



MAISHA

Prevalence of intimate partner violence and abuse among women in northwestern Tanzania: results from MAISHA study

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BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Intimate partner violence (IPV) and other related partner abuses are major public health and social problem, with serious consequences for women's physical and emotional health and social well-being [1-3]. Globally, it is estimated that about 30% of women will experience physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner during their lifetime [4]. Only limited information is available to estimate the prevalence of IPV and abuses and associated factors in sub-Saharan African countries. In Tanzania, 44% of ever-married women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their current or most recent husband or partner, and 37% of ever-married women experienced such spousal violence in the past 12 months [5]. We determined the prevalence of IPV and abuse in the past 12 months and associated factors at baseline among women taking part in the ongoing MAISHA study in Mwanza city, NW Tanzania.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

MAISHA study design and procedures:

- MAISHA study is an ongoing cluster-randomised controlled trial to assess the impact of participatory gender training for women on participants' experience of IPV and other related outcomes.
- As part of this trial, we have enrolled women in groups (with about 10-30 women per group) taking part in a microfinance (MF) loan scheme (N=66 groups) and comparable women not taking part in this scheme (N=66 groups).
- Each woman received information about the study and those who agreed to participate and demonstrated understanding of the study procedures were invited to sign the consent form.

Baseline survey:

- During the baseline survey, consenting women were interviewed by female interviewers to collect information about socio-demographic characteristics, experiences of specific acts of IPV and abuse, and symptoms of poor mental health status.
- Responses were entered directly onto a tablet computer programmed to check for accuracy and consistency of information entered during the interview.
- We used a standardised structured questionnaire which was translated into a local language (Swahili) and then independently back-translated into English to check for accuracy. Questions asking about each type of violence and abuse were adapted from the WHO Violence Against Women instrument [18].

RESULTS

- We have enrolled 1021 women in MF scheme and 1245 women not in MF scheme. Overall, **27% (95% CI: 24-29%) of women on MF and 35% (95% CI: 32-38%) of women not in MF** reported experiencing physical and/or sexual IPV in the past 12 months.
- In Table 1, we show the prevalence of different types of IPV and abuses in the study population.
- When compared to women in MF, women not receiving MF were more likely to report emotional (45% vs 39%, p=0.007) and economic (39% vs 34%, p=0.01) abuse during the past 12 months.
- Partner controlling behaviour was the most prevalent type of abuse with 63% of women in MF and 64% of women not in MF reporting this during the past 12 months.

Baseline prevalence of self-reported experiences of intimate partner violence and abuse in the past 12 months among women in MAISHA study (N=2266)

	Women in MF scheme			Women not in MF scheme		
	N	%	95% CI	N	%	95% CI
Total	1021	100		1245	100	
Physical violence	194	19	17, 22	312	25	23, 28
Sexual violence	171	17	15, 19	270	22	19, 24
Controlling behavior	639	63	60, 66	802	64	62, 67
Emotional abuse	401	39	36, 42	554	45	42, 47
Economic abuse	343	34	31, 37	489	39	37, 42

- The prevalence of IPV and abuses varied by socio-demographic characteristics, showing much higher prevalence rates among younger women, women with young partners and less educated women. Further analysis is ongoing to explore the reasons for the observed differences between women in MF and those not in this scheme.

CONCLUSIONS

- These results show that violence by an intimate partner and abuses are a major problems among women in the study population.
- The prevalence of IPV and abuses varied by socio-demographic characteristics, showing much higher prevalence rates among younger women, women with young partners and less educated women.
- These findings indicates an urgent need for developing and testing appropriate interventions in settings like Tanzania to tackle both violence and abusive behaviours among intimate partners.
- As part of the ongoing MAISHA study, we are aiming to assess the impact of a gender training programme for women on physical and/or sexual IPV in NW Tanzania.

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