Violence against women and girls 3

From work with men and boys to changes of social norms and reduction of inequities in gender relations: a conceptual shift in prevention of violence against women and girls

Rachel Jewkes, Michael Flood, James Lang

Violence perpetrated by and against men and boys is a major public health problem. Although individual men's use of violence differs, engagement of all men and boys in action to prevent violence against women and girls is essential. We discuss why this engagement approach is theoretically important and how prevention interventions have developed from treating men simply as perpetrators of violence against women and girls or as allies of women in its prevention, to approaches that seek to transform the relations, social norms, and systems that sustain gender inequality and violence. We review evidence of intervention effectiveness in the reduction of violence or its risk factors, features commonly seen in more effective interventions, and how strong evidence-based interventions can be developed with more robust use of theory. Future interventions should emphasise work with both men and boys and women and girls to change social norms on gender relations, and need to appropriately accommodate the differences between men and women in the design of programmes.

Introduction

The need for work with men in the prevention of violence against women and girls (VAWG) is well accepted among advocates, educators, and policy makers. Over the past 10–15 years, interventions involving men and boys have proliferated around the world. These interventions have been motivated by a desire to address the role of men in violence perpetration, and recognition that masculinity and gender-related social norms are implicated in violence.[1–3] Although not all men are violent, all men and boys have a positive part to play to help stop violence against women.[4,5] Furthermore, these men can benefit personally from more equitable relations with women, although use of this argument to encourage men to become involved is somewhat controversial.[6]

Violence prevention practice has developed during the past few decades from instrumental approaches that target only women to approaches that seek to transform the relations, norms, and systems that sustain gender inequality and violence.[7,8] Gender norms for men have become central. This change can be seen in the language used by practitioners. Initially, men were rarely mentioned, except possibly as (potential) perpetrators of violence.[4] The language of men as partners emerged in the 1990s, with men described as allies of women in the work to end men's violence, or the promotion of gender equity. More recent interventions have sought to change the way men see themselves as men (their gender identities) and consequent gendered practices, including the use of violence, sexual practices, and other behaviour towards women (figure 1).[9]

Prioritisation of, and resource allocation for, work with men on violence prevention has often been contested, not least by female gender activists concerned about opportunity costs and future male domination of the field of violence against women and girls.[10] Although they engage men, some interventions have shied away from naming men (eg, by explicit reference to the need to change men's violence against women[5]) and making their roles visible in the desired change objectives (ie, to change men's behaviour). Interventions have been very varied, and some have excluded women. The use of role models and stereotypical masculine attributes in violence prevention work has been challenged by those who fear that such interventions might reinforce that

Gender and Health Research Unit, Medical Research Council, Pretoria, South Africa (Prof R Jewkes MD); **Department of Sociology, University of Wollongong, Wollongong, NSW, Australia** (M Flood PhD)**; and United Nations Development Programme, Asia-Pacific Regional Centre, Bangkok, Thailand** (J Lang MA)

