

Risk Factors for Sexual Violence Among 13–17-year-old Girls In Uganda: Findings From The National Violence Against Children Survey

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Study Context



Population of 48 m. 56% are children



Post independence political upheaval



A diverse country with > 50 ethnic groups



Largely patriarchal society



Predominantly rural



Favourable policies and a pathfinder country



Study Background

SVAC encompasses a range of acts-touching, completed nonconsensual sex acts, attempted non-consensual sex acts, and abusive sexual contact (Barr, 2017)

Being a girl is an established risk factor for experiencing SV (Cerna-Turoff 2021; Bjørnseth and Szabo 2018; Barth 2015; Stoltenborgh et al., 2011; Pereda et al. 2009)

Lifelong effects of SVAC: higher risks of injury, HIV, STIs, mental health problems, reproductive health problems, and NCD-cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic lung disease, and diabetes (Hillis, et al., 2017), making prevention imperative

Understanding of the risk factors that predispose children to violence is important in order to prevent sexual abuse of children.

Study Background

Emerging research in Uganda on sexual violence against children

9.9%-Life time sexual violence among girls 15-19 years

5.3%-sexual violence in the last 12 months (UDHS 2016)

16.4% among ALL adolescents 12-17 years in secondary schools (Goessmann, 2020)

60% women reported SV before 15 years (UBOS; 2021)

Prevalence of sexual violence
Risk factors??

25% of 13-17 years girls report SV (MGLSD; 2018)

11.8%

Lifetime prevalence of SV among adolescents in school (Devries et al; 2014)

20.9% prevalence of sexual assault for 13-17 year olds in a clinical sample (Ononge; 2005)

18% girls 10-19 years. Associated factors at familial level (Natukunda 2020)

The ecological systems theory provides a framework for analyzing the interplay between the child and factors in their environments associated with risk and protection from SV.

Study Objectives and Research Question

The current study seeks to understand the factors associated with sexual violence among 13-17 year old girls in Uganda.

1. What is the prevalence of sexual violence among the 13-17 year old girls in Uganda?
2. What are the risk factors associated with sexual violence among girls aged 13-17 years in Uganda?

Methods

Nationally representative cross-sectional household survey of 13- to 24-year-old females and males

Measured violence in childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood; risk and protective factors; consequences of violence

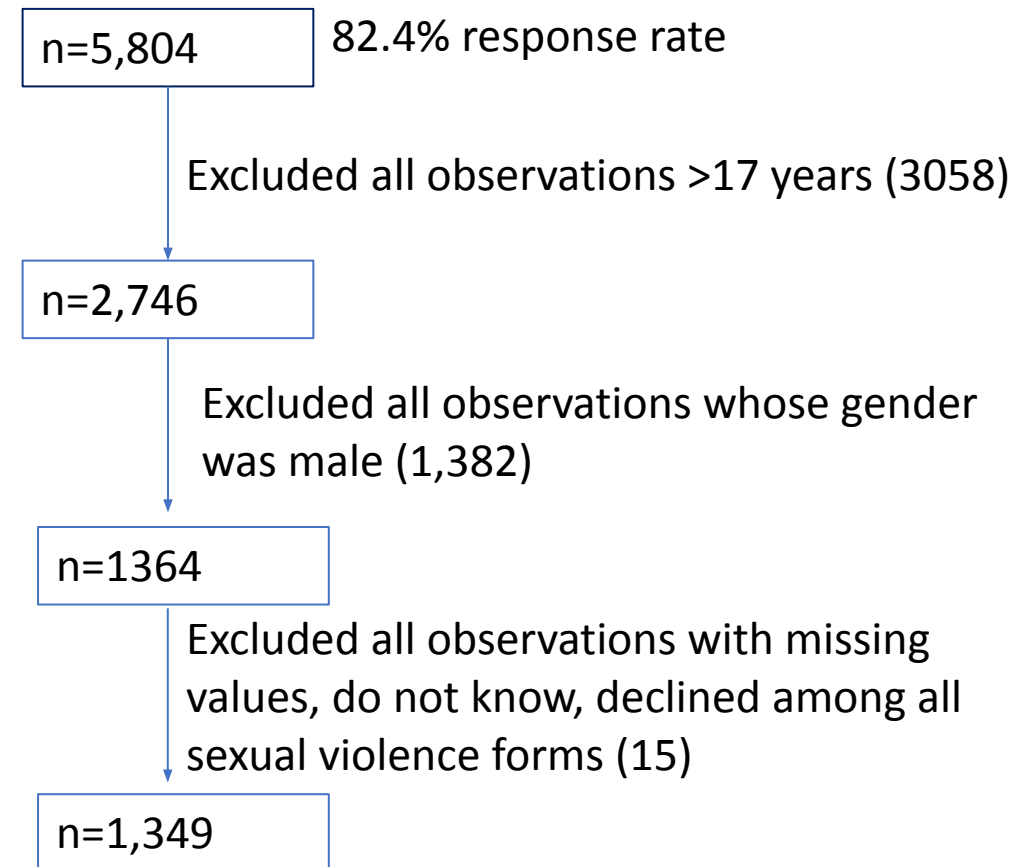
Lifetime prevalence of violence were based on experiences of 18-24 age group. Data from 13-17 year-olds generates estimates for the last 12 months.

