WHICH GENDER NORMS ARE LINKED TO IPV, AND HIV-RELATED PARTNER COMMUNICATION? NEW EVIDENCE FROM A POPULATION-BASED SAMPLE IN SOUTH AFRICA

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KEY MESSAGES
- Both men and women strongly conditioned men's control over women, while fewer endorsed overt violence.
- Violence-control norms were associated with IPV perpetration among men, and IPV experience among women, as well as lack of partner communication about HIV among women.
- It is important to specifically address violence-control norms in violence and HIV prevention interventions.

BACKGROUND
- There is increasing consensus that programs aiming to reduce intimate partner violence (IPV) should address harmful gender norms.
- However, it remains unclear how support for particular norms condoning men's violence and control over women may influence IPV perpetration, as well as related behaviors like partner communication about HIV testing.
- Such efforts are particularly salient in populations with a high burden of both IPV and HIV, like South Africa.
- Identifying key norms could facilitate strategic targeting of essential intervention components and messaging.

METHODS
- Data come from a 2014 population-based survey with 2,057 individuals (1,004 men and 1,053 women) ages 18–49 in rural Mpondoland, South Africa.
- We assessed specific gender norms concerning men’s violence and control over women (using 7 Gender Equitable Men Scale items), prevalence of IPV, HIV testing, and communicating with partners about HIV testing and HIV-positive status. We also explored associations between these factors.

RESULTS

- Views toward gender norms
  - A majority of both men and women held strong expectations that men should maintain control over women.
  - Views that a woman should tolerate violence to keep her family together were also common.
  - Fewer respondents endorsed more overt violence against women.

- Prevalence of key behavioral outcomes
  - About 10% of men reported perpetrating IPV, and 9% of women reported experiencing IPV, in the last 12 months.
  - Most common types of IPV were pushing, grabbing, hitting, twisting arm or pulling hair, or throwing something that could hurt.
  - Substantially more women than men had tested for HIV in the last year.
  - About half of men and women had discussed getting tested with their last sexual partner.
  - Among HIV-positive respondents, about half of both women and men reported disclosing their status to a main partner.
  - Fear of violence and threats of violence were key reasons cited for non-disclosure to a main partner.

- Multivariate analyses
  - In multivariate analyses controlling for demographic characteristics, men who supported violence-control norms were more likely to have perpetrated IPV in the last 12 months (p<0.05); the same was true for women experiencing IPV (p<0.01).
  - Similarly, women who supported violence-control norms were less likely to have discussed getting tested for HIV with their last sexual partner (p<0.05).

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