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## CyberSenga Dissemination Meeting

### SESSION 2: DEVELOPING CYBERSENGA: DATA INFORMING THE CONTENT

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\* Thank you for your interest in this presentation. Please note that analyses included herein are preliminary. More recent, finalized analyses may be available by contacting CiPHR for further information.

**CiPHR**  
Center for Innovative  
Public Health Research  
*Decoding how technology influences and can improve public health*



#### DEVELOPING CYBERSENGA: DATA INFORMING THE CONTENT

#### UNDERSTANDING WHY AND HOW YOUTH MAKE SEXUAL DECISIONS: FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS WITH ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS WORKING WITH YOUTH<sup>A</sup>

<sup>A</sup> Excerpts from: Katz IT, Ybarra ML, Wyatt M, Bangsberg D, Kiwanuka J, Ware N. Sociocultural and Economic Antecedents of Adolescent Sexual Decision Making in Rural Uganda. Under review.

## Methods

- In 2008, we talked to:
  - 48 adolescents (24 boys and 24 girls) and
  - 15 adults (9 women and 6 men) who work with adolescents
- The aim was to understand young people's information about HIV, the reasons why young people choose to play sex (or not) and why they use condoms (or not), and the behavioral skills they have to make healthy choices

## Reasons to play sex: Social pressure

### A desire for luxury items

*"She told me that she loves that boy – that is why she had sex with him. He takes care of her... Like he can give her everything she asks for... Like if she asks for clothes, he can buy it for her. If she says let's go out, he does not refuse, so they go out and enjoy. Like if she wants money the boy can give her such things."*

## Reasons to play sex: Social pressure

### Peer pressure

*“There is that peer influence.. Sometimes they are being laughed at by their fellow friends. There is that saying they have of, ‘others are doing it’ and those who are doing it laugh at those who are not doing it...how can you be there without a boyfriend?”*

## Reasons to play sex: Decline of the Senga

*“It may be difficult for the parents to talk about sex with their children. [Sengas] are people whom you think are able to talk with your child... And when a young person sees that old person, she will keep on following her. ... Traditionally, those are secret things. It is really secret to tell your child about sex.”*

## Reasons to play sex: Barriers to condom use

- Overtly goes against a strong cultural sanction against premarital sex.
- Cost (students do not have enough money)
- Embarrassment (being refused by the shopkeeper)
- Misunderstanding of the effectiveness of condoms
- “Bad manners” - it suggests suspicion of HIV infection, and/or multiple concurrent partnerships.

## Reasons to play sex: External locus of control

*“like when one starts...to watch blue movies - then you feel like you are the one doing it so you feel attracted and then you are tempted to go for it.”*

### Reasons to play sex: Sexual curiosity

*“They say playing sex with a lady is very good that you feel so much sweetness.”*

### Reasons to play sex: Sexual violence

*“He can be having money and he will tell the girl that [they should] go in town together to cut hair, and when they reach there, you may find that he has convinced the owner of the salon to close her in the shop and they force her to have sex.”*

### Reasons not to play sex: Knowledge of HIV transmission and modes of prevention

*“First and foremost you should avoid having sex. Secondly, you should avoid sharing sharp things to the people whether infected or not. You can also go and have the test...If they are a wife and husband and they go for a test and they find that one of them is infected, they can advise them to use a condom.”*

### Reasons not to play sex: Knowledge of HIV transmission and modes of prevention

Despite this, concerning inaccuracies – particularly around anal sex - emerged:

*...like in men you find that the man puts his penis in the other's anus during sex and here he may get the virus or not but is not at a big risk compared to when he is having sex with a woman. For a woman and a woman, these may not get it because they use fingers.”*

## Reasons not to play sex:

### Moral injunction against playing sex

*“If you go [to church] and read the Bible... like when they talk about King David who had sex with someone’s wife and God punished him by making his family commit other crimes and even the death of his son. So when you read such, you know that God does not like that, so you avoid sex such that God does not punish you.”*

## Conclusions

- Like young people all over the world, youth in Uganda are subjected to pressures to engage in risky sex.
- Socio-cultural and economic influences specific to Uganda may foster an environment where social pressure to have sex is particularly strong.
- HIV prevention programs should take social, cultural and economic influences and their complex interrelations into account.

