

Motivation: Limited evidence on what works to prevent IPV, especially at scale

- Prevention programs that train men OR women
- Community edutainment programs with no/limited impact on IPV
- Methodological limitations: small sample size, non-blinded recruitment, or cannot detect spillovers



Research question

- What is the impact of a scalable gender-transformative IPV prevention intervention on the incidence of IPV in Rwanda?
- Are there any spillover effects to couples who do not participate in the intervention?

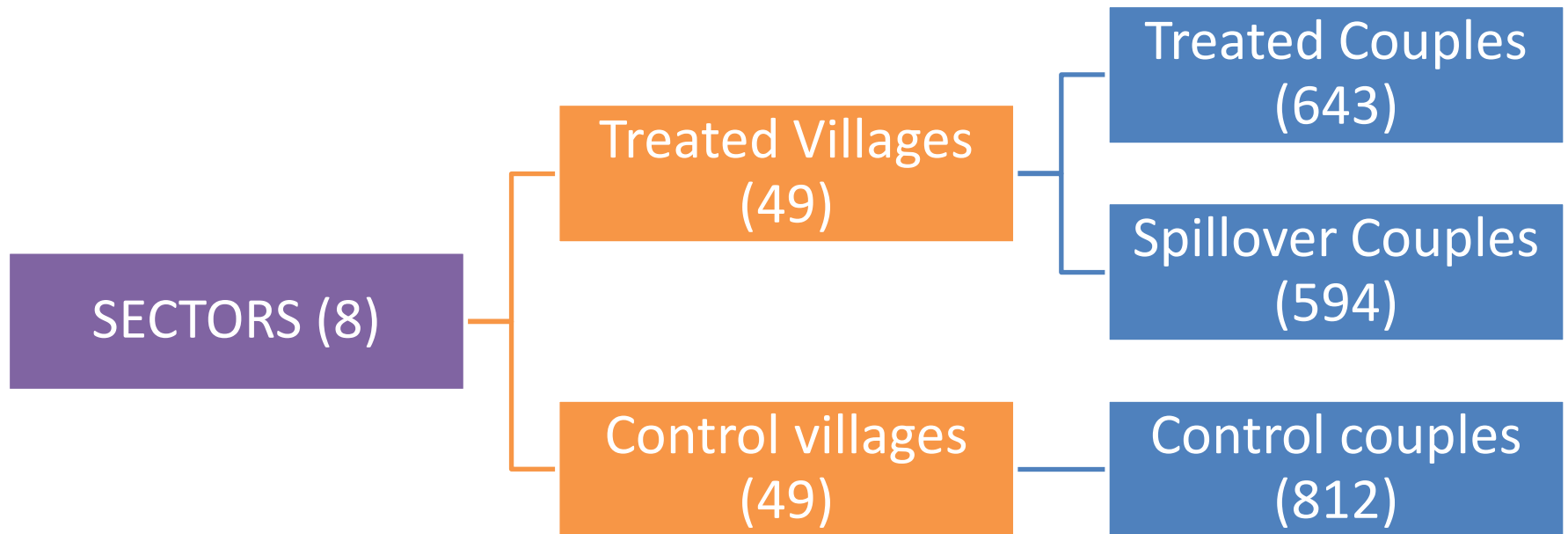
What we evaluated: Gender-transformative couple's discussion groups

- *Indashyikirwa*: multi-component program
 - Scalability in question → piloting and testing a less costly version
 - *Great Lakes Sexual and Gender Based Violence and Women's Health project*, funded by the World Bank
- Scalable adaptation of *Indashyikirwa*
 - Evaluated the couple's training only (not the multi-component program)
 - Removed activism component
 - Opinion leaders training and women's safe spaces
- Same implementing NGOs
 - But different implementation arrangements

What we evaluated: Gender-transformative couple's discussion groups

- 22 weekly couple's discussion groups
- 3-4 hrs/session
- Concepts: power, triggers of IPV, healthy relationships, gender, and sex
- Improving spousal communication & cooperation
- Changing individual gender attitudes
- Promoting norms of gender equality in the village
- Interactive group discussions and take-home exercises
- VSLAs members
- Small weekly travel stipend (RWF2,500 person/session)