Key messages

- Men's use and experience of violence is a major public health problem, and men and boys are necessary participants, along with women and girls, in prevention interventions to reduce perpetration of violence against women and girls.
- Men's perpetration of violence against women and girls is a constituent element of gender inequality, and men's use and experiences of violence are upheld by commonly held versions of manhood. Violence against women and girls is more common where men themselves encounter high levels of violence.
- Interventions to address perpetration of violence against women and girls by men vary greatly in terms of target groups, change objectives, and methods. Evidence on interventions solely with boys and men is scarce, and most points to some measured attitudinal changes, but not necessarily change in violence perpetration or social norms.
- Future work should promote more programmes with women and girls, in addition to boys and men, for effective and sustained gender transformation. This work should strive for several varied change objectives related to violence reduction and the factors most associated with perpetration, have enduring effects, and be based on robust theories of change.
- Interventions need a coordinated focus on multiple risk factors and ecological levels (eg, individual, peer/family, and community levels). Approaches that centre on community norm change have the potential to change versions of masculinity that promote violence. In so doing, they address power and oppression, and seek to change the mechanisms in society that support them.
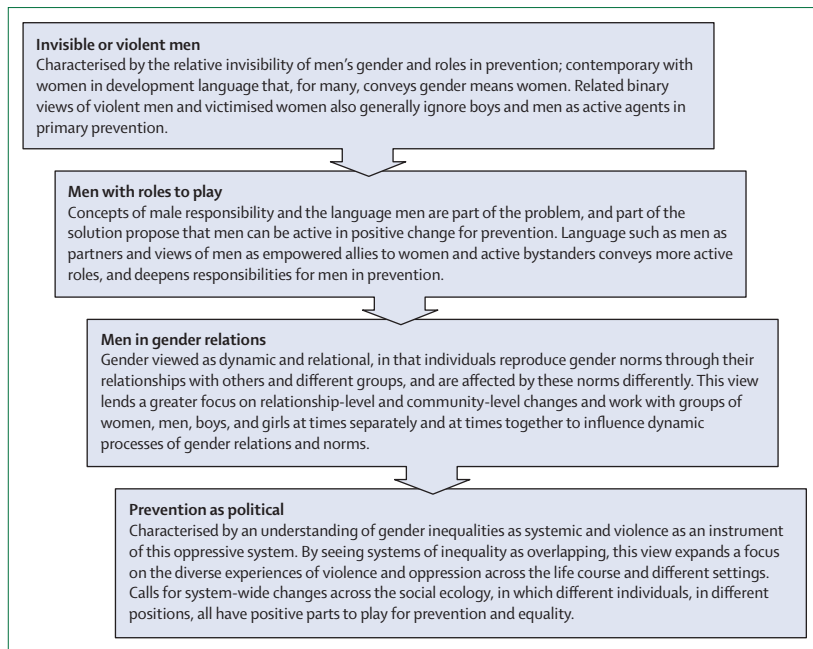
Invisible or violent men
Characterised by the relative invisibility of men's gender and roles in prevention; contemporary with women in development language that, for many, conveys gender means women. Related binary views of violent men and victimised women also generally ignore boys and men as active agents in primary prevention.

Men with roles to play
Concepts of male responsibility and the language men are part of the problem, and part of the solution propose that men can be active in positive change for prevention. Language such as men as partners and views of men as empowered allies to women and active bystanders conveys more active roles, and deepens responsibilities for men in prevention.

Men in gender relations
Gender viewed as dynamic and relational, in that individuals reproduce gender norms through their relationships with others and different groups, and are affected by these norms differently. This view lends a greater focus on relationship-level and community-level changes and work with groups of women, men, boys, and girls at times separately and at times together to influence dynamic processes of gender relations and norms.

Prevention as political
Characterised by an understanding of gender inequalities as systemic and violence as an instrument of this oppressive system. By seeing systems of inequality as overlapping, this view expands a focus on the diverse experiences of violence and oppression across the life course and different settings. Calls for system-wide changes across the social ecology, in which different individuals, in different positions, all have positive parts to play for prevention and equality.

Figure 1: Changing perspectives on men in violence prevention
Shifts in influential views of men and violence prevention over time; however, these shifts are not linear and contemporary interventions can show signs of all four.

Correspondence to:
Prof Rachel Jewkes, Medical Research Council, Private Bag X385, Pretoria 0001, South Africa
rjewkes@mrc.ac.za

which we most seek to change.[9] Women's groups have voiced concerns that donors have diverted funding from women's programmes and services to work with men, and this has further marginalised women's voices and experiences.[6] This Series paper seeks to situate these debates by addressing the questions of why focus on men's violence, what part gender plays, what works in work with men, and how evidence and gender theory can be used to work more effectively to address social norms on gender relations with men and boys in addition to women and girls.

