

# Exploring the Use of Gender Scales in Predicting Contraceptive Use in Tanzania

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Population Association of America Annual Meeting, April 1, 2011, Washington, DC

## INTRODUCTION

This presentation describes preliminary findings from an ongoing operations research (OR) project in two regions in Tanzania (Dodoma, Mwanza) that tests the effectiveness of radio programming addressing gender norms in support of a community based distribution of contraceptives (CBD) program. A baseline household survey was conducted to explore gender attitudes as well as family planning (FP) knowledge and use. Findings from the baseline survey are described here.

## BACKGROUND

- Evaluation studies suggest that programs that integrate gender can lead to changes in reproductive health attitudes and behavior.<sup>1</sup>
- However, most of the programs that have documented success in transforming gender norms have been focused on HIV/AIDS or gender-based violence, or have worked with youth using multi-sectoral life skills approaches, rather than focused on FP.
- In the context of Africa, some have argued that FP programs should focus on men, because they are the traditional decision-makers in the family.<sup>2</sup> This OR project, in contrast, tests the idea that promotion of gender equity in the context of FP will lead to increases in contraceptive use.
- In keeping with this objective, the following analysis tests the hypothesis that gender scales (which measure the degree of equity in gender attitudes) are associated with contraceptive use.

## METHODS and ANALYSIS

- Source of data:** baseline household survey of 200 couples (15-49 years), including FP users and non-users.
- Measurement:** four composite gender scales; items summed to create a single score per scale, with higher scores representing more equitable gender attitudes.
- Analysis:** t-tests to compare mean scores on each gender scale for wives and husbands; and multivariate logistic regression, including wives' and husbands' gender equity scores in separate models.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To determine which gender scales, if any, predict contraceptive use.
- To determine whose gender attitudes, if anyone's, predict contraceptive use – husband's and/or wife's.

## GENDER SCALES DESCRIPTION

- Gender Equitable Men (GEM):** measures equitability of attitudes in intimate relationships in various domains including, violence, sexual relationships, reproductive health and disease prevention, and domestic chores and daily life; 24 items.
- Household Decision-Making:** measures attitudes regarding women's individual and joint decision-making in five areas; 5 items.
- Attitudes toward Wife Refusing Sex:** measures attitudes regarding a wife's refusal to have sex with her husband in four hypothetical scenarios; 4 items.
- Attitudes toward Wife Beating:** measures attitudes regarding wife beating in five hypothetical scenarios; 5 items.

## TABLE1: Average Gender Scale Scores for Wives and Husbands

Gender Scale	Wives	Husbands
Gender Equitable Men (GEM)	9.0	9.4
Household Decision-Making*	2.9	3.2
Attitudes toward Wife Refusing Sex	3.5	3.6
Attitudes toward Wife Beating***	2.0	3.4

t-test: \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

## TABLE 2: Multivariate Results: Do Gender Attitudes Predict Contraceptive Use?

Variable	Logistic Regression 1 (OR)		Logistic Regression 2 (OR)		Logistic Regression 3 (OR)		Logistic Regression 4 (OR)	
	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives
Age	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Education	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
No. of living children								
0-1 (R)								
2	2.76*	4.37**	2.71*	4.09**	2.73*	4.04**	2.76*	4.43**
3 or more	2.94*	5.74***	2.85*	5.36***	2.88*	5.03**	2.98*	5.52***
Region								
Mwanza (R)								
Dodoma	4.20***	7.06***	4.02***	4.82***	3.81***	5.48***	4.12***	6.43***
GEM	ns	1.11*	---	---	---	---	---	---
HH Decision-Making	---	---	ns	ns	---	---	---	---
Refusing Sex	---	---	---	---	ns	ns	---	---
Wife Beating	---	---	---	---	---	---	ns	1.29*

## DISCUSSION

- Overall, wives had less equitable gender attitudes, compared to husbands on all gender scales. Husbands had significantly higher average scores on the Household Decision-Making and Wife Beating scales.
- For wives, more equitable attitudes were associated with a significant increased likelihood of using contraception.
- For husbands, gender attitudes had no significant association with contraceptive use (as reported by wives).

## STUDY LIMITATIONS

- Small sample size (n=400).
- Respondents have high family planning use.

### References

- World Health Organization . (2007) *Engaging men and boys in changing gender-based inequity in health: Evidence from programme interventions*. Geneva: WHO.
- Dodoo FN. (1998) *Men Matter: Additive and Interactive Gendered Preferences and Reproductive Behavior in Kenya* . *Demography* 35(2): 229-242.

## PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

- Husbands and wives had similar scores on the GEM scale, and husbands had significantly more equitable scores on the Wife Beating scale, but only wives' scores predicted contraceptive use. (*Why?*)
- We know from other studies that age, parity, and education are commonly associated with contraceptive use. (In our analysis, among these correlates only parity was significant, and highly so.) This analysis shows that gender attitudes have predictive power even after controlling for known correlates of FP.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study was made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the terms of Cooperative Agreement No. GPO-A-00-07-00004-00. The contents are the responsibility of the C-Change program, managed by AED, and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.