The role of gender and romantic jealousy in intimate partner violence: A mixed-methods study in northern Ecuador

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The findings and conclusions in this presentation are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
Background

- Romantic jealousy is a commonly occurring driver of intimate partner violence (IPV)
- Conceptualisations, prevalence, and impact of romantic jealousy on relationships and IPV varies across cultures
- Romantic jealousy identified as the 2nd most common trigger of IPV in LAC (Bott et al., 2012)
- In Ecuador, 29.9% of respondents said they thought “wife-beating” was acceptable in cases of actual/suspected infidelity (Bott et al., 2012)
- Lack of in-depth, contextualised understanding of the pathways and mechanisms from romantic jealousy to IPV
Rationale and methods

• Secondary mixed-methods analysis: low-income married women and men in northern Ecuador that participated in a trial of cash transfers and food security

• The trial measured IPV as a secondary outcome and included measures of romantic jealousy

• Qualitative accounts of romantic jealousy arose spontaneously during IDI’s and FGDs
“a complex set of thoughts, feelings and actions that follow a threat to self-esteem and/or threaten the existence or quality of the relationship. These threats are generated by the perception of a real or potential attraction between the partner and a (perhaps imaginary) rival” (White, 1981).
Gender norms in LAC

- Authoritarian
- Honour
- Bravery
- Aggressive
- Chivalry
- Oppressive
- Philandering
- Strength
- Machismo
- Moral
- Faithful
- Spiritual
- Respectful
- Silent

- Marianismo
Quantitative sample analysis

• 1,216 baseline and follow-up surveys, collected 7 months apart.

• Low-income, married women, 15 years and over, in same partnership.

• Logistic regressions controlling for age nationality, education, treatment assignment, province, number of kids and baseline IPV.
Quantitative results

• Male romantic jealousy was associated with:
  
  ➢ Controlling behaviours  
  (aOR: 14.47, 95% CI: 9.47, 22.12)
  
  ➢ Sexual IPV  
  (aOR: 2.4, 95% CI: 1.12, 5.12)
Qualitative analysis and results: N=100
Gossip functioned as a mechanism of community control of women’s movements and sexuality...

33-year-old, Woman, IDI, Sucumbíos

Usted sabe si es que yo voy [...] la vecina ella comienza con los chismes, voy por aca chisme, ya entonces no salgo
Accusations of infidelity functioned as a socially sanctioned mechanisms of sexual coercion.

En veces yo estoy durmiendo, le digo no quiero, estoy cansada. [Me dice] que o que, ya tienes otro! [...] yo para que me deje dormir, [...] ya pues tenemos relaciones

40-year-old, Woman, IDI, Sucumbíos
Many men didn’t want their wives to work outside of the home. Violence could occur if they returned home later than expected, or there were rumours about what happened while they were at work.

No quiere que venga, [...] yo le digo que vengo al comedor a trabajar... (el me dice) que tengo mi “mozos” (amantes) en el comedor

18-year-old, Woman, IDI, Sucumbíos
Figure 2. Romantic jealousy partially mediated the relationship between gaining employment and physical or sexual IPV

Adjusted odds ratio, standard errors robust to non-independence; controlled for age, nationality, education, treatment assignment, province, number of kids and baseline IPV; indirect effect calculated using bootstrapping.
1) **Gender transformative** at the individual, couple and community level programming that provides alternative masculinities and femininities

2) Education and **critical reflection** interventions that dismantle love-based narratives around romantic jealousy and emphasize trust within relationships

3) **Economic empowerment** programmes that incentivise women’s participation in paid labour should be mindful of the potential link between work, romantic jealousy and IPV
Romantic jealousy, infidelity and IPV collaboration

- Part of global collaboration: https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/jealousy-ipv-collaboration

- Full paper: https://doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2022.2031299
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Thank you

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