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“ They Just Whisper in Their Hearts That He's Doing a Bad Thing” : A Qualitative Study of Tanzanian Perceptions of Cross-Generational Sex

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“They Just Whisper in Their Hearts That He’s Doing a Bad Thing”: A Qualitative Study of Tanzanian Perceptions of Cross-Generational Sex

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HIV prevalence among young Tanzanian women is twice that of men, and risk doubles if a partner is ten or more years older. Cross-generational sex (CGS) is typified by transactions, economic asymmetries, power differentials, and inconsistent condom use. By investigating perceptions of CGS in families, schools, and communities, this study explored the role each plays in addressing or condoning CGS and where interventions are needed. Qualitative data were collected in Tanzania’s Iringa and Pwani regions after a campaign to reduce CGS. Community leaders suggested key informants and provided household lists used to randomly select participants. Individual interviews were conducted with 20 women (M age = 20.7, SD = 3.1, range = 15 to 26) and 20 men (M age = 37.1, SD = 7.3, range = 30 to 56), focus groups with 15 women (M age = 20.4, SD = 2.9, range = 17 to 25) and 26 men (M age = 39.2, SD = 7.9, range = 30 to 55), and key informant focus groups with 10 women (M age = 47.6, SD = 10, range = 37 to 70) and 16 men (M age = 55.5, SD = 9.5, range = 37 to 67). CGS was viewed as detrimental to girls’ education and a financial loss to parents, but barriers, including reluctance to approach parents and older men, prevented community action. Interventions may involve community leaders transcending restrictions on confronting older men and promoting communication between teachers, communities, parents, and young women regarding CGS.

Globally, women are more likely than men to become infected with HIV due to biological vulnerability and gender inequalities such as the low socioeconomic and political status of women, lack of access to education, limited ability to negotiate safer sex, and gender-based violence (Gregson et al., 2002; UNAIDS, 2010). According to UNAIDS, three-quarters of all women with HIV live in sub-Saharan Africa. Cross-generational sex

(CGS) is considered a contributing factor to young women’s high vulnerability to HIV in the region, as older men have higher HIV rates than do adolescent men (Gregson et al., 2002; Kelly et al., 2003), and condom use and communication about HIV are uncommon within these relationships (Luke & Kurz, 2002). While there is no standard definition for CGS, researchers have suggested a definition of nonmarital relationships with an age difference of ten or more years to examine the high risk of HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) these relationships present (Kelly et al., 2003; Luke, 2005).

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CGS and Sexual Risk

Researchers have found a negative correlation between condom use and partnerships with age and economic asymmetries (Luke, 2005; Silberschmidt & Rasch, 2001). A study in Uganda found that, among women aged 15 to 19, the risk of HIV infection doubled if their partners were ten or more years older,

compared with those whose partners were zero to four years older (Kelly et al., 2003). In general, young women who form sexual partnerships with older or employed men who likely have large numbers of previous partners or other concurrent partners are at greater risk of HIV infection (Gregson et al., 2002). These women also often have concurrent partners similar to their own age, making the sexual risk more complex. Because of their transactional nature, cross-generational partnerships are usually of short duration, since gifts diminish as the relationship progresses (Wamoyi, Wight, Plummer, Mshana, & Ross, 2010). This gives women incentive for partner change to maximize the gifts they receive, leading to greater numbers of partners (Maganja, Maman, Groves, & Mbwapo, 2007; Wamoyi, Fenwick, Urassa, Zaba, & Stones, 2011).

Adolescent girls in sexual partnerships with much older men tend to have less sexual negotiation power. Transactional, intergenerational partnerships are characterized by an expectation that sex will take place. If a man gives a young woman gifts or money, he feels entitled to sex and may use force to obtain it (Maganja et al., 2007). Several qualitative studies have found that both women and men in such contexts often regard the woman's body as a commodity (Wamoyi et al., 2010; Wamoyi et al., 2011). While women may use their bodies for economic negotiations at the beginning of the relationship, once sexual behavior is initiated women's sexual power and control over condom use decreases.

In Tanzania, Wamoyi and colleagues (2011) found that men equated women's demand for money to power. Older participants reported that in the past, men did not have to negotiate for sex and were not expected to give women anything in return, signaling that the transactional nature of partnerships is relatively new. There is also a degree of selectivity for women at the beginning of a relationship, as she chooses her partner and dictates the price for sex. As the relationship continues, men decide on such issues as condom use and amounts exchanged. A main factor for skewed power differentials is that older men are often in positions of power, with many as schoolteachers, bankers, or government officials; associated economic asymmetries put women at a disadvantage in negotiating sexual terms (Maganja et al., 2007; Mgalla, Schapink, & Ties Boerma, 1998).

The Study Setting and Cultural Context of CGS

The estimated national HIV prevalence among Tanzanian women aged 15 to 24 is 3.9%, more than twice that of men of the same age (UNAIDS, 2010). The Tanzania Commission for AIDS (TACAIDS, 2008) lists CGS as one of the five drivers of the country's

HIV rate. According to national statistics, 8% of Tanzanian women aged 15 to 19 reported engaging in CGS in the past 12 months, with prevalence highest among urban women and those with no education, at 10% and 18%, respectively (TACAIDS, Zanzibar AIDS Commission, National Bureau of Statistics, Office of the Chief Government Statistician, Macro International Inc., 2008). CGS may also be more common among some groups of women, such as those who have abortions. In a study of women aged 15 to 19 undergoing illegal abortions in Dar es Salaam, 45% reported having partners aged 30 to 39, and 27.5% reported partners over age 40 (Silberschmidt & Rasch, 2001).

In Tanzania, many young women's sexual relationships are in large part under the authority of their parents, who negotiate bride wealth from the groom's family in exchange for their daughter's productive and reproductive capacity. One study showed the illegitimacy of premarital sex can be viewed in terms of the man's failure to provide payment to the woman's family in exchange for this relationship, and the harm to her sexual reputation, which determines her marriage eligibility (Wight et al., 2006). For transactional sex, it was not the material exchange but the absence of wealth transfer to the woman's parents which was frowned on (Wight et al., 2006).