The multiplicity of men's use of violence

Perpetration of violence against women and girls by men spans the lifecourse. Children can perpetrate sexual violence, but in the teenage years rape becomes more common such that between a half and three-quarters of men who ever rape first do so as teenagers.[11–14] After marriage or dating, some men use emotional, financial, physical, or sexual violence against a wife or girlfriend, and violence often persists throughout the relationship, although it occurs most commonly at younger ages.[14,15] Rape and intimate partner violence occur in all cultures, with varying prevalence, and culturally specific forms of violence might be locally common, such as honour killings or female genital mutilation (FGM).

Men are also victims of violence. Interpersonal violence, mostly perpetrated by men, is the seventh ranked cause of loss of disability-adjusted life years of men aged 15–49 years worldwide, and is the leading cause in much of Latin America.[16] Rape of men (by men) is also appreciably common. The 2013 UN multicountry study in Asia and the Pacific noted the population prevalence of male rape of men to be 2–8%.[11] Some of this abuse might have occurred in childhood, and credible estimates of male experience of child sexual abuse are about 4–32%.[17] Men can also face partner violence, and 6% of male homicides worldwide are estimated to be by intimate partners.[18]

Men's use of violence against women and girls is closely related to their use of violence against other men, and in some cases their own experiences as victims.[5,11,12,14,15] Men who have been victims are more likely to perpetrate intimate partner violence or rape, although most male victims do not subsequently perpetrate.[11,12,15] Furthermore, men who are violent towards women and girls are much more likely to engage in violence against other men.[11,12,15] Not surprisingly, where violence against women and girls is highly prevalent, male experiences of violence as victims are especially common, as is interpersonal violence between men.

Men, masculinity, and violence

So how are these forms of violence connected? A simple explanation is that a society with a culture related to the use of violence, and social norms that are accepting of violence, in many respects permits a range of forms of violence.[19,20] Although this can be empirically supported, it does not explain why men, rather than women, are the most common perpetrators of moderate and severe violence.[21] Nor does it explain the links between ostensibly quite different types of violence, such as sexual violence against girls and physical violence between men.[11,15] A more complete answer requires an understanding of the association between violence and masculinity.

This association is not simply Y-chromosome determined; prevalence and patterns of violence differ greatly worldwide, and individual differences exist between men in any one setting. The connection instead lies in gender; that is, the social values, roles, behaviours, and attributes thought to be appropriate and expected for men and women.[22] These sets of ideas and behaviours that constitute gender are defined and determined by societies and their subgroups. They vary across societies and, to the extent that they reflect social norms, they are propagated through the actions of people and institutions within a society.[23–25] Ideas and values related to gender affect how men view themselves as men, their social and intimate relationships, and institutions and policy frameworks.[22,26] Although differences between men and women are much less notable in more equitable societies, all societies tend to confer a higher social value on men than women, and a range of norms and powers derive from this.[27]

Although not all men are violent, and some actively oppose violence, the use of violence over women is one source of power accorded to men in many settings.[8,28,29] Many different ways of being a man

(multiple masculinities) exist within a society,[30] but dominance and control over women are frequently part of the set of male attributes and behaviours (masculinity) that is recognised as a shared social ideal.[31] The gender theorist Raewyn Connell[22] refers to the most legitimate and acclaimed version of manhood as hegemonic masculinity to show the particularities of how this position is achieved within a society.[31] Importantly, the dominance of this masculinity over others is not imposed, but rather becomes accepted by women and men as normal. This concept is taken in from childhood and aspired to by most men; even those who, for various reasons, cannot fulfil all the associated roles (eg, poverty preventing a man from being a provider). Mostly, both men and women agree that this social ideal shows how men (and gender relations) should be.[32] Thus both men and women need to be engaged in any efforts to change it.

