role of SATU and an acknowledgement of the importance of the service. We were delighted to hear from Dr Anne Laking, from the Adult Sexual Assault Service for the Auckland region in New Zealand. Many of us had met Anne when she undertook her 'European Tour' reviewing provision of forensic and therapeutic care after sexual violence in cities in the UK, Ireland, Germany and New Zealand.



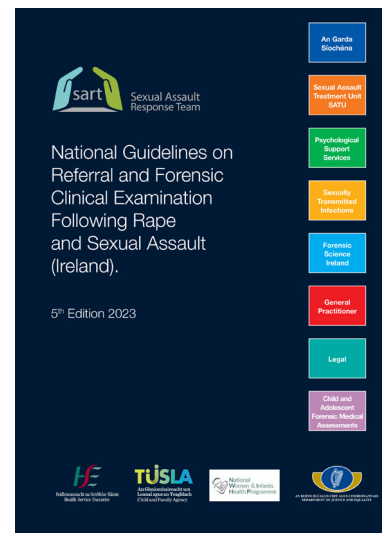
Her insights were fascinating and highlighted the strengths and challenges of the Irish service when compared with other international models. We were also delighted to hear from Noeline Blackwell, as she prepared to move on from her time as CEO of Dublin RCC, Noeline has always been a fantastic colleague and outstanding collaborator with the multiagency sexual assault response team, and we wish her well in all her future endeavours.

The annual Study Day continues to be a key date in the calendar, as it provides unparalleled opportunities for colleagues from the National Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) and other key agencies to meet and network. These development and networking opportunities are essential to the inter-agency and inter-speciality approach to care for persons who experience sexual violence. We appreciate the support of NWIHP in continuing to fund the study day, and we are already looking forward to our 2024 meeting, which will take place on October 4th, 2024.

## ii. National Guidelines on Referral and Forensic Clinical Guidelines

We are pleased to announce that the 5th Edition of the National Guidelines on Referral and Forensic Clinical Examination Following Rape and Sexual Assault (Ireland) were published online on 5th December 2023. These guidelines form the basis for an inter-agency and inter-speciality approach to holistic care for persons who experience sexual violence. The updates reflect the ever-evolving landscape for each of the agencies and disciplines involved, whilst continuing to ensure a person-centric approach to care. Following the publication, update lectures were held for each SATU team and each respective agency. These lectures provided an opportunity for participants to gain a thorough understanding of the updates made to the guidelines and how the changes not only impact their role, but also how the changes impact each agency's respective role in the inter-agency approach to care.

A link to the Guidelines can be found in appendix 2.



### iii. SATU Administration Network

Following the policy review in 2018 one of the key objectives was the establishment of a National SATU service network. NWIHP allocated an administrative resource to establish the network and the first meeting was held on the 30th of March 2023. The aim of the network is to connect all six units and provide national level organisational leadership and support.

The objectives of the network are:

- ▶ To provide a space of support for the SATU administrators.
- ▶ To assist with the production of the annual SATU report of Key Service Activity and other reports and documents as required
- ▶ To provide a mechanism to resolve issues that are common to multiple SATUs.
- ▶ To ensure quality and consistency of administration resources across the 6 SATUs.
- ▶ Deliver on key service objectives and integrate with other HSE functions as required.

The membership of the group is comprised of an administration representative from across the six SATUs and an NWIHP administrative resource. Sarah O'Connor the National SART Guidelines Coordinator also attends to advise on education and training for the Sexual Assault Treatment Units. The meetings are held every 5 weeks to facilitate a rotation of the Dublin SATU administrators and are held virtually.

The network will host their first SATU Administration Network Learning Day on the 22nd of February 2024. All six units will be represented, and it will be held in Midland Regional Hospital, Mullingar.

This training day aims to not only benefit the day to day running of the unit but will also build an essential support system between the units.

## iv. Reflective Practice and Emotional Supports

The specialist administrative and nursing team in the Sexual Assault and Treatment Units (SATUs) in Ireland provide complex treatment to people across Ireland who have been sexually assaulted or raped. The challenging nature of the work is recognised time and again. The DOH Policy Review of SATUs recommended the provision of high-quality emotional supports for all staff (core and on-call). In addition they recommended clinical supervision for all core and on-call staff.

Supervision is a joint endeavour that involves both the practitioner and supervisor in attending to their work and the complexities associated with that work. The benefits of clinical supervision to the supervisee are well supported across the literature. Reflective Practice is a form of in-depth thinking about work activity with the aim of developing as a practitioner (Kurtz, 2020). High quality clinical supervision and reflective practice is associated with increased staff well-being and job satisfaction, and reduced burnout (Hyrkas, 2005, Kurtz, 2020). The provision of this supportive and safe service offers the opportunity to think, reflect and get in touch with experiences at work. It is also recognized as essential that the mental health of practitioners treating survivors of sexual assault are offered a supportive and structured environment regularly.

Beginning in 2021 the SATU service began offering staff, (medical, nursing/ midwifery and administrative), the opportunity to avail of professional reflective practice spaces. These confidential and safe spaces are offered online across all SATU sites. In addition, group reflective practice spaces are offered to staff teams. The benefits and availability of reflective practice spaces are signposted to (medical and nursing) staff in training and new recruits. The service is offered by two independent practitioners, trained and experienced in providing reflective practice and clinical supervision to staff working in health, forensic and social care settings. Dr Nicola O’Sullivan and Dr Anne Golden.