In her review of ethnographic records of CGS in Southern Africa, Leclerc-Madlala (2008) found that age gaps in relationships have not historically been considered contentious in any context, as young women were traditionally engaged in rituals at puberty to prepare them for marriage. She reported that young women were encouraged to seek older partners, who were viewed as better positioned to facilitate a stable marriage through their wealth and authority. Further, men of higher socioeconomic status were traditionally expected to redistribute their wealth through practices such as polygyny; as the prevalence of these practices declined, multiple partnerships and cross-generational transactional relationships may have in part served a similar purpose (Leclerc-Madlala, 2008). Leclerc-Madlala (2008) described how these relationships exist within a system of long-standing cultural norms for men to share resources and convey their love and commitment through material gifts, and for women to view their sexuality as a resource, with gifts affirming their worth and their partners' devotion.

Though laws against CGS to protect girls have been developed in Tanzania and carry severe sentences, enforcing these laws in practice is a challenge. Sex with a woman under age 18 is considered rape and carries a minimum sentence of 30 years imprisonment, as does taking advantage of one's position of authority to force women into sexual relationships (Penal Code, 2002). Similarly, offering money, gifts, or benefits to a girl or her parents with the intent to engage her in a sexual relationship is against the law (Penal Code, 2002).

However, victims are required to prove penetration, which is virtually impossible without forensic evidence, and survivors may be averse to subjecting perpetrators to long prison terms when they know the individuals well (Betron, 2008). Furthermore, in Uganda, Parikh (2012) found that, following the amendment of the Defilement Law to raise the age of consent to 18 in an effort to reduce CGS, those who were prosecuted were young, lower-class men in consensual relationships. Rather than successfully protecting young women, the law served to excessively regulate their sexuality.

Motives for Cross-Generational Sexual Partnerships

Despite the illegality of CGS in Tanzania, strong social incentives for engaging in CGS persist. Research has shown that men's primary reasons for initiating CGS are sexual desire, affirmation of masculinity, and peer pressure (Cockcroft et al., 2010; Maganja et al., 2007; Wight et al., 2006), and a perception that adolescent girls are unlikely to infect them with HIV/STIs because they have had fewer sexual partners (Gregson et al., 2002; Longfield, Glick, Waithaka, & Berman, 2004). In Tanzania, men's social respectability among other men increases with sexual activity, and having multiple partners is seen as a sign of masculinity and wealth (Wight et al., 2006). In Southeastern Nigeria, Smith (2007) found that men's extramarital affairs were associated with an expression of masculinity closely intertwined with their economic capacity to support additional partners, particularly modern young women. In Papua New Guinea, migrant laborers entered a culture that normalized and embraced these relationships as an assertion of modern masculinity among male peers (Wardlow, 2007). Both Smith and Wardlow found that men viewed their affairs as independent of marital satisfaction. Extramarital sexual partnerships are widespread in some parts of Tanzania. In a study conducted in the rural Kisesa ward in Mwanza Region of Tanzania, 40% of married men reported having nonmarital partners (Nnko, Boerma, Urassa, Mwaluko, & Zaba, 2004).

Studies have characterized young women involved in CGS in two disparate ways: as victims, either seduced or forced into sex by older men (Matasha et al., 1998; Mgalla et al., 1998; Poulin, 2007), and as active social agents who enter sexual partnerships with older men for financial and material gains (Silberschmidt & Rasch, 2001). The primary motivation to engage in CGS is financial, while intentions for marriage, love, and sexual desire are secondary or nonexistent (Longfield, 2004; Silberschmidt & Rasch, 2001). In Kenya, Longfield and colleagues (2004) found that, in some cases, as little as the equivalent of 25 cents was enough to convince a young woman to engage in CGS.

Another influential factor for girls who engage in CGS is peer pressure; the number and quality of commodities received can affect a girl's social respectability among her peers (Silberschmidt & Rasch, 2001; Wight et al., 2006). Girls who receive a small gift or nothing for sex are perceived as having low self-worth and "easy to get" (Wamoyi et al., 2010; Wight et al., 2006). In general, girls were aware of the health risks associated with entering into these relationships, including STIs and unintended pregnancies, and they accepted their partners' lack of condom use because of the financial benefits received (Silberschmidt & Rasch, 2001; Wamoyi et al., 2011). Some research has indicated that as the gift value increases in such relationships, the likelihood of condom use decreases (Luke, 2005).

Despite the incentives for engaging in CGS, many young women may avoid these relationships. An exploration of the factors that might lead young women to refuse CGS is absent from the literature. The current study sought to compare the experiences of young women who accepted CGS to those who refused in order to gain a deeper understanding of protective factors that may translate to preventive interventions. In some cases, a young woman's parents tacitly condone or even encourage these relationships due to the economic gains received from the partnership (Wight et al., 2006). This study explored the perceptions surrounding parental attitudes toward CGS and their roles in its initiation or termination in order to identify how best to incorporate parents in interventions. While much has been done to understand men's involvement in CGS, there is insufficient literature on fathers' views of CGS. Further, exploring current community views of men and women who engage in CGS will be useful to understand how such perceptions play into community efficacy to prevent or intervene in these relationships. This study aimed to address this gap.

The Fataki Campaign

Recognizing the barrier that incentives for CGS engagement create to individual behavior change, a mass media campaign was implemented in Tanzania from late 2008 to early 2011 that attempted to reduce the social acceptance of these relationships. The campaign sought to address CGS and thus HIV by raising awareness about the issue and calling for action from communities and families to protect young women and intervene in their relationships with much older men (Ogden & Bergmann, 2010). It assigned the label *Fataki* for older men who engage in sexual relationships with much younger women, a term which has since achieved widespread use in the Tanzanian lexicon. *Fataki* is Swahili for "explosive," a word which carries connotations of damage and killing. By developing a character named "Fataki," a man who preys on young girls for

sex, the campaign hoped to encourage Tanzanians to view such men in a negative light and recognize the dangers they pose (Johns Hopkins University Center for Communication Programs, 2011). This study arose from data collected to evaluate the Fataki campaign.

