Addressing gender norms within economic programming: results from a randomized controlled trial in Côte d'Ivoire

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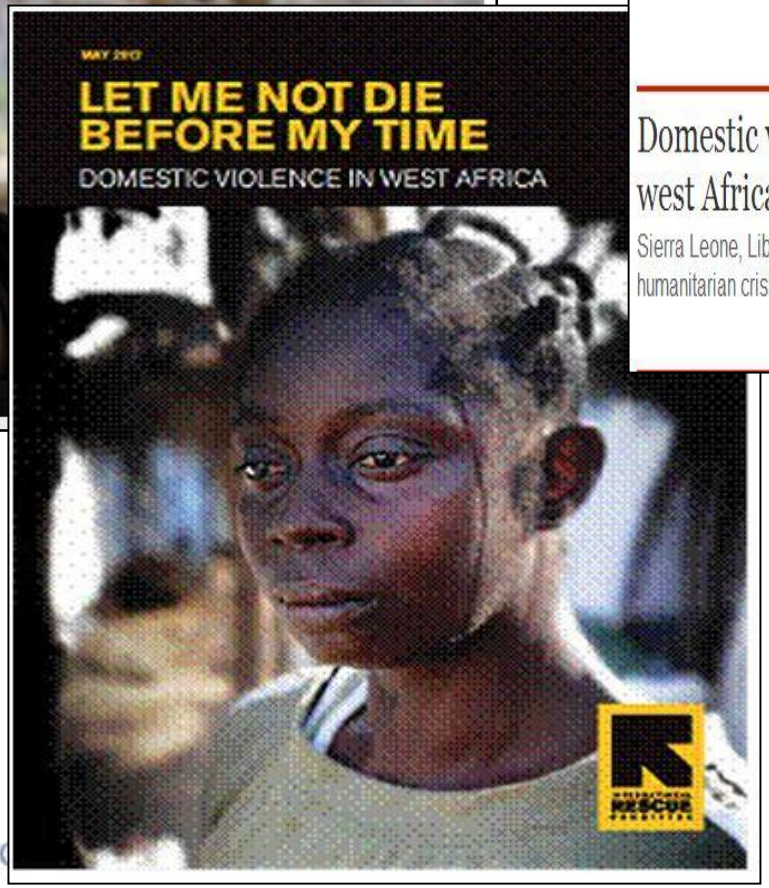
IPV in Conflict-Affected Settings



47-49% of women in regional and community-based surveys report lifetime physical or sexual IPV

(Gupta et al, 2010; Hossain et al, 2010)

EA$E (Economic and Social Empowerment)

Village Savings and Loans Associations

- 15-30 women per group
- Meet twice monthly

Gender Dialogue Groups

- 8 sessions on financial literacy, gender equality, and non-violence
- For women and their male partners (or male family member if unpartnered)

Business Skills Training

- Competency-based Economics, Formation of Enterprise (CEFE)

Intervention Overview

Economic Empowerment Component:
Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs)

