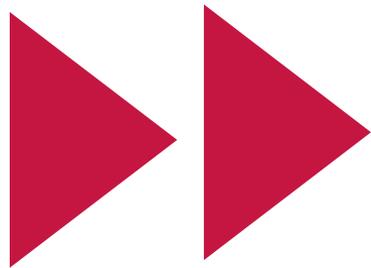


"Who is exploiting who?" Understanding motivations & perceptions of exploitation for intergenerational transactional sex



Dr. Joyce Wamoyi,
Dr. Ana Maria Buller,
Daniel Nyato,
Dr. Nambusi Kyegombe,
Rebecca Meiksin,
Dr. Lorie Heise.

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Intergenerational transactional sex

- Intergenerational transactional sex (IGTS) associated with:
 - Increased HIV risk among adolescent girls & young women (AGYW)
 - Low condom use
 - Alcohol use
 - Violence
 - Multiple & concurrent partnerships
 - Higher likelihood of older men already being HIV-positive
 - Exploitation
- AGYW engage in transactional sex (TS) for several reasons
 - Poverty
 - Love/emotions
 - Desire to consume items of modernity

Sexual exploitation & IGTS

- SE of children & young people is a complex issue
 - Manifests differently in different settings
 - Degree to which circumstances or relationships may be viewed as “exploitative” also varies across the continent
- AGYW in IGTS relationships may not see themselves as “exploited”
 - IGTS relationships often include emotionality
 - AGYW see themselves as having power to manipulate men to get what they want

Objective

To explore the motivations and perceived benefits of AGYW and older men in IGTS relationships, as well as the social and SRH consequences of these relationships

Methods

- **Ethnographic research design**
 - 16 Participatory focus group discussions
 - 43 In depth interviews
- **Study populations**
 - Young people aged 14 to 24 years
 - Adult men and women
 - *Fataki (explosives/dynamite) men*
- In-depth exercises with vignettes that assessed different scenarios
- Thematic analysis

Why do girls engage in Intergenerational Transactional sex?(1)

- Girls like older men because they have money, have a job, have business – give girls money for a “good life”
 - Afford a girl a trendy lifestyle compared to same age boyfriends
 - Older men may give money upfront
 - Relationships driven by “a man having money & a girl being poor/needing money”
- **Peer pressure:**
 - AGYW under pressure to expect & obtain gifts/money from male partners
 - Girls desire to look modern (Going with the times/being current)
 - Girls envy peers with older partners & nice things
 - Failure to receive gifts led to ridiculing from peers

Illustrations: Why AGYW engage in IGTS

I: What leads to such relationships?

R: It is money, money leads to such relationship because she has somebody who has a good job and money, when she needs anything she is given, I think money causes this. Also, poverty leads to having a lover who is much older than you. (IDI, 17 year-old-girl)

Another girl talked about benefits of IGTS in the following:

But maybe that "dad" has money, he has a good job, just imagine for someone to get into a sexual relationship with somebody who is very old...she is the only one who knows what she wants from there, it is not just sex... May be she thinks, "that one has money, if I am with him I will fulfill my needs. May be he will help me with this and that" [IDI, 23 years old]

Illustrations: IGTS & Peer pressure

- A girl talked about the ridicule from peers for having a school boy for a boyfriend

Yes, they always deny me. If I see them with something good & desire it, they start talking badly, “you decided to be with a student, that is up to you with your student, so, eat your exercise books [IDI, 17 year old]

- Peer pressure & desire to stand out among peers

She goes because this one has money.....you can find that her parents give her everything but she wants her personal things so she can be seen in the streets. For example, when you are at school every minute you have money, now your friends follow you, you become like a queen because you have enough money that you get from that man and bring it to school. Those things lead her to be like that [have an older partner] [IDI, 17 year old]

Why do older men engage in IGTs (1)?