Overall, the current study aimed to gain an understanding of the current views of men and women at risk of CGS, as well as the perceptions of community leaders, in order to identify attitudes and actors to target or leverage for future messaging or community-based interventions for HIV prevention. It explored how CGS relationships develop and persist within the context of families, schools, and communities, and how each of these actors addresses or condones CGS. A better understanding of the views of CGS and the successes in and persisting challenges to confronting CGS will provide insight into where further interventions may target efforts. Results of the Fataki campaign evaluation are reported elsewhere (Kaufman et al., 2013).

Method

Data were collected in March 2011, two years after the start of the Fataki campaign. In-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted in urban and rural communities in the Iringa and Pwani regions of Tanzania with a total of 107 participants. These regions were selected for their high HIV prevalence (15.7% and 6.7%, respectively; TACAIDS et al., 2008). Two teams collected data; each team consisted of four local research facilitators and a supervisor, all trained on the study protocol and ethical treatment of human subjects. Ethical approval was obtained from the National Institute for Medical Research in Dar es Salaam and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health Institutional Review Board.

Participants

Table 1 shows the ages, residences, and education levels of participants. FGDs and IDIs were conducted with women aged 15 to 26 and men aged 30 to 56. These age groups reflected the approximate ages of individuals in CGS relationships so as to explore the views of a representative sample of community members who are at risk for (but not necessarily experienced with) CGS. To increase the likelihood that participants had experience with CGS, all FGD participants, except for community leaders, must have had sex within the past year (although this was not a requirement for IDIs). Five single-sex FGDs were conducted with 26 men (M age = 39.2, SD = 7.9, range = 30 to 55) and 15 women (M age = 20.4, SD = 2.9, range = 17 to 25), each FGD with 7 to 10 participants. IDIs were conducted with 20 men (M age = 37.1, SD = 7.3, range = 30 to 56) and 20

Table 1. *Participant Characteristics*

Characteristic	Men		Women	
Age breakdown	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
IDIs	37.1	7.3	20.7	3.1
FGDs	39.2	7.9	20.4	2.9
Key informant FGDs	55.5	9.5	47.6	10.0
Education breakdown	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Primary school	56	90	28	62
Secondary school	6	20	16	36
Higher education	0	0	0	0
Certificate of secretarial	0	0	1	2
Residence	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Rural	32	52	21	47
Urban	30	48	24	53
Total participants	62		45	

Note. FGD = focus group discussion; IDI = in-depth interview.

women (M age = 20.7, SD = 3.1, range = 15 to 26). In addition, three mixed-gender FGDs were conducted with key informants, including 10 women (M age = 47.6, SD = 10, range = 37 to 70) and 16 men (M age = 55.5, SD = 9.5, range = 37 to 67). Key informants included community leaders, schoolteachers, and religious leaders. It was thought that these leaders could speak to how CGS is perceived and treated by the broader community, beyond those at risk.

Sampling

Community entry was facilitated through meetings with community leaders with approval from district medical officers, who provided introduction letters to present to village authorities. In the villages, team leaders introduced the study to community leaders, and after approval it was announced in larger community meetings. Community leaders provided the research supervisor with a list of households, from which team leaders randomly selected households to be approached. Participants within households were randomly selected using a Kish grid, a preassigned table of random numbers (Kish, 1965), assuming the household met the selection criteria (age range, sexual experience in the past year). Informed consent was obtained first from heads of households, followed by participants, who were consented in a private location. Community leaders provided suggestions for key informant FGD participants based on who may be in a position to provide information on how CGS was viewed in the community. There were no refusals to participate in this study.

Measures and Procedure

Data were collected using semi-structured interview guides. All IDIs and FGDs were conducted in Swahili by gender-matched local field-workers trained on the objectives of the study and the research protocol. IDIs

were conducted in participants' homes or other private locations. FGDs were conducted in public places such as community centers or classrooms. Incentives were not offered to participants; however, FGD participants were provided with refreshments and a small stipend to cover transport costs.

After clarifying that they did not play a part in the design of the Fataki campaign but were simply seeking an understanding of participants' experiences with CGS and opinions of the campaign, data collection team members asked IDI and FGD participants about their perceptions of men and women who engage in CGS, personal stories of being involved in CGS or of others involved, the benefits and risks of CGS to men and women, the impact of CGS on the community, and stories of intervention in CGS relationships (see the appendix for a sample interview guide). CGS was defined as a nonmarital relationship with an age difference of ten or more years. A lack of judgment by the interviewers regarding the information relayed by the participants was stressed repeatedly throughout the interviews in order to decrease desirability bias.

IDIs and FGDs were audio-recorded, transcribed, and translated into English for coding and analysis. Using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), perceptions and experiences were classified and interpreted. A codebook was created based on the interview guide, which included broad themes such as CGS interventions, stories of being approached by Fatakis, and social ills of CGS. Second, the data were categorized by sub-themes that emerged from each broader category in order to analyze the variation in perception and experience across participants.

Two researchers coded the data autonomously using the same conditions of Atlas.ti qualitative analysis software, and intercoder reliability was assessed at >85% agreement of all coded excerpts. The coders then compared and discussed their interpretations until reaching full agreement.