These reflective practice spaces are offered in recognition of the complex and emotive work that is being undertaken in SATU. Once per quarter staff across the SATU team are invited to attend a workshop, these have focussed (to date) on vicarious trauma, reflective practice, compassion and compassion fatigue. The workshops present a range of issues relevant to identification and mitigation of potential vicarious trauma when working in this area. Three out of four of these annually are moderated online, and one group session is held concurrent with our in-person SATU Study Day in the Autumn of each year.

Between January and December 2023, the SATU teams have taken up 316 reflective practice spaces. This is an increase on 2022 figures, reflecting the positive impact of providing such spaces.

The impact that this new service and support has had on the SATU staff delivering care to victims of rape and sexual assault is evident from the feedback that was received in the service evaluation.

## v. Outreach and Innovation

In 2023, The Cork SATU team has continued to deliver The ASSUME education programme to over 40 schools in Cork, Kerry and Waterford. Since 2017, Margo Noonan has been developing a comprehensive schools programme which is now being delivered by both Margo Noonan ANP SAFE and Sinead Maher CNS SAFE which includes education on busting myths, fears regarding sexual assault and rape, the law around sexual violence and laws pertaining to social media and how it applies to young men and women. It covers the topic of consent and how this applies to real life with anonymized case studies. The programme is targeted at educating young people about the many faces of sexual violence, how to recognise sexual violence and where and how to look for help. The aim is to empower as many young people as possible with knowledge to protect them as they get ready to start their young adulthood journeys. We are striving to create a culture where victim blaming is challenged and the focus of blame is on the perpetrator. The program is provided to all year groups.

In December 2023, with the help of Margo Noonan and Angela Brosnan, Niamh Whooley and Catherine O'Brien gave out oranges and leaflets from various providers of services such as Men's Aid, Mná Feasa, OSS Cork, Sexual Violence Centre Cork, Women's Aid and YANA Cork. This also allowed people to explore the various organizations and ask any questions regarding the SATU services.

SATU Mullingar are engaged in the CYPSE Education Program and were part of the development and delivery of a newly designed series of five workshops for senior cycle students within secondary schools which has been delivered in Laois and Offaly. This initiative, which was a collaboration with Gardaí DPSU, Offaly Domestic Violence Support Service, Tullamore Rape Crisis Centre, Laois Domestic Abuse Service, Tusla and HSE Sexual Health Service Portlaoise along with the Laois Offaly CYPSC.



This initiative was showcased through a first of its kind Initiative with the Healthy Relationship Forum in the Esker Arts Centre in Tullamore on October 11th. The Forum brought together Gardaí, teachers, social workers, youth and community workers and other state agencies who have an interest in the area of safeguarding young adults.

The Forum brought together all the relevant stakeholders to discuss consent and what healthy relationships look like for young adults. The Forum also helped inform upcoming workshops taking place across secondary schools in Laois and Offaly.

In December 2023, Niamh Whooley and Catherine O'Brien from Cork SATU marked the "16 Days of Activism, Orange the World" by having a stand at the Main SIVUH Hospital entrance and at the entrance into the Staff Canteen. The 16 days of activism is an annual campaign which begins on the 25th of November and runs through to international human rights day on 10th December. It is a key global movement which calls for an end to gender-based violence.

An additional Outreach programme was established in the Inishowen area of Donegal in 2023. The Donegal SATU now currently has three Outreach programmes, Sligo, South Donegal and North Donegal. Feedback from patients has highlighted how these outreach sites have benefitted their care.



*"...It was great and very helpful not to have to travel to Letterkenny or Sligo [for follow-up care] and that we could do it in Donegal hospital so wouldn't have to travel as far."*

.....  
**18 – 24-year-old**

*"...SATU is a brilliant service, especially in Buncrana. [Follow up] support is available locally and there is no awkward-ness as I often experience ...They are a wholesome and supportive team and very good at what they do..."*

.....  
**25 – 34-year-old**

Since October 2023 when the new outreach in Inishowen commenced 6 patients were seen in this outreach. There were 77 patients were seen in the Sligo outreach clinic and 20 were seen in Donegal Town in 2023.

## Section 3 SATU Other Areas of Work (continued)



Following its inception in 2022 SATU presence continued in 2023 at Electric Picnic and Longitude festivals. The Trojan work carried out by Catherine Marsh in organising and coordinating these events must be commended. The Rotunda and Mullingar teams collaborated on volunteering for both of these festivals as this helps to increase awareness of SATU services, and they received excellent engagement from the public on both days.

Engagement with the public in regards to sexual violence is increasingly recognised as an important factor in creating awareness, reducing incidents, facilitating disclosure and providing a swift care response for people following a disclosure of sexual violence.

Over the 3 days for each event, staff from the various SATU's, equipped with information leaflets, management sheets, condoms and of course some lollipops provided an information service.

There was an overwhelming positive response from all services to have SATU on site creating awareness and highlighting the issue of sexual violence while providing the support necessary to manage disclosures in a proficient manner. The level of professionalism and ability to integrate agencies for patient benefit was visible over the weekend and the experience was above and beyond what we could have expected for in the short timeframe spent there.