A three-stage sampling design

The survey applied a split sample approach

A face-to-face structured questionnaire- household head and respondent

Informed consent and assent. Ethical approval from Makerere University CHS REC, CDC IRB, UNCST



Methods: Measures

Exposure Variables		Outcome Variable: Sexual Violence
Age	(13-14, 15-17)	<p>Unwanted sexual touching fondling, pinching, grabbing, or touching sexual body parts</p> <p>Attempted unwanted sexual intercourse - attempted intercourse through harassment, threats and tricks, no penetration</p> <p>Pressured intercourse unwanted sex completed through use of threats or non-physical pressure</p> <p>Physically forced sex - unwanted intercourse completed through physical force</p> <p>Coded into one binary variable SV with “1” for any SV form, and “0” for no SV</p>
School attendance	(Never been, in school, dropped out)	
Living arrangements	(both parents, mother only, father only, neither parent)	
Marital status	(Ever married, Ever cohabited, Ever had a boyfriend, Never in union)	
Orphan status	(both parents dead, mother dead, father dead, both parents alive)	
Approve GBV attitudes	(Yes, No)	
Witnessing GBV	Never, At home, in community, home &Community)	
Victimization	(physical violence, emotional violence, both physical and emotional violence)	
Mental Health	(Kessler 6 Psychological distress scale, Yes, No)	
Isolation	Isolated, close to parents, close to friends, not isolated	

Measures: Analysis

STATA version 15

RQ1-Prevalence of sexual violence presented as a percentage

RQ2-Logistic regression adjusted and unadjusted to measure association between independent variables and sexual violence

The level of significance at multi-variable analysis considered to be 5%.

Results-Prevalence of SV among 13-17 year old Girls in Uganda

Table 1: Prevalence of Sexual Violence

Sexual Violence (n=1287)	N (%)
No experience of sexual violence	861 (66.9)
Experienced sexual violence	426 (33.1)

Results (Unadjusted and adjusted OR for Predictors of SV)

Table 2: Factors Associated with Sexual Violence

Variable	Unadjusted OR (95% CI)	p-value	Adjusted OR (95% CI)	p-value
School attendance (n=1287)				
Never been to school	1.00		1.00	
Currently in school	0.30 (0.10-0.95)	0.040*	0.30 (0.07-1.31)	0.109
Dropped out	0.65 (0.20-2.12)	0.477	0.45 (0.10-2.08)	0.303
Age group (n=1287)				
13-14 years	1.00		1.00	
15-17 years	2.24 (1.42-3.53)	0.001*	1.97 (1.08-3.57)	0.027*
Live with parents (n=1287)				
Both parents	1.00		1.00	
Mother only	0.92 (0.60-1.40)	0.688	0.80 (0.43-1.47)	0.466
Father only	0.97 (0.46-2.04)	0.932	1.10 (0.48-2.50)	0.827
Neither of the parents	1.50 (0.88-2.59)	0.139	1.30 (0.51-3.27)	0.580

