Changing normative beliefs to reduce partner violence

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What role, if any, do norms play in driving prevalence of IPV and individual-level risk?

Norms are collective beliefs about what is typical and appropriate within a valued reference group.
The origins of violence are multi-causal
Ecological Model

Economic structures
Religious ideologies
Gender regimes
Honor cultures
Market ideology
Consumerism

Macrosocial
Community

The Man

Relationship
Woman

Poor communication
Marital conflict

Life history
Genetic endowment
Gender socialization

WhatWorks
TO PREVENT VIOLENCE
IPV is sustained by a set of interlocking beliefs, norms and attitudes

- **Belief:** Men are the “natural” head/authority in the family
- **Attitude:** Women should be obedient to their husbands
- **Belief:** Beating is an effective form of discipline
- **Norm:** Others expect men and women to adhere to strict, gendered division of labor
- **Attitude:** It is not right for other to intervene in the domestic matters of others
- **Norm:** Others will look down upon a man who is ‘controlled’ by his wife
Cross sectional studies suggest that norms are an important community and individual level risk factor.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUTHORS</th>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Koenig et al. 2006</td>
<td>AJPH</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
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<td>Boyle et al. 2009</td>
<td>Soc Sci Med</td>
<td>India</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heise 2012</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Brazil, Peru</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heise &amp; Kotsadam 2015</td>
<td>Lancet Global Health</td>
<td>Multi-country (88 surveys)</td>
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We now have evidence from the SASA! Intervention trial that changing norms on acceptability of IPV is an important mechanism for reducing IPV victimization and perpetration.
SASA! – Community mobilization approach

- Activities to reach out to all levels in the community to affect norm change
  - Training and on-going support of community activists
  - Uses the language or power rather than women’s rights
  - Not curriculum based

- Content evolves with each phase
Analysis

- Did SASA! Achieve both primary and secondary prevention of physical IPV?

- Which mediating factors played a role in reducing IPV?
  - Victimization of women
  - Perpetration by men
Methods

Cluster level intention to treat analysis of prevalence in intervention versus control enumeration areas (EAs)

- Adjusted for site pair (n=8),
- Marital status
- Baseline EA-level prevalence of physical IPV

Assess intervention impact on intermediate variables and then association between intermediate variable and past year physical IPV*

**Risk ratios or risk difference calculated at the cluster-level, using logistic/poisson regression, adjusted for community-pair, and weighted according to the number of observations per village.**
Mediation analysis

- Asks: Does measured impact appear to work through the hypothesized pathway?

- If Adjusted RR reduces significantly when the intermediate variable is added to the full model, we take this as suggestive evidence of mediation.

- Measure of effect = percent reduction in the adjusted risk ratio (for continuous variables) or adjusted risk difference (for binary variables).
Results

- 52% less physical IPV in last 12 months as reported by women (aRR 0.48, 95%CI 0.16 - 1.39)

- 61% reduction in past year physical IPV perpetration as reported anonymously by men (aRR 0.39, 95%CI 0.20 - 0.73)

- Intervention had an impact on both primary and secondary prevention (i.e. new and continued IPV)

- Impact was greatest on women who reported IPV at baseline
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Individual</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Transform norms</td>
<td>• Improved communication</td>
<td>• Changed attitudes toward wife beating</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Acceptability of wife beating</td>
<td>• Changed power dynamics</td>
<td>• Changed attitudes toward male sexual entitlement in marriage</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Gender norms</td>
<td>• Relationship ends</td>
<td>• Increased disclosure or help seeking</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sexual entitlement</td>
<td>• Reduced conflict</td>
<td>• Reduced drinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Violence no longer private</td>
<td>• Fewer outside partners</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Community response*</td>
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*ok to intervene; people help
SASA! mechanisms of change

Model 1 w/o pathway variable
- Adjusted RR
  - Community
  - Relationship
  - Individual

Model 2 with pathway variable
- Adjusted RR
  - Community
  - Relationship
  - Individual

Model 2 with pathway variable
- Adjusted RR
  - Community
  - Relationship
  - Individual
SASA! mechanisms of change

- Transform norms
  - Acceptability of wife beating: 70% victimization, 95% perpetration
  - Gender norms (husband’s decision if wife works): 46% victimization, 67% perpetration
- Appropriate community response: 0% victimization, 38% perpetration
SASA! mechanisms of change

Adjusted RR → Relationship → Adjusted RR

SASA reduced concurrent partners among men but this does not appear to be a significant pathway for IPV reduction

- Reduced suspicion around infidelity
- Improved communication around sex

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<th>Victimization</th>
<th>Perpetration</th>
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<tr>
<td>18%</td>
<td>22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>16%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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SASA! mechanisms of change

Adjusted RR → Individual → Adjusted RR

Attitudes accepting of wife beating

Victimization: 16%
Perpetration: 42%
Conclusions

- Community level norm change holds great promise for substantial reductions in victimization and perpetration of IPV in low resource settings.

- Norms appear to play a more significant mediating role than changes at either the relationship- or individual-level.

- Reduced suspicion of infidelity may play a significant role at a relationship level.

- Reductions in broad measures of gender inequality may not be sufficient in themselves to prevent violence if specific attitudes toward IPV are not also directly addressed and challenged.
Many thanks to the authors

Tanya Abramsky, LSHTM
Karen Devries, LSHTM
Lori Michau, Raising Voices
Janet Nakuti, Raising Voices
Tina Musuyu, Raising Voices
Ligia Kiss, LSHTM
Charlotte Watts, LHSTM