## vi. Training and Continued Professional Development

September 2023 saw the completion of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) based Sexual Assault Forensic Examination (SAFE) education programme for Nurses and Midwives, Level 9 QQI (Masters Level). As a result, an additional seven Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNS) have joined the National SATU team. Two CNSs are based at Donegal, Cork and Galway SATUs respectively, with the remaining CNS based at the Laurels Clinic at CHI Tallaght.

A tender was released for the SAFE Training Program in 2023. The intention is that there will be a revised education program for Nurses and Midwives that will be more flexible and accessible for trainees. It will also provide a pathway for non-clinical members of the national Sexual Assault Response Team (SART), e.g. An Garda Síochána, Office of Director of Public Prosecutions, Rape Crisis Network, etc, to undertake specific non-clinical modules. The overall aim of this program is to provide an inter-agency, inter-speciality approach to training and education, culminating in more integrated and holistic care for persons who experience sexual violence.

The Continuing Professional Development initiatives undertaken by SATU practitioners during 2023 were aimed at enhancing their capabilities and knowledge in the handling of the clinical and sensitive issues surrounding sexual violence. The initiatives have seen staff from each Sexual Assault Treatment Units (SATUs) participating in a series of clinical training events throughout the year, including events hosted by:

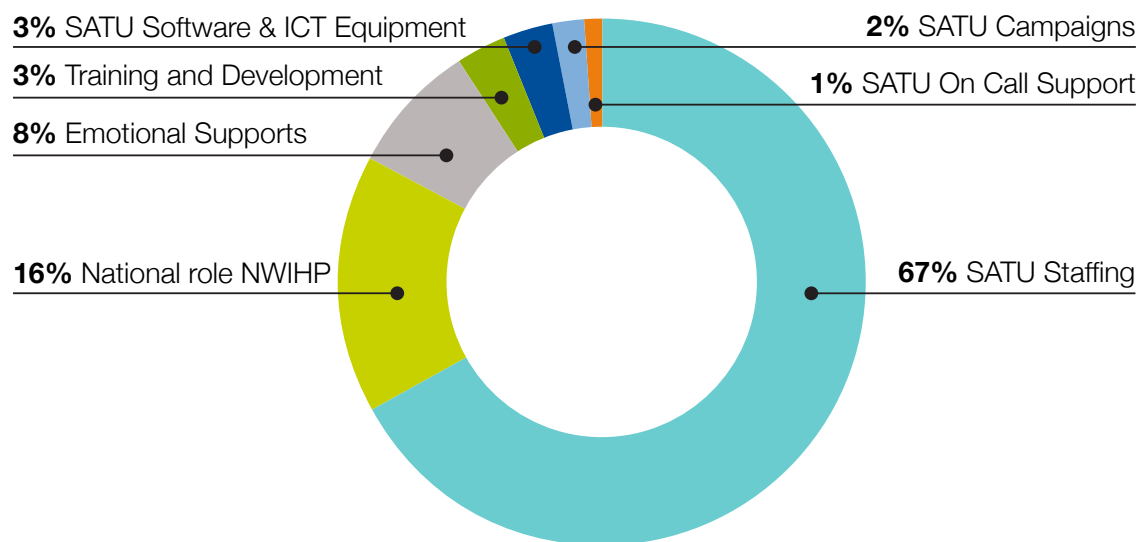
- ▶ Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine (FFLM), which provided training on Non-Fatal Strangulation
- ▶ The HSE National Office for Human Rights and Equality, which provided webinars updating clinicians on the Assisted Decision-Making Capacity Act 2015
- ▶ The HSE Social Inclusion Office, which provided training on working effectively with migrants who have experienced trauma and sexual violence ensuring that these vulnerable groups receive appropriate care and consideration.

SATU also had several specialist guest lectures throughout the year. Example topics included: Specifics of Injury Documentation and Considerations for the Care of Vulnerable Patients. Additionally, there was focus on Legal Skills training which is important for the accurate documentation and presentation of findings needed in legal proceedings. These specific training opportunities reflect a comprehensive approach to continuing education for professionals about the evolving multifaceted challenges of sexual violence and the clinical and legal nuances involved in SATU care.

## vii. Funding

The SATU budget of 0.8m remained the same in 2023. The allocation of the budget can be seen in the graph below. The majority of the funding is spent on staff costings with the remaining been used for:

- ▶ Provision of dedicated emotional supports for SATU staff.
- ▶ Training and development of current staff.
- ▶ Increasing the awareness of the SATU's and their services.
- ▶ Updating and maintaining the IT equipment and software used in the SATU's.







# Section 4 Research

### Ongoing Research at the Sexual Assault Treatment Units

Sexual Assault Treatment Units (SATUs) play a crucial role in providing comprehensive care for survivors of sexual assault. Research conducted at the SATU network encompasses various aspects of post-sexual assault care including understanding the demographics of patients that attend our services as well as analysing the treatment provided to them.

The importance of research in SATUs can be divided into several outcomes:

1. **Evidence-Based Practice:** Research findings inform evidence-based practices within SATUs, ensuring that interventions are grounded in scientific evidence and tailored to meet the unique needs of survivors.
2. **Continuous Improvement:** Research fosters continuous improvement and innovation within SATUs, driving advancements in staffing, clinical care, forensic procedures, and support services to enhance the quality of care provided to survivors and the working environment of practitioners.
3. **Policy Development:** Research outcomes contribute to the development of policies and protocols governing the response to sexual assault, influencing legislative reforms and institutional practices aimed at improving the overall response to sexual violence.
4. **Empowerment of Survivors:** By amplifying survivors' voices and experiences, research in SATUs empowers survivors, validates their experiences, and advocates for their rights, thereby promoting survivor-centred approaches within the healthcare system and society at large.