Violence is not necessarily a part of masculinity, but the two are often linked. If women are expected to fall under men's control, then physical or sexual force and threat are ways to achieve this. This control also includes punishment of acts of resistance to, or transgression of, gender norms (eg, anti-lesbian violence). Physical strength and toughness are very frequently associated manly attributes, and violent competition between men is often used in demonstrations of this, such as fights for honour and territory.[24,33,34]

Not all masculinities of men who use violence are hegemonic.[26,27,31] In most settings, exaggerated masculinities that caricature the masculine ideal exist, and emphasise power and force. These masculinities are particularly common among men who have been victims of violence and severe emotional adversity in childhood.[35] Boys who are exposed to abuse in early childhood become prone to aggression, impulsivity, and an absence of empathy and remorse, and are more likely to perpetrate violence.[11,12,15,33,35] They are over-represented in gangs, where aggressive young people congregate, engage in antisocial behaviour, and adopt masculinities that emphasise dominance over women and violent competition between men.[36]

Involvement of boys and men in violence prevention

The range of interventions implemented under the header of work with men and boys is very diverse.[2,9,37] There have been different types of men or boys targeted, changes desired, settings, scope, and durations of interventions. The category has included, for example, both attendance at a brief lecture or drama, and participation in a 50-h workshop-based intervention such as Stepping Stones.[1,38] Interventions have also varied in the gender theory or politics informing them, especially whether their focus was to stop violence or build gender equity, raise awareness, or change gender norms. At times, change objectives have stopped short of including

Search strategy and selection criteria

Between Jan 27, 2014, and March 31, 2014, we reviewed evaluations of interventions that involved men and boys in the prevention of violence against women and girls. The interventions included those targeting men and boys and workshop interventions directed at individuals, those directed at men in relationships, bystander interventions, school and dating interventions, perpetrator programmes, social norm change interventions including men, and multicomponent interventions including men and group interventions. Many overlapped several of these categories. We undertook a keyword search for interventions published in English in PubMed, Google, and JSTOR, and manually searched the websites of donors (DFID, USAID, World Bank, AusAID, CIDA, Danida, EU, GIZ, NORAD, Sida, Irish Aid), UN agencies (UN Women, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UN Trust Fund on EVAW, UNICEF, WHO), international non-government organisations and funders (ActionAid, Amnesty International, Comic Relief, Human Rights Watch, International Rescue Committee, IPPF, Oak Foundation, Oxfam, Plan International, Population Council, Sigrid Rausing Trust, and Womankind), established violence intervention databases (Partners for Prevention), and several universities and science councils with an established track record on violence against women and girls. Where possible we aimed to draw on systematic and comprehensive reviews and meta-analyses in addition to interventions. We inventoried the results and compiled 67 non-duplicate citations to putative gender-based violence prevention interventions that sought to engage men and boys.

For more on **violence intervention databases** see http://www.endvawnow.org

reduction of violence towards women. As reported by Ellsberg and colleagues,[39] a substantial overall proportion of interventions to reduce violence against women and girls involve boys and men. These either target men together with women or men only.

Some interventions, especially those implemented from a policing or justice perspective, have not engaged with notions of gender in the course of intervening to change violent men.[40] Other interventions have engaged with gender and masculinity explicitly, but in the course of which have courted controversy. For example some campaigns have drawn on ideas commonly associated with hegemonic masculinity such as strength, warrior, or leader, and spun them in a direction that is non-violent, consensual, or gender equitable.[5,41] Other campaigns use classic male role models such as sports stars. Advocates argue that role models are influential, and ideas such as leadership provide an easy frame of reference for engagement with other men. However, the fear has been that these interventions might reinforce the gender-inequitable masculine ideals that need to be changed to prevent violence. These fears are greatest where little variation is acknowledged between men, and thus concerns exist of further marginalisation of men who are different.[42]

