

Understanding the Intersections between Violence against Women and Violence against Children using Case Vignette Methodology

Sexual Violence Research Initiative Forum • September 15-17, 2015 • Stellenbosch, South Africa
Catherine Carlson¹, Sophie Namy², Mary Dudzinsky¹, Milton Wainberg¹, Janet Nakuti², Lori Michau², Dipak Naker²
1 Columbia University, Global Mental Health Program; 2 Raising Voices

BACKGROUND

Violence against Women (VAW) & Violence against Children (VAC)

High rates of VAW and VAC in families in Uganda:

- 42.7% of women experienced physical violence from an intimate partner in their lifetimes (UBOS, 2012)
- 98.3% of children experienced physical violence, much of it at home (Naker, 2005)

VAW and VAC often occur in the same household, **but programming frequently happens in silos.** (Guedes & Mikton, 2013)

The intersection of VAW and VAC and community beliefs must be **better understood in order to consider integrated prevention programming.** A type of qualitative research called 'case vignette methodology' may provide unique insight.

Case Vignette Methodology

Case vignettes are short stories about individuals, situations, or behaviors to which participants comment and respond (Barter & Renold, 1999)

Using vignettes allows us to:

- Elicit perceptions, beliefs and attitudes on sensitive issues using specific scenarios and open-ended questions (Barter & Renold, 1999; Hughes, 1998; Hughes & Hubby, 2004; Bradbury-Jones, Taylor, & Herber, 2014)

Strengths of case vignette methodology:

- Vignettes focus discussion on the overlap of VAW and VAC using relatable stories
- Better protect participants from emotional harm, allow discussion without personal disclosure (Bradbury-Jones, Taylor, & Herber, 2014)

METHODS

Study Aims

Identify lessons learned from using case vignette methodology for understanding the intersection of VAW and VAC in Kampala, Uganda.

7 Focus Groups

Younger Mothers	18-24 years old
Older Mothers	25-35 years old
Younger Fathers	20-29 years old
Older Fathers	30-39 years old
Community Informants (3 Groups)	Police Local Council Leaders (LC) Healthcare Workers (HCW)

Case Vignette Summaries

Story 1 *Father loses job, becomes violent toward mother and children.*

Story 2 *All family members use violence. Poor communication & empathy in family.*

Story 3 *Mother is violent toward children, Father is violent toward mother.*

Data Collection

Presented participants with three vignettes

Protocol included questions on attitudes, gender norms, and potential interventions

Pretested protocol

Facilitated by experienced local research staff

Focus groups took place in community settings in both Luganda and English

Framework Analysis

Analysis was conducted as a team in these steps: 1) Two-staged verbatim transcription & translation; 2) Familiarization with data; 3) Coding; 4) Developing Analytic Framework; 5) Applying the Analytical Framework; 6) Charting Data; 7) Interpreting Data. ATLAS.ti and Excel were used to assist in analysis.

RESULTS

1. Focused discussion on the intersection of VAW and VAC

Case vignettes **quickly narrowed the focus of discussions on the intersection of VAW and VAC.** This type of 'focused' discussion allowed for three different scenarios to be discussed in which both VAW and VAC occur in families, all within a 1.5 hour session.

Example 1

Story 3 elicited discussion about the acceptability of men's use of VAW as a means of punishing women for using violence against their children.

Example 2

In response to Story 2, participants explained that a boy using violence against his younger siblings was a result of **learned behavior.**
"The story mentioned that they used to beat [the children] whenever they made mistakes at home ... The boy grew up seeing things related to fighting where the elders are fighting and also beating them as children at home and he is trying to do what he saw them doing." – Younger Father

2. Limited disclosure of personal experience

Case vignettes allowed us to solicit beliefs and suggestions for intervention **without participants disclosing personal details or experiences.** Given the highly sensitive nature of both VAW and VAC, discussions about fictional stories **reduced potential traumatization and maintained participants confidentiality** in the group setting. This does not mean that participants did not relate to stories. One mother reported after hearing Story 1 that she could not participate in this story's discussion because it resonated with her too closely. She resumed participation in the next story.