Results

Perceptions of Young Women Who Engage in CGS

Two distinctly different characterizations of young women who engaged in CGS emerged in the IDIs and FGDs with both men and women: that of the innocent and naive schoolgirl, deceived by false promises, and that of the ill-disciplined, promiscuous seductress. The first perception may have been more a product of one of the depictions from the Fataki campaign—which portrayed a young schoolgirl preyed upon by the conniving Fataki character—than a preexisting attitude. For example, in an FGD with young women in the Pwani Region, participant characterizations of the innocent, unsuspecting schoolgirl arose during discussion of

the campaign: “The girl can board [a Fataki’s motorcycle] thinking that it is just a lift, that he is a good man” (female, age 17, Pwani Region, FGD). As the discussion progressed beyond the campaign, the second, more negative characterization of young women as active initiators of CGS emerged: “She will be roaming around in the village, she will be walking, shaking her rear part, and she will be doing that to draw men’s attention” (female, age 17, Pwani Region, FGD).

Some participants explained that girls who have CGS could not be generalized, considering the diversity of their behaviors, motivations, and circumstances. Some characterized girls in the context of their impoverished environment and limited options, acquiescing to CGS to obtain desperately needed financial support, such as food, school fees, or employment. Others described girls as greedy and unsatisfied with what their parents could offer, seeking to keep up with friends and acquire social status through modern material items. Many described girls as disrespectful, reasoning that their intimate relationships with older men and the income they begin to generate blurred the line between youth and elders and degraded the authority of the latter. Girls were sometimes characterized as adopting an air of arrogance as a result of their increased spending abilities and material wealth. These participants described how girls took on a blasé attitude and refused to heed the cautions of parents or friends who advised them to end their relationships. Nearly all who mentioned girls’ economic status, however, described them as low income. Despite variations in perceptions of girls, there was general consensus among men and women that the decision to engage in CGS is made in the context of insufficient opportunities for girls to earn an independent income.

Personal Accounts of CGS Relationships

Though the financial stability Fatakis offered was significant, girls’ accounts of the nature of their CGS relationships were starkly different from the perceptions of others. While others viewed CGS as a somewhat basic financial arrangement, the five female participants with CGS experience recounted the emotional investment and long-term commitment they had put forth. For example, many participants expressed the perception that girls have young partners whom they seek to marry but use Fatakis for short-term transactional sex to obtain income or specific items. In contrast, girls who engaged in CGS reported that they intended to marry these older men, were initially unaware of the men’s wives or other partners, and tended to break off the relationships upon realizing they had been misled. Some of these relationships lasted for several years. Girls with CGS experience viewed older men as financially stable, viable marriage partners, evidenced by several accounts of marriages to significantly older men after their previous CGS relationships failed.

The age of these young women at the time of their CGS relationships ranged from 13 to early 20s; most were students, though one was a market vendor, and were approached at neutral places such as church or their place of work. Girls reported they did not accept CGS at first but met with the men on multiple occasions before agreeing to engage in a relationship. Some described how they eventually consented after repeated gift giving or outings. Often the initial sexual encounter was described as “forced,” though over time the sexual relationship began to feel normal. One participant explained that despite getting used to sexual intercourse with a much older man, a sense of immorality lingered, though another described how she began to enjoy the sexual relationship.

Girls described developing emotional attachments to these older men and the pain they endured when they discovered the men’s affairs. For the young women, these relationships carried elements of love and commitment, as well as betrayal and loss. When girls reflected on their relationships, they frequently expressed feeling deceived and doubted whether their sentiments had been shared by their partners: “It was cheating, using sweet words like ‘I love you,’ while he never did” (female, age 25, Iringa Region, IDI). One young woman viewed her partner’s financial gifts as an exchange for her loyalty and love, and realized only later, when she discovered his affairs with others, that he was “wasting time” and did not intend to marry her. Regret was a common sentiment, particularly when CGS resulted in pregnancy and discontinued education.

Girls with CGS experience frequently reported the same negative views of young women who engage in CGS as did the other participants, suggesting they had internalized these social norms and that self-presentation (Goffman, 1959) may have influenced their depictions of their own CGS relationships, such as by de-emphasizing financial incentives. They justified their own involvement in various ways: a mistake made during their naive youth, rather than a current behavior; force or bribery to have sex; defensible financial support; their intention to marry; and deception surrounding the men’s motives.

Personal Accounts of Refusing CGS

For some young women, however, the knowledge of such negative perceptions of girls who engage in CGS, and the fear of damage to their reputation, was a powerful disincentive. They reported that girls involved in CGS were disgraced in their communities, and since Fatakis were often married, girls were resented for intruding upon another woman’s marriage.

Indeed, advances from Fatakis were experienced frequently by female participants, but many reported refusing from the outset. Those who refused often mentioned a discomfort with age gaps and an absence of love, trust, and attraction as their reasons for disinterest.

Some also mentioned feelings of obligation to parents, who made sacrifices to invest in their schooling to focus on their education and avoid the risk of pregnancy and disease:

Parents tighten their budget, they don’t even wear good clothes so that they [can] save for your school fees. Then today Fataki gets you pregnant, or he infects you with AIDS. You will get the ARVs [antiretrovirals] that will prolong your life, but your mother will still be unsatisfied. (Female, age 17, Pwani Region, IDI)

Some of the women who engaged in CGS had on other occasions refused it, suggesting that specific characteristics of the men who approached them or the context of the advances influenced their decisions to accept or refuse. For example, while girls who accepted CGS reported they hoped the relationship would evolve into marriage, girls who described refusals often mentioned their knowledge of the men’s wives or children to qualify their lack of appeal.

Some women who refused CGS mentioned having communicated with a mother or female caregiver about the risk of HIV and avoiding Fatakis. One described how recalling these conversations had helped her resist the temptation she faced when a Fataki offered her cash. These women were particularly successful in fending off insistent Fatakis who made repeated advances by threatening to inform parents if harassment continued.

Several male and female participants noted how girls of the same low socioeconomic status differed in their abilities to reject offers from Fatakis and attributed these differences to family “upbringing.” Parents were perceived to influence decisions by equipping young women with the shrewdness to recognize the danger of the situation and refuse the temptation CGS presents. Many asserted that it was indeed the role of parents to discourage their daughters from engaging in CGS and to intervene when such relationships developed.