Interventions have sought to change the way men see themselves as men (their gender identities) and resultant gendered practices, including the use of violence, sexual, and other behaviour towards women.[9,37] These interventions have used various strategies.[2] Some have focused on involving those who are not themselves violent by encouraging intervention with other men who are sexist and aggressive.[5] The Mentors in Violence Prevention intervention in the USA is a good example, and has been quite widely used. Face-to-face educational programmes with boys and young men (and sometimes women and girls) that promote critical reflection on gendered behaviours and norms have spread across settings from clubs and schools, to sports teams, workplaces, and other institutions. Examples include the Gender Equity Movement in Schools adaptations in South Asia and Vietnam,[43] the Men of Strength Clubs of Men Can Stop Rape in Washington, DC,[41] and Sonke Gender Justice's work with the South African military.

As a complement to group education, social marketing strategies have been used in an effort to shift attitudes on men's use of violence, for example as pioneered through Instituto Promundo's Programme H that started in Brazil and has been adapted in several countries.[44] There have been efforts to engage men through parenting and couples programmes, such as the worldwide Men Care campaign that has a violence prevention component in Indonesia. These efforts stem from a belief that men involved in care practices might be less likely to use violence towards women, although more empirical evidence of this is needed.[45] Addressing the systemic and structural supports for male violence is increasingly understood to be paramount, especially social norms on gender such as barriers to women's participation in politics and the economy. Community mobilisation approaches, such as Men's Action for Stopping Violence against Women in Uttar Pradesh,[46] foster men's participation in collective advocacy and social movements, often in close collaboration with women and women's groups.

Lessons from prevention programmes

Evidence of the effectiveness of interventions involving men and boys for the reduction of use of violence, or its risk factors, is poor, since rigorous evaluations are few, their geographical base narrow, and the interventions evaluated have often been weak.[1] A comprehensive review[1] of interventions with men and boys to prevent sexual violence identified 65 high-quality studies, and a handful have been reported since.[47] Of the 65 studies, 85% took place in high-income countries and 90% in school settings. A third were only one session, typically of an hour's duration, and few assessed change in the perpetration of violence as opposed to participant satisfaction or attitudes. Only eight interventions were classified as strong when evaluated with the Cochrane Collaboration tool for bias assessment, and only seven of

the moderate or strong evaluations had an effect on violence perpetration. Of these, four were focused on early teens, five included both sexes in the intervention, and all involved more prolonged interventions that addressed violence through promotion of respectful intimate relationships. For example, the two strong interventions that had an effect on male perpetration of violence were a 50 h programme with school-attending young people in South Africa and a 26 h school programme in Canada.[38,48]

Despite the small evidence base, these effective interventions with men and boys address masculinity; that is they explicitly address the norms, behaviours, and relationships associated with ideals of manhood.[47] Such programmes have been termed gender-transformative, in that they seek to transform gender norms and promote more gender-equitable relations between men and women,[49] and most worked with both women and men, which is essential for sustained gender transformation.[1]

Only five of 12 moderate or strong evaluations of interventions that sought to change gender roles had positive findings. Bystander interventions—those that aimed to teach non-violent men or women to challenge tacit acceptance of behaviour by others—did not fare well.[1] Overall, two[50,51] of three[52] moderate or strong evaluations have had any significant findings, but there have been serious limitations in many of the evaluations and so these cannot be considered to have shown the interventions worked. The evaluations of bystander attitude interventions showed no more promise.[53] Some prevention strategies have powerful rationales, but have been implemented infrequently and rarely assessed, or have never had efforts made to optimise them. These include interventions that focus on changing social norms[54] and initiatives specifically for male-dominated or masculine workplaces, sports, and military contexts, where violence prevalence is high. The focus of many prevention interventions has tended to be to raise awareness and change gender attitudes, with an assumption that behaviour change will follow; yet decades of behaviour change research shows the association between attitudes and behaviour to be complex and bidirectional.[55,56] Awareness might be more readily raised among those with least propensity to ever be violent. Research from the USA with men in college attending rape prevention programmes suggests that these have less effect on men at a higher risk of committing rape.[57] Violence prevention with men is very unlikely to be optimised with a one size fits all intervention. Men who perpetrate the most severe violence against women often do not see themselves as bound by social norms.[33,35] Men who are most violent and controlling towards women often have notable victimisation histories, or an exaggerated sense of entitlement.[33] Interventions that seek to reduce the violence of men who are bound by social norms might need to be different from those targeting men who are positioned at society's margins, especially men who

are highly violent, otherwise antisocial, structurally marginalised through poverty, and in environments where the social norms supporting violence are strongest.

