

EXPERIENCE OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AMONG ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN ENGAGED IN DREAMS PROGRAMS IN KENYA

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KEY MESSAGES

- About a 1/5th of the sample reported experiencing sexual violence from both intimate and non-intimate partners in the last 12 months.
- Adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) who experienced sexual violence were twice as likely to also report STI symptoms.
- Though most AGYW did not support normative attitudes toward violence against women, and noted having social support outside the home; use of services for violence prevention, counseling, or post-violence care was abysmal.

BACKGROUND

- Sexual violence is associated with HIV acquisition, yet there is insufficient evidence about AGYW's experiences of sexual violence and related HIV risk.
- DREAMS (Determined, Resilient, Empowered AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe) partnership is a comprehensive intervention package aiming to significantly reduce new HIV infections in AGYW in Kenya and other sub-Saharan African countries.
- The DREAMS interventions have an explicit focus on addressing AGYW's experiences of violence.
- We examined the experience of sexual violence by intimate partner (IP) and non-intimate partners (non-IP) among 15–24 year old women and its influence on sexual health outcomes.

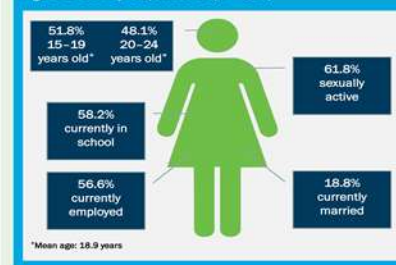
METHODS

- Cross-sectional survey with 914 AGYW enrolled in the DREAMS program in 2 locations in Kisumu county, Kenya between October and December 2016.
- Survey participants were randomly selected from rosters of DREAMS program beneficiaries.
- Survey assessed experience of sexual violence with non-IP (i.e., not boyfriend or husband) among all AGYW and sexual violence among partnered AGYW (N=574) in the last 12 months.
- Participants reported on perceived risk of HIV (very/somewhat likely versus unlikely/not at all likely) and experiencing any of 4 STI symptoms (e.g., genital ulcer) in the last 12 months.
- Multivariable logistic regression analyses examined associations between experience of sexual violence (IP and non-IP) and HIV risk perception and STI symptoms, controlling for age, marital status, schooling status, and orphanhood.
- Informed consent was obtained for each respondent.

RESULTS

Respondent characteristics

Figure 1 Survey respondents (n = 914)



Experience of sexual violence in the last 12 months

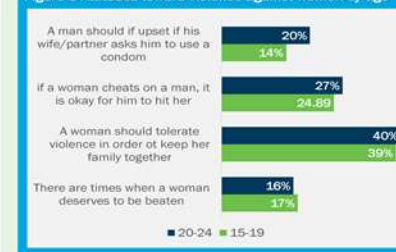
- About 24% of all AGYW reported experience of sexual violence from non-IP and 19% reported experience of sexual violence from IP in the last 12 months.

Figure 2 Experience of sexual violence among AGYW in last 12 months, Kisumu, Kenya



AGYW attitudes toward violence against women

Figure 3 Attitudes toward violence against women by age



RESULTS

STI experience

- AGYW who experienced IP or non-IP sexual violence had increased odds of experiencing an STI symptom in the last 12 months (OR adj: 2.23 [1.34–3.69] and 1.74 [1.13–2.66], respectively).

Table 1 HIV risk outcomes

Experience of STI symptoms in last 6 months (among sexually active)	Percent (n=565)
No	76
Yes	24

Violence prevention or post-violence care-seeking behavior

Only 15% of AGYW have sought counseling, services, or other help for violence treatment, support, and/or prevention in the last year.

Only 2% sought help after experiencing sexual violence.



Social support for AGYW

65% of AGYW reported having a space to meet with other girls in the community.



61% reported having an adult woman in the community to whom they can usually go to with problems.

CONCLUSION

- Experience of sexual violence from intimate & non-intimate partners is high, and associated with increased HIV risk.
- Primary prevention programs for sexual violence are urgently needed.
- Screening for sexual violence history and provision of post-violence care is critical within HIV prevention programs for young women.
- Innovative approaches might be needed to tap into social norms that don't support GBV and girls' existing social support networks to prevent GBV and link to care.



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