3. Nuanced comparison of beliefs about VAW and VAC

Presenting case vignettes with both VAW and VAC in the same families allowed for nuanced comparison of how people view each type of violence similarly or differently.

Example 1

Participants frequently described both VAW and VAC as "wrong", but usually provided caveats to each. VAW and VAC were thought more acceptable if done "calmly" or to "discipline".

Example 2

Emotional effects of violence on children were discussed more often than emotional effects on women, including effects on children who witness VAW.

4. Details of case vignettes guided discussion in anticipated and unanticipated ways

Particular details of each story strongly guided the discussions, and this happened in ways we were not always expecting.

Example 1

In response to Story 2, discussions on family conflict revolved heavily around the position of one of the children as a **non-biological child.**

Example 2

In response to the **husband losing his job** in Story 1, participants focused on the perceived role of men in the family to earn money.
"For me I think [violence] is like a displacement mechanism for this man due to losing a job. Now he is going to lose full potential to sustain his family. [...] That is why you find he is beating the children for no reason and even he is fighting the wife [...] Since he's a man and he is the head of the family he is the supplier of everything. If it happened to a woman it wouldn't have been a big deal." –HCW

5. Comparison of different groups' responses to uniform situations

Case vignettes allowed for **comparison between groups** (younger and older, men and women, and different community informants) in **response to the exact same scenarios** of VAW and VAC.

Example

Younger and older fathers differed on the acceptability of using VAW in response to women's use of VAC.

- Older Father:** "As the family head, when you find a child has been beaten the first option is not to beat the mother."
- Younger Father:** "It was good to beat her to help her to learn a lesson."

DISCUSSION

Methodological Strengths

- Vignettes enabled **focus on the intersection** of VAW & VAC to explore how the community connects & differentiates both forms of violence.
- Vignettes **resonated with participants** and elicited in-depth group discussion of sensitive topics, in most cases **without disclosure of personal experiences.**
- Vignettes are non-threatening and helped facilitators **quickly move into discussion.**

Methodological Limitations

- One mother had difficulty discussing a vignette because it was too similar to her own experience.
- Details** provided in vignettes may steer discussion in unintended ways.
- Using vignettes did **not allow for identification of all patterns** of violence between multiple family members.

Recommendations for Future Research

- Consider the use of **pictures** to accompany vignette presentation.
- Carefully select which details** to include and which details to omit. Or try slightly altering details of stories and compare results.
- Use vignettes to **understand intersections of VAW and VAC** and **other types of violence** or behavior.

REFERENCES

- Abramsky, T., Devries, K., Kiss, L., Francisco, L., Nakuti, J., Musuya, T., ... & Watts, C. (2012). A community mobilisation intervention to prevent violence against women and reduce HIV/AIDS risk in Kampala, Uganda (the SASA! Study): study protocol for a cluster randomised controlled trial. *Trials*, 13(1), 96.
- Barter, C., & Renold, E. (1999). The use of vignettes in qualitative research. *Social research update*, 25(9), 1-6.
- Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The qualitative report*, 13(4), 544-559.
- Bradbury-Jones, C., Taylor, J., & Herber, O. R. (2014). Vignette development and administration: a framework for protecting research participants. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 17(4), 427-440.
- Guedes, A., & Mikton, T. (2013). Examining the intersections between child maltreatment and intimate partner violence. *Western Journal of Emergency Medicine*, 14(4), 377.
- Hughes, R. (1998). Considering the vignette technique and its application to a study of drug injecting and HIV risk and safer behaviour. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 20(3), 381-400.
- Hughes, R., & Hubby, M. (2002). The application of vignettes in social and nursing research. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 37(4), 382-386.
- Hughes, R., & Hubby, M. (2004). The construction and interpretation of vignettes in social research. *Social Work and Social Sciences Review*, 11(1), 36-51.
- Naker, D. (2005). *Violence against children: The voices of Ugandan children and adults*. Raising Voices.
- Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) and ICF International Inc. 2012. *Uganda Demographic and Health Survey 2011*. Kampala, Uganda: UBOS and Calverton, Maryland: ICF International Inc.