Working with men to prevent violence against women in a conflict-affected setting: A cluster RCT of a male-focused IPV prevention intervention in rural Côte d’Ivoire

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Background: IPV prevention in conflict settings

- Women and men likely to have been exposed to a variety of violent and traumatic acts in conflict-affected settings.
- Increasing recognition that post-conflict reconstruction activities need to address rape, IPV and other violence exposures.
- IPV prevention is still in its infancy and there are few well-designed or established prevention programmes.
- Few prevention programmes directly engage with men.
- Little published evidence on the impact, or acceptability, of implementing a male-focused intervention in a conflict-affected setting.
IRC Intervention: Men’s Discussion Groups

INTERVENTION OBJECTIVES
To reduce violence against women and girls through:
• Improving men’s knowledge about impact of GBV on women, men and children;
• Shift towards gender equitable beliefs and behaviors within the relationship and household;
• Provide men with conflict management techniques

INTERVENTION ACTIVITIES
• Men’s-only discussion group, approx. 30 men;
• Recruitment among all adult men in intervention communities;
• Focus on individual-level behaviour change;
• Trained male IRC facilitator;
• 16 sessions + review sessions

Research questions

PRIOR TO THE INTERVENTION:
• In the study communities, what are the characteristics of intimate and non-partner violence? What are the attitudes towards IPV?

1-YEAR POST-INTERVENTION:
• What is the impact and added value of a male-focused intervention among intervention participant to prevent VAWG?
Cote d’Ivoire: Political context

BEFORE the Crisis (Pre-1999)

1960: Independence granted, Houphouet-Boigny holds power until his death in 1993
1993: Bedie becomes president

1999: Coup d’état
2000: Gbagbo declared President; clashes between north and south
2001: Attempted coup d’état
2002: Rebels seize control of western and northern towns
2003: Peace deal brokered with power-sharing government & ceasefire; UN peacekeepers arrive
2005: Massacres in western towns
2006: Violent demonstrations, peace talks, UN extends transitional government mandate

2007: Power-sharing deal
2008: Disarmament begins; elections postponed
2010: Run-off election; pre- and post-electoral violence

POST the Crisis (2007-2008)

2009: Massacres in western towns
2010: Massacres in western towns
2011: Post-electoral violence continues; opposition party gains control
2012: Power transfer process ongoing

Overview of research design

Mixed methods study:
- Community cross-sectional survey
- Cluster randomised controlled trial (CRT)
- Complementary qualitative research

Community selection:
- 12 clusters: 6 intervention & 6 control sites across 6 administrative districts
- Communities pair-matched based on SES + geographical buffer
- All communities receive IRC community-level GBV programme
- Random allocation of men’s discussion groups to intervention clusters

Time period: 2008-2012

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## Research design overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>TOTAL COMPLETED</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quantitative</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(1) Community survey to inform intervention design</td>
<td>Nov 2008</td>
<td>12 villages: All women or all men in randomly selected households</td>
<td>Total: 2,684 Men: 1,419 Women: 1,265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Baseline survey before start of intervention activities</td>
<td>Aug 2010</td>
<td>6 Intervention villages: Intervention participants &amp; partners (couples)</td>
<td>Total: 601 (baseline) Men: 346 Women: 316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Follow-up survey, 1 year after intervention</td>
<td>Feb 2012</td>
<td>6 Control villages: IRC-GBV committee members (couples) and age-matched men &amp; female partners</td>
<td>Total: 560 (follow-up) Men: 316 Women: 244</td>
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<td><strong>Qualitative</strong></td>
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<td>(1) Key informant interviews</td>
<td>Aug 2010 - Feb 2012</td>
<td>3 intervention &amp; 3 control villages: Intervention participants, females partners, IRC-GBV committee members, village leaders</td>
<td>Total: 30 (2010) 98 (2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) IRC facilitator debriefings at end of intervention</td>
<td>Jun 2011</td>
<td>IRC intervention facilitators &amp; supervisors</td>
<td>Total: 8 (men only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Complementary Activities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(1) Community mapping for sampling frame</td>
<td>Oct 2008</td>
<td>12 villages: Community maps and household lists in all study sites</td>
<td>Households: 2,077 Individuals: 13,986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Attendance monitoring of intervention participation by session</td>
<td>Aug 2010 - Mar 2011</td>
<td>6 intervention villages: Male intervention participants</td>
<td>Total: 166</td>
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## Fieldwork procedures

- **Local interviewer training**
  - 3 wks in 2008; 2 wks in 2010 and 2011
- **Translations of quantitative questionnaires**
  - French and 7 local languages
- **Face-to-face interviews using direct questions on violence**
  - e.g., slapped, pushed, choked, etc.
- **Standardized quality control** at data collection and data entry phases
- **Strict ethical and safety procedures:**
  - Private interviews; informed consent; information on sources of support; referrals offered; follow-up by IRC staff
- **Other considerations in conflict-affected or politically unstable settings:**
  - Questionnaires avoided politically charged questions as probes may pose danger to participants and interviewers.
  - Safety of respondents and data collection team paramount. Aware of political situation at all times during the data collection period.
Lifetime levels of violence exposure high among women & men

Women report more partner violence than men (47% vs. 16%) 

Overall, women experience more violence compared to men (59% vs. 43%) 

Women & men report similar levels of non-partner violence (34% vs. 31%) 

What were traumatic experiences levels in the communities?

“Afraid for your life”
Discrepancies between women’s reports of experiencing violence & men’s reports of perpetration

- Slapped or threw something
- Pushed or shoved
- Hit with fist or something else
- Kicked or dragged
- Choked or burnt
- Threatened with or used weapon
- Forced sex by intimidation or fear
- Physically forced to have sex

Promising outcomes at follow-up: consistent direction of effect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trial outcomes (past year)</th>
<th>Direction of effect</th>
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<tr>
<td>Woman’s experience of physical and/or sexual IPV</td>
<td>↓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Men’s intention to use physical IPV</td>
<td>↓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Men’s attitudes towards the unacceptability of sexual IPV</td>
<td>↑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Men’s use of positive conflict management techniques &amp; women report no threats from partner</td>
<td>↑*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Men’s involvement with at least 2 household tasks</td>
<td>↑*</td>
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Summary

- High levels of violence exposure in study communities among women & men - before, during & post conflict.
- Women are vulnerable to multiple forms of violence from conflict, partner and family. Family & acquaintances reported as perpetrators more often than combatants.
- IPV prevention programming can be done in conflict-affected setting. Men were very receptive to participating in IRC intervention.
- Promising impacts on men’s behaviour in relationship & household
- Declines in physical and/or sexual IPV between baseline & follow-up in intervention & control communities
  - Declines in sexual IPV only seen in intervention community
- Findings support the continued implementation of women’s programming plus potential added value of men’s programming to IPV prevention activities.
- Reconstruction efforts should consider IPV prevention programming.

Study Partners (2008-2012)

London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM)
- Mazeda Hossain
- Cathy Zimmerman
- Ligia Kiss
- Tanya Abramsky
- Tammy Maclean
- Charlotte Watts

International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- Heidi Lehman
- Jeannie Annan
- Monika Bakayoko-Topolska
- Drissa Kone
- Virginie Tanou
- Tia Gogbeu
- Plus many others...