- The belief that AGYW were safer as not HIV-positive
- Older men naturally interested in ‘testing out new flavours’
- Men’s need to satisfy their sexual desires (*tamaa*)
 - Increased sexual desires as they aged
- Perception of AGYW as more capable of engaging in new & creative sexual styles (pleasurable sex) unlike older married women
- Men’s desire to be with clean & neat woman
- Prestige among male peers for having a young women

Illustrations: Why men engage in IGTs

AGYW safer

Another problem is that for us men, we believe that those of a young age are safe and hence we have sex without a condom... because we think this one has no infections she is young...but unfortunately he [adult partner] gets those infections from her [FGD, adult men, rural]

Testing new flavours

... "Some men just have the urge of "testing the little girls"[having sex with girl]...you find that after testing one [first sexual encounter], he is no longer interested, he leaves her and goes to the next one. [FGD, adult women, rural]

Increased sexual desires

... You might pass through other stages of life quietly, but when you reach old age, you start experiencing temptations; these desires might even double up those you experienced when you were young. You might get money during old age and that increases your desire to get whoever passes by, you see! but during youthhood you never experienced such desires...but as you age, you find that you are 'out of control'. [FGD, adult men, urban]

Reflections on the social & SRH costs of IGTS (1)

- Short term benefits versus long term losses (e.g. on reputation, disease, finances, psychological stress)
- Intergenerational sex is common but could be stigmatizing
 - Shameful for AGYW & older man
 - Tarnishing of one's reputation
 - Risk of isolation by the community
- Risk of exploitation (e.g. coercion & violence)
 - Accepting gifts/money implied readiness for sex
 - Expectation for AGYW to reciprocate gifts/money through sex

Illustrations (1)

- Short term benefits versus long term loses

Personally, the benefits for me being in the relationship with her were those short lived happiness/pleasure during the time I was with her. But after leaving her, I always regret about the money I gave her ...you see I use my money for a short time and later I am really worried that “probably my wife will know about the affair but also what if the community knows about this?, What if I make her pregnant, what might happen?”. You see, I end up just blaming myself. [IDI, adult man involved in intergenerational sex, rural]

- Satisfying sexual desires

There is nothing good but as said earlier, when the body has the desire it pushes your mind...you find it difficult to resist since your mind is set on this and you get yourself involved with those little girls. But there is no benefit ...it is like entertainment...Like for me, I just wanted to satisfy my bodily desires. [IDI, adult man, urban]

Illustrations(2)

Stigma faced by adult men who engaged in IGTS

...In this community, we consider the older man as “polluting the environment”...I mean for an older man to take a little girl ...We will right away know that he is deceiving that child. [FGD, Adult men, urban]

Adult men sometimes lost respect in the community

His respect reduces, even though he is an adult, the respect for him reduces, he loses his respect because he is someone who goes after little girls; he lacks respect in the eyes of the society [IDI, 19 year old girl]

A 20 year old talked about her feelings of embarrassment & shame for a relationship with a 40 year old man:

I have never told any one about it [having sex with an older man]...it is embarrassing to tell people...I am not compatible with him because my body is small and he is big

Awareness of SRH risks in IGTS

- Examples:
 - Unplanned pregnancy
 - Sexually transmitted infections including HIV
- Adult men weighed SRH costs of IGTS relationships & HIV epidemiological trends among AGYW:

When we look at the infections that we are talking about [HIV], a large percentage are in girls who are still young...those are the ones facing temptations...that is why the experts say that between the ages of fourteen and sixteen years is where we have many HIV/AIDS infections. [FGD, adult men, urban]

- Risk of AGYW infecting men, adult men reported:

...Many little girls have already been infected with HIV than adults.... Now because of his money, he [an adult man] decides to be with that girl without knowing she has the viruses... by doing that he is finished [infected] [FGD, adult men, rural]

Conclusions

- AGYW and older males engage in IGTS for varied perceived benefits
 - AGYW
 - Peer pressure & desire to consume is key
 - Older men are generous & readily provide than same age boyfriends
 - Older men – mentioned more reasons for IGTS than AGYW
- Also recognise the potential social and SRH risks
 - More costs than benefits for AGYW being in IGTS relationships
 - Elements of exploitation in IGTS for the AGYW
- Interventions to acknowledge the perceived benefits of IGTS from the perspective of AGYW & older men
 - Engage them in a critical reflection process that allows men to think on the costs/consequences for both the AGYW and themselves

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