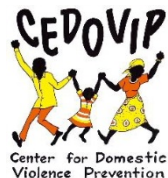


She said/he said: The added value and opportunities of analysing data from couples on partner violence

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MEDICINE



OVERVIEW:

- Context of application: SASA! couples study
- Methodology
- Findings
- Learnings

CONTEXT OF APPLICATION: SASA! COUPLES STUDY

- Study nested in the multidisciplinary SASA! evaluation in Kampala, Uganda included a RCT, qualitative evaluation, operations research and costing study
- **Research objective:** To understand the processes that led to change in the relationships of couples exposed to SASA!
- **Aim:** to provide a richer understanding of catalysts and barriers to change in relationships to improve and inform IPV programming

The SASA! Approach: How it works

Start



Learning about the community

Selecting Community Activists

Fostering 'power within' staff and community activists

Awareness



Helping activists gain confidence

Informal activities

Encouraging critical thinking about men's 'power over' women

Support



Strengthening skills and connections between community members

Joining 'power with' others to support change

Action



Trying new behaviors, celebrating change

Fostering the 'power to' make positive change

involving community members, leaders and institutions to build critical mass



METHODOLOGY: SAMPLING

- Key stage to build in measures to ensure safety
- Sampled 20 individuals participants from the follow-up survey who met the following criteria:
 - agreed to be contacted again
 - reported previous IPV with their current partner (but not in the last 12 months)
 - reported exposure to the intervention
 - reported positive change in their relationship since their involvement with the intervention
- Criteria helped decrease the possibility of sampling couples experiencing ongoing IPV



