

Risk and Protective Factors for HIV among Adolescent Orphans and Non-Orphans in Tanzania: A Qualitative Analysis

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Primary objectives of study

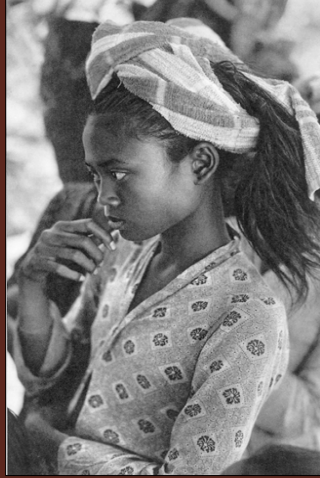
- To identify the potential risk and protective factors for engaging in unsafe sex among adolescent orphans and non-orphans;
- To explore whether differences in risk and protection differ by orphan status



Background & Significance

- Globally, as of 2007, an estimated 16 million children from birth to 18 years had been orphaned by AIDS
- Without continuous ARV treatment the number will rise to 25 million by 2010. (UNAIDS/UNICEF/USAID, 2006)

Orphanhood and Sexual Behaviors



Studies conducted in South Africa, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe have shown that losing a parent significantly increases the likelihood that an adolescent will have an earlier sexual debut, become pregnant, and acquire HIV (Gregson et al., 2005; Thurman et al., 2006; Hallman, 2004; Urassa et al., 2006)

Overarching research question:

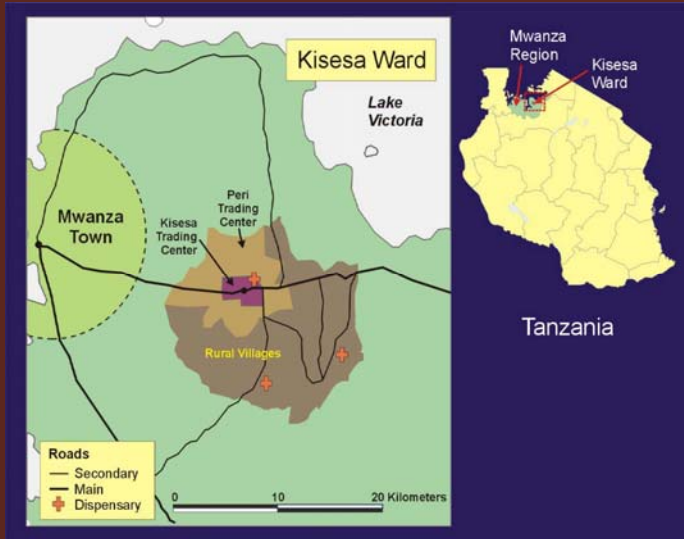
Why do some orphans engage in high-risk sexual activity while others, in the same socio-economic circumstances, do not?

Study Design

- In-depth interviews and focus groups among three groups of adolescents (ages 14-18 years):
 - Adolescent orphans
 - Adolescent non-orphans with chronically sick parent
 - Adolescent non-orphans with two non-infected parents

- Focus groups with caregivers of orphans

Study Site: Kisesa Ward



Study Participants

- Demographic and epidemiological surveillance systems were used to select households with adolescents living with two parents and adolescents who had lost a parent (s)
- Separate module was used by field staff to identify households that had adolescents living with a chronically sick parent

In-depth interviews

- A total of 52 adolescents participated in in-depth interviews
 - 25 orphans (17 who were paternal orphans)
 - 7 were non-orphans who had a sick parent
 - 20 were non-orphans with two parents
- Adolescents discussed their sexual life histories and the factors that they perceived influenced their sexual history

Focus group discussions

- A total of 83 adolescents participated in 11 focus groups:
 - 4 among female non-orphans with parents
 - 4 among male non-orphans with parents
 - 1 among female orphans
 - 1 among male orphans
 - 1 among male & females with a sick parent

- Two additional focus groups among female caregivers of orphans (n=17)

