

## **Effectiveness of men groups in prevention of violence against women among refugees in Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda.**

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### **BACKGROUND**

Reliable estimates of the effectiveness of men involvement and participation in addressing violence against women in conflict and post conflict zones is important for success of programmes in a culturally diverse patriarchal environment. Short-term studies set to measure impact of men groups may depict a wrong picture of long term outcomes and residual confounding may have biased past results. This study examined the effectiveness of refugee men groups in preventing violence against women over the 5 year term while addressing potential bias and residual confounding in the results.

### **OBJECTIVE**

To evaluate the effectiveness of refugee men groups in the prevention of violence against women by establishing the difference in the total and age-specific rates of refugee Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Congo women subjected to physical and sexual violence in 2007 and 2012.

### **METHODS**

Using United Nations Statistical Commission on Statistical Indicators on Violence against Women (2010) tool, data were collected from 4 cohorts of Rwandese refugee men groups in Nakivaale Refugee Settlement in Uganda for August 2007 through August 2012 and of 4 other Congolese refugee men groups in the same period of time. Logistic regression was used to estimate the effectiveness of the refugee men groups in the prevention of all forms of violence against women after adjustment for important covariates. The evaluation tools were explored for evidence of bias and the potential effect of residual confounding.

### **KEY RESULTS**

There were 220 refugee men that were observed and followed. Most total and age-specific rates of women subjected to physical violence in the last 12 months of 2007 by severity of violence, relationship to the perpetrator(s) and frequency were more prevalent among the refugee men groups from Democratic Republic of Congo than among those from Rwanda. Total and age-specific rate of refugee women in Rwanda subjected to physical violence was associated with a 37% reduction in the risk of hospitalization for physical injuries (adjusted odds ratio, 0.75; 95% confidence interval [CI], 0.74-0.76) and a 48% reduction in the risks of sexual violence (adjusted odds ratio, 0.53; 95% CI, 0.51 to 0.55). The Uganda Red Cross Society Tracing tools helped to keep estimates of location and tracking generally stable across refugee women in Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Congo.

### **CONCLUSION**

During the 5 year period, refugee men groups understanding of women rights was associated with significant reductions in the risk of violence against refugee women especially in Rwanda compared to those from Democratic Republic of Congo. This could have been fueled by the strong health system of Rwanda which quickly absorbed the men refugees immediately on their return. In Democratic Republic

of Congo, the refugee men groups structure disintegrated and did not abide by the understanding of women' rights programme they had had while in Uganda.

**IMPLICATION FOR POLICY, ACTIVISM, AND/OR SERVICE DELIVERY**

Therefore refugee men, in a patriarchal society should be treated as a high-priority group in preventing violence against women.

Impact evaluation of peer education on life skills knowledge and sexual behavior of young refugees in Nakivaale and Oruchinga Refugee Settlements In Uganda

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**BACKGROUND**

Of the refugees registered in the camps of Nakivaale, and Oruchinga in western Uganda, young people aged 15-24:-an age group with a number of reproductive health needs form 62%. Peer education in the two settlements has been used in HIV/AIDS programme design and implementation but evaluation of its effectiveness remains unpublished and evaluation methodologies very rarely reported on. This study conducted between 2011-2013, aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of HIV/AIDS peer education among young refugees in order for implementing partners not to knit without a pattern.

**OBJECTIVE**

**Main objective**

To evaluate the effectiveness of peer education HIV/AIDS prevention on the HIV/AIDS life skills knowledge and sexual behavior of young refugees in Nakivaale and Oruchinga Refugee Settlements in Uganda

**Specific objectives**

- To document the HIV/AIDS life skills knowledge accuracy of young refugees in Nakivaale, and Oruchinga Refugee Settlements In Uganda
- To establish the difference in sexual behavior patterns of young refugees in Nakivaale and Oruchinga Refugee Settlements In Uganda

- To define the terms programme 'peer education' and 'peer-ness' according to young refugees in Nakivaale and Oruchinga Refugee Settlements.

## METHODS

This cross sectional study involved young refugee respondents aged 15-24 from 2 refugee settlements (n=480) who were chosen and participated in focus group discussions (n=250). There were also individual interviews with young refugee peer educators (n=20). A prior prepared questionnaire that covered life skills, knowledge accuracy about HIV/AIDS transmission, information and sexual behavior was administered to young refugee adolescents from all the refugee settlements (n=240). In focus group discussions and interview sessions, tools that aimed to cover in depth the behavior change and to give a more insight into the impact of peer education programme on their lives were used.

Binary logistic regression was then introduced to compare responses from the young refugees from Nakivaale Refugee Settlement who were peer educated and those from Oruchinga Refugee Settlement who were not peer educated with the model being adjusted to cater for confounders. Data was also analyzed using SPSS software with the Pearson Chi square test for categorical data. The respondents were described using descriptive statistics.

## KEY RESULTS

There was a demonstrable significant increase in life skills knowledge accuracy and in young refugee adolescents that received peer education ( $\chi^2=0.741$ ) in Nakivaale Refugee Settlement as compared to those from Oruchinga Refugee Settlements who did not receive peer education sessions ( $\chi^2=55.141$ ). Respondents from non peer educated Oruchinga Refugee Settlement had a higher chance of being involved in risky sexual behavior than those from peer educated Nakivaale Refugee Settlement although there was no significant change in condom use for all groups. All respondents showed a need for a technical person to supplement the work of peer educators.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, peer education among young refugees is an effective approach in HIV/AIDS prevention in a multicultural setting. Life skills knowledge and sexual behavior are influenced positively especially if the work of peer educators is supplemented by a technical person or young role models

## IMPLICATION FOR POLICY, ACTIVISM, AND/OR SERVICE DELIVERY

Implementing partners in refugee areas need to understand the peerness and peer education according to the refugees before they do any programme design. Young people in refugee areas need inspiration preferably from a fellow young person as well as a technical person to supplement on the work of peer educators.