Association Between Domestic Violence and HIV Serostatus Among Married and Formerly Married Women in Kenya

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Introduction

• Intimate partner violence, which includes DV, is the most common form of gender-based violence.
  
  "...the range of sexually, psychologically and physically coercive acts used against adult and adolescent women by current or former male intimate partners” (WHO, 1997, p. 5).
  
• In Kenya, as in much of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), women are disproportionately affected by both HIV and domestic violence.
  
  -Women aged 15-49 years, 8% of them compared to 4% of men were infected with HIV in 2008 (KNBS & ICF Macro, 2010).
  
• African countries, 25-48% of women suffer from abuse at one point in their lives.
  
  -Kenya, physical (42%), sexual (14%), and emotional (24%) violence.
  
-Physical and sexual violence, including sexual assault within marriage, increase transmission of the HIV virus (Abuya, Onsomu, Moore, & Piper, 2012).

• Women refrain from discussing their husbands’ risky behaviors
  
  -Avoid disclosing their own HIV serostatus in fear of accusations of infidelity, abandonment, discrimination, physical and emotional violence, and disruption of family relationships (Karamagi et al., 2006; Lary et al., 2004; Larea & Becker, 1997).

• Impaired emotional and social functioning
  
  -Depression, helplessness, resignation, and isolation from friends, family, and religious groups and
  
-Reduced participation in household decision making, including decisions about her own health (Dietz et al., 1997; Wittenberg et al., 2007).

Materials and Methods

• Retrospective population cross-sectional data from The 2008-2009 Demographic and Health Survey (KNBS & KF Macro, 2010).
  
• Data were weighted attaining Sample size: 2,727.

• Outcome measures: HIV Serostatus (negative [-] or positive [+]).

• Dichotomous variables coded as “0” negative and “1” positive.

• Predictor variable: Domestic Violence (physical, emotional, sexual, violence with aggravated bodily harm, and all forms of violence)

• Forward stepwise and manual variable selection methods were used for selecting covariates in the final model.

• Descriptive analysis, bivariate analysis, and univariate and multivariate logistic regression models were estimated.

• Covariates adjusted in the model: age, religion, marital status, ethnicity, wealth, occupation, circumcision, residence, voluntary counseling, and testing.

• Odds ratios (ORs) and 95% confidence intervals (CI), statistical significance set at a two-tailed p-value of ≤0.05. StataSE version 13.1 was used for all analyses.

• Winston-Salem State University IRB#: 2086-13-0024

Results

- Among married women, 11.9% (F1.235 = 14.24, p < .001), 11.2% (F3.233 = 3.83, p < .05), and 10.6% (F1.469 = 6.22, p < .05) experienced physical, sexual, and all forms of abuse (total violence) respectively compared to those who did not.

- Among formerly married women, 20.5% (F2.217 = 5.01, p < .05) experienced sexual violence compared to those who did not (see Table 1).


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<td>Married</td>
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<td>Physical abuse</td>
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<td>Emotional abuse</td>
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<td>Sexual abuse</td>
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<td>Violence with aggravated bodily harm</td>
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Table 1. Bivariate analysis, number and percentage of the association between HIV serostatus and domestic violence, KDHS 2008/2009

- For married women, the OR for HIV infection was higher among those who experienced physical violence compared to those who did not 2.01 (p < 0.05; see Table 3).

- The ORs were also higher among married women who experienced sexual and all forms of violence compared to those who did not 1.66 (p < 0.05) and 1.83 (p < 0.01) respectively.

- Among formerly married women, the OR for HIV infection among those who experienced sexual violence compared to those who did not was 0.42 (p < 0.05; see Table 2).

- After adjusting for confounding, attenuation was observed in the odds ratios.

- Among married women, the OR for HIV infection was higher among those who experienced physical violence compared to those who did not 2.01 (p < 0.05; see Table 3).

Conclusions

- Women who experienced domestic violence had a high likelihood of testing positive for HIV.
- Other factors that increased the likelihood of positive HIV included, number of lifetime sexual partners, number of co-wives, and age at first marriage, risky sexual behaviors, and age.

- Call for increased level of awareness, protection, and subsequent empowerment of women.

- Kenyan government should be more involved and develop nationwide emergency shelters to provide accommodation, medical care, and counseling services for victims of gender-based violence.

- Our study supports and reiterates the need to implement the UNAIDS (2009) critical priority to end violence against girls and women, especially to protect young women from early marriage.

Acknowledging

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