Study designed to measure spillover effects



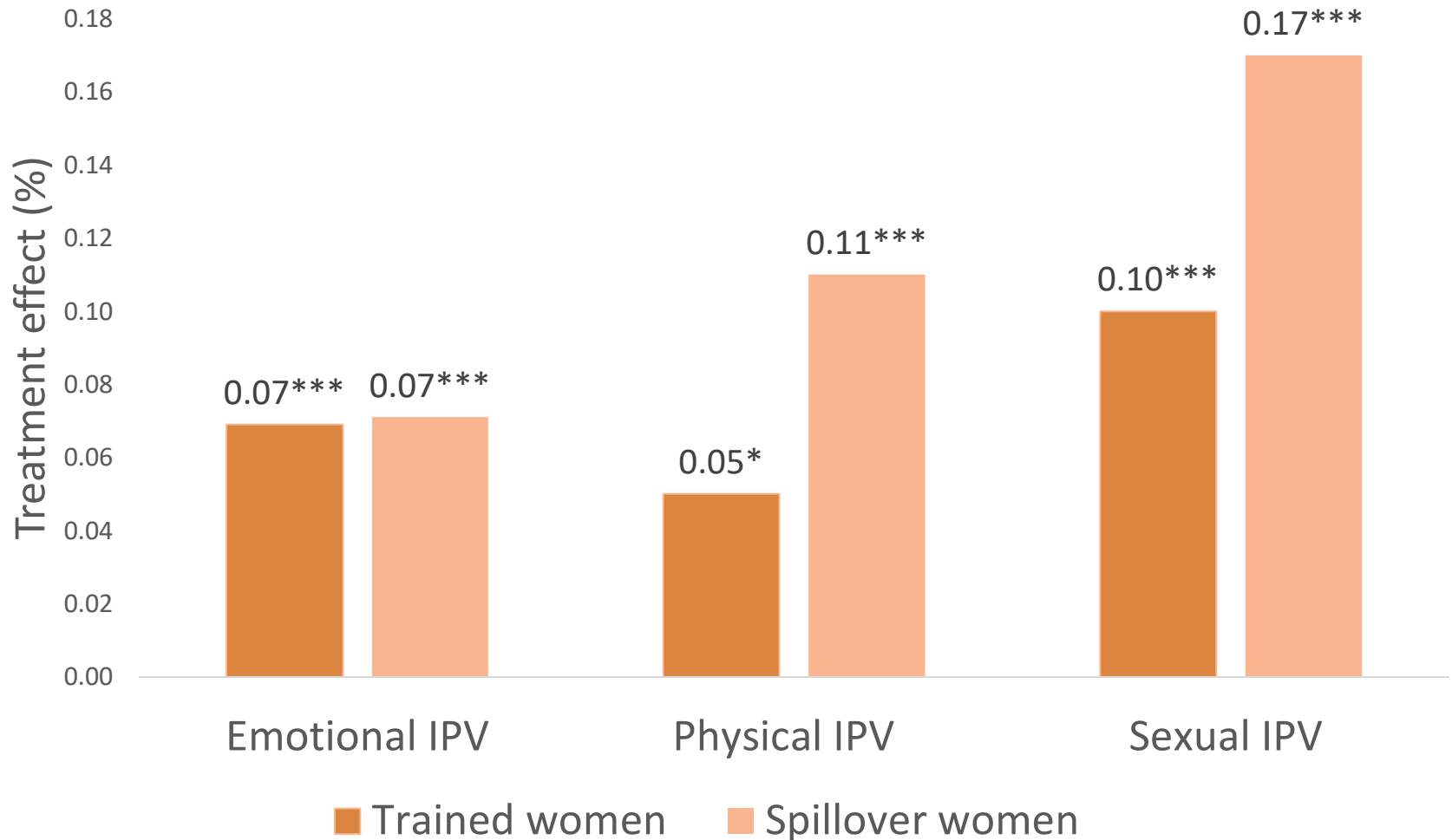
All couples blind to treatment status during recruitment and baseline data collection