Procedures & Analysis

- Research protocol was approved by Johns Hopkins IRB and National Institute of Medical Research (NIMR)/Mwanza IRB

- Interviews were conducted in Swahili

- Two sets of coders: Johns Hopkins research team and NIMR research team

- Periodic meetings (in person and via phone call) were held to discuss the interpretation of the summarized data

Sexual Life Histories

- Among the 52 in-depth interviewees, 13 adolescents reported having either exchanged sex for money or having had unprotected sex):
 - 4 female orphans
 - 3 male orphans
 - 3 female non-orphans with parents
 - 3 male non-orphans with parents
 - Mean age was 17.3 years (this compares with Unicef data of 16 years as a mean age for first sex)

Sexual life histories, cont.

- All four female orphans had sex in exchange for money
- Only one female non-orphan said she received a *gift* after having sex
- Five out of the six males paid money for sex
- One male orphan married to support his mother and siblings (wife helps sell vegetables at market)

Risk factors for unsafe sex

Lack of money and basic resources (female orphans)

I was fifteen years old the first time I tried sex. I did it because I didn't have any money. I just found myself doing sex so that I could get some money. The man came to me and he said he would give me money. He gave me \$5000 shillings (about \$5). I didn't know him well. I needed money for clothes.

Female orphans are at particularly high risk...

Focus group participants agreed that female orphans were at highest risk for HIV because they were seen to have a *lust for money*.

"...it's because of the situation at home. If the situation is tough, and she is an orphan, where she has no one to advise her, and she has no money, she decides to do prostitution to sell her body so that she can get money for her needs."
(female adolescent, with two parents)

Risk factors for unsafe sex

- Lack of information and knowledge

"I did it a long time ago. It was in 1998. I was a bit older than her. I had never even heard of the diseases one could get. I didn't repeat sex again. I did it as a game, because I had never before slept with any woman. (male, with two parents)

- Focus group participants discussed that many adolescents who have sex at a young age do so because they aren't given enough information from teachers or their parents

Risk factors for unsafe sex

Adult caregivers provide less advice than in the past

The reason we have HIV is that the children and parents are negligent. In the past, we used to have a night fire where the parents taught the children good ethics, but now, we have forgotten that culture. We don't even follow up what our children are doing. We have neglected our culture. We have forgotten to teach and advise our children like what are elders used to do in the past. {Female caregiver of orphan}

Risk factors for unsafe sex

If males have money there is the expectation of payment or gifts for sex

"I had sex two years ago. We agreed with each other. She was older than me. I knew her since I was born as she is from the same area as me. I gave her money."
(male with sick parent)

The Majority of Orphans have not had sexual intercourse

Fear of AIDS and pregnancy

If AIDS wouldn't have been there, I probably would have done it by now. (male with two parents)

Education (particularly for males)

If you have sex as a pupil, you will fail to concentrate on your subjects because all you will be doing is just remembering your lover. (male with two parents)

Extra income (particularly for female orphans)

I do things like cultivate a garden and do different business so that I can get money for my upkeep. That helps me to not get tempted to do sex for money.
(female orphan)

Summary of Findings

Participants agreed that female orphans are at highest risk for HIV.

- Risk factors: not enrolled in school, caregivers aren't providing them with needed resources (i.e., clothes and money) and not giving moral guidance.
- Protective factors: education (being in school), ability to earn money (for females especially)

Caregivers believe that adolescents (regardless of orphan status) are not being provided with adequate moral guidance – and that this indicates a change in 'parenting' in sub-Saharan Africa

Implications of Study

- Study is a starting point for examining risk and protective factors among orphans
- Findings suggest that HIV interventions for orphans may be most effective by targeting females and parents/caregivers of orphans.
 - For female orphans, interventions need to focus on increasing access to education and decent work opportunities
 - For caregivers, interventions need to provide them with education and awareness for not only HIV, but how to communicate and talk with the adolescent children in their household.

THANK YOU!