Perpetrators' programmes characteristically target more violent men, often identified by courts or through restorative justice models. They can be mandated by court order or voluntary, and often use cognitive behavioural therapy approaches. As reported by Ellsberg and colleagues[39] most of the programmes assessed have been in the USA, but the research has many limitations. Three systematic reviews[58–60] have concluded that no evidence suggests that perpetrators' programmes have any notable effect on reduction of recidivism, but this finding is partly caused by the small evidence base, and researchers are calling for more tests of such interventions using diverse strategies in different settings. The interventions could be better and it has been argued that those programmes that more explicitly aim to address masculinities might be more promising.[61]

Change in the use of violence by men is especially difficult in communities that have experienced multiple traumatic events, particularly lengthy conflict, and where normative support for the use of violence to show dominance is especially strong. Here, the need exists to address normative use of multiple forms of violence, change gender norms, strengthen livelihoods, and recognise the pain of men's (and women's) experiences as victims at a population level. Long-term work with multiple participants is needed. However, in some post-conflict settings, less complex masculinity interventions have shown promise.[62] Several interventions have been developed to address deeply rooted social norms in difficult settings. For example, the non-government organisation Tostan's intervention on social norm change to prevent female genital mutilation (FGM) in rural Senegal. Tostan works with communities with sessions two to three times a week over 6–8 months and combines broader life skills, such as literacy and numeracy, with programming on gender, violence, and (in view of their specific goal) FGM. Qualitative research suggests that there may be substantial reductions in FGM in Tostan's villages.[63]

Interventions with men have generally not developed links with substance misuse programmes and other therapeutic programmes, and currently most of these do not ask about, or deal with, intimate partner violence perpetration. Although alcohol is not a main driver of violence against women in many countries at a population level, it is an important risk factor in some.[11,15] Population-level interventions on alcohol use, for example reduction of outlet density, coupons to ration alcohol, or higher tax, have been associated with reduced gender-based violence and child abuse rates.[64–66] Interventions that reduce alcohol misuse can have positive effects at an individual level.[67] In low-income and middle-income countries particularly, research is needed into the benefits of the combination of intimate partner violence prevention with alcohol abuse prevention interventions that are currently being used, such as early detection and brief interventions for problem drinking in primary health care; interventions to change social norms related to men's alcohol and other drug consumption; and couples interventions and self-help therapy (such as Alcoholics Anonymous). More research should be done about the contribution of therapeutic interventions with boys or men that address combinations of these factors—healing from traumatic experiences, substance misuse, mental ill-health, and use of violence—based on the assumption that they are interrelated.

Masculinities and change

So how do we build better interventions with men and boys? Present discourse about evidence-based prevention programming emphasises the need for interventions to have an explicit theory of change, grounded in an empirical understanding of the problem. Interventions to prevent male use of violence need to start by understanding the risk factors for men's perpetration. More than 10 000 men participated in the recent UN study in Asia and the Pacific,[14] providing valuable insights into factors associated with men's perpetration of violence against women and girls, and complementing work from South Africa and work done through the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES).[11,12,15,68,69] Figure 2 summarises the factors associated with perpetration of intimate partner violence and non-partner rape.

