



Why is MCP important in HIV prevention?

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Reprise

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1 - Definitions and measuring MCP

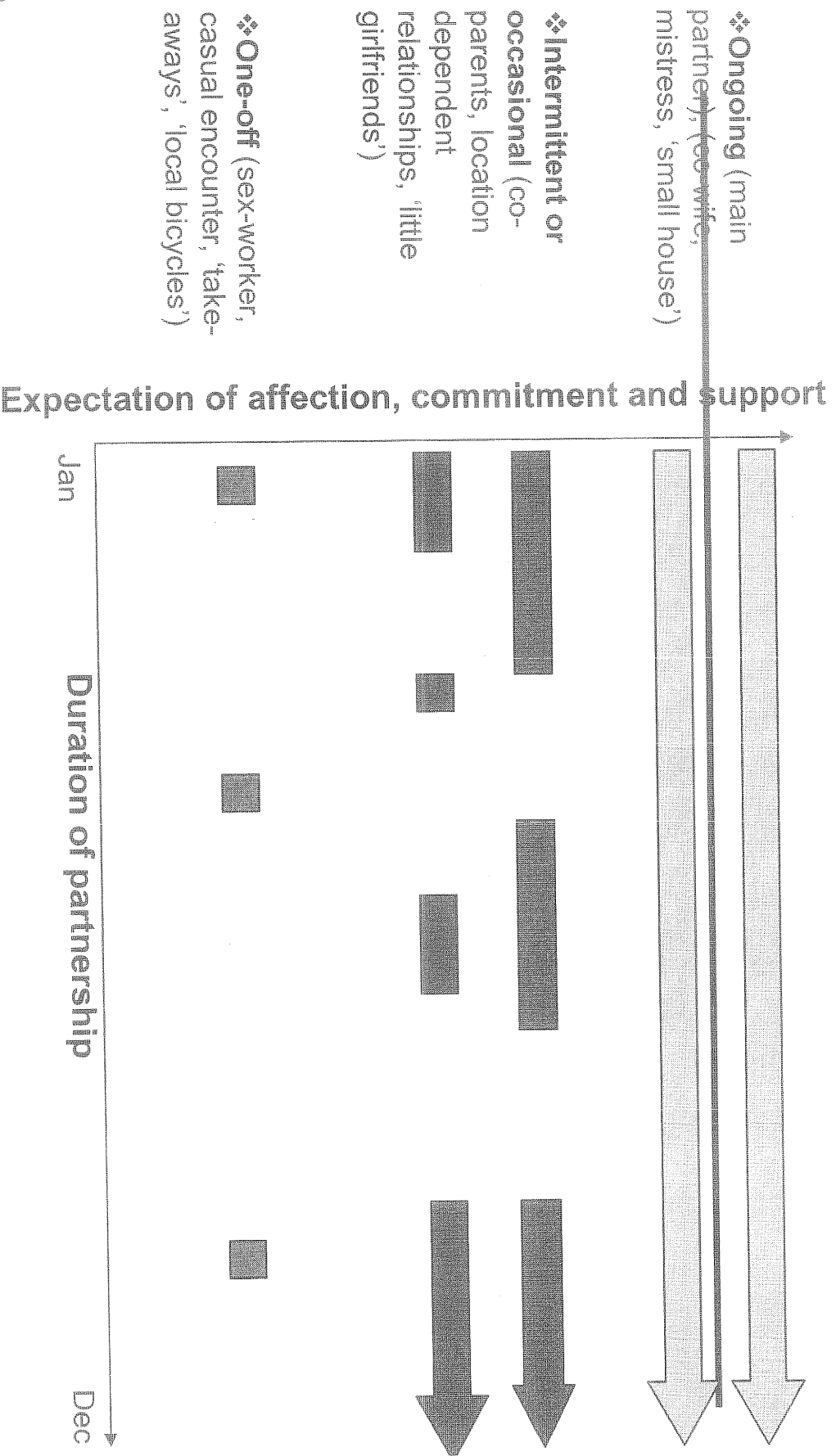
Definitions of MCP

- Concurrent partnerships are relationships whereby an individual has overlapping sexual relationships with more than one person.
- The overlap of one or more sexual partnerships for a period of one month or longer (Mah & Halperin, 2008), in past 3 months (Colvin et al. 1998); or in the past year/12 months (Global Program on AIDS, 1996)
- This is contrasted with sequential or serial partnerships/monogamy, whereby an individual engages in a sexual relationship with only one partner, with no overlap in time with subsequent partners.

