

Survey Measurements of Community Norms on Adolescent Girls and Young Women's (AGYW) Sexual Behaviour and Use of Condoms for HIV Prevention in Manicaland, East Zimbabwe

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Background: Qualitative data suggest pre-marital sex stigma presents a major obstacle to AGYW's use of HIV prevention methods. Lack of social acceptability therefore is included as a barrier to motivation to use condoms in HIV prevention cascades. Representative survey data on community norms are rare but necessary to test the validity of this assumption and measure their contributions to gaps in prevention cascades.

Methods: General-population survey participants in Manicaland (ages \geq 15, N=9803) were asked if they agreed/disagreed with statements on social norms. AGYW were asked whether community views are an obstacle to their using condoms. Proportions agreeing/disagreeing with these statements were calculated, variations in community members' views were investigated in multivariable logistic regression models, and the association between AGYW's perceiving negative community norms and condom use was measured.

Results: 93.5%(95%CI,93%-94%) of respondents agreed that 'Many young women have sex before marriage these days'. 57%(56%-59%) of men and 70%(69%-71%) of women disagreed that 'If I have a teenage daughter and she has sex before marriage, I would be ok with this'; and 41%(40%-43%) of men and 57%(56%-59%) of women disagreed that 'If I have a teenage daughter, I would tell her about condoms'. Fathers but not mothers were more likely to disagree with their daughters having sex before marriage (Figure). Similar proportions of parents and other community members were against telling daughters about condoms. 68%(61%-75%) of sexually-active unmarried AGYW said negative community views were unimportant in decisions to use condoms. Condom use didn't differ between those who agreed/disagreed that negative community views are important (46.9% vs. 50.0%; AOR=0.88, 95%CI,0.48-1.62; N=202).

Conclusions: Community resistance to condom promotion based on pre-marital sex stigma may be weakening as a barrier to AGYW's motivation to use condoms in Manicaland. Community-led interventions to accelerate this dynamic in social norms and support AGYW's agency could reduce HIV incidence.

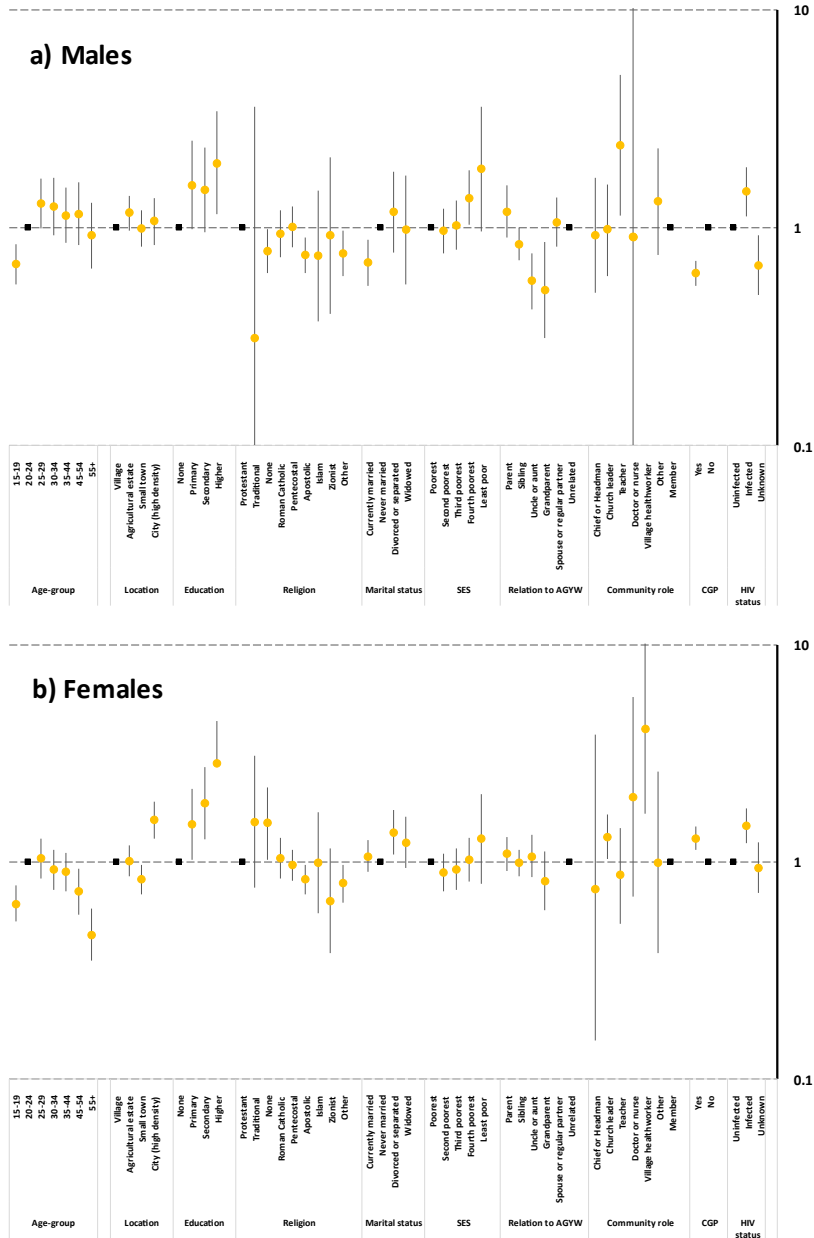


Figure. Variation in community members agreement on telling teenage daughters about condoms by relationship to an AGYW, community role and participation, and socio-demographic characteristic: adjusted odds ratios from multivariable logistic regression. Yellow points above/below the central line indicate higher/lower odds of agreement. Whiskers indicate 95% confidence intervals.