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1. Introduction
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Introduction: A Compendium of Gender Scales

The identification of appropriate gender-related measures is important for developing and evaluating interventions that aim to promote positive health outcomes by addressing the gender norms that function as barriers to health.

Gender has been posited as a gateway factor to behaviors that affect health outcomes and health status. While gender norms and power dynamics between men and women have been studied in context of HIV and gender-based violence, less is known about their role in contraceptive use and their influence on reproductive health behaviors. C-Change (Communication for Change) has been exploring the impact of gender on family planning and the validity of current gender scales in predicting contraceptive use.

**WHAT IS A SCALE?**
A scale is a numerical score aggregating multiple indicators believed to reflect an underlying concept. Because there is no single “gold standard” for measuring gender norms, gender attitudes, women’s empowerment, and other aspects of gender, researchers often use multiple measures. Using a single measure is not possible because gender operates in multiple spheres and has many facets. When a single measure is preferred, a scale combining several items creates a more valid measure than any single scale item used alone.

**WHY A COMPREHENDIUM OF GENDER SCALES?**
In March 2010, C-Change convened a working group of researchers with expert knowledge of gender scales to review those scales in current use. The participants identified scales that measure adherence to gender norms and reviewed how they have been used to measure the success of interventions in changing these norms.

The working group enthusiastically supported the creation of an online compendium of gender scales. They saw the value of making it easily accessible by health and development practitioners, who may want to use these tools to assess gender-related attitudes and beliefs and evaluate their interventions. Scales selected for the compendium have all been tested for their ability to measure gender attitudes and predict behaviors of interest, such as gender-based violence and partner reduction. The scales include those developed by working group participants as well as other scales they identified.

The compendium is not exhaustive. It does not encompass all scales appropriate for studying gender and health outcomes, and it does not identify which scale is best for a specific study or evaluation.
WHICH GENDER SCALES ARE INCLUDED?
The following gender scales are included in this compendium:

1. Couple Communication on Sex
2. Women’s Empowerment
3. Gender Beliefs
4. Gender Equitable Men
5. Gender Norm Attitudes
6. Gender Relations
7. Household Decision-Making
8. Sexual Relationship Power

WHAT TYPE OF INFORMATION IS PROVIDED FOR EACH GENDER SCALE?
Each gender scale in this compendium includes the following information, when available:

Scale objective: The purpose of the scale

Type(s) of behavior or outcomes predicted: Behaviors or outcomes the scale aims to predict (such as gender-based violence)

Types of items the scale includes: Domains for the items in the scale

Number of items and subscales: Number of items in the scale and number of subscales, if any

Scoring procedures: Procedures followed for scoring response options to scale items

Psychometrics used: Types of statistical approaches used to construct the items in the scale, such as internal consistency (the extent to which items in a scale are correlated with one another or measure the same thing) and factor analysis (a method that reduces a large number of variables or factor to a smaller number)

Type(s) of statistics used to test predictive validity: Which statistics, if any, were used to test how well the scale predicts the behavior it aims to predict

Used with women/used with men: Whether the scale has been used with one or both genders

Country/countries where tested or applied: Locations where the scale was tested or adapted

Additional information: Relevant information not otherwise covered, including definitions and more information on the construction of the scale

Source: Citations on the development of the scale and/or its adaptation or modification
Women’s Empowerment Scale
Women’s Empowerment Scale

**SCALE OBJECTIVE**
To measure women’s empowerment, defined as the ability to exercise agency and acquire resources within a context of gender inequality.

**TYPE(S) OF BEHAVIOR OR OUTCOMES PREDICTED**
Current contraceptive use

**TYPES OF ITEMS INCLUDED**
- Women’s mobility
- Women’s freedom from family domination
- Women’s economic security and contribution to family support

**NUMBER OF ITEMS AND SUBSCALES**
18 items, 3 subscales

**WOMEN’S MOBILITY SUBSCALE ITEMS**
- Have you ever been to the bazaar?
- Have you ever been there alone?
- Have you ever been to the hospital/clinic/doctor?
- Have you ever gone there alone?
- Have you ever gone to the cinema?
- Have you ever gone there alone?
- Have you ever gone outside the village?
- Have you ever gone there alone?

**SCORING PROCEDURES**
Each respondent was given 1 point for each place she had visited and an additional point if she had ever gone there alone. The scale ranged from 0 to 8 and was employed as a continuous variable.

**FREEDOM FROM FAMILY DOMINATION SUBSCALE ITEMS**
Have any of the following happened to you in the past 12 months?
- Husband/other family member took your money when you didn’t want him to.
- Husband/other family member took your land/jewelry/poultry/livestock when you didn’t want him to.
- Husband/other family member prevented you from visiting your parents.
- Husband/other family member prevented you from working outside the home.

**SCORING PROCEDURES**
A woman was classified as “empowered” and coded as 1 if she said that none of these things had happened to her. The category “not empowered,” was coded as 0.
ECONOMIC SECURITY AND CONTRIBUTION SUBSCALE ITEMS
• Do you, in your own name, own any land, your homestead land, or your house?
• Do you yourself own any productive assets (for example, cattle or sewing machine)?
• Do you have any cash savings?
• Have you ever used your savings for business or money-lending?
• Of your total household expenses, what proportion is met through your own earnings?

SCORING PROCEDURES
Two variables were used in an earlier analysis. Economic security was based on a scale from 0 to 4. One point was assigned for each of the following: if a woman owned her house or homestead land; owned any productive asset; had her own cash savings; and her savings were ever used for business or money-lending. A woman with a score of 2 or better was classified as empowered. Contribution to family support measured whether the respondent said she provided all, most, half, or some of her family’s support, as opposed to very little or none.

Because preliminary analyses indicated that economic security and contribution to family support were closely related, the two variables were combined into one. Women were coded as 1 if they had positive scores on economic security, contribution to family support, or both. Women who did not have positive scores on either variable were coded as 0. Several combinations of dummy variables were tried, but these variables worked as well or better than several more complex configurations.

PSYCHOMETRICS USED IN SCALE CONSTRUCTION
None

TYPE(S) OF STATISTICS USED TO TEST PREDICTIVE VALIDITY
Logistic regression

USED WITH WOMEN
Yes

USED WITH MEN
No

COUNTRY OR COUNTRIES WHERE TESTED OR APPLIED
Bangladesh

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
The construction of the scale was based on a literature review; ethnographic interviews and observation; and interviews with staff of credit programs, women’s groups, and NGOs. Mobility, the first subscale, intends to tap into women’s agency, while the second subscale, women’s freedom from family domination, more accurately represents a lack of agency or ability to exercise agency. The third subscale, women’s economic security, is meant to tap into two related aspects of empowerment: women’s resources and their capacities. These scales are intended to be culture-specific. Specific items in each of them should be reviewed and adapted before attempting to use them in a new setting.

SOURCE(S)