+

Social Empowerment Component:
Gender Dialogue Groups

→

Reductions in IPV

Intervention Overview

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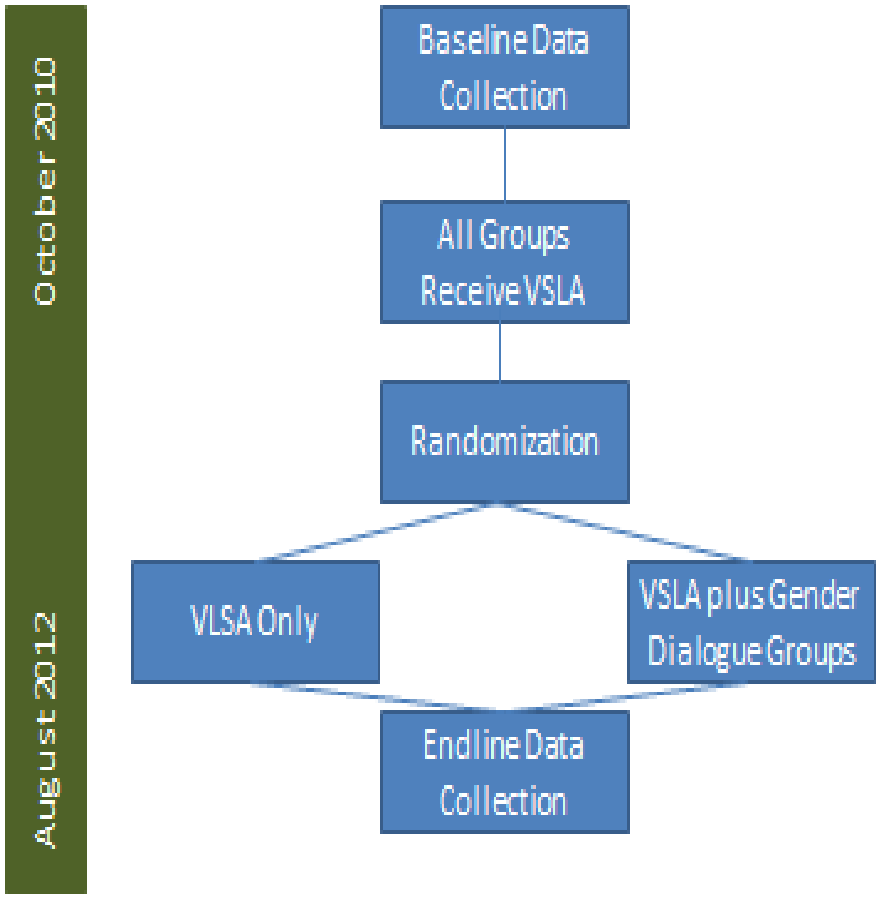
→

Reductions in IPV

Secondary Outcomes
Gender Attitudes
Economic Abuse

RCT Study Design: 2 –armed trial

- Conducted across 24 villages (48 groups) in rural Côte d'Ivoire
- All women eligible to participate (N=1,271 at baseline)
- All groups received VSLAs 1/2 also received gender dialogue groups
- Waitlist control design



RESULTS

Participants (N=934 Women*)

Baseline Characteristics**	
Mean Age	37.7 years
Married	82.0%
Women's Occupation	45.5% Small business owner only
No Formal Education	70.6%
Ethnicity	62.6% Yacouba
Number of Pregnancies	73% had 4+
Partner's occupation	73.9% Farming
Religion	44.0% Christian

*983 Partnered women originally completed baseline
**Characteristics did not differ significantly by treatment arms

Key Findings*

Outcome	Direction of Change	Intent to Treat
Physical and/or Sexual IPV	↓	Not significant *(very small change)*
Physical IPV	↓	Not significant
Sexual IPV	↓	Not significant *(very small change)*
Economic Abuse	↓	Significant
Acceptance of Wife Beating	↓	Significant
Acceptance of Sexual Violence	↓	Not significant

*Analysis: 4-level multi-level model accounting for individual, group and village clustering

