The effects of transfers and behavior change communication on intimate partner violence: Evidence from rural Bangladesh

**BACKGROUND**

Reports of physical/sexual violence are extremely high in Bangladesh, with 53-62% of women reporting violence in their lifetimes. While the consequences of intimate partner violence (IPV) are well documented, less evidence exists on programs that effectively reduce IPV in the developing world by investigating the impact of transfer programs on IPV, assessing whether different design features of transfer programs—such as providing a different modality than cash, or attaching different design features to transfers—lead to larger decreases or increases in IPV. The pathways through which transfers affect violence also remain under-explored.

**PROJECT AIM**

This project aims to help fill the knowledge gap on what types of programs can reduce IPV in the developing world by rigorously estimating the impacts of a transfer program on IPV, and to explore the potential pathways through which these impacts occur.

**PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

The specific objective of this project is to write and present an academic paper that uses a randomized control trial design, stratified by region. In the north, households were randomly assigned to (1) cash transfers, (2) food transfers, (3) a combination of half cash and half food transfers, (4) cash transfers with nutrition behavior change communication (BCC), (5) food transfers, (6) a combination of half cash and half food transfers, (4) food transfers with nutrition BCC, or (5) a control group receiving no transfers. In the south, households were randomly assigned to (1) cash transfers, (2) food transfers, (3) a combination of half cash and half food transfers, (4) food transfers with nutrition BCC, or (5) a control group receiving no transfers.

**PROJECT METHODS**

We propose to achieve the project's objective by conducting secondary analysis of data that were collected by the World Food Programme (WFP) in rural Bangladesh. The Transfer Modality Research Initiative (TMRI) – implemented by the World Food Programme (WFP) in rural Bangladesh; study design: TMRI provided very poor rural households with cash or food transfers, with or without intensive nutrition behavior change communication (BCC). Treatment modalities were assigned following a cluster-randomized design, stratified by region. In the north, household heads were randomly assigned to (1) cash transfers, (2) food transfers, (3) a combination of half cash and half food transfers, (4) cash transfers with nutrition BCC, or (5) food transfers. In the south, household heads were randomly assigned to (1) cash transfers, (2) food transfers, (3) a combination of half cash and half food transfers, (4) food transfers with nutrition BCC, or (5) a control group receiving no transfers. Data collection and sampling: Four rounds of quantitative panel data were collected: a baseline in April 2012, a midline in June 2013, an endline in April 2014, and a post-endline in Oct 2014-Feb 2015 after the intervention.

**STUDY CONTRIBUTION**

The contribution of this study is to rigorously estimate the effects of transfer programs on IPV in the developing world and the added impact of nutrition behavior change communication; and c) explore mechanisms that may explain impacts on IPV, by estimating impacts of the transfer modality modalities on mediators such as women’s status in their households and communities, their households’ well-being, and the relationship between partners.