Preventing HIV Infection among young girls by addressing Cross Generational Sex (CGS) in Secondary Schools in Uganda

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Background

- HIV disproportionately affects young girls in Uganda (UBOS 2006);

- Part of this epidemic is driven by cross generational sex (CGS)

- Findings show that 10% of girls 15-19 had sex with man 10 years or older in the past 12 months (MoH 2006)

- According to Ntozi (2008), poverty affects the potential of parents to meet the needs of their children, thus young girls may engage in sexual relationships with economically stable men in an attempt to match standards of their counterparts from well off families
Introduction

- In 2010, PACE a local affiliate of PSI partnered with Johnson & Johnson to implement an anti-CGS program in secondary schools; “Go Getters program”

- Districts of intervention include Kampala, Wakiso, Mukono and Mbarara

- The program is implemented through IPC, life skills curriculum and peer education program during holidays (camps)

- The program is being implemented in 50 secondary schools
Baseline Survey on Cross Generational sex among Female Secondary Students in Uganda 2010
Objectives of the Study

- Determine levels of CGS among secondary school girls
- Establish girl’s risk perception to HIV by engaging in CGS
- Determine whether young women perceive CGS as a social norm
- Establish the relationship between girls background characteristics and CGS
- Establish the proportion of girls who discourage friends from engaging in CGS
Methodology

- A cross sectional survey from a representative sample of 2,410 girls aged 15-19 was conducted

- 30 secondary schools to assess sexual behavior and its determinants

- Schools were classified as low category schools (LCS) and high category schools (HCS) based on amount of tuition fees and intake into university as a reflection of the economic background of young girls
Method of data collection: Individual interviews

Inclusion criteria

- Girls whose parents assented to their interview
- Only girls who consented to the study
- Aged 15-19
- Only girls from selected schools in the intervention area
Results

- CGS practice was high in LCS (9.4%) compared to only 2.6% in HCS (p=0.000)
- Young girls who had CGS
  - were more likely in the last 12 months preceding the survey to report early sexual debut (p< 0.05)
  - have multiple older sexual partners (p< 0.05)
  - have low confidence in their ability to reject advances from older men
  - perceive CGS as socially acceptable
Analysis of findings

- A total of 2,410 girls were sampled
- 50.4% had a boyfriend at the time of survey
- In their lifetime, 22.2% had ever had sexual intercourse
- In the past twelve months 21.7% had sex
- 20% of girls who had ever had sex had multiple sexual partners in the last 12 months
More findings

Girls from high category schools;

- had high confidence in their ability to reject advances from older men than LCS
- Had perceived social support not to engage in CGS than LCS
- Agree to that one is susceptible to HIV by engaging in CGS than LCS
- Reported high perceived severity of HIV
- Had high self esteem than their counterparts in LCS

Over all girls in low category school had higher risky sexual behavior indicators than their counterparts in HCS
Graph 1: Sexual behavior among secondary school girls 15-19

- Has a boyfriend
- Ever had Sexual encounter
- Had Sex (past 12 month)
Graph 2: Shows multiple sexual and CGS behavior

- Multiple sexual partners
- CGS
- Multiple older sexual partners
Conclusions and recommendations

HIV prevention programs should focus on

- Building life skills that improve confidence of girls in schools to reject sexual advances from older men

- Using girls in schools to promote campaigns against cross generational to their peers

- Program activities should address the social norms that encourage cross generational sex

- Communication activities should emphasize risks associated with the behavior