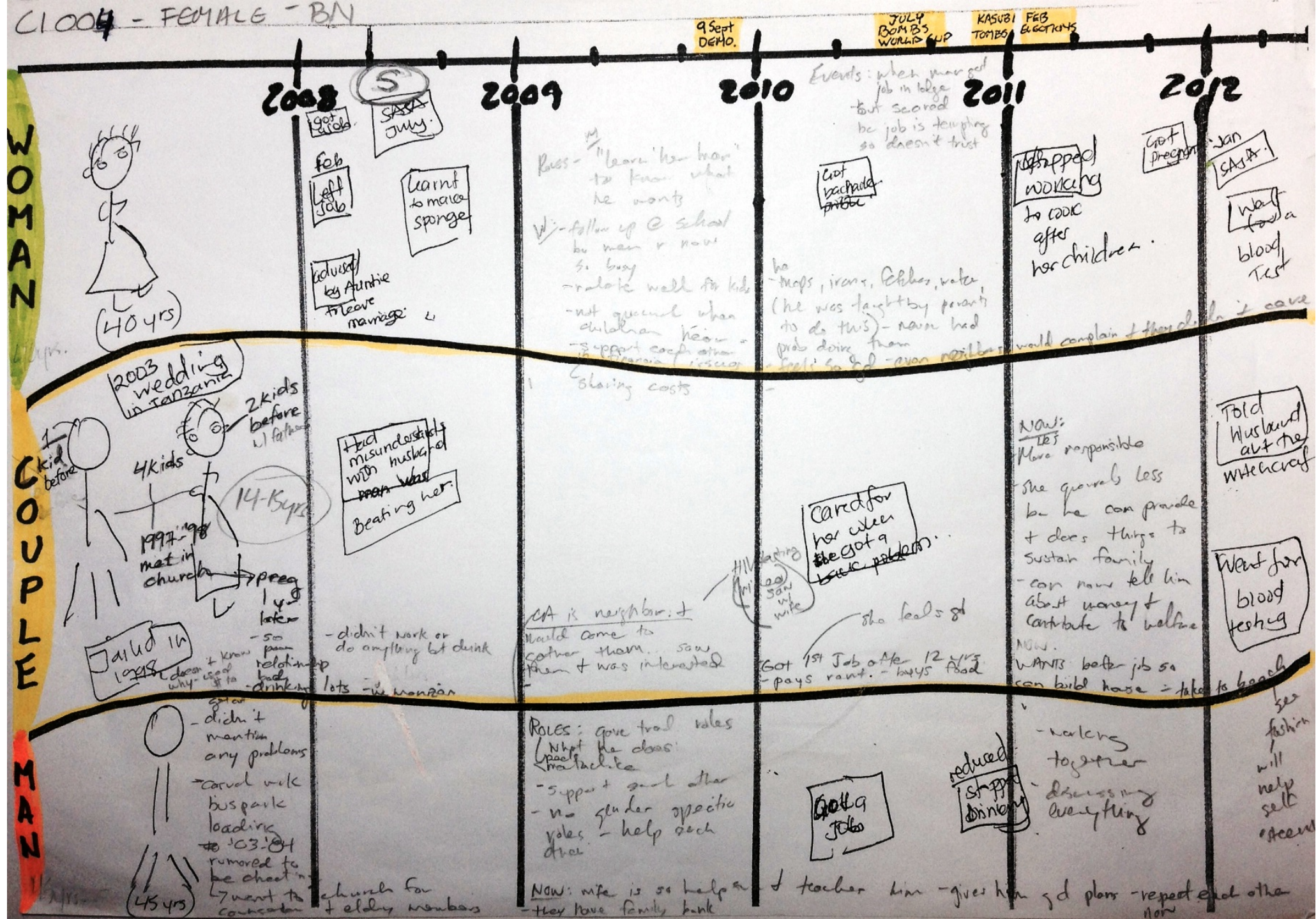
METHODOLOGY: CONSENT

- Recruiting and obtaining consent from both partners requires additional safeguards
- Initially sampled through female partners = challenges recruiting male partners
- Sampled through men with extra safety precautions around consent
- Steps were taken to ensure women fully consented (i.e. not coerced by partner)

METHODOLOGY: CONFIDENTIALITY

- A female and male researcher, trained extensively in IPV research, conducted interviews separately in a private place
- Researchers emphasized nothing would be shared with their partner
- Some expressed curiosity around what partner was sharing in their interview

Timeline tool example



Findings

OVERLAPS: TRIANGULATION & VALIDITY

- Overlaps increase the validity of individual narratives and enhances the 'trustworthiness' of couples' accounts.
- Key overlaps- partners reporting the same improvements in their relationship around:
 - communication
 - sharing of financial decisions
 - household financial well-being
 - male provision
 - infidelity
 - unity in family goals
- Corroborate changes in the relationship:
 - substantiates reports and offers insight into relationship dynamics and important aspects of relationship quality (i.e. closeness, unity, poor communication, etc.)
 - reveals the meaning this had for each partner and how they felt it affected them

OVERLAPS: TRIANGULATION & VALIDITY

Example: in two couples each partner's narrative revealed and verified important changes around sex and intimacy

Andrew: "And maybe now another thing is that my wife no longer turns her back on me [denies me sex] like she used to do before." (3M)

Milly: "I give my husband happiness as he needs it...He might want to make love to you, there are some women who refuse, and she says that 'aaaah, aaaah' [no] so it is by force. But for us we do not have that." (3F)

MEANING IN CONTRASTS

- Challenge of couple data analysis: piecing together and making sense of two narratives
- Same issue...different accounts or parts of the same story
- Key areas of contrast: infidelity and communication

KEY AREA OF CONTRAST: INFIDELITY

Paul: “[W]henever I left to go the village, she started cheating...That infidelity thing affected my life so much.”
(7M)

Sarah: “[H]e thought that I have other men. He used to have people to spy on me and they would tell him that I have other men... It was all because of rumours.” (7F)

MEANING IN CONTRASTS...

- Purpose is not constructing most accurate joint account-specific details often less critical than how each person perceives events.
- Contrasts = an opportunity, signalling the researcher to step back from the contrast and look across the whole of each narrative for insight into the meaning behind the contrast
 - Why did they tell this story or this version of the story in the way they did?
 - What does this indicate about the phenomena being studied (in this case relationship dynamics and change processes)?

WIDER NARRATIVES OFFER CLUES:

- Wider analysis of both narratives revealed:
 - a deep lack of trust is at the root of their conflicts and Paul's controlling behaviour
 - Paul's need to control has roots in feelings of being overwhelmed by responsibility and is a barrier to change
 - While SASA! sparked a process of change in their relationship Paul's controlling behaviour and bitterness remained a barrier



ADDITIONAL EFFORT,
ADDITIONAL GAIN?

