

CyberSenga  
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AIDS Impact  
Gaborone, Botswana

CiPHR  
Center for Innovative  
Public Health Research

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## Cyber-Senga: Ugandan youth preferences for content in an Internet-delivered comprehensive sexuality education program

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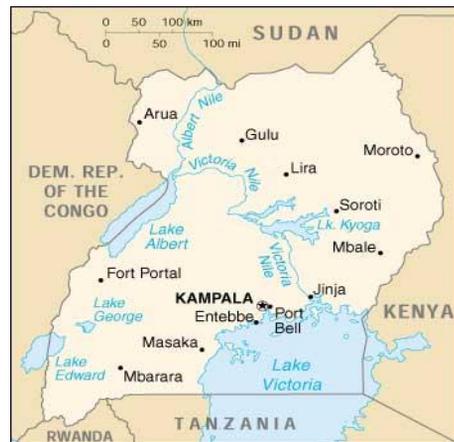
\* Thank you for your interest in this presentation. Please note that analyses included herein are preliminary. More recent, finalized analyses can be found in: Bull, S., Nabembezi, D., Birungi, R., Kiwanuka, J., & Ybarra, M. (2010). Cyber-Senga: Ugandan youth preferences for content in an internet-delivered comprehensive sexuality education programme. *East African Journal of Public Health*, 7(1), 58-63.

## Presentation Objectives

- To offer background information on the CyberSenga research project
- To discuss the methods utilized to develop and pilot test design elements for the CyberSenga Program
- To present initial and revised design elements of the Internet-based program for Ugandan youth
- To consider the applicability of the method for other technology based program development and adaptation for health promotion in Africa

## Background information on CyberSenga

- Sub-Saharan Africa remains the world's region most heavily affected by HIV, accounting for 67% of all young people living with HIV and for 75% of AIDS deaths
- Among 15–24-year-olds in Uganda who were testing for the first time, HIV prevalence was 3% among young men and 10% among young women in 2002
- Uganda's HIV prevalence rates are currently estimated to be between 6-7% ; in Mbarara, 6%



## Background information on CyberSenga

- HIV prevention programs have led the technology health field.
- Technology can provide a private and confidential environment, which is particularly important in places where stigma could limit service access.
- Technology has the potential to be highly cost effective
- There is evidence that the Internet and computers may be a feasible and attractive approach for developing country and other resource-limited settings

## Background information on CyberSenga

- CyberSenga is a research project that aims to develop and test an Internet program for adolescents in Uganda
  - “Senga” is the Luganda term for Auntie, who is the father’s sister and is expected to offer guidance to family as they mature
- Our goal today is to describe
  - Experiences Ugandan youth have had with sexuality education;
  - Reactions to and acceptability of the concept of an Internet based HIV prevention program;
  - Preferences for content and structure of such a program.

## Methods

- Participants were recruited from one of five secondary schools partnering with us on the project
- We used a qualitative approach, conducting three focus groups with five secondary school students in each group. (5 female, 10 male)
- Participants were peer-nominated popular opinion leaders in their respective school class.
- Focus groups were conducted in the CyberSenga project office in Mbarara, Uganda.

## Methods

- Groups were facilitated by research assistants trained in focus group methodology; each group had an observer to take notes
- Facilitator and observer debriefed after each group; their notes of the debriefings are the field notes
- Groups lasted between 75 and 90 minutes
- Groups were conducted primarily in English although some Ruyenkole was used to clarify or offer detail as needed

## Analysis

- Data were tape recorded and transcribed. For one group, there was a severe thunderstorm and it was difficult to hear the voices on the tape; for this group analysis relied primarily on observer notes and the field notes
- The data set included transcripts, observer notes and field notes

## Analysis

- All data were coded using three iterative processes:
  - Open coding
  - Axial coding
  - Summary coding
- All coding was completed by one analyst
- All procedures have been reviewed and approved by IRB's at MUST and Chesapeake

## Results

- *Experiences with sexuality education*
  - Participants received sexuality education at home, from family members, and at school, from teachers.
  - Sexuality education at home was done by their mothers, although some indicated that an older sister or brother or aunt or uncle had talked to them about sex and sexuality.
  - Content of sexuality education was focused on HIV— with less emphasis on pregnancy prevention, prevention of other sexually transmitted diseases, and how to cultivate healthy sexual relationships.

## Results

- *Experiences with sexuality education*
  - Youth need basic facts on sex and sexual health
  - Youth have received considerable information about abstinence
  - Youth are confused about how to reconcile messages about abstinence with messages that discuss sex and condoms

## Results

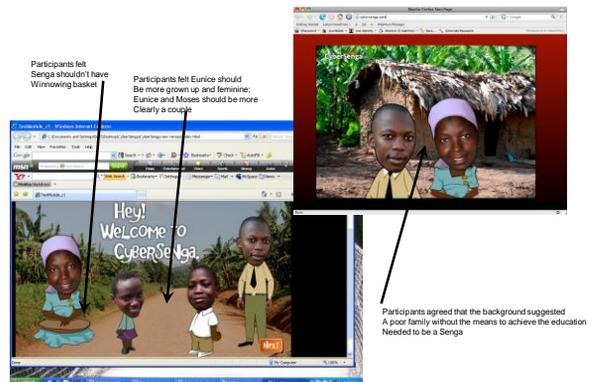
- *Experiences with sexuality education*
  - Participants have misperceptions that most condoms have holes or are poorly manufactured, which is why they should not be relied upon
  - Participants did agree that they need information on condoms
  - Participants need information on self esteem and emphasizing future aspirations

## Results

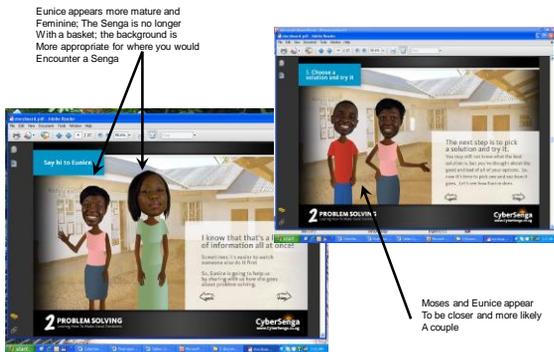
- *Reactions to and acceptability of the concept of a CyberSenga program*
  - universal understanding of the Senga, and appreciation for the attention to the cultural norm of accessing the Senga for sexual health information
  - High acceptability of the program delivery via computer because of confidentiality and privacy

## Results

- *Reactions to and acceptability of the concept of a CyberSenga program*
  - While youth recognize the Senga, they expressed distrust of “real life” Sengas and consider this an interesting alternative
  - Many youth are very familiar with computers and access the Internet cafes



## Conclusions



- Youth in Uganda have a need for comprehensive sexuality education
- The information they receive about sexuality tends to emphasize abstinence and HIV to the exclusion of other topics
- They get inconsistent education
- Youth use and are familiar with computers and the Internet

## Conclusions

- The Senga is a well known figure, and integrating her into a program is compelling for youth
- Youth have specific suggestions for making the program credible and appealing
- The process of engaging youth in focus groups is an important step in the development of a culturally appropriate technology based sexuality education program for Ugandan youth

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