Methods

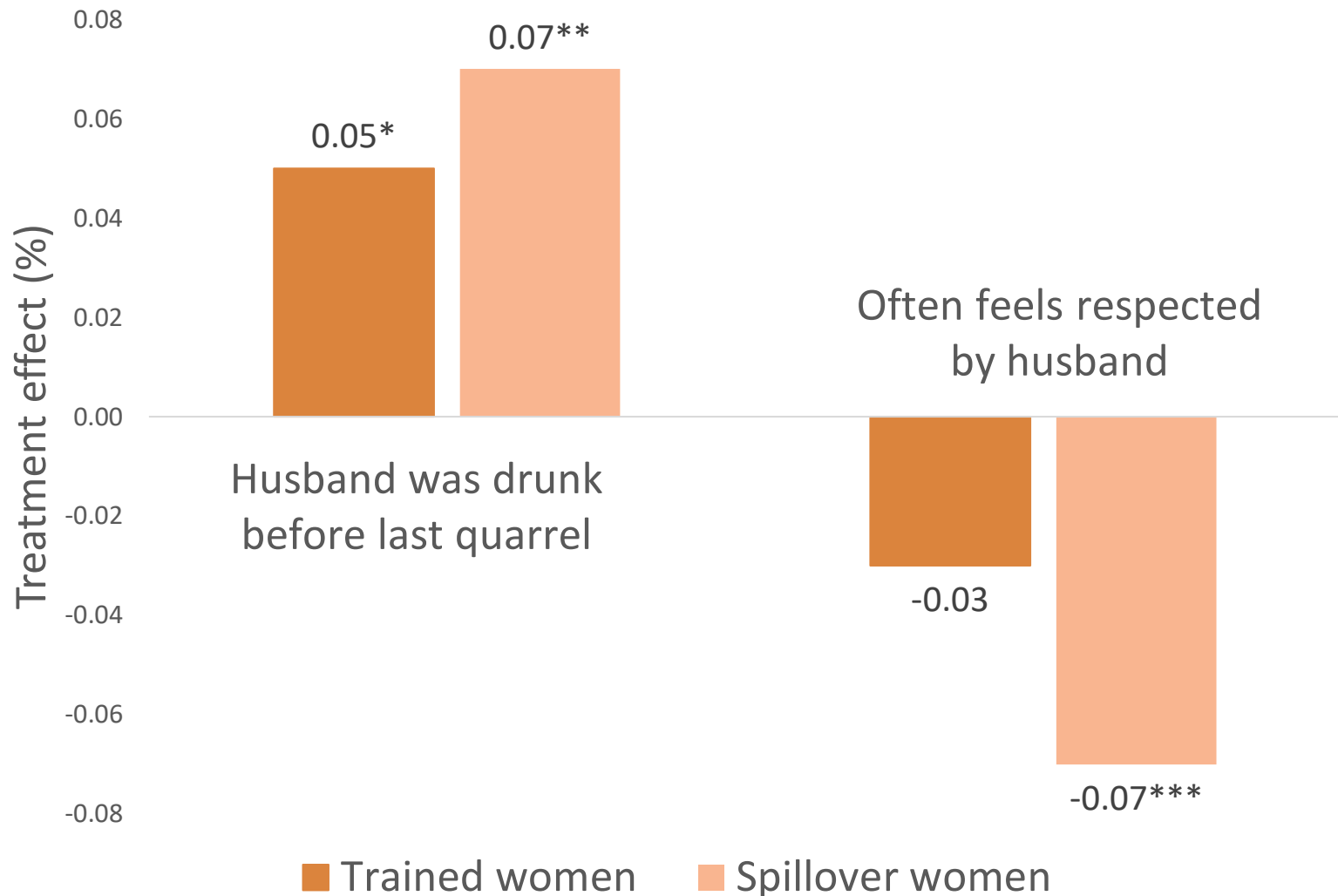


- Program delivered March to August 2018 and endline data collected in February-March 2019
- Over 2,000 couples included
- Impact measured 6 months post-program:
 - 98.3% of women and 97.5% of men were reinterviewed at endline
 - Short term impacts
- Violence outcomes + socioeconomic indicators
 - WHO instrument
 - Audio-Computer-Assisted Self-Interviewing (ACASI)

Trained women's experience of IPV was higher than in the control group. It was even higher for spillover couples.



Results are corroborated by secondary indicators: the program worsened wellbeing of couples



What happened?

Data consistent with a backlash mechanism

- i) a community-wide diffusion of new progressive gender attitudes and behaviors that violate traditional identity prescriptions,
- ii) increased friction in couples who are becoming more divergent in their beliefs, attitudes, and aspirations for power in the household.
- Threat to traditional male identity → men may act out against this perceived threat to or loss in identity through violence

What happened? Spillover couples



- Spillover men react to the diffusion of progressive messaging in the community: they are becoming less progressive
- Increased friction in spillover couples
- Spillover men are responding to a threat to their identity

What happened? Trained couples



- Improvement in attitudes among trained men
- BUT also increased friction amongst couples
- Also some positive (and potentially visible) behavioral changes in treated men

Consistent with backlash against social sanctions from behavioral changes

- None of these behavioral changes are observed for spillover men (and their attitudes worsened)
- Qualitative information gathering → shaming, social sanction, rumors
- Increased alcohol consumption for treated men
- Training improved treated men's attitudes and visible behaviors but friction in the household and potential shaming may have caused increases in violence

Very different findings from the study of the original *Indashyikirwa* program

- Differences in
 - Research design
 - Implementation and institutional arrangements
 - Program design
- To learn more at SVRI Forum 2022 and understand how the programs were different:
 - Session 1.2, Tuesday, 11.30-1pm: “**Comparative review insights on adaptation of *Indashyikirwa* in Rwanda**”, Angella Agado et al.
 - Session 7.1, Thursday, 11.30-1pm: “**The prevention triad model for understanding what works to prevent violence against women and girls**”, Lori Heise et al.