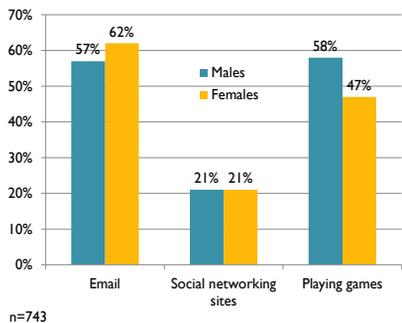
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## FINDINGS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT SURVEY

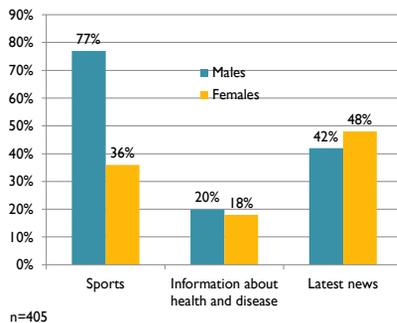
## Methods

- In 2008-2009 we surveyed 5 schools:
  - 1,508 surveys were completed
  - 62% were male
  - Youth ranged in age between 12-19+ years
- The aims were to: 1) quantify factors related to HIV information, motivation, and behavioral skills; 2) understand youth profiles based upon their sexual history; and 3) identify ‘popular opinion leaders’

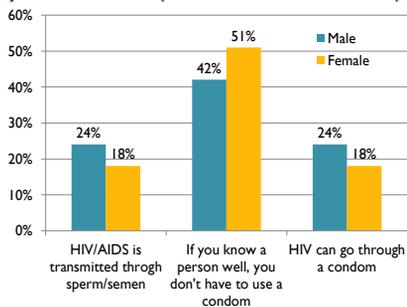
### What do you use the Internet for?



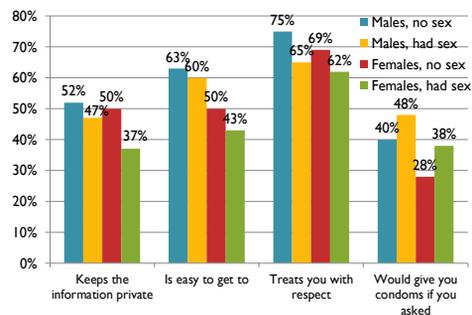
### What do you SMS about?



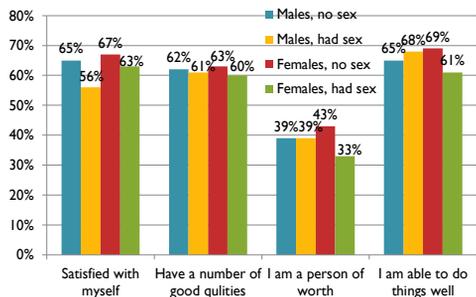
### What is your knowledge of HIV prevention (incorrect answers)



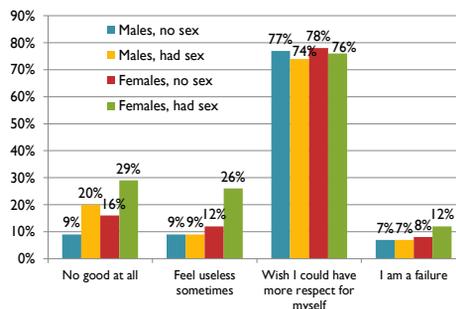
### The local health center...