**What key details are missing that
the other provided?**



**How would the absence of this
information have influenced our
study findings on relationship
trajectories and processes of
change?**

ADDED VALUE: ENHANCED UNDERSTANDING OF INTERACTION PATTERNS

- Separate interviews allowed partners to share more openly
- Revealed key information on:
 - motivations for their own behaviour (i.e. frustrations, disappointments, expectations and fears)
 - how they experienced their partner's behaviour and how both influenced the relationship
 - overlaps in couples' narratives + different aspects each reported around relationship changes revealed key reciprocal change processes at work
 - barriers to change- helped us to see why some couples experienced great change, while others did not

EXAMPLE

In couple 5 each narrative revealed:

- Individual factors influencing their behaviour (e.g. her physical disability, their age difference)
- Aspects of their interaction patterns that were a barrier to change
- Ongoing conflicts were related to differences in gender role expectations

Frank: “What my wife helps me with are most of the things...sometimes she helps me at home, she says that let me buy food and dress the children, the money that I make, helps us to develop and her money helps us to run the home.” (5M)

Esther: “Ah, these men of today...a man is supposed to look after his wife and children by buying for them clothes, food...these days men do not want to do all this, they are no longer responsible...Because [my husband] knows that I earn money he does not provide.” (5F)

ADDED VALUE: INSIGHT INTO INTERVENTION EXPOSURE AND INFLUENCE

- Striking variations in what individuals reported their partner's exposure to be and what the individual reported themselves
- 18 out of 20 participants were not accurately aware of their partner's exposure to *SASA*!
- E.g. one partner, unaware of other's involvement with the intervention, would report changes in their partner, but equated this to getting older, whereas the other partner reveals they changed because of *SASA*!

EXAMPLE :

Couple 3:

Andrew: Reports extensive exposure, spoke passionately about SASA!'s impact on him and his relationship

Milly: Reported he was not involved, but corroborates the changes Andrew reported, credits 'maturity' for the changes



“[Y]ou can’t know what really changed her...there are people who advised her, there was a church and these things and at the end you can’t say that this is what changed her, all you see is the change.” (9M)



MORE COMPLETE PICTURE OF EXPOSURE

Partners offer different parts of the story = insight into exposure and influence

Paul: reported the key impact a neighbour had on supporting change in their relationship, but did not indicate or know it was a community activist

Sally: we learn this neighbour is a community activist, allowing us to link the changes Paul reports to exposure to the intervention

SUMMARY

- Having both partners' narratives offers important information not available from individual accounts
- Illuminates underlying relationship issues, change processes and other factors that influenced or impeded change in relationships
- Offers greater insight into exposure and can inform program design



LEARNING AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

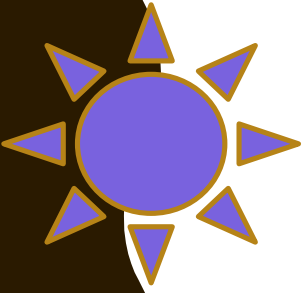
- Safety measures:
 - May be helpful for interviewers to offer suggestions (e.g. verbally and/or in a pamphlet) for how participants could safely engage their partner in discussion post-interview if they wished and where to seek support with this
 - Offer a facilitated group discussion with couples after data collection
- Future research:
 - Go back to see if being interviewed impacted the couple in a way that was harmful to women
 - Gather data at multiple time points with a larger sample of couples

LEARNING AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Couple-level research should be a priority area in IPV prevention and desistance research, in particular in low-income countries

Requires:

1. Collecting data from each partner on the relationship and their personal characteristics, history and behaviour within the relationship
2. Couple-level analysis of this data for a more comprehensive picture of the interaction patterns and change processes within relationships including those involved in IPV interventions



IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO DO GOOD RESEARCH...

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MORE INFO ON SASA! COUPLES STUDY:

Starmann, Elizabeth, Martine Collumbien, Nambusi Kyegombe, Karen Devries, Lori Michau, Tina Musuya, Charlotte Watts, and Lori Heise. 2017. "Exploring Couples' Processes of Change in the Context of SASA!, a Violence Against Women and HIV Prevention Intervention in Uganda." *Prevention Science* 18 (2):233-44. doi: 10.1007/s11121-016-0716-6.