Within SATU several peer-reviewed research papers have been published in 2023 which have looked at specific patient populations including adolescent attenders, male attenders, female-perpetrated sexual assault attendances as well as the care provided to all those who attend SATU (Post-exposure prophylaxis, emergency contraception and transfer to secondary care).

Sinead Boyle from Waterford SATU also conducted qualitative research for a Masters in Advanced Nursing Practice (UCC) with the aim of exploring the transitioning of Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANPs) into the ANP role SATUs and to identify barriers and enablers to that transition.

In order for us to conduct this research, we would most importantly like to acknowledge the people who attend the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU) services, who entrust us with their care and who's experiences help inform service development and quality improvement. We would also like acknowledge every member of the SATU team who provide professional and expert care and ensure accurate and appropriate data collection.

**Some of the completed works include:**

- ▶ “Female perpetrated sexual assault: a review of attendances to the national sexual assault treatment units in the Republic of Ireland” – by Daniel Kane and Maeve Eogan. (*appendix 3 for abstract*)  
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38092893/>
- ▶ “The prevalence of genital injuries in post-pubertal females presenting for forensic examination after reported sexual violence: a systematic review” – by Daniel Kane, Kieran M Kennedy and Maeve Eogan (*appendix 3 for abstract*)  
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37971512/>
- ▶ “Female adolescent sexual assault; a national review of 1014 consecutive cases” – by Daniel Kane and Maeve Eogan. (*appendix 3 for abstract*)  
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38086273/>
- ▶ Post-exposure prophylaxis, STI testing and factors associated with follow-up attendance: a review of 4159 cases of acute post-sexual assault medical care” – by Daniel Kane, Andrea Holmes and Maeve Eogan. (*appendix 3 for abstract*)  
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37977653/>
- ▶ “General practice trainees’ understanding of post-sexual assault care: the impact of a specialist educational intervention” – by Daniel Kane, Kieran M Kennedy, Karen Flood and Maeve Eogan. (*appendix 3 for abstract*)  
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38055147/>
- ▶ “Male patient attendances at Sexual Assault Treatment Units in Ireland: An analysis of 381 cases and a comparison with female patients” – by Daniel Kane, Kieran M Kennedy, Karen Flood and Maeve Eogan. (*appendix 3 for abstract*)  
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38224652/>

### **Sinead Boyle's Research for Masters in Advanced Nursing Practice at UCC (2023)**

(c/ANP with the Waterford SATU)

**Aim:** To explore the transitioning of Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANPs) into the ANP role in Sexual Assault Treatment Units' (SATUs) in Ireland and to identify any possible constraints and enablers to that transition.

**Background:** Sexual Assault Treatment Units' (SATUs) in Ireland are a very unique clinical setting. The implementation of the ANP role in SATUs' is still in its infancy. Therefore, it is important that we explore the transition experience from a Clinical Nurse Specialist into candidate ANP (c/ANP) or ANP.

**Methodology:** A qualitative descriptive approach utilising semi-structured interviews with participants (n = 7) employed or previously employed in specialist nursing and clinical lead roles in one of Ireland six SATUs'.

**Results:** Participants perspectives on the transitioning of ANPs' in SATUs' resulted in the generation of four major themes:

- ▶ Challenges in the implementation of the ANP role in the SATU.
- ▶ Facilitators experienced in the implementation of the ANP role.
- ▶ Distinguishing the roles of the CNS and ANP.
- ▶ Advancing SATU Services to empower SATU ANPs: future planning and perspectives.

**Conclusion:** Organisational constraints to the implementation of the ANP role and staffing challenges negatively impacted the transitioning of ANPs' into the ANP role in SATU. An increased clinical workload due to a shortage of specialist nurses in SATUs' impacted the ability of the SATU ANP to meet the full potential of the ANP role and develop the SATU service further.

**Implications for nursing and midwifery management:** A Standardised implementation process for the SATU ANP role is required nationally. A career pathway for SATU specialist nursing roles in SATU will impact future attrition and the long term sustainability of the SATU ANP role.

**Service User Feedback in SATU - Listening and Learning to Improve**  
**Submitted to and presented at 4th Annual RCSI Hospital Group Quality and Patient Safety Conference, March 2023.**

**Introduction:** The Irish SATU network comprises 6 geographically distributed SATUs, which provide a 24/7 forensic, medical and psychological support response to people who disclose sexual crime. In 2022 over 1000 people accessed this service, with 427 of these accessing care in the Rotunda SATU. An online feedback questionnaire is available via the Hse webpage ([hse.ie/satu](https://hse.ie/satu)) and service users are encouraged to provide feedback. This project summarises feedback provided in 2022.

**Project Aim:** To review the quantity, quality and content of SATU service user feedback, in order to listen to the views of those accessing SATU care.