Dimensions of Concurrency

- Length of time of partnership overlap or gap length between partnerships
- Type of partner
 - Regular, spousal
 - Casual
 - Commercial
- Number of partners
- Extent of concurrency in wider society – among men and women (networking)

Types of Concurrent Partnerships



From: S. Leclerc-Madala (2008) Age-disparate and intergeneration sex in southern Africa: the dynamics of hypervulnerability. *AIDS*, 22 (supp 4): 1-9.

“...another loves another.. It's a circle of
love...”

Look, listen and decide, Ray Phiri

Measuring MCP

Two general measurement methods have been used to collect partnership and concurrency data:

1. Asks an interviewee directly if he/she has had additional sexual partners during a specific partnership(s).
2. Asks about the number of regular partnerships a respondent was and/or is engaged in. Also asks about and characteristics of the partners (e.g. regular, casual, commercial, etc.)

2. Evidence behind concurrency in HIV prevention

Concurrent partnerships

- A 1995 survey in rural Kwazulu Natal, South Africa found that 40% of sexually active men reported more than one partner during the past three months, although it is unclear whether those relationships were serial or concurrent (Colvin et al. 1998).
- A 2006 study in rural Swaziland found that 70% of males and 62% of females reported having 2 or more partners in the last 3 months (James and Matikanya 2006).
- A 2003 study in Botswana found that 23% of sexually active respondents reported having had a concurrent partnership with any of their last three partners over the last 12 months (Carter et al. 2007).
- Adimora et al. (2007) reported that 11% of men in the US reported a concurrent partnership during the year preceding the survey.

Evidence behind concurrency

- ...the rate of spread of infection is much faster than would be predicted in the absence of concurrent partnerships (Watts and May, 1992).
- ... epidemic spread of HIV would tend to occur in populations with high rates of overlapping partnerships Hudson, 1996).
- HIV prevalence was generally far higher in those sites where more men and women reported having more than one regular partner during the previous year (Mah & Halperin, 2008).
- Using data from Rakai, Uganda, Wawer et al. (2005) and Pinkerton (2007) report higher HIV transmission probability during acute infection compared to asymptomatic or late HIV infection periods.
- HIV prevalence is highest in sub-Saharan Africa compared to other regions of the world, which may in part be due to the high prevalence of concurrency (Halperin and Epstein 2007)

MCP not a deterrent?

Some other research, however, has suggested that concurrent partnerships may not be a major determinant of the rate of spread of HIV.

- Lagarde et al. (2001), in the “four cities” study, “could not find evidence that concurrent sexual partnerships were a major determinant of the rate of spread of HIV in four cities in sub-Saharan Africa”.

3. Social, cultural, and economic factors in MCP

Men's motivations for seeking multiple partners

Young men: Peer pressure to prove normality and masculinity identified as #1. Concurrency also viewed as 'strategic', hedge against disappointment, recreational, means constant availability of a woman.

Older men: Report need for variety, relief from stress or boredom, desire for 'clean' partners, desire for sexual rejuvenation, also pressure to demonstrate manhood & social worth, feel 'forced' by society.

- *"As a man's wealth increases so does his sexual access and social expectations of sexual access increase"* (Swidler & Watkins 2006).

Perceptions of the male "role" and masculinity:

It's greed... It's just being a man... It's just not being satisfied with your partner and you wishing to taste other women outside. (Black Male 30-34)

Sexual Dissatisfaction:

You find that days go by with you never having any sex [with your main partner]... So you eventually find someone else who is willing to fulfill your sexual needs. (Black Male 30-34)

Social, cultural, and economic factors in MCP

Women's motivations for seeking multiple partners

In addition to the possibility of finding love, affection, or marriage:

Vulnerable victims-- report hunger, coercion, manipulation, pressure to conform, obey and show 'respect', need for protection, employment.

Active agents-- boast of taking charge, 'milking the cow', seeking fun/adventure/opportunities to make contacts among 'sponsors', 'investors' or 'ministers' for present or future social mobility.

"Material Exchange: She is going to see her Roll-On that lives in Site B. That man will buy her train tickets. The other man will give her groceries' money. The other will give her spending money. It's just greed and lack of satisfaction" (Black Male 30-34)

"Maybe he had money. I know that whenever I see him, he will give me money..."
(Black Female, 25-29)

Social, cultural, and economic factors in MCP

Religion as a deterrent to concurrent partners

“Born Again” Christian Woman:

“So you’re saying cheating is a way of relieving stress? (all laugh) No, I’m serious. I don’t see the need for a married person to go out and cheat!”

