Baseline Findings

RCT of Bandebereho Couples’ Group Education in Rwanda

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In collaboration with Rwandan Ministry of Health
Background

MenCare+: 4-country integrated approach to engage men as caring, non-violent, equitable partners & fathers in SRHR & MNCH

- Coordinated by Rutgers and Promundo
- Funded by the Dutch SRHR Fund
- Rwanda: Implemented by the Rwanda Men’s Resource Center in partnership with Ministry of Health
- Study funded by Dutch SRHR Fund & MacArthur Foundation
Intervention description

Couple group education as part of a larger set of integrated interventions

Fatherhood as an entry point to:

• Transform inequitable attitudes
• Promote couples’ communication about & use of contraceptives
• Increase men’s involvement in maternal, newborn & child health
• Prevent intimate partner violence
Group education

Gender transformative curriculum with 15 weekly sessions adapted from *Program P*

Targeting new parents and expectant couples ages 21-35

15 weekly sessions for men (8 with their partners) led by trained community facilitators

Relevant Topics:
- Family communication & decision-making
- Understanding Violence
- Conflict Resolution
- Gender equality
Motivation for the Study

• Opportunity to rigorously evaluate a male engagement strategy for increasing men’s involvement in MNCH and SRHR

• Support the scale-up and advocacy for inclusion of the father group methodology within national and district MNCH initiatives

• Opportunity to present evidence that this type of intervention could address multiple outcomes, including violence and SRH
Research Questions

What is the impact of the intervention on:

• Men’s participation in reproductive health, family planning and maternal, newborn and child health

• Gender attitudes and household dynamics

• Violence perpetration, risk behaviors, specifically:
  • intimate partner violence, violence and harsh discipline against children, attitudes about violence, couple communication & decision-making, substance use
Study Design

- 2 arm randomized controlled trial
- Sites: 4 districts of Rwanda (16 sectors)
- Eligible men identified community health workers & local authorities, then recruited by group facilitators
- Sample size: n=1200 men, 600 in each arm
- Study protocol approved by: RNEC, NHRC, NISR
Sample Description

• Men’s Age: 19-47, mean = 28.7
  - Partner: 18-44, mean = 26.6

• Education: 63% had not completed primary education

• Children: 65% currently expecting a child
  - One-quarter did not yet have a child, remainder had 1 or more children already

• SES: 39% can never or only sometimes afford basic household needs (food & shelter)
Baseline Results: Prevalence of Violence in past 6 months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional or economic</td>
<td>57.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

One-third reported perpetrating both physical and sexual violence in the past 6 months.
Attitudes related to Violence

- It is natural and right that men have more power than women in the family: 70.0%
- A good woman never questions her husband's opinions even if she disagrees with him: 51.3%
- Men are always ready to have sex: 62.7%
- VAW laws contribute to conflict in the family: 34.2%
- Women are using [VAW] laws to dominate men: 65.0%
Attitudes related to Violence

- It is okay for a man to hit his wife if she refuses to have sex with him: 6.9%
- There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten: 18.7%
- Sexual violence does not exist within married couples: 77.8%
- A woman should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together: 51.3%
## Associations at Baseline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>More equitable attitudes about gender and violence</th>
<th>Sexual Violence</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More joint decision-making</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>More frequent quarreling/disagreement</td>
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<td>More participation in household tasks</td>
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THANK YOU!

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