**Methodology:** In 2022 we emphasized the availability of this feedback questionnaire to all people attending SATU.

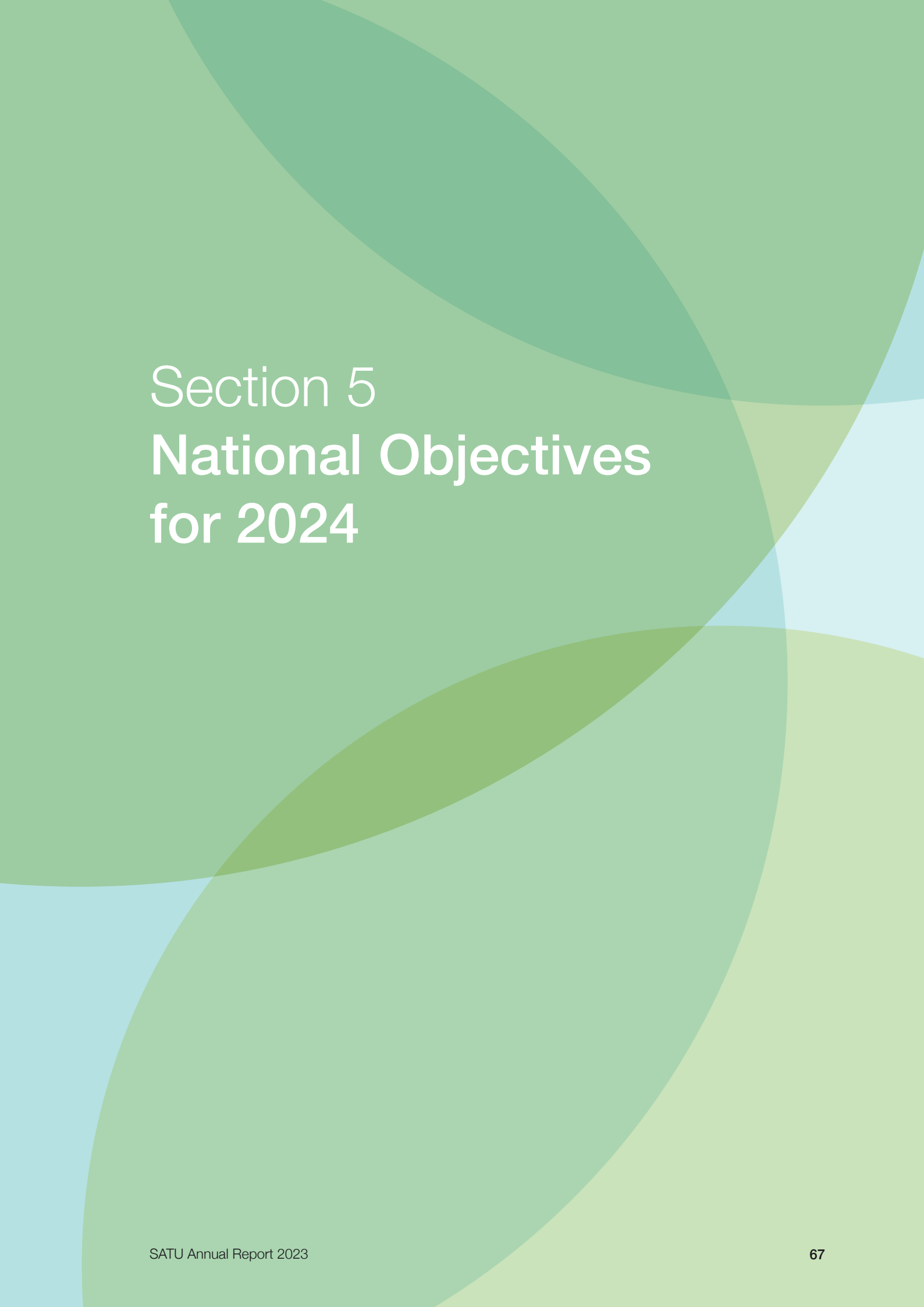
**Measurement:** Number of service users who provide feedback, comparison of demographics of those providing feedback compared with demographics of SATU attendances. We also measured response to various questions as well as summarizing free text inputs to the feedback questionnaire.

**Results:** Almost 29% of those who attended SATU in 2022 provided feedback via the web-based portal. 94% identified as women. 86% described their overall SATU experience as good/very good with 83% describing the facilities as good/very good. 98% trusted the team to take care of them, with 93% describing the support nurse/midwife as 'good/very good', and 86% described the forensic examiner as 'good/very good'. 95% said they felt safe in SATU while 89% said they felt involved in decision making around their care. 92% felt that aspects of care were explained in a way they could understand, and 93% said they would recommend the SATU to others.

**Value to patient/staff:** This feedback is reassuring to staff providing this care, while also being reassuring to other service users, their advocates as well as to those who fund the service. The number of people who provided feedback is really interesting, as traditionally it was felt that people would just want to 'forget and move on' from their SATU attendance.

**Sustainability of Intervention:** This method of data collection is sustainable as it is linked with a HSE hosted data collection platform. It is important that we continue to emphasise this portal to service users so we can continuously listen to and action service user feedback.



The background features several large, overlapping, semi-transparent shapes in various shades of green and light blue. The shapes are organic and flowing, creating a layered, abstract effect. The text is positioned in the upper left quadrant, overlaid on the green shapes.

# Section 5 National Objectives for 2024

## National Objectives for 2024

In 2024 the SATU service will focus on some key objectives in order to continually improve the care of the people who need to use their service.

