EXPERIENCE OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AMONG ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN ENGAGED IN DREAMS PROGRAMS IN KENYA

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KEY MESSAGES
- About 1/5th of the sample reported experiencing sexual violence from both intimate and non-intimate partners in the last 12 months.
- Adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) who experienced sexual violence were twice as likely to also report STI symptoms.
- Though most AGYW did not support normative attitudes toward violence against women, and noted having social support outside the home, use of services for violence prevention, counseling, or post-violence care was suboptimal.

BACKGROUND
- Sexual violence is associated with HIV acquisition, yet there is insufficient evidence about AGYW’s experiences of sexual violence and related HIV risk.
- DREAMS (Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe) partnership is a comprehensive intervention package aiming to significantly reduce new HIV infections in AGYW in Kenya and other sub-Saharan African countries.
- The DREAMS interventions have an explicit focus on addressing AGYW’s experiences of violence.

METHODS
- Cross-sectional survey of 914 AGYW enrolled in the DREAMS program in 2 locations in Kisumu county, Kenya between October and December 2016.
- Survey participants were randomly selected from rosters of DREAMS program beneficiaries.
- Survey assessed experience of sexual violence with non-IP (i.e., not boyfriend or husband) among all AGYW and sexual violence among partners AGYW (N=574) in the last 12 months.
- Participants reported on perceived risk of HIV (very/somewhat likely versus unlikely/not at all likely) and experiencing any of 4 STI symptoms (e.g., genital ulcer) in the last 12 months.
- Multivariate logistic regression analysis examined associations between experience of sexual violence (IP and non-IP) and HIV risk perception and STI symptoms, controlling for age, marital status, schooling status, and orphanhood.
- Informed consent was obtained for each respondent.

RESULTS
- Respondent characteristics
  - Figure 1: Survey respondents (n = 914).
  - 16.10% currently employed.
  - 56.2% currently in school.
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- Experience of sexual violence in the last 12 months
  - About 24% of all AGYW reported experience of sexual violence from non-IP and 19% reported experience of sexual violence from IP in the last 12 months.

- AGYW attitudes toward violence against women
  - Figure 3: Attitudes toward violence against women by age.
  - 40% of AGYW reported having a space to meet with other girls in the community.
  - 65% of AGYW reported having an adult woman in the community to whom they can usually go to with problems.

- STI experience
  - AGYW who experienced IP or non-IP sexual violence had increased odds of experiencing an STI symptom in the last 12 months (OR adj. 2.23 [1.34–3.69] and 1.13 [1.13–2.95], respectively).

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