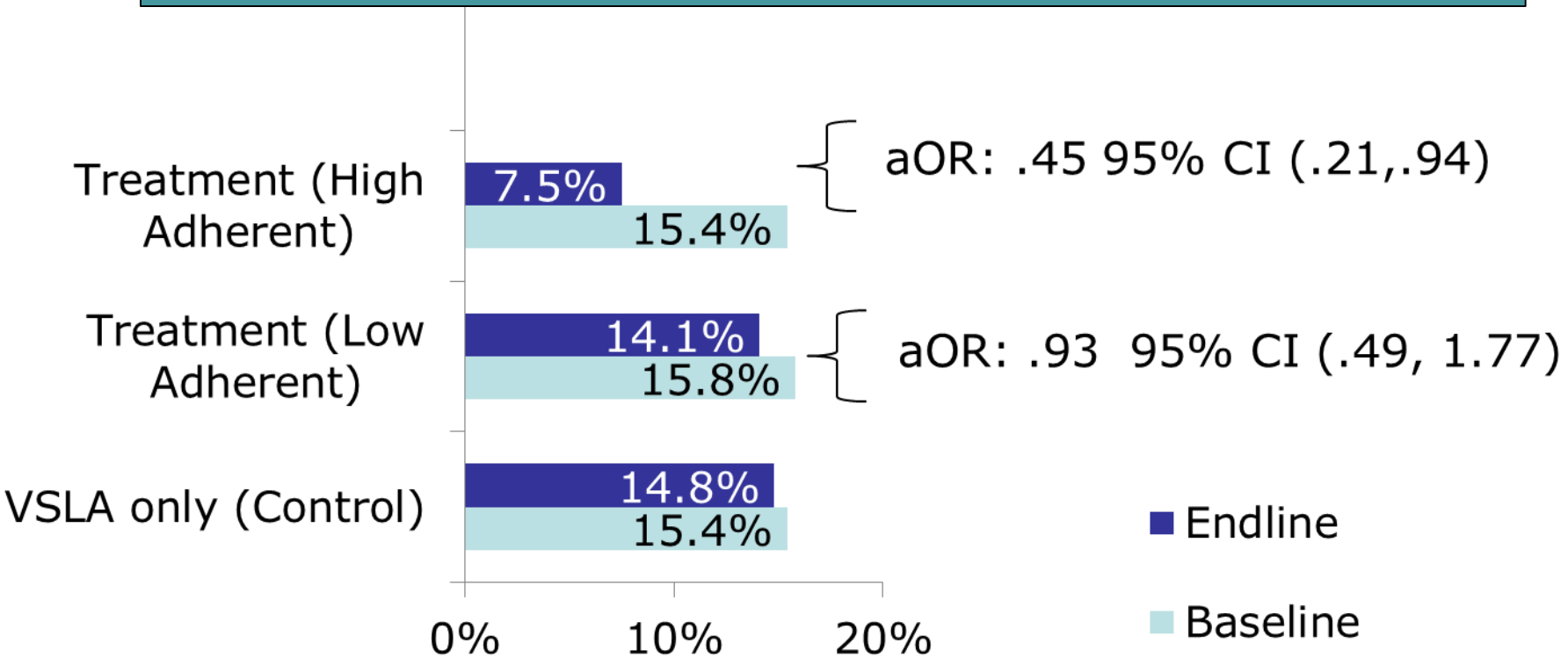
Key Findings*

Outcome	Direction of Change	Intent to Treat	Per Protocol[1]
Physical and/or Sexual IPV	↓	Not significant *(very small change)*	Not significant
Physical IPV	↓	Not significant	Significant
Sexual IPV	↓	Not significant *(very small change)*	Not significant
Economic Abuse	↓	Significant	Significant
Acceptance of Wife Beating	↓	Significant	Significant
Acceptance of Sexual Violence	↓	Not significant	Not significant

*Analysis: 4-level multi-level model accounting for individual, group and village clustering; [1] Women and partner attended 75% or more sessions

