

Men's Use of Alcohol and Perpetration of Intimate Partner Violence in Rakai, Uganda

BACKGROUND

Men who consume alcohol, particularly at problematic levels, are more likely to perpetrate intimate partner violence (IPV), compared to men who do not drink.¹ In the fishing communities of Uganda's Rakai district, prevalence of alcohol use and HIV are among the highest in the country.² However, little is known about the way Ugandan men's drinking affects their use of violence or risky sexual behavior, overall and in high risk fishing areas. Further, there are no alcohol or IPV-focused services or prevention efforts available in Rakai's fishing communities. Thus, men dealing with problems related to alcohol use or family-level violence have no options for treatment or intervention.

GOALS

We conducted 10 focus groups and 30 interviews with men and women living in fishing villages in Rakai.

Our goal was to understand:



Drinking customs and norms



Barriers and facilitators to an alcohol and IPV perpetration reduction (Alcohol+IPVP) intervention



Ideas for tailoring an Alcohol+IPVP intervention to this community

DRINKING CUSTOMS AND NORMS

Fishermen and male adolescents drink the most

Sachets are the most commonly consumed type of alcohol

- 100ml plastic bags filled with hard liquor
- Strong, portable, cheap
- 1 sachet \approx 2 drinks by U.S. standards³



Beer is more "high class" than sachets

- Often reserved for occasions when friends gather for drinks, or when trying to impress a female
- People are more likely to drink beer in moderation

Home-brewed alcohol is generally reserved for family celebrations or religious occasions

FACILITATORS TO ENGAGING MEN IN AN ALCOHOL+IPVP INTERVENTION

- Most men supported the idea of an alcohol reduction intervention, believing it could foster improved health and self-respect. However, many men were hesitant to actually take part in the program themselves.
- An HIV-positive diagnosis was perceived to be a main driver of men's reduced alcohol consumption and risky sex.
- Marriage, family problems, and partner violence are the most commonly cited consequences of drinking alcohol.

"You need to convince an individual by saying, 'If you want health improvement and development in your life, you need to first stop drinking alcohol.'"

"You see, I too used to drink a lot and by this time (it was midday) I would be drunk. But when I was told that I was HIV positive, I felt that those things will not work well with my new status. So I quit."

"If you happen to return home when you are drunk and the woman starts complaining about it, you end up slapping her because you feel you are energetic."

BARRIERS TO ENGAGING MEN IN ALCOHOL+IPVP INTERVENTION



Men drink too much and will be resistant to intervention

"The alcoholics will not agree to it. When a person is referred to as an alcoholic, he is an actual alcoholic and he/she cannot agree [to participate in an alcohol reduction program]."

It would take too much time & they have to work

"The major challenge is that people are always busy at work. This kind of program requires much time and a person may be having activities like going to the lake or preparing fishing nets. Therefore an individual may think that he will be wasting his time for such a program."



There is a lack of understanding about what is "acceptable" alcohol consumption

"I think twenty sachets of alcohol is too much but then there are those who take three sachets and lose their minds, end up in fights and things like that. It mostly depends on a person."

Some feel an IPV reduction program would negatively impact men

"They can't introduce a program when it has a negative impact to only one particular gender. Like in developed countries they have those programs, but they have a negative impact to only men. So when you initiate such a program which oppresses me only, I will not take part."



Drinking is a way to support local businesses

"Another individual may drink because his friend is a bar owner. Such a person may be heard saying 'I'm a long term customer for my friend; I may feel bad if I fail to report to his bar.'"

IDEAS FOR TAILORING AN ALCOHOL+IPVP INTERVENTION TO THIS COMMUNITY

- General education about the health effects of alcohol and tips to drink responsibly
- Enforce laws restricting the sale of alcohol to adults and increase the price of alcohol
- Collaborate with trusted organizations
- Focus on partner violence in a non-threatening way that doesn't place blame on either person.

"You should talk about what alcohol does to a person who has drank it. They should talk about the kind of things alcohol brings to your body and to your mind."

"There is need to formulate a law stating that it is not allowed to sell alcohol to a person below 18 years old. But due to poverty, the seller may not reject money if someone comes to buy alcohol."

"All cheap alcohol should be banned."

"Now that we work with Rakai Program, if there are education sessions involving those people who really sell it, I think alcoholism would reduce." "

"Drinking alcohol is the major cause of chaos in our community because if a person is to fight with another, he/she first drinks... They should get a way of packaging the program without being too rude."

"Domestic violence should be emphasised because they badly affect people in this community."



Rakai Health Sciences Program
Improved Health Through Research



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References

- ¹White HR, Chen PH. Problem drinking and intimate partner violence. J Stud Alcohol. 2002 Mar;63(2):205-14.
- ²Rakai Health Sciences Program. 2014. Report to the World Bank: Comprehensive Report on Combination HIV Prevention Impact Evaluation in Rakai District, Uganda.
- ³In the United States, one "standard" drink contains roughly 14 grams of pure alcohol, which is found in 1.5 ounces of distilled spirits, which is about 40% alcohol. Found at: <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/overview-alcohol-consumption/what-standard-drink>