Conclusion



- Program, as designed and delivered, posed a risk of harm even though delivered by experienced, gender-focused NGOs
 - Need for careful monitoring, design, implementation, and adequate project management and coordination mechanisms
- More research is needed:
 - ‘Spillovers’ can be large → Incorporate spillover measurement in all designs
 - Measure longer term impacts
 - Need more testing on how to scale holistic, multi-component programs

Evidence points to a real increase in IPV – not an increase in reporting

Data does NOT support:

- 1.increased understanding of what counts as GBV;
- 2.strategic misreporting to gain program access;
- 3.reduced stigma around reporting of GBV.

[Truth or reporting](#)

1. Not an increase in understanding of GBV

Hypothesis: expanded understanding of IPV → increases in reported IPV → larger increase among treated than spillover women

This is not what we observe.

- Overall rates of physical and sexual IPV increase the most for spillover couples
- Spillover couples report increases in the number of types of sexual violent acts. Treated couples do not.
- Respondents are reporting increased levels of both **subjective** (“humiliated”) and **objective** (“slapped”) questions, not only the subjective questions.

2. Not strategic misreporting to gain access to the program

Hypothesis: respondents want to gain access to the program in the future → try to seem more desirable candidates

This is not what we observe.

- Respondents don't present themselves as ideal candidates for such a project:
 - Husband drink more alcohol
 - None of the groups report being poorer
 - All have worse acceptance of a wife refusing sex
 - Spillover men increase their reported intention of being violent
 - Respondents are not changing their reporting of IPV based on their likelihood of getting program access:
 - Baseline eligibility for the program
 - Knowledge it was a gender program
 - Rank in the selection lottery
- } Same levels of reported IPV

3. Not reduced stigma around reporting or IPV

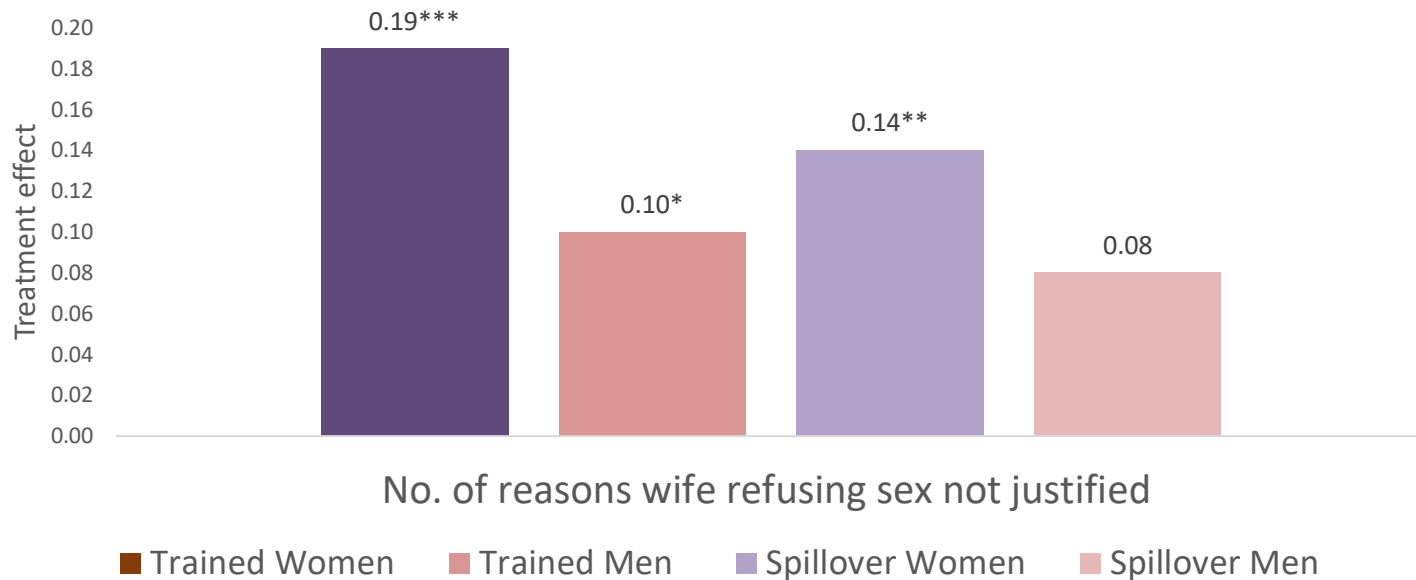
Hypothesis: reduced stigma → increase reporting of IPV → reduction in proxies of stigma

This is not what we observe

- We observe large increases in IPV among spillover women but not decrease in proportion who refuse to answer the questions in the survey.
- Spillover women are not more likely to speak to others about their IPV experience than control women

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Worsening in all groups' attitudes regarding acceptance of wife refusing sex



- Unlike other domains where women's gender attitudes improved, women think that refusing sex is less acceptable
- This is corroborated by the qualitative data. Qualitative reports suggest there was a village-wide resistance against a woman's right to initiate and refuse sex.