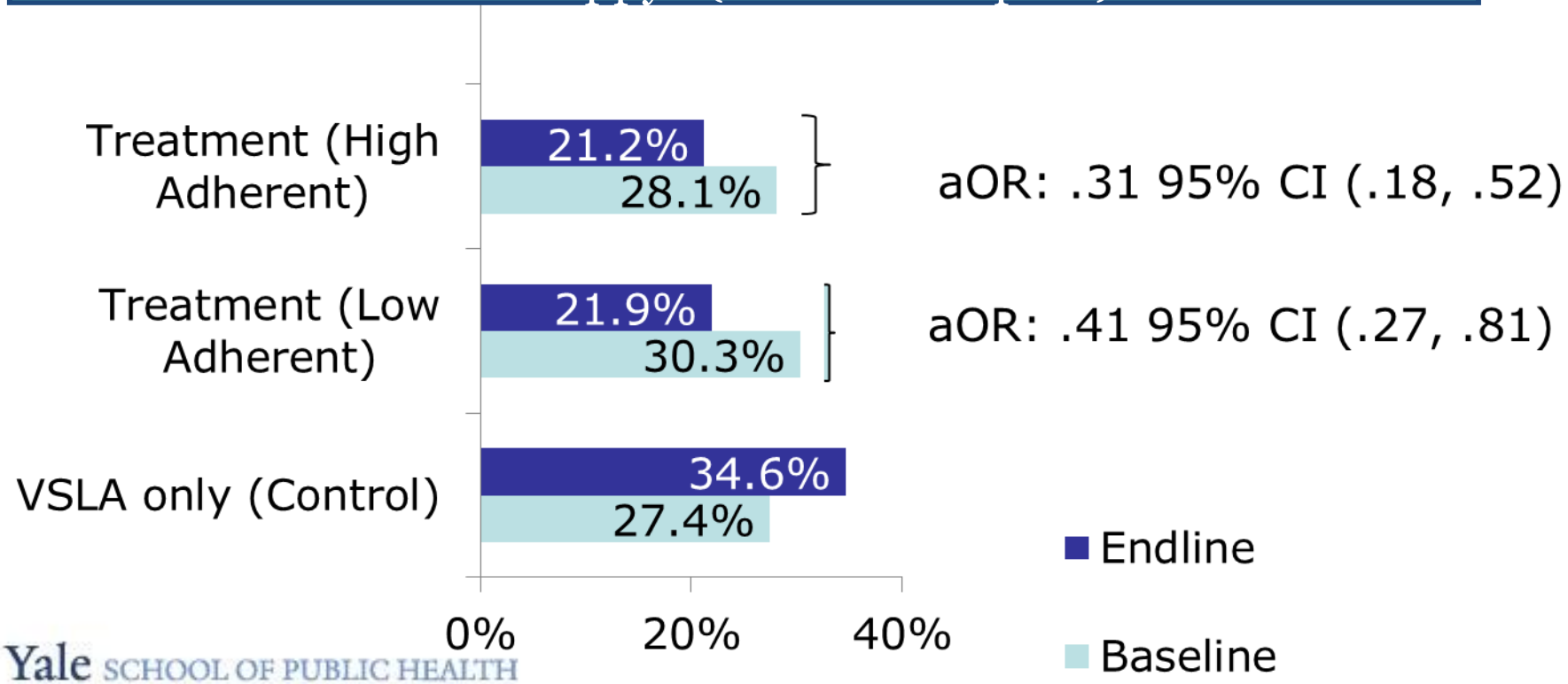
Past year physical IPV reduced by 55% (per protocol)

"Since I joined the group, there is a change in my life. My friends say before he was like that, violent with his wife and children. Now, I am learning other ways."
(Male participant)



Past year Economic Abuse reduced by 69% (per protocol)

Before, when I earned some money, I did not present it to my wife, I made the expenditure alone like as I wanted and for a certain moment, I realized that money is finished and I cannot take care the family, but since EASE has given me this idea, I sit with my wife and we share ideas and I realize that it better and we are happy. (Male Participant)



Limitations

- Time overlap of intervention and follow-up period
  - Delays due to election-related violence
- Lower statistical power
  - Widows
- No quantitative assessments of men
- No true control group

Lessons Learned and Next Steps

- Adding a dialogue component tailored to male partners to economic interventions has the potential to empower women and reduce IPV
- Ongoing follow-up is needed to determine the impacts of the intervention over time
- Investigating impacts among sub-groups of women and community-level modifiers of intervention success
- Examining the intervention across multiple contexts will determine global impacts (ex. Abidjan)

Acknowledgments

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