



Starting Young: Evidence from an Evaluation Review of Interventions to Reach Boys and Young Men in SV Prevention

Christine Ricardo, University of Chicago
Gary Barker, Instituto Promundo

www.promundo.org.br

In collaboration with SVRI

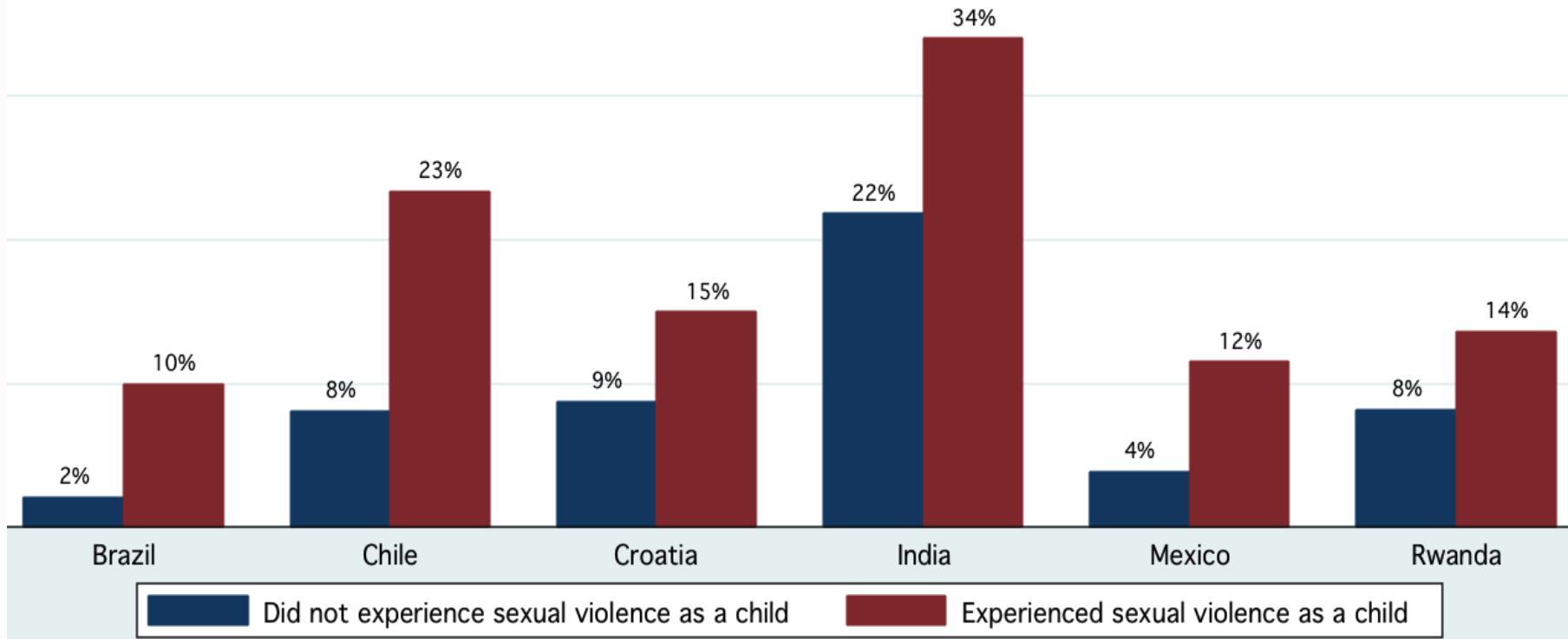
Brief Overview of Formative Research on Men, Boys and Sexual Violence

- Sizable portion of sexual violence carried out by men happens during youth/adolescence
- Data from US, 25% of male sex offenders said first SV carried out during adolescence
- Research in RSA with rural sample found that average age at first SV perpetration was 17
- Numerous studies finding “victim blaming” and rape myth attitudes in boys and young men
- Numerous studies finding a “dating script” that includes sexual coercion and objectification of women’s/girls’ bodies
- Clear association between experiencing SV and using SV



Sexual violence linked to childhood sexual victimization (Men 15-59, IMAGES, 2011, ICRW and Promundo)

Links between experiencing sexual violence as child and perpetrating it later



Others factors associated with young men's use of SV

- Attitudes (rape supportive, gender inequitable)
- Age
- Educational attainment
- Alcohol use
- Personality disorders (low empathy/low remorse)
- Economic stress, poverty
- Conflict/social stress
- Specific cultural settings

Most studies find the single most important factor being childhood experiences of violence, including but not limited to childhood experiences of sexual violence.

Does the intervention base take this research into account?