### Ongoing ambitions

- ▶ Capital development – with focus on a number of units with specific infrastructural needs.
- ▶ Recruitment and retention – with focus on recruiting and training additional medical and nursing staff for all SATUs.
- ▶ Research and audit.
- ▶ Responsive health service
- ▶ Conclude the review of the Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner Training Programme with a view to establishing a more flexible, modular training model.
- ▶ Continue to engage with the Barnahus Steering Group and others relevant stakeholders, working towards collocation of adult and child sexual assault treatments services.
- ▶ Facilitate interagency, multi-stakeholder collaboration by hosting the bi-annual SATU Professional Clinical Network meeting.
- ▶ Continue to prioritise the wellbeing and emotional support needs of our healthcare workers with provision of online professional therapeutic spaces and group workshops.



The background features several overlapping, semi-transparent shapes in various shades of green and blue. A large, dark green leaf-like shape is prominent on the right side. Other shapes in lighter greens and blues are layered underneath and to the left, creating a sense of depth and movement.

# Section 6 **APPENDIX**

## Appendix 1

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention)

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/gender-matters/council-of-europe-convention-on-preventing-and-combating-violence-against-women-and-domestic-violence>

## Appendix 2

The Guidelines can be found at the following link:

[Guidelines on Referral following Rape and Sexual Assault.pdf \(hse.ie\)](#)

# Appendix 3

International Journal of Legal Medicine  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s00414-023-03134-7>

ORIGINAL ARTICLE



## Female perpetrated sexual assault: a review of attendances to the national sexual assault treatment units in the Republic of Ireland

Daniel Kane<sup>1,2,3</sup> · Maeve Eogan<sup>1,2,3</sup>

Received: 17 August 2023 / Accepted: 11 November 2023

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### Abstract

**Background** Female perpetrated sexual assault is under-represented in sexual assault research, and indeed possibly an under-reported crime. The aim of this study is to address the lack of comprehensive data in relation to female perpetrated sexual assault attendances to the national sexual assault treatment unit network in the Republic of Ireland.

**Methods** This is a cross-sectional study analysing the attendances of female perpetrated sexual assault attendances at the six sexual assault treatment units in the Republic of Ireland between 1 January 2017 and 31 December 2022.

**Results** There were 95 attendances where the assailant (or one of the assailants) was identified as female. 62% (n=59) of these attendances involved a solo female assailant, 3.2% (n=3) where it was a multiple assailant assault with only female assailants and 34.7% (n=33) cases with male and female assailants. 74.7% (n=71) of victims identified as female, 24.2% (n=23) as male and 1.1% (n=1) as 'other'. The average age of attenders was  $27.0 \pm 10.7$  years old. 54.7% (n=52) of attendances were within 72 hours of the assault. 52.6% (n=50) of these underwent a forensic examination. 30.5% (n=29) of incidents occurred in the assailant's home. 23% of assailants were described as a friend of the victim/survivor. 34.7% (n=33) sustained bodily injuries (genital and/or extra-genital).

**Conclusion** Female perpetrated sexual assault is a distinct entity when analysing attendances to the national sexual assault treatment unit network, representing just under 2% of all attendances. We have shown that those who experience these assaults are likely to be female, be assaulted by a single female perpetrator who is known to them and attend a sexual assault treatment unit within 72 hours of the assault. Awareness of the characteristics of these attendances will ultimately allow us to develop appropriate supports for these victims/survivors and to raise awareness of this type of crime.

# Appendix 3

International Journal of Legal Medicine  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s00414-023-03117-8>

REVIEW



## The prevalence of genital injuries in post-pubertal females presenting for forensic examination after reported sexual violence: a systematic review

D Kane<sup>1,2</sup> · KM Kennedy<sup>3</sup> · M Eogan<sup>1,2</sup>

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### Abstract

**Background** Sexual violence is a prevalent issue in contemporary society requiring a robust forensic healthcare response. It is critically important that forensic examiners put clinical examination findings into an appropriate evidence-based context. The presence of genital injuries has been shown to increase the likelihood of successful criminal prosecution and report the crime. However, the reported rates of genital injury vary widely in published studies.

**Aims and objectives** We aim to critically evaluate and synthesize existing literature on the prevalence of genital injuries in post-pubertal females, examined following sexual violence, with a view to describing the prevalence and characteristics of genital injuries as well as the range of forensic practices employed.

**Methods** Three online databases (PubMed, Embase, and Scopus) were systematically searched with key terms.

**Results** Of the 1224 studies screened, 141 full-text publications met the inclusion criteria. Reported injury prevalence rates varied widely. Details pertaining to forensic examinations included in each study, such as grade of the examiner, type of examination, location of examination, and time interval from assault to examination also varied widely. Injury prevalence was highest in studies where enhanced visualization techniques were utilized.

**Conclusions** This systematic review demonstrates that there is no universally agreed standard for documenting genital injuries in cases of sexual violence and highlights the need for standardized approaches and guidelines for assessing, documenting, and reporting these injuries. The review provides robust evidence to support a call for establishing consistent context, terminology, classification systems, and data collection methods to improve the comparability and reliability of future research findings.