Parents and CGS

The emphasis on parental responsibility for their daughters’ CGS partnerships may be rooted in a number of cultural traditions surrounding marriage, sexual education, and the consequences of pregnancy for a young woman’s family. While participants across all groups reported opposition to CGS and Fatakis in particular, several key informants offered insight into the source of their vilification and its link to the parents of the young women involved. In Tanzania, where many marriages are arranged by the bride’s parents, cultural norms in some areas dictate that a man seeking to initiate a sexual relationship with a young woman should first obtain her parents’ consent; otherwise, the relationship takes on an illicit nature. Key informants articulated that the Fataki label, used disparagingly by

all participants to describe older men who engage in CGS, marks their disregard for the tradition of seeking permission. The age difference was less important. As long as parental consent was sought, older men with young partners would not be characterized as Fatakis.

Key informants explained that even in cases where sexual relationships were initiated without permission and the young woman was impregnated, the Fataki label was fluid, and men who upheld their responsibilities by agreeing to marriage would no longer be considered unlawful. However, participants in all groups reported that this was rarely the case in CGS. Pregnancy was commonly the catalyst for a Fataki to leave the CGS relationship, out of fear of being implicated in an illicit partnership with a student or an inability to shoulder the responsibility for child care while also supporting his existing family.

As CGS was typically associated with unprotected sex and resulting pregnancy, key informants and male participants frequently referred to these relationships as a loss to parents who invested in their daughters' schooling. An early pregnancy restricts a daughter's earning potential and places a financial burden on parents to care for an additional child. The impact of CGS on girls' education was a dominant theme across all participants and typified Fatakis' destructiveness. Descriptions regarding the illegality of CGS typically specified relationships involving students, as opposed to young women in general, and young women commonly mentioned how CGS presented a barrier to their education. One male key informant explained that as the appreciation for the societal and familial benefits of educating young women has risen over time, social acceptance of CGS has decreased.

Some male participants expressed anger and frustration with Fatakis for targeting youth because they feared their own daughters would be victimized. They explained it was difficult to fathom how a Fataki, who may himself be a parent, was capable of harming children. Further, they expressed the view that when Fataki behaviors are condoned, all children are made vulnerable, and perpetrators potentially become victims if their own children are targeted:

They should stop it because what they do to others' children will also be done to theirs. (Male, age 33, Iringa Region, IDI)

I hate when an adult is dating a young child, I personally hate that. It hurts me because I have two daughters. (Male, age 34, Iringa Region, IDI)

CGS was described as a family issue across participants. Many expressed discomfort with interfering in CGS relationships that did not involve their families and reported that parents should enforce strict rules for their daughters. This view was particularly strong among key informants, who asserted that parents should take greater responsibility for their daughters'

relationships by teaching them to avoid CGS, monitoring their whereabouts, and questioning the source of their daughters' gifts: "The parents are the ones who take that responsibility to follow up their children's movements. . . . The community has no responsibility to take action against other people's children" (female, age 19, Pwani Region, FGD).

The perception that girls' involvement in CGS should be blamed on parents was linked by an older male key informant to the disintegration of traditional initiation ceremonies, where pubescent girls are taught sexual and reproductive health and are prepared for the roles of adulthood. He described the thoroughness and honesty of the information imparted and how these lessons would function as a protective mechanism against CGS. He suggested that similar lessons for young men could serve to prevent them from initiating CGS as adults. As formal school systems in Tanzania have not included such forms of sexual education into their curriculum, parents may be expected to take on this responsibility in the absence of traditional ceremonies. However, key informants implied parents may be uncomfortable replicating the explicit conversations about sexuality that have been historically conducted by elders who taught these ceremonial lessons.

While participants assigned parents the responsibility to intervene in CGS, they acknowledged that parents may not be aware of their daughters' relationships. Yet participants feared relaying observations to parents would be met with defensiveness, denial, and hostility because of the negative image surrounding young women who engage in CGS:

You may report it to the parents, but instead they will say that you want to overprotect their child. (Male, age 40, Iringa Region, IDI)

This can create conflict between the parent and the one trying to report the girl. (Male, age 31, Pwani Region, IDI)

Further, they described how the ambiguity of parent roles in young women's relationships creates an unwillingness among community members to come forward, as parents may condone the behavior: "No one is ready to face another person's child and start educating her. They will not say a word, because no one will know whether the parents know and do not want to take action" (male, age 31, Pwani Region). Some explained the quiet acceptance of CGS as a result of the pressure of poverty, particularly among parents who benefited financially from their daughters' participation: "For instance, a girl can ask her mother for soap, and she may tell her go and find it yourself. So in what situation does she put her daughter when she tells her to go out and find soap?" (female, age 22, Pwani Region, IDI).

The notion of parent complicity was not present in accounts from girls with CGS experience. These

participants reported hiding their relationships from their parents, whom they knew would disapprove, and expressed the opinion that parents in general would be distraught by their daughters' involvement in CGS. One young woman described how she took eggs her Fataki brought her to a friend's house to fry in order to avoid questions from her parents. She used his cash gifts to purchase undergarments, which could be hidden from her parents' view.

Key informants and older male participants who mentioned their own daughters echoed this finding. They expressed concern that their daughters could engage in CGS beneath their radar and were distressed by the difficulty of preventing it, considering the secrecy and financial incentives surrounding these relationships. Some mentioned that often the only way to discover their daughters' relationships was if a community member informed them. As long as girls were receiving material benefits from CGS, they would have no incentive to expose their relationships:

How can [girls] decide to report [Fatakis] while they do not have money to use at school? (Female, age 17, Pwani Region, IDI)

You know everyone is doing it [CGS] privately. . . . She gets say ten shillings every day. Do you think if that is the case she will tell others? (Male, age 60, Pwani Region, Key informant FGD)

In accounts of parent discoveries of CGS, parents were consistently successful in ending the relationships by directly confronting Fatakis or notifying authorities. Participants reported that parents represented a threat to Fatakis, who feared the violence and legal implications that could ensue from parents' knowledge of their relationships and the public shame of exposure. In some accounts, just the possibility of discovery by parents was sufficient to discourage Fatakis.