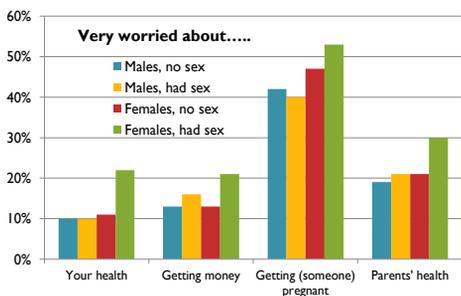
### Self esteem: positive aspects



### Self esteem: negative aspects

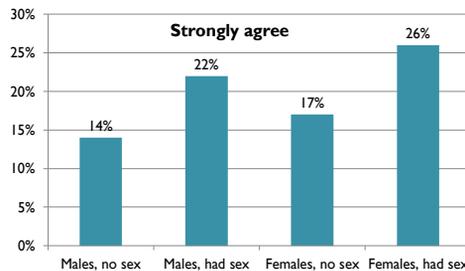


### Health Concerns

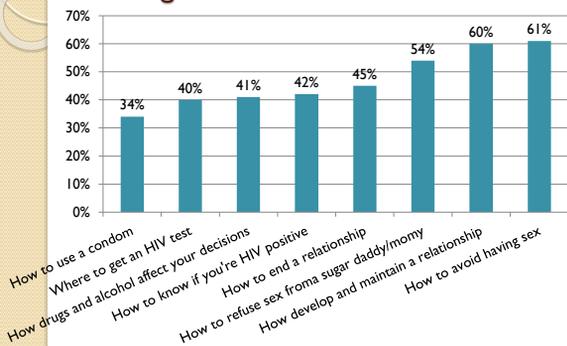


All statistically significantly different across the four groups of youth p<0.05

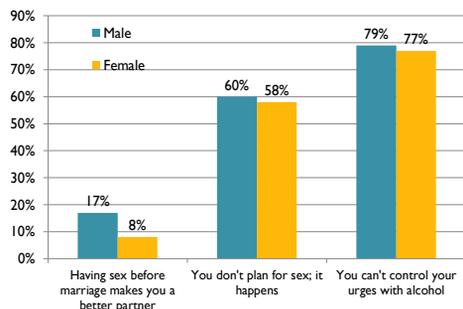
### I'm tired of hearing about HIV prevention



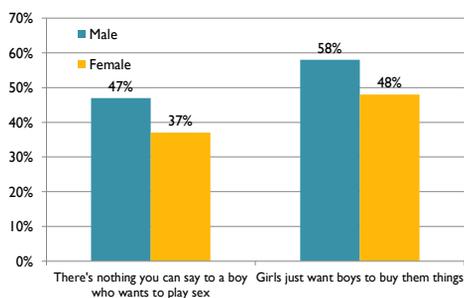
### Top 3 things youth are interested in hearing about



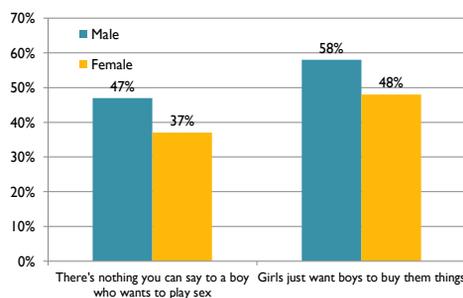
### Attitudes about sex



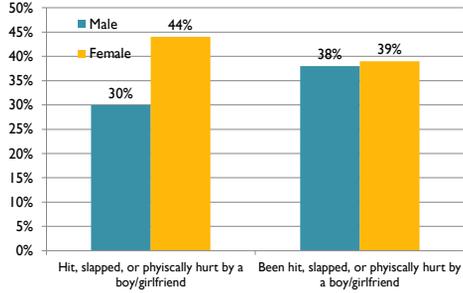
### Attitudes about coercive behavior



### Attitudes about coercive behavior



### Physical aggression in romantic relationships



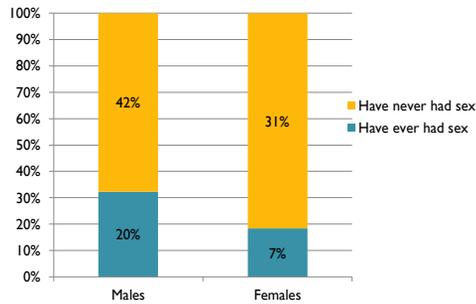
Among youth who have had a boyfriend or girlfriend (n=786)

### Gift giving to have sex\*

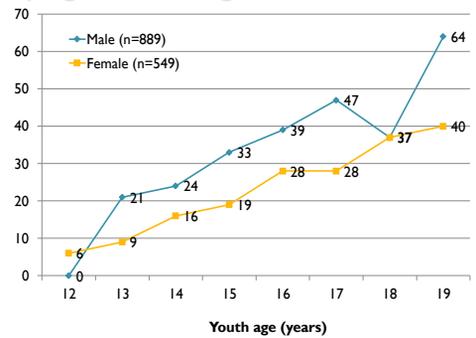


Among youth who have had sex (n=314; 327)

### Percent of youth who have ever had sex



### % of youth with sexual experience by age and biological sex



## Conclusions for design

- Given the popularity of online games, games will be important for engagement of youth
- Based upon the percent of boys who SMS for information about sports, boys' content especially needs to include sports themes

## Conclusions for content

- We need to making sure that youth know HIV is not small enough to get through a condom is important.
- Also, we need to focus on changing norms to use condoms with people youth know as well as do not know well.
- Need to start changing norms for accessing health services - especially for girls, giving specific referral information.
- Females who have had sex seem to be particularly in need of positive messaging. We need to actively promote their self-worth.

## Conclusions for content

- HIV prevention fatigue is high
  - Need to focus on fundamentals of healthy adolescence: problem solving, coping skills, etc
- Based upon what youth say they are interested in:
  - Teaching condom usage skills is not high on their list, so need to 'sell' the importance of it for everyone
  - General relationship skills are needed, e.g., how do you end a relationship if it's not going well.
  - Also, refusal skills are important: how do you avoid sex – especially if you have played sex before?