Social, cultural, and economic factors in MCP

Socio-economic reasons men use to justify having multiple partners

- The roots of concurrency relates to the migrant labor system of mines and industrial areas, which resulted in men and women spending considerable time apart. This had implications for multiple partnering and marital non-exclusivity (Romero-Daza 1994; Spiegel 1991).
- For reasons not unrelated to post-apartheid 'liberalisation' of markets, privatisation, growing urban unemployment, and the media promotion of conspicuous consumption, multi-partnered transactional sexual relationships have come to play an integral role in the lives of many urban young women (Leclerc-Madlala, 2003).

Social, cultural, and economic factors in MCP

- Kaufman and Stavrou (2002) found that among young people in urban South Africa, gift-giving and a transactional aspect of relationships was common and widely accepted.
- Hunter (2002) found that this association between sex and gifts (i.e. transactional sex) has been a central factor in driving “multiple-partnered sexual relationships.”
- In examining the gender dynamics of transactional relationships, Hunter (2002) and Leclerc-Madlala (2002) both concluded that women often were not “passive victims” of such relationships but rather acted to “access power and resources.”

Social, cultural, and economic factors in MCP

- Selikow (2004) found that male sexuality in townships was defined by how many sexual partners men have and is encapsulated in the terms such as *ingagara* - a “real man” or “top dog” - and *isithipa* – an unfashionable man without many girlfriends.
- Motivations for engaging in concurrent partnerships include exchange of material goods and money, sexual dissatisfaction with one sexual partner, a “safety-net” against losing a main partner, peer and social pressures, particularly among young people, and the social acceptance of having multiple partners (Epstein 2007; Parker et al. 2007; Psaki et al. 2007)

The economic cost of maintaining multiple sexual relationships

- Kisumu men's (N=2700) average giving per partner was 9% of monthly wages (Luke 2006).

* 7% for relatively wealthy men

* 15% for poorer men

4. Concurrency and HIV prevention in South Africa

~~T. Shongwe, M. Janda, G. Goldstein, A. Shababala, R. Weiner (2008) Understanding multiple and concurrent partnerships to inform the soul city hiv prevention campaign~~

Concurrency and HIV prevention in South Africa

- Understanding the nature of sexual behavior is critical to improving HIV prevention efforts. Approaches to primary prevention through promotion of behavior change would be improved by better understanding of the dynamics of important behaviors, including concurrent partnerships.
- Partner reduction messages are critically important for reducing HIV incidence.
- Targeted messages, focusing on concurrency, such as encouraging people to have only one partner at a time, have the potential to improve the effectiveness of interventions (Potts et al. 2008; Shelton 2007; Halperin and Epstein 2007)
- Messages around concurrency must be locally informed and culturally relevant

5. Implications of MCP for HIV prevention

Social-cultural implications of MCP

Socio-cultural meaning:

- For a man: affirms his self-worth, shows generosity, expresses love/appreciation, helps restore pride, validates manhood, asserts & establishes power & authority in relationship.
- For a woman: affirms her value, an expression of love/appreciation, boost self-esteem & social status, helps build social networks & capital, gains materially, promotes dependency and vulnerability.

(a conundrum for women)

(Luke & Kurz 2002, Kelly et al 2003, Hallman 2004, Lary et al 2004, Longfield et al 2004, Luke 2005, Nshindano 2006, Nikosana & Rosenthal 2007).

Implications of MCP in HIV prevention

Implications:

- *Social values uphold men's privilege and constrain women's autonomy.
- *The verification of a man's wealth, standing and manhood closely tied to ability to secure women & cattle as property.

Today:

- *Modified polygamy: 'monogamy *de jure* - polygamy *de facto*', or multiple concurrent partnerships.
- *Many sociocultural norms & values for gender relations that support this system still persist.

Addressing MCP in HIV prevention

- Great need for raising awareness of the HIV risks of multiple concurrent partnering.
- Need for greater awareness on the specific risks involved in age/wealth disparate relationships.
- More effort and resources required to directly engage men for change, both **young and old**.
- HIV prevention is about the disadvantages of un-safe sex. What about the advantages? Need to explore opportunities for promoting advantages of mutual faithfulness and/or partner reduction
(i.e. less STIs, less expensive, less stress due to deception, possibly contribute to building trust & partner faithfulness).