When grouped together, many of these behaviours are rooted in expected practices or entitlements that flow from the hegemonic ideals that men should be strong, tough, in control over women and their bodies, heterosexual, and sexually dominant.[11,14,15,69] For example, key factors strongly associated with perpetration of intimate partner violence and non-partner rape include controlling behaviours towards women and inequitable gender attitudes, behaviours which emphasise (hetero) sexual prowess (transactional sex and having multiple sexual partners), and involvement in violence with men (figure 2).[11,15,70,71] Other associated factors suggest that men who are violent are more likely to struggle to live up to a masculine ideal in other respects, for example by having depression, or alcohol and drug misuse, no high school education, and current food insecurity (the latter two being proxies for social marginalisation and poverty).[11,14,15] Furthermore, men's own history as victims of violence is visible in associations between perpetration and men's experiences of childhood victimisation, rape, and homophobic abuse.[11,14,15,72] These two groups of factors expose the other side of the coin: men struggling to live up to the ideals of manhood that are hard to reach, and men who have been traumatised through harsh childhoods and violence in adulthood.

Figure 2 shows how the measured risk factors for intimate partner violence and non-partner rape perpetration can be read from the perspective of
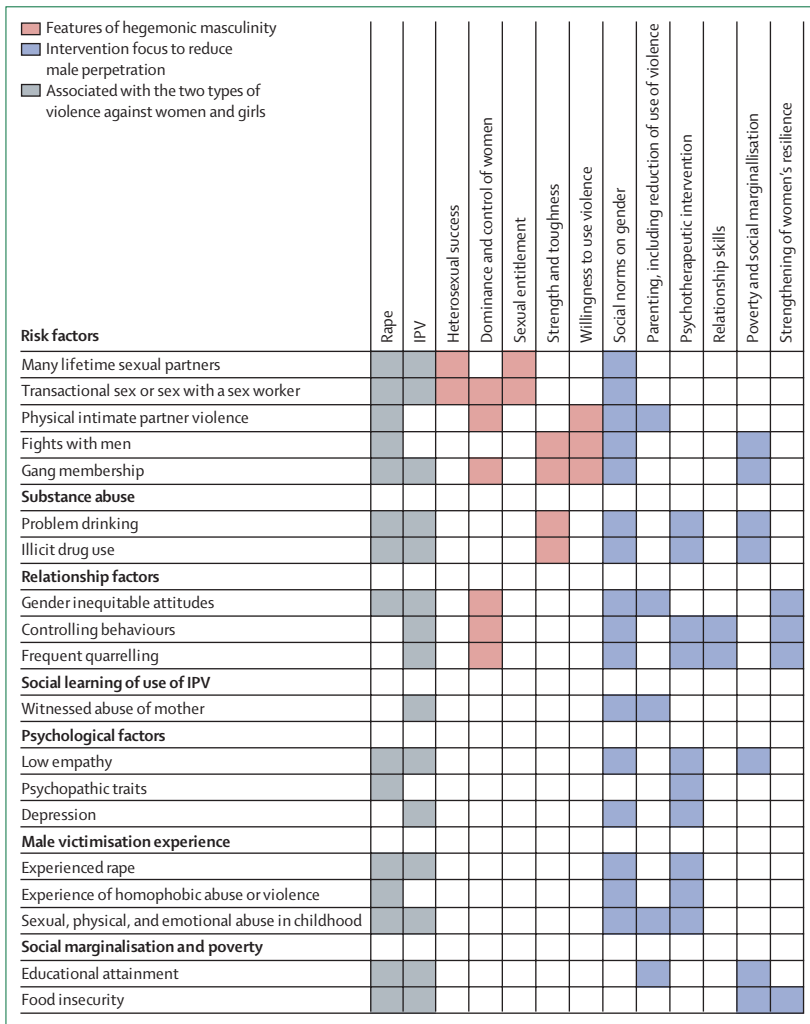
Legend:
- Features of hegemonic masculinity
- Intervention focus to reduce male perpetration
- Associated with the two types of violence against women and girls

