Exploring intersections between romantic jealousy, infidelity, and intimate partner violence in Rwanda and Uganda

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Romantic Jealousy and IPV

- Efforts to prevent IPV informed by emerging research on common triggers/pathways
- Increasing recognition of importance of engaging with couple dynamics (in addition to individual risk and protective factors)
- Relationship dynamics underpin IPV including romantic jealousy, which is associated with:
  - controlling behaviours of intimate partner
  - decreased relationship quality
  - low self-esteem & insecurity
  - alcohol abuse
- Limited evidence on jealousy as driver of IPV
- Even less evidence on how programmes can mitigate jealousy to reduce IPV
- Part of an international collaborative on romantic jealousy and IPV
  
https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/jealousy-ipv-collaboration
Theoretical Framework

• Buunk’s multi-dimensional framework of jealousy – jealousy defined as a negative response to the actual, imagined, or expected emotional or sexual involvement of a partner with a third party
  – Reactive jealousy
  – Anxious or past anxious jealousy
  – Preventive jealousy
Comparative Study

• Secondary data analysis from qualitative evaluations of two IPV prevention programmes: SASA! in Uganda and Indashyikirwa in Rwanda

• Explores under-researched linkages between romantic jealousy and IPV

• Examines how interventions mitigated jealousy as trigger of IPV
Views of romantic jealousy and unfaithfulness

• In Rwanda jealousy perceived as negative trait, yet extremely common with ‘those you love’
• In Uganda, some participants described how infidelity affected wellbeing and concerns about acquiring HIV/STIs
• In both settings, more culturally accepted for men to have extra-marital relationships
• Different gendered pathways for men and women
Conflict and IPV

• Rumours of infidelity could exacerbate tension & conflict
• Jealousy could lead to IPV; mostly described to trigger men’s use of physical IPV
• Caused controlling behaviours more likely by male partners ie women working, what they wore, who they met
• Caused conflict through quarrels about household resources
• Jealousy could threaten women’s economic independence
Strategies to mitigate romantic jealousy and IPV

• Both programmes identified benefits of reduced jealousy and infidelity

• Supported skills i.e. communication to generate trust

• Helpful to learn about jealousy as trigger of IPV and consequences of jealousy

• Encouraged fidelity to improve trust and relationship quality and minimise sexual risks
Discussion

• Jealousy and infidelity common in both settings and leads to conflict though breakdown of relationship and trust; quarrels about resources
• Triggers controlling behaviours, physical, emotional & economic IPV
• Findings resonate with mixed methods systematic review summarising pathways from infidelity and romantic jealousy to IPV
• Men who anticipate partner infidelity use controlling behaviours and economic IPV in response
• Women’s jealousy more constrained by power inequities
• Women experience accusations of jealousy as form of emotional IPV
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MECHANISM</th>
<th>PATHWAY</th>
<th>INFIDELITY &amp; RJ</th>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
<th>THEORY</th>
<th>IPV OUTCOME</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Suspicions of infidelity are associated with threatened masculinities and violence</td>
<td>1. Men who suspect their partner of infidelity use physical and psychological IPV</td>
<td>Real or suspected female infidelity</td>
<td>Male RJ</td>
<td>Threatened masculinities, which are founded on:</td>
<td>Physical IPV (from men to women, including femicide)</td>
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<td>2. Women who suspect their partner of infidelity experience physical and psychological IPV</td>
<td>Real or suspected male infidelity</td>
<td>Female RJ</td>
<td>• Ability to control partner</td>
<td>• Psychological IPV (from men to women)</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Accusations of female infidelity are associated with threatened femininities and violence</td>
<td>3. Men who anticipate partner infidelity use controlling behaviors and economic IPV</td>
<td>Anticipated female infidelity</td>
<td>Male RJ</td>
<td>• Having heterosexual sex with many women</td>
<td>• Physical IPV (sometimes bi-directional, including femicide)</td>
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<td>4. Women experience accusations of infidelity as a form of psychological IPV</td>
<td>Accusation of female infidelity</td>
<td>Accusation of female infidelity</td>
<td>• Male provider role</td>
<td>• Psychological IPV (sometimes bi-directional)</td>
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<td>C. Beliefs about infidelity and sex are associated with patriarchal culture and sexual violence</td>
<td>5. Women who anticipate partner infidelity and male suspicion of their own infidelity experience sexual coercion</td>
<td>Anticipated male suspicion of female infidelity</td>
<td>Anticipated male RJ</td>
<td>Threatened femininities, which are founded on:</td>
<td>• Controlling behaviors (from men to women)</td>
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<td>6. Women who suspect male infidelity are unable to negotiate condom use</td>
<td>Anticipated male infidelity</td>
<td>Female RJ</td>
<td>• Being a passive recipient of sex</td>
<td>• Economic IPV (from men to women)</td>
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<td>Real or suspected male infidelity</td>
<td>Female RJ</td>
<td>• Having few sexual needs</td>
<td>• Psychological IPV (from men to women)</td>
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<td>• Decreased worth as sexual experience increases</td>
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Pichon et al 2020
Conclusion

• Encouraging evidence to suggest romantic jealousy can be reduced when identified as trigger of conflict & IPV
• Skills to mitigate jealousy to improve trust and relationship quality
• More attention should be given to measuring and addressing romantic jealousy for violence prevention programming
• More research needed on forms, gendered pathways & consequences of romantic jealousy
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