# Appendix 3



Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](https://www.sciencedirect.com)

## Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/yjflm](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/yjflm)



Research Paper

### Female adolescent sexual assault; a national review of 1014 consecutive cases

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#### ARTICLE INFO

Handling Editor: Wilma Duijst

#### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Sexual violence is common in contemporary society and disproportionately affects adolescents. In order to develop effective treatment, awareness and prevention strategies it is vital that we understand the epidemiology of adolescent sexual assault (SA). The aim of this study is to evaluate attendances by female adolescents to the national sexual assault treatment unit (SATU) network in the Republic of Ireland and compare these attendances with adult women accessing the service.

**Methods:** This is a cross-sectional study analysing the attendances of all adolescent female attendances at the 6 SATUs in the Republic of Ireland and comparing them with all adult female attendances between 1/1/2017 and 31/12/2022.

**Results:** There were 1014 female adolescent attendances and 3951 female adult attendances over the timeframe studied. Adult attenders were more likely to attend within 7-days of the alleged assault compared with adolescent attenders (80.3% V 70.2% OR1.513 CI 1.35-1.697  $p < 0.001$ ). When compared with adult attenders, adolescent attenders were significantly more likely to disclose being assaulted outdoors (40.9% V 15.7% OR2.607 CI 2.346-2.898  $p < 0.01$ ), during the day (58.4% V 34.4% OR1.673 CI 1.565-1.790  $p < 0.01$ ), assaulted by a friend/family member (28.9% V 16% OR 1.812 CI1.603-2.049  $p < 0.01$ ) and less likely to have consumed alcohol prior to the incident (45.6% V 25.3% OR1.807 CI 1.653-1.975  $p < 0.001$ ). Physical injuries were less likely in adolescent attenders (30% V 35.5% OR0.845 CI 0.758-0.942  $p = 0.02$ ).


**Conclusion:** A comparison of the characteristics of adolescent and adult female sexual assault disclosures identifies differences regarding location of the incident, relationship to perpetrator and prevalence of alcohol consumption. Knowledge of these factors support appropriate tailoring of treatment, prevention and awareness strategies to help modify the impact and reduce the incidence of SA in the vulnerable adolescent cohort.

# Appendix 3



OPEN ACCESS

## Post-exposure prophylaxis, STI testing and factors associated with follow-up attendance: a review of 4159 cases of acute post-sexual assault medical care

Daniel Kane <sup>1,2</sup>, Andrea Holmes,<sup>3,4</sup> Maeve Eogan<sup>1,2</sup>

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Received 1 September 2023  
Accepted 21 October 2023

### ABSTRACT

**Background** Sexual assault (SA) is a prevalent issue with enduring consequences. Post-SA medical care mainly focuses on injuries, sexually transmitted infection (STI) prevention and detection, as well as preventing unwanted pregnancies. Swift access to post-SA medical care is vital with sexual assault treatment units (SATUs) streamlining this care. The primary aim of our study is to report on post-SA care provided at the national SATU network in Ireland with a secondary aim of analysing factors associated with follow-up attendance for STI testing.

**Methods** This is a retrospective cohort study of all acute attendances (<7 days from incident) at the national SATU network between 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2022.

**Results** A total of 4159 acute cases presented during the study period. Emergency contraception (EC) was administered to 53.8% (n=1899/3529) of cases, while postexposure prophylaxis (PEP) for chlamydia was given in 75.1% (n=3124/4159) and for HIV in 11.0% (n=304/3387). Hepatitis B vaccination was initiated in 53.7% (n=2233/4159) of cases. 1.4% (n=59/4159) of the attendees were referred to an emergency department for the treatment of injuries. Follow-up appointments were scheduled for 75.8% (3151/4159) of acute cases. 71.6% (n=2257/3151) attended follow-up. Certain factors were found to correlate with a higher likelihood of attending follow-up appointments: adolescents (p<0.0001), concern about drug-facilitated SA (DFSA) (p=0.01), no consumption of recreational drugs before the incident (p<0.0001), alcohol consumption prior to the incident (p=0.01), and not reporting the crime to the police (p<0.001). However, gender (p=0.06) and the presence of injury at time of primary attendance (p=0.97) were not predictive of likelihood of follow-up attendance.

**Conclusion** This study demonstrates that EC, chlamydia PEP, HIV PEP and hepatitis B vaccination were all administered at SATU. A small proportion of attenders required emergency injury care. Factors influencing attendance at follow-up include age, drug use, alcohol use and police involvement, highlighting the need for tailored patient-centred support.

### INTRODUCTION

Sexual assault (SA) is common and it can have multiple and sustained consequences.<sup>1,2</sup> Possible physical consequences include injury, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unwanted pregnancy.<sup>3</sup> Medical care provided after SA mainly

### WHAT IS ALREADY KNOWN ON THIS TOPIC

⇒ Sexual assault requires prompt medical care, facilitated by sexual assault treatment units (SATUs), focusing on injuries, sexually transmitted infection (STI) prevention, and detection and pregnancy prevention.

### WHAT THIS STUDY ADDS

⇒ This study provides a comprehensive overview of medical care post sexual assault at Ireland's national SATU network, emphasising positive follow-up attendance rates, especially for STI testing.  
⇒ It also identifies factors influencing follow-up attendance.  
⇒ Factors including age, drug and alcohol use, and police involvement affected likelihood of attendance for review.

