The Male Provision Belief Scale – Assessing whether internalized beliefs about men’s roles as providers can harm women

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Transactional Sex and Women’s Risk of HIV

Adolescent girls and young women remain at disproportionate risk of acquiring HIV

• Adolescent Girls and Young women (AGYW) in sub-Saharan Africa
  • 10% of the population; 25% of new infections
  • In South Africa 1,500 AGYW are infected every week

• Determinants of HIV among AGYW
  • Biological susceptibility
  • Poor access to sexual and reproductive health information and services
  • Gender inequality including:
    • Gender-based violence
    • Transactional sex (Wamoyi et al, 2016)
Defining Transactional Sex

Transactional sex refers to noncommercial, nonmarital sexual relationships motivated by the implicit assumption that sex will be exchanged for material benefit or status

(STRIVE- Stoebenau et al, 2016)
Women's perceived position in transactional sex relationships can vary from powerless to powerful. Programs must begin by critically assessing how women see themselves in these relationships.

Context
Transactional sex can take place in contexts ranging from those marked by uniform poverty to high levels of inequality. Programming should be responsive and relevant to the context.

Three overlapping sets of motivations for women’s engagement in transactional sex:

1. Basic needs
2. Improved Social status
3. Material expressions of love

All structured by **Gender Inequality**
- Fundamental assumption of heterosexual relationships in patriarchal societies:
- Men Should Provide financial and material support for women, and women are expected to offer sexual and domestic services in return

Stoebenau et al, 2016
Gender Inequality and Transactional Sex

- We know TS → increased HIV risk for women
- Mechanisms remain unclear
  - VAW/IPV (Cluver, 2013), age-disparate partnerships (cite); frequent exchanges (Kilburn, 2018); agency (Fielding-Miller)
- Limited understanding of gendered social dimensions
  - Existing evidence at relationship level (Dunkle, 2004; Jewkes, 2012; Fielding-Miller, 2017)
  - Gender Norms and Individual beliefs less understood
Pilot Study Objectives

• We set out to develop measures to assess the gendered social dimensions of women’s HIV risk
• Measures explore whether and how fundamental gendered expectations of men’s roles as providers are manifested in:
  – Gender Norms (see Stoebenau et al, 2019)
  – Internalized gender beliefs
Research Methods

• Small Pilot Study with Adolescent Girls and Young women in Kampala and Masaka districts, Central Uganda

• Study population: Young women ages 15-24
  – Sampled by: school status, community vs. “high-risk” venue
  – Stratified by district, age

• Data collected in 2017-2018 over four phases with small research team
  – Secondary data analysis, 10 focus-group discussions, 32 cognitive interviews, pilot survey (n=108)
Scale Development Process across Each Phase of Data Collection

Phase 1
- Literature Review
- Secondary qualitative data analysis
  - Informed initial sub-domains and scale items

Phase 2
- 10 Focus Group Discussions
  - Confirmed sub-domains
  - Refined scale items
  - Face validity

Phase 3
- 32 Cognitive Interviews
  - Further refined items for each sub-domain (50 items → 25 items)
  - Content validity

Phase 4
- 108 Surveys
  - Construct validity
  - Internal reliability
Phases 1 and 2: Identifying Dimensions attached to expectations of Male Provision

**What male provision expectations “buy men”:**

1. **Male authority** in relationships (Dunkle, 2007)
   1. Legitimizes masculine identity (Morrell, 2012; Dunkle, 2007)
2. Male **control of sexual decision-making** (Jewkes, 2012; Zembe; 2015)

**How women respond to male provision expectations:**

3. **Women’s economic dependence** on men (Stoebenau, 2011)
4. **Women use “erotic power”** to access support from men (Groes-Green, 2012; Wamoyi, 2010; Leclerc-Madalala, 2003)
5. Evidence of **Commitment/Intimacy**: provision=love=sex (Poulin, 2007; Mojola, 2014; Swidler and Watkins, 2007)
Male Provision Belief Scale Properties

Scale as Pilot Tested

• 25 item scale, 5 sub-domains of male provision expectations
  – Male relationship authority
  – Male control of sexual decision-making
  – Women’s economic dependence
  – Women’s sexual agency
  – Male provision and love/commitment

• Response category – 4 point Likert-type scale
  – (Strongly disagree → strongly agree)
Male Provision Belief Scale Items

• **Male Authority**
  – When a man helps his partner to pay for things important to her, it means he should have authority in that relationship.

• **Sexual Decision-Making**
  – If a man is providing a lot of financial support to his partner, then he should decide whether or not they use a condom during sex.
  – If a man is providing financial support for his partner, then she is expected to have sex with him.

• **Economic Dependence**
  – Of all the ways a woman can pay for her needs, the best way is to find a man who can help her.

• **Sexual Agency**
  – As a woman, it’s important to know how to use physical beauty to get whatever you want from a man.
  – Women are lucky because they can get financial support from men just by having sex with them.

• **Love and Intimacy**
  – The more a man helps a woman to pay for things she needs, the more it shows that he loves her.
  – If a man provides very little financial support to his partner, it means he doesn’t really love her.
Assessing Scale Reliability and Validity

• Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses – in STATA
  – Assessed correlation matrices for sub-scales and full scale
  – Confirmatory factor analysis to assess construct validity
  – Alpha if item deleted analyses to increase internal reliability

• Results
  – Only “agency” had potential as a separate subscale
  – Economic dependence dropped out (low validity and reliability)
  – Single model prevailed of 17 items across all sub-domains
    • Internal reliability: alpha=.86; factor loadings .43 - .72
    • Predicted scores – higher score = stronger adherence to conventional beliefs
### Bivariate associations with Male Provision Belief Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MPBS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coeff/OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Completed Education</strong></td>
<td>-1.8 ** ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had a non-marital birth</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>age</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Practiced TS in last 12 months</strong></td>
<td>3.8 ** ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifetime sexual partners</td>
<td>1.0 ** ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2+ sex partners in last 12 months</strong></td>
<td>2.8 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justified physical VAW</td>
<td>1.9 *</td>
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- Tested MPBS Correlation with
  - GEMS (-.02) (Pulerwitz, 2008)
  - Sexual Relationship Power Scale (-.23) (Pulerwitz, 2000)

\[ p < .05 *, p < .01 **, p < .001 *** \]
Implications and next steps

Summary
– MPBS assesses adherence to relationship expectations in patriarchal societies
– We find association between MPBS scores, sexual risk behaviors, and justification of VAW

• Future directions → Larger, generalizable sample, men
• Implications
  – May contribute to explaining HOW women are at risk of HIV through TS
  – Inform interventions –importance of critically assessing the “male provider role” and related expectations
Thank you!

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