Thus, while parent involvement was an effective tool for preventing and intervening in CGS relationships, parents' ability to address CGS was limited by their daughters' secrecy and the community's unwillingness to come forward.

Schools, Teachers, and CGS

When young women refused Fatakis' advances, the men tended not to persist because of the risk of exposure to parents or the public. However, for young women approached by Fatakis in positions of authority, an outright refusal was not so straightforward. One participant explained that girls at her school, including her, felt forced to consent to teachers' advances to avoid beatings—and that reporting such advances to school authorities was met with accusations and punishment. She reported that these relationships were not relayed to parents or authorities beyond the school, and while

female teachers may have been viable allies, there were no female teachers employed at the school at the time.

Key informants agreed that teachers presented a risk to students as powerful initiators of CGS and described situations where male teachers asked female students to come to their homes to help with chores. However, some key informants also presented a different view: that of teachers and parents as allies to prevent CGS. One described how, in her own community, teachers and parents had built alliances to address CGS by partnering to supervise youth and creating open channels of communication regarding their observations of young women's involvement in these relationships. Her view represented parent resistance against CGS and young women's complicity in CGS relationships and efforts to maintain secrecy to sustain them.

This view aligned with one young woman's account of her classmate's relationship with a teacher, which her parents discovered and reported to the school, and which resulted in the firing of the teacher. In this case, parent awareness and involvement was described as an effective intervention.

Beyond the risk of teacher-student relationships, several male and female participants described how boarding school environments facilitated CGS among students and men in the surrounding community. Boarding school students have limited finances and are far from any safety net their families can provide. In the absence of financial resources, girls may seek out Fatakis to cover their expenses. Going to school in an unfamiliar area was seen as an opportunity for girls to engage in these relationships at a safe distance from parents. Because many boarding schools have insufficient accommodations, residing in unsupervised off-campus housing further facilitated CGS.

Addressing CGS

While parents, provided they were aware of their daughters' relationships, represented a particularly proactive group in addressing CGS, the general community was reluctant to approach older men and risk generating conflict. Community leaders, perhaps because of their responsibility to the well-being of the public, were able to transcend these barriers and effectively intervene in CGS relationships by confronting Fatakis.

Among the general community, both men and women were apprehensive about directly intervening in CGS relationships because of the potential for antagonizing another community member, particularly if the relationship was ambiguous and conceivably innocent. Because evidence of a sexual relationship was not made public, participants feared they might observe a girl speaking to an uncle or neighbor and misconstrue it as CGS. Beliefs concerning the power of others to exact revenge through witchcraft was a factor, and social norms surrounding age differences also placed

limitations on their abilities to intervene. Approaching an older man would be inappropriate in a culture of generational hierarchies of respect and could elicit enmity: “I can’t follow a person who is older than me. . . . How do I start, my brother? That is hostility, meaning that I may be vulnerable” (male, age 33, Iringa Region, IDI).

Both men and women expressed a strong aversion to confronting Fatakis and a preference for addressing CGS through discussion with young women, who were depicted as more amenable to change. While participants often referenced law enforcement and imprisonment as an approach to deter Fatakis, they reported girls can be taught to avoid CGS: “I won’t go directly to that man, but I will talk to the girl about this behavior, that it is not good. If she understands, then she won’t do it” (male, age 33, Iringa Region, IDI).

Though some young women reported engaging in discussions about CGS with their peers, some were also anxious about the response they would receive, particularly as girls who engaged in CGS were perceived as disrespectful of others. They pointed out that young women who depend upon a Fataki’s support may not be receptive to an intrusion: “She can speak bad words to you. She can say, ‘If you care so much, okay, take the responsibility to pay for my school’” (female, age 18, Pwani Region, FGD). Overall, there was a tendency of passiveness and reluctance among the general community to directly interfere, despite disapprobation for CGS: “Other times people might find a man talking to a girl in strange corners, or they see him taking her to a guest house, but they keep quiet. They just whisper in their hearts that he’s doing a bad thing” (male, age 39, Iringa Region, IDI).

Community leaders, however, did not express the same resistance to confronting Fatakis. In two cases, community leaders approached Fatakis and engaged them in dialogue about their relationships with young women. Recognizing others were aware and disapproved acted as a deterrent, particularly in a context where harsh prison sentences and social shame threaten men whose relationships with students become public knowledge. In one instance, a church leader confronted one of the leadership group members about his CGS relationship. He denied the relationship, but according to the participant, the exposure alone convinced him to discontinue it. One man described how in his leadership role with a community organization, he worked with the manager of a road construction company temporarily stationed in his village to address CGS holistically through awareness campaigns and meetings with communities, young women, and the men employed at the company. Employees who were suspected of CGS were confronted: “We told him his behavior is not good, because the girl he sleeps with is like his daughter. What will he feel when someone does the same to his daughter?” (male, age 39, Iringa Region, IDI).

Men and women described how the social disapproval of CGS in their communities had allowed for

public opprobrium to be used to discourage Fatakis and promoted the view of these relationships as unlawful. In turn, public discovery of a CGS relationship, or the threat of it, was viewed as discouraging men seeking CGS: “If he realizes that people have found out, then I don’t think he will follow her again” (male, age 33, Iringa Region, IDI). Some young women described how society’s condemnation of Fatakis enabled girls to safely decline men’s advances, because they could count on their community’s support should they require it.