*Significant at 5% level

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Marital status (n=1287)				
Ever married	1.00		1.00	
Ever cohabited	0.76 (0.19-3.09)	0.697	1.54 (0.23-10.26)	0.655
Ever had a boyfriend	2.39 (0.94-6.13)	0.069	4.34 (0.96-19.50)	0.056
Never in union	0.54 (0.21-1.40)	0.207	1.82 (0.36-9.07)	0.465
Orphan status (n=1287)				
Both parents were dead	1.00		1.00	
Mother dead	0.33 (0.09-1.25)	0.104	0.38 (0.03-5.46)	0.474
Father dead	0.66 (0.26-1.70)	0.391	1.16 (0.14-9.42)	0.889
Both parents alive	0.68 (0.31-1.50)	0.335	0.97 (0.10-9.10)	0.977

*Significant at 5% level

Results (Unadjusted and adjusted OR for Predictors of SV)

Variable	Unadjusted OR (95% CI)	p-value	Adjusted OR (95% CI)	p-value
Approval of attitudes towards GBV (n=1223)				
Yes	1.00			
No	1.34 (0.82-2.19)	0.238		
Gender attitudes towards sex (n=1187)				
Yes	1.00		1.00	
No	2.33 (0.78-6.97)	0.129	2.49 (0.86-7.19)	0.093
Witnessing GBV (n=1253)				
Never	1.00		1.00	
Home only	1.83 (0.91-3.71)	0.091	1.89 (0.88-4.07)	0.104
Community only	2.31 (1.35-3.96)	0.002*	2.04 (1.04-4.00)	0.037*
Home and community	3.01 (1.63-5.59)	<0.001*	2.10 (1.11-3.99)	0.023*

***Significant at 5% level**

Results (Unadjusted and adjusted OR for Predictors of SV)

Variable	Unadjusted OR (95% CI)	p-value	Adjusted OR (95% CI)	p-value
Child victimization (n=1276)				
Child not victim	1.00		1.00	
Victim	3.13 (1.71-5.72)	<0.001*	3.46 (1.77-6.77)	<0.001*
Mental health (n=1287)				
No mental distress	1.00		1.00	
Mental distress	2.18 (1.40-3.41)	0.001*	1.97 (1.22-3.19)	0.006*
Isolation (n=1227)				
Isolated	1.00		1.00	
Close to parents	0.82 (0.22-3.09)	0.769	0.22 (0.06-0.84)	0.028*
Close to friends	1.01 (0.27-3.71)	0.992	0.54 (0.15-1.98)	0.355
Not isolated	0.37 (0.87-1.58)	0.179	0.57 (0.17-1.92)	0.366
*Significant at 5% level				

Summary and Discussion

The prevalence 33% is higher than previously reported among adolescents in a national survey (UBOS, 2016) clinical (Ononge, 2005) and community samples (Natukunda et al., 2019, Devries, 2014), in Uganda.

Lower than reported among adult women recalling childhood violence (UBOS, 2021)

Higher than global estimates (Barth et al., 2013).

Summary and Discussion

Current enrolment in school is a protective factor against sexual violence, though not significant in the adjusted model.

Close parental relationships are a significant protective factor against sexual violence for Uganda adolescent girls

The most significant risk factors associated with sexual violence were (i) experiences of violence/ victimisation (Assink et al., 2019; Natukunda et al., 2019) (ii) witnessing violence (Biaiocchi et al., 2019), (iii) mental health (Butler, 2013) and (iv) being older (Natukunda et al., 2019; Ward et al., 2018; Kunnuji & Esiet, 2015; Breiding et al., 2011)

Implications

Address attrition to improve retention in schools

Parenting interventions targeting needs of children in adolescence

Mental health interventions targeting adolescents in their diverse settings

Increased investment in prevention of all forms of violence in domestic and community settings

Qualitative research to obtain insights on the lived experiences of adolescents and to support interventions.

Risk and protective factors for sexual violence are at the individual, interpersonal, family, school and community level, suggesting the need for a holistic approaches for effective prevention.

Strengths and Limitations

Strengths

1. Nationally representative
2. Large sample size
3. Uses a standardized data set (VACS)

Limitations

1. Relies on retrospective self-reports of experience of sexual violence: recall bias , social desirability bias, fear of disclosure.
2. Cross-sectional study and does not establish causality

Acknowledgements



Together for girls

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS



MAKERERE UNIVERSITY



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**THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA
MINISTRY OF GENDER,
LABOUR & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Thank you for listening



Gracias por escuchar

Asante Sana

Mwebale nyo