The Interplay of Childhood Sexual Violence, Gender Norms and Help-Seeking Behavior: Findings from the Kenya Violence Against Children Survey

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Together for Girls: Pillars of work

**NATIONAL SURVEYS & DATA**
Conduct national violence against children surveys (VACS)

**COUNTRY-LED RESPONSE**
Support national government-led multi-sectoral programs and policies

**GLOBAL COMMS**
Engage in advocacy and public awareness raising at the global level

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**Kenya Violence Against Children Survey:**

- National household survey of 13-24 year old Kenyan females and males on prevalence, incidence, circumstances of violence in childhood
- Led by the Government of Kenya with technical support from UNICEF and CDC
Using violence and gender norms data from the Kenya VACS, we sought to answer the following questions:

Are Kenyan females who experienced childhood SV:

1. More likely to endorse harmful norms than females who did not?
2. Are those who endorsed harmful gender norms less likely to seek help after an SV incident than those who did not?
Population for this study

Total VACS study population of females 13-24 years

- Never experienced sexual violence
  \(n=819\)

- Experienced sexual violence prior to age 18
  \(n=320\)

- Experienced violence after age 18
  \(n=83\)

- Experienced sexual violence in lifetime
  \(n=403\)
Analytic methods

Using an adapted GEMS scale from the VACS, a harmful gender norm score was calculated for each respondent from 0 (low endorsement) to 5 (high endorsement). The scale was used to analyze:

1. **Relationship between experiences of SV and harmful gender norms: compared scores across three groups:**
   - One or more experiences of SV in childhood
   - One or more experience of SV after age 18, none in childhood
   - No experience of SV
   - *Used a regressed mean gender score for the comparison*

2. **Relationship between harmful gender norms and help-seeking behaviors among those who have experienced SV**
   - Regress help-seeking behaviors on harmful gender norms score using logistic regression models
Unacceptably high percentage of females and males experience sexual violence before age 18.

- Prevalence of sexual violence before age 18:
  - Females: 38%
  - Males: 18%

- Past 12-month incidence of sexual violence among 13-17 year olds:
  - Females: 11%
  - Males: 4%
Disclosure and service usage by females who experienced childhood sexual violence in Kenya

- 3.9% Received services
- 5.1% Sought professional help
- 21.5% Knew a place for professional help
- 38.5% Told someone about sexual violence
Reasons for not seeking services for sexual violence, reported by Kenyan females:

- Afraid of getting in trouble: 23.4%
- Did not think it was a problem: 18.9%
- Other/do not know/refused: 14.1%
- Did not want abuser to get in...: 10.9%
- Did not need/want services: 9.4%
- Could not afford service fees: 3.1%
- Too far to services: 3.1%
- Could not afford transport: 1.6%
Reasons survivors did not disclose, or did not seek services

- Fear (did not want self/abuser to get in trouble)
- Stigma (embarrassment for self/family)
- High tolerance for violence (did not think it was a problem)
- Structural barriers were less sited (awareness, cost, transportation)

Photo credit: © UNICEF/HIVA2014-00047/Marion
Majority of respondents endorsed 1 or more harmful gender norm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Score</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>403</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gender scores by females’ experiences of sexual violence

**Crude Score**
- Never experienced SV: 1.79
- SV after age 18: 1.85
- SV prior to 18: 2.05

**Adjusted Score**
- Never experienced SV: 1.75
- SV after age 18: 1...
- SV prior to 18: 2...

*P<0.05*

Not Significant
## Association between harmful gender norms and help-seeking behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Help-seeking behaviors</th>
<th>Prevalence (%)</th>
<th>Adjusted Odds Ratios (95% CI)</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Told someone about the incident every time (n=150)</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>0.86 (0.75, 0.98)</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know of a place to go for professional services (n=84)</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>0.78 (0.66, 0.93)</td>
<td>0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tried to seek professional services (n=20)</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>0.70 (0.50, 0.98)</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received professional services successfully (n=15)</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.49 (0.30, 0.81)</td>
<td>0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tried to receive professional services for most recent incident (n=13)</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.49 (0.29, 0.83)</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Implications of the Findings

- Childhood sexual violence
- Endorsement of gender norms favoring male dominance
- Less likely to seek help for sexual violence victimization

Revictimization
Low uptake of family planning
Poor reproductive health outcomes
HIV/STI risk
Addressing harmful gender norms, including:

- INSPIRE
- Raising Voices
- Coaching Men into Boys
- Families Matter

Support reporting, help-seeking:

- Every Hour Matters campaign for post-rape care
- Technology based programs (e.g. phone apps connect victims with services)
- Establish child- and adolescent-friendly reporting
Thank you!

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