Objectives of the evaluation review

✓ Investigate the **effectiveness of interventions** for preventing boys' and young men's use of sexual violence Attitudes (rape supportive, gender inequitable)

✓ Explore the potential for **building on or scaling up effective interventions** with boys and young men in community and school settings

✓ Focus is on **high-quality studies** – defined as having a randomized controlled or quasi-experimental design

Also sought to reach beyond North America and Australia where most of previous reviews (and evaluation research has been carried out)

Table 1. Research Question in PICO format	
Population	Adolescent boys and young men ages 12-19
Intervention	Preventing boys and young men's use of rape and other forms of sexual violence; improving attitudes toward gender, violence and/or intimate relationships with women that are correlated with boys' and young men's use of rape and other forms of sexual violence; increasing boys' and young men's positive bystander attitudes and behaviors.
Comparator	No intervention, services as usual or alternative services
Outcomes	Perpetration of sexual violence against a girl or woman; Perpetration of other form of violence against a girl or woman; Bystander behaviors; Intention/likelihood to perpetrate sexual or non-sexual form of violence against a girl or woman; Attitudes towards violence against women (sexual and other forms); Attitudes towards gender roles and/or intimate relationships with girls and women and; Bystander attitudes, efficacy or intentions.
Context	Global
Study Designs	Controlled studies, with or without randomization.

Outcome Measures

Behaviors

- perpetration of rape or other forms of sexual violence against a girl or woman
- perpetration of non-sexual forms of violence against a girl or woman
- bystander behaviors

Attitudes & Efficacy

- intention/likelihood to perpetrate rape or other forms of sexual violence
- intention/likelihood to perpetrate non-sexual forms of violence against an intimate partner
- rape-supportive attitudes, including rape myth acceptance

Outcome Measures (cont.)

- attitudes towards gender-based violence
- attitudes towards intimate partner violence
- attitudes towards interpersonal violence
- empathy for rape or sexual assault survivors
- attitudes towards gender roles
- attitudes towards women's rights and roles
- attitudes towards intimate relationships with women
- bystander attitudes
- bystander efficacy
- bystander intention

Overall results

The review found **63 suitable evaluated studies, 85% from the Global North (mostly the US)**. 21 of the studies were carried out on university campuses in the US. The objectives of such interventions fall roughly into four categories:

- 1) promotion of **empathy** for victims of sexual violence;
- 2) learning the **meaning of consent**;
- 3) encouraging **bystander intervention**; and
- 4) questioning **norms related to masculinities**

The Evaluated Interventions: Methods and Theoretical Frameworks

- The most common methodologies are **group educational workshops**, some based on participatory learning styles, while others were more didactic.
- **Some involved only boys and young men**, while others were mixed sex.
- Some targeted only a specific group of young men, while others sought to have an impact on a community- or campus-wide level. **Almost none specifically targeted young men/boys exposed to violence.**
- The interventions draw from different theories – the most common being **social learning theory**.

Evaluation Results (n=42 that measured attitudes)

- 25 (60%) reported statistically significant ($p < .05$) **positive effects on attitudes towards violence**, compared to no treatment, alternative or delayed treatment.
- 21 studies evaluated the effects of intervention on attitudes towards **gender roles and/or intimate relationships with women**, including: attitudes towards gender roles; attitudes towards women's rights and roles and; attitudes towards intimate relationships.
- Of these 21 studies, 12 (57%) reported statistically significant ($p < .05$) **positive effects on attitudes towards gender roles** and/or intimate relationships, compared to no treatment, alternative or delayed treatment.

Additional results: Bystander attitudes and sexual violence perpetration

- 14 studies evaluated **effects of intervention on bystander attitudes, efficacy and/or intentions**. Of these, eight (62%) reported statistically significant ($p < .05$) positive effects.
- 6 studies evaluated effects of intervention on **bystander behaviors**. Of these, only one reported statistically significant ($p < .05$) positive effects on self-reported bystander behaviors.
- **9 studies evaluated the effects of intervention on perpetration of SV against women**. Of these, only one reported statistically significant ($p < .05$) positive effects on boys' self-reported use of SV.
- **16 studies evaluated effects of intervention on perpetration of non-sexual forms of violence** against girls and/or women. Of these, eight reported statistically significant ($p < .05$) positive effects on use of non-sexual forms of violence.

Think about standardizing measures?

A total of **77 identifiable measures/scales were used:**

- Only 16 of these were used in more than one study.
- The Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale was used in 11 different studies.
- The Burt Rape Myth Acceptance Scale was used in 7 different studies.
- The Attitudes Toward Women Scale, the Conflict Tactics Scale, the Rape Empathy Scale, and Gender Equitable Men were each used in 5 different studies.

All suggests the need to consider standardizing or encouraging use of a narrow range of indicators that work well across cultural settings

Interventions showing effectiveness in attitude change were generally:

- 1) Based in ***strong formative research***;
- 2) Following a ***coherent theoretical model***; and
- 3) Applied and ***implemented consistently***.

The data suggest that:

- Building on lessons from other settings may be appropriate;
- That both single sex and mixed sex interventions show effectiveness;
- That there may be ***a set of core components*** for such interventions that need to be promoted as standards or “good practice” across the field of SV prevention

Possible ways forward

- Need for more impact evaluation in Global South settings (and in rural areas)
- More research on effectiveness of starting at different ages – how early makes sense? What kinds of interventions are most appropriate at different ages?
- Need more evaluation of interventions outside the school system (sports-based, other community-based, mass media+ approaches)
- What programming is possible for boys who experience/witness violence?