However, some described how increasing social disapproval had driven CGS underground. Participants reported that the secrecy shrouding CGS may contribute to the challenge of prosecuting Fatakis, as it is difficult to prove involvement in a relationship intentionally kept hidden. Often, Fatakis were reported to authorities only after a girl was impregnated and the evidence of a sexual relationship was apparent. The challenge of prosecution was further compounded in cases where Fatakis were individuals in positions of great influence whose status and wealth may have enabled them to circumvent the law. Some described how corruption and limitations to existing laws, such as the requirement for evidence and eyewitness accounts, have created a general lack of faith in the law enforcement system to address CGS. Faced with legal obstacles and discomfort with direct confrontation, some communities have channeled widespread opposition to CGS into developing innovative approaches, such as fining guesthouse owners for renting rooms to cross-generational pairs, to confront this behavior through collective action.

Recommendations

Previous research on CGS has primarily focused on the set of factors that influence men and women to engage in these relationships and the health risks they present. The current study expanded upon this knowledge by examining perceptions of CGS and the social and cultural factors that present barriers and facilitators to CGS interventions. Understanding the challenges to and opportunities for preventing or intervening in CGS relationships will provide a pragmatic view of where HIV prevention efforts may be targeted.

Parents and CGS

Participants perceived girls’ sexual relationships under the purview of parents. They were reluctant to report observations of CGS relationships to girls’ parents, while parents were apprehensive that Fatakis would prey on their own daughters unbeknownst to them. The latter attitudes can be leveraged to address the former, by encouraging parents to recognize that one of the best prospects for protecting daughters may be sharing information with other parents about their

observations of CGS relationships. Previous research has indicated that girls and their parents have implicit agreements regarding transactional sex because the financial gains help sustain impoverished families (Wight et al., 2006). While our findings suggested this is a common perception among community members, many parents disagreed. Young women involved in CGS hid their relationships from parents, and the fear of disappointing parents prevented some from engaging in CGS. In cases where parents discovered their daughter's CGS relationship, they effectively intervened. If immediate reporting of observations to girls' parents is presented as collaborative supervision and a caring gesture rather than interference in personal matters, people may be more apt to report and parents more likely to express appreciation for the information.

The disintegration of traditional ceremonies in which elders taught young women about sexual and reproductive health has left a gap in communication about these issues to young women. Participants reported expectations that parents fill this gap, though some may be uncomfortable in this role. Exploring the creation of forums for discussion of CGS and broader sexual health issues may help to reopen this channel of communication.

Building communication and collaboration between parents and teachers may be an effective strategy in some instances, though such interventions would need to be sensitive to cases where teachers themselves are Fatakis, rendering alliances ineffective. Our findings suggested it was not uncommon for male teachers to exploit their positions of power to seek sexual relationships with students, as observed in previous research in Tanzania (Mgalla et al., 1998). Recruiting female teachers for such efforts may be particularly helpful, and developing a safe and effective reporting system for young women intimidated by teachers into CGS relationships should be further explored. Working with boarding schools to address insufficient on-campus accommodation as a facilitator of CGS may be an important strategy as well. Strategies could include homestays that provide increased guidance and supervision.

Men and CGS

Working through community leaders may be useful in interventions for men because of their ability to transcend cultural restrictions on confronting older men. The general community's unease with direct confrontation regarding CGS relationships which did not involve family members should be recognized as a significant barrier, and alternate strategies, such as the creation of bylaws, should be explored.

Interventions may also leverage the feelings men expressed in this study regarding the risk CGS poses to their daughters. Men may respond to messages encouraging them to consider the relationships they

hope their own daughters will have and how their relationships with other men's daughters may be in contradiction to this. In addition, men who partner with younger girls to secure sexual satisfaction that they deem absent in their marriages may benefit from messaging encouraging open communication with spouses concerning their sexual relationships.

Future campaign efforts should be cautious of how promoting social disapproval of CGS drives the practice underground, which can magnify the difficulty of addressing existing relationships. Psychological theories of concealable stigma explain that situational factors, including the salience of the stigma, the threat of discovery, and the perceived consequences of being discovered in a given situation, can increase an individual's attempts to conceal a stigmatized behavior (e.g., Pachankis, 2007). In the current context, the Fataki campaign increased the salience of stigmatizing CGS behavior by portraying the Fataki character as a fool. It also put families and communities on alert, creating a larger threat to discovery for those involved. Finally, the consequences of being discovered have increased in some communities as leadership and parents have followed up on the encouragement to take action against CGS. All of these situational factors that were affected by the campaign can lead to further secrecy on the part of both partners, but particularly for the men involved.

While social shame and unlawfulness appeared to be useful as a deterrent for Fatakis who were confronted about their relationships and an effective tool for young women to decline advances, campaigns fostering negative images of CGS should be paired with programs facilitating improved communication and partnership among parents and community leaders to address CGS. While the Fataki campaign was designed in part to generate dialogue about CGS, it did not provide specific strategies for increased communication; its focus was primarily to encourage interventions in CGS relationships.

Young Women and CGS

Our findings paralleled prior research indicating that the principal motive for women to engage in CGS is financial, covering a continuum from the fulfillment of basic needs to the acquisition of "luxury" items that younger boyfriends and family cannot provide (Longfield, 2004; Meekers & Calvès, 1997; Wamoyi et al., 2011). Though young women who engaged in CGS reported the intention to marry their older partners, and a higher degree of emotional investment than has been identified in other studies of CGS, the financial stability that older partners offered was still central to their motivation.

Participants' perceptions of the diverse circumstances facilitating CGS, as well as girls' varying degrees of agency, are supported by previous research (Cockcroft

et al., 2010; Luke & Kurz, 2002; Nkosana & Rosenthal, 2007). Some studies of transactional sex have shown that receiving money or gifts is not necessarily disempowering but rather for some women is a way to express agency and a validation of their worth to their partner. Other research has also shown that girls often end partnerships if gift giving ceases; however, this particular issue was not explored in depth in the current study (Nyanzi, Pool, & Kinsman, 2001; Kaufman & Stravrou, 2004; Silberschmidt & Rasch, 2001).