### HOW THIS STUDY MIGHT AFFECT RESEARCH, PRACTICE OR POLICY

⇒ The findings suggest a need for a patient-centred approach in post-sexual assault care, potentially influencing improvements in research, clinical practices, and policies to provide more effective and tailored support for survivors.

focuses on treatment of injuries, prevention of STIs and unwanted pregnancies. Combining acute medical care with the forensic examination (FE) for collection of samples for DNA analysis, has been shown to be less traumatic for the person who discloses sexual violence.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the need for rapid access to post-SA services is essential in order to mitigate these physical consequences in so far as possible. SA treatment units (SATUs)/SA referral centres (SARCs) are set up to streamline post-SA care.<sup>5</sup> These units provide expert-led care including medical, forensic and follow-up STI testing for victims of SA. Affiliated rape crisis centres also offer and provide psychological support and follow-up care to all people attending acutely.

The primary aim of this study was to provide a descriptive analysis of the medical care received by these patients including the type of attendance (FE, health check or advice) as well as the provision of EC, HIV PEP, chlamydia prophylaxis and hepatitis B immunisation. Details on referral for further medical care and other services were also analysed.



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## Appendix 3

Irish Journal of Medical Science (1971 -)  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11845-023-03576-3>

ORIGINAL ARTICLE



### General practice trainees' understanding of post-sexual assault care: the impact of a specialist educational intervention

Daniel Kane<sup>1,2</sup> · Kieran M. Kennedy<sup>3</sup> · Karen Flood<sup>1</sup> · Maeve Eogan<sup>1,2</sup>

Received: 17 October 2023 / Accepted: 20 November 2023  
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#### Abstract


**Background** Sexual assault (SA) is a highly prevalent issue, with significant adverse health sequelae. Given that general practitioners (GPs) may serve as the first point of contact for many SA victims, their awareness of post-SA care and appropriate understanding of referral pathways to a sexual assault treatment unit (SATU) are critically important. This study evaluated GP trainees' knowledge of and comfort with post-SA care.

**Methods** Educational intervention study using a didactic teaching session was delivered by a specialist forensic examiner on post-SA care. A pre and post-study questionnaire was implemented to assess participants' knowledge and comfort levels with subject material. Significance was set at *p*-value below 0.05.

**Results** Seventy-five GP-trainees attended the teaching session. Fifty-three completed the pre-teaching questionnaire and 50 completed the post-teaching questionnaire. Only a minority of trainees had received prior teaching in post-SA care as a medical student (13.2% *n* = 7) or as a postgraduate (28.3% *n* = 15). After the teaching session, there was a significant improvement trainees' comfort levels in explaining a forensic examination (*p* < 0.0001), referral pathways to a SATU (*p* < 0.0001) and offering advice in relation to emergency contraception (*p* < 0.0001). There was also a significant improvement in understanding HIV post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) (*p* < 0.001) and forensic examination (FE) time-lines (*p* < 0.001).

**Conclusion** This study reveals that GP-trainees have had limited exposure to teaching on post-SA care. Additionally, significant improvements were observed following a 1-h didactic teaching session on post-SA care. Trainees demonstrated increased understanding of SATU referral pathways, understanding of immediate medical care after SA, including PEP and FE timelines.

# Appendix 3




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Research Paper

## Male patient attendances at Sexual Assault Treatment Units in Ireland: An analysis of 381 cases and a comparison with female patients



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### ARTICLE INFO

Handling Editor: Wilma Duijst

#### Keywords:

Sexual assault  
Rape  
Forensic examination  
Sexual offences

### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Sexual violence is a crime that affects people of all genders. While focus is frequently on female survivors, it is crucial to acknowledge that males also experience sexual violence and to ensure that gender-sensitive services are available to all survivors. Understanding the prevalence of, and factors associated with, sexual violence against males is a critical first step in addressing this issue. We aim to address the lack of data in relation to sexual violence against males.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional study of all male attendances at 6 Sexual Assault Treatment Units (SATU) in the Republic of Ireland over a 6-year period and, where applicable, comparison with corresponding female attendances.

**Results:** There were 381 male attendances with an average age of 28.5 years over the study period, representing 7 % of all SATU patients. There was a 24 % increase in male attendances during the study period. 39.1 % presented within 24 h of the assault. 61.9 % reported the crime to the police. Employment status included 37.3 % employed, 24.9 % unemployed, and 26.2 % students, with 86.7 % being Irish nationals. Most incidents occurred on weekdays (53.3 %) and at night (56.7 %). Referrals were primarily from police (55.9 %), and psychological support was provided in 62.3 % of cases. Alcohol (60.4 %) and illicit drugs (20.5 %) were reported before assaults. 18.6 % suspected drug-facilitated assaults. Male assailants constituted 90.1 %, with 13.9 % involving multiple assailants. Male attenders were significantly more likely than females to be assaulted in their assailant's home and to be assaulted by more than one assailant. They were significantly less likely than females to report the crime to the police or to have consumed alcohol.

**Conclusion:** To our knowledge, this is one of the largest case series of male patients attending a sexual assault treatment service to be published in the international literature. Male patients are a distinct group that are increasingly accessing SATU services. Significant differences exist between male and female patients' reported experiences of sexual violence. Knowledge of these factors will support appropriate tailoring of treatment & service provision, prevention and awareness strategies to help modify the impact and reduce the incidence of sexual violence in this cohort.







Sexual Assault  
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