## Conclusions for content

- Directly address boys' assumption that having sex makes him a better man and a better husband.
- Talk about how drugs and alcohol impair judgment **but** that youth still can control their urges (they are responsible for their behavior).
- Gift giving is not uncommon to initiate a relationship, but it seems to be particularly common for girls who have had sex and should likely be integrated into their scenarios.
- Need to change norms for physical violence perpetration – particularly for girls.

DEVELOPING CYBERSENGA:  
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## SEXUAL COERCION IN ADOLESCENTS: VOICES FROM YOUNG PEOPLE<sup>A</sup>

<sup>A</sup> Excerpts from: Birungi R, Nabembezi D, Kiwankua J, Ybarra M, Bull S (2012). Adolescents' perceptions of sexual coercion in Uganda. American. East African Journal of Public Health. 7(1): 58-63

## Methods

- Three focus groups were conducted with 'popular opinion leaders' at partner schools
  - Two groups were conducted with boys (n=13)
  - One group was conducted with girls (n=7)
- All groups were asked the same questions
- The aim of the groups was to understand youth's experience and perceptions of coercive sex, and understand how we should address this issue in the CS content

## Verbal pressure is common

*'A situation may happen, like you are attending a function and you spend a night there, and when you are there in the night the boy tells you that — I am badly off, you need to help me — and you finally give in against your will...you have come without the intention of having sex, but you reach [there and] the person starts demanding.'*

## Coercion is perpetrated by adults

*'When you are having someone older than you, you have to give respect to that person. That person is going to fear the age of the person, and then they will keep quiet. That is where that kind of thing is going to come from...'*

### ...but not by adolescents

*'For adolescents, for them they just fall in love with each other, but I do not think that they are forced. The forced sex I know is between the adult and the young people. That one I know is where there is forced sex.'*

A few disagreed however...

*'For me, what I think even there are some adolescent boys who take girls to some extent, they force them to have sex with them.'*

### Men are perceived to be the coercers, females the victims

*'You would rather go for girls rather than boys because men have this mentality that these young girls are not infected with HIV, and then he wants to infect that girl.'*

*'For example, if you are talking to sugar mummies and sugar daddies, you find that the information [mostly] applies to girls; you should put more emphasis on [the risks that young girls face from men].'*

### Coercion can be achieved through gifts

*'In most cases you find the adult is the one approaching the adolescents; like you find that they give them small gifts like money and other gifts in order to seduce these young people.'*

*'When someone gives you a gift, obviously that person loves you, then, now you think that the next thing has to be that [sex]. You think that okay this person has given me a gift because he loves me, he cares about me, and now there are two people in a relationship; you know that love is sex — the next thing will be having sex.'*

### Coercion can be achieved by exploiting financial needs

*'Like you find the adult is assisting the adolescent in some basic needs... So you find the adolescent plays sex with an adult so that they can keep getting assistance from the adults.'*

### Coercion can be facilitated with alcohol

*'Like you can be there and you get a girl, and you get her booze and you convince her and at the end of it all, you find that they are drunk. So due to that influence of alcohol, you find that they end up playing sex.'*

### Coercion can be facilitated by adults with authority over the youth

*'There was this girl who was staying with the stepmother and the stepmother had a friend who was a man. Those people had a belief that sleeping with a young virgin girl can cure AIDS. That man has AIDS and he was a close friend to the stepmother. So the stepmother decided to give her that one whose mother is dead. She was then raped and she got infected.'*

### Victims are responsible too

*'I heard about a man who had a daughter. He used to give her the boda boda man to take her to school; so one time...the man had no time to pick the girl from school, and he sent the boda boda man to pick her [up], and the boda boda man raped the girl.'*

*Even the way girls wear [clothes] affects boys too much...because when you see a girl putting on a short skirt, it makes them feel like dying.'*

### It is difficult to talk about (and therefore report) rape

*'Okay when someone is your parent's friend, your father will begin trusting him. He can even trust him to take you to school, so through that, the friend tells you something and you wonder how you are going to tell your father, so you just keep it and in the long run you find yourself in a relationship.'*

## Conclusions for content

- Help youth identify safe places to report sexual violence
- Foster skills to think critically about the intention behind gifts, and skills to refuse unsafe gifts
- Address misconceptions:
  - Both boys *and* girls can be perpetrators
  - Adolescents can perpetrate and are more likely to be involved than adults

## Acknowledgements

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