The variation in the nature of CGS points to the need for interventions to take a multipronged approach. Girls seeking CGS to acquire a modern image and status among peers may be more likely to display their gifts to classmates. Interventions for such forms of CGS relationships could target teachers, as described, who may observe girls with items they hide from parents at home.

Girls who participate in CGS for survival may be more inclined to resist these relationships in the presence of economic support, such as school scholarships and opportunities for income generation. Cash transfer programs, which provide cash payments to households that meet behavioral requirements, such as school attendance or vaccinations, have emerged in recent years as an innovative and potentially effective interventions to reduce HIV/STIs and CGS, and such programs have recently been investigated for their effectiveness in the Tanzanian context. A randomized controlled trial conducted in rural South-Western Tanzania found that conditional cash transfers significantly reduced the prevalence of curable STIs among men and women aged 18 to 30 in a 12-month period (de Walque et al., 2012). A randomized cluster trial investigating the effects of a cash transfer program in neighboring Malawi with girls aged 13 to 22 found that girls who received cash transfers had lower rates of HIV and HSV-2, younger partners, less frequent sex, and were more likely to be enrolled in school than those in the control group (Baird, Garfein, McIntosh, & Ozler, 2010). Scale-up of such programs in Tanzania could further decrease the incidence of CGS and thus HIV/STI transmission among girls.

Limitations

As is typical with studies seeking to understand attitudes, this study was subject to social desirability bias, particularly in that data were collected in the context of a campaign that sought to reduce CGS. We attempted to reduce the risk of bias by collecting data from participants in individual and group settings, using trained facilitators of the same gender as participants, and speaking to key informants.

While acknowledging stereotypical views of young women who engage in CGS, which may have been shaped by the campaign, we sought to tease out perspectives that ran deeper than those simply echoing the campaign, such

as parent views of the economic loss and cultural disregard inherent in CGS. Nevertheless, significant social desirability bias in discussions of stigmatized relationships was unavoidable. Self-presentation likely played a role in participants' expressions of opposition to CGS, whether as young women, men, parents, or community leaders. The disinclination of men to report their own involvement was evidence of this, and the lack of data from men who engaged in CGS further limited the scope of this study. However, the social shame associated with men's and women's involvement in CGS, in some cases an effective deterrent, indicated the development of social norms resisting these relationships.

While generalizable findings are not a useful standard or goal for qualitative research, studies conducted to examine a particular phenomenon in a unique setting may contribute to the body of knowledge about that phenomenon. This study, with elaborate descriptions on attitudes toward CGS in the context of a campaign seeking to reduce it, can inform future studies that aim to understand the social context of CGS in order to influence change.

Conclusions

While perceptions of CGS are negative, acting upon this disapprobation poses many challenges. Participants were uncomfortable approaching older men who were engaged in CGS. And while they viewed preventing young women's involvement as a parent's responsibility, these relationships were kept secret from parents, and there was reluctance among others to report their observations. Social shame and the threat of discovery appeared to be an effective deterrent for older men. Yet for women seeking to secure economic stability, opportunities for income may be needed.

Involving community leaders in interventions for men may be a promising tactic, as their positions allowed them to approach older men engaging in CGS, which cultural hierarchies of respect barred others from doing. Teachers and community members may witness CGS relationships, and encouraging communication with parents as a form of collective supervision may be useful. However, some teachers initiate CGS with students, and a safe system for students to report these cases is critical. Finally, the breakdown of traditional ceremonies that taught sexual and reproductive health to pubescent girls has left a communication gap in families, creating a need for appropriate forums for discussing sexuality with young women and men.

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Appendix

Translations

Interview guides were translated into Swahili for data collection. Only the interview guide used for in-depth interviews with young women is presented in this appendix. Interview guides for focus group discussions were

adapted to exclude questions regarding personal experience with cross-generational sex (CGS). Additional questions concerning actions taken by community leadership to address CGS were included in key informant focus group guides.

Individual Interview Guide—Women

1. Tell me about the concept of Fataki.
2. Have you ever heard or seen a message about Fataki? What did it say? Where did you see or hear it? What does the message mean to you? Was the message funny? Did you like or dislike the fact that it was funny? Why?
3. What kinds of girls/women get involved with Fataki?
4. What does a Fataki normally do or say to start a relationship?
5. Do you know someone who has ever been involved with a Fataki? Without using names, tell me a bit about the situation. (How long were they together?)
6. Have you ever had proposals from men to be in a relationship or to have sex? How many? From which men?
 - a. Have you ever refused an approach from an older man? Please tell me what happened.
7. Have you ever been involved with a man ten or more years older than you (not including a marriage)? Please tell me about the situation.
8. What is good about being with a Fataki? What benefits does a woman receive?
9. What is bad about being with a Fataki?
10. What impact do relationships between a young woman and a Fataki have on the woman?
11. What impact do these relationships have (if any) for the community?
12. What does your community say about Fatakis?
13. What happens when someone in your community sees a Fataki trying to seduce a young girl?
14. Have you ever done something to interrupt a Fataki from trying to be with a girl? Why? what happened?
15. Have you ever talked with someone about getting involved with a Fataki? Without naming names, tell me if this person was a family member, friend, or someone in your community. What did you discuss? What happened after your discussion?
16. *If respondent was ever involved with a Fataki:* Did anyone ever talk to you about getting involved with a Fataki? Tell me what happened.
17. Do girls ever feel unsafe by saying no to Fataki? If so, what can they do or where can they go? Why?
18. Are there ever female Fatakis? Tell me about them.
19. Have you ever been in a relationship with a man ten or more years *younger* than you? Please tell me about the situation.
20. Is there anything else you think I should know about Fatakis or the women with whom they are involved?