Column headers:
- Rape
- IPV
- Heterosexual success
- Dominance and control of women
- Sexual entitlement
- Strength and toughness
- Willingness to use violence
- Social norms on gender
- Parenting, including reduction of use of violence
- Psychotherapeutic intervention
- Relationship skills
- Poverty and social marginalisation
- Strengthening of women's resilience

Risk factors
- Many lifetime sexual partners
- Transactional sex or sex with a sex worker
- Physical intimate partner violence
- Fights with men
- Gang membership

Substance abuse
- Problem drinking
- Illicit drug use

Relationship factors
- Gender inequitable attitudes
- Controlling behaviours
- Frequent quarrelling

Social learning of use of IPV
- Witnessed abuse of mother

Psychological factors
- Low empathy
- Psychopathic traits
- Depression

Male victimisation experience
- Experienced rape
- Experience of homophobic abuse or violence
- Sexual, physical, and emotional abuse in childhood

Social marginalisation and poverty
- Educational attainment
- Food insecurity

Figure 2: **Risk factors for male perpetration of violence, connections to dimensions of hegemonic masculinity, and translation into foci for interventions**
Risk factors are drawn from the UN Multicountry Study on men and violence (papers three and six on rape and intimate partner violence, respectively). Risk factors are listed in column one and the grey shading shows which are associated with the two types of violence against women and girls. Key factors strongly associated with perpetration of intimate partner violence and non-partner rape are shaded in pink. The purple shading shows the different risk factors that each intervention type might address.

	Implications
Multiple masculinities	Avoid gender stereotypes, emphasise differences, and inequalities among men
Competition between masculinities	Engage with men's vulnerability from other men
Denial of vulnerability	Engage with men's other vulnerabilities (eg, health, poverty)
Women and all things feminine presented as the opposite of manly	Engage with similarities between men and women
Use of violence	Address multiplicity of men's violence
Gay men and all things effeminate presented as the opposite of manly	Address homophobia
Power of men taken for granted	Challenge the taken for granted power of men by empowerment and raising of consciousness in women to tackle gender inequity
Male privilege and power over women	Challenge men's privilege

Table: **Use of Raewyn Connell's gender theory to build interventions**

hegemonic masculinity and individual behaviours seen to represent different underlying features. The importance of understanding this is that interventions do not need to be developed to address each of the individual risk factors, but to change the ideas and behaviours that men adopt in the course of showing that they are men. Interventions that have sought to do this, such as Stepping Stones, have shown the possibility of this approach, and that, with a reduction in violence, a change in other practices associated with hegemonic masculinity can be seen.[38] Interventions commonly have the potential to address multiple risk factors and this is illustrated by figure 2, which shows the different risk factors that each intervention type might address.

Theoretically based interventions need to draw from gender theory in this broad way, but they also need to draw from it in microlevel intervention planning. The table shows some of the considerations here. For example, discussion of changing social norms can be opened up through acknowledgment that multiple ways of being a man exist, and that men's positions and experiences shift. Interventions that offer simplistic and homogenous portrayals of ideal masculinity are not helpful in this respect. Over time, men might both feel vulnerable and entitled. Interventions often benefit from enabling men to acknowledge their fears and experiences of victimisation. Social norms regarding masculinity often emphasise men's difference from women, and differences between masculine norms and those of gay men. Acknowledgment of similarities between men and women, and addressing homophobia, are important for gender transformation. Even in settings of poverty and adversity, men are typically better off than similarly placed women, irrespective of their perceptions of hardship in comparison to all men. Critical analysis of men's privilege, power, and how they use their power is crucial to transform men. Finally, work with both women and men is important, because women often take for granted men's power and dominance over them. In some instances, within the constraints of power relations within their social context, women might benefit individually from men's power and therefore actively support it; for example, if doing so enables them to achieve status and power in their own right (eg, over younger women or daughters in law).[73] A need exists to empower women not only economically, but also socially and individually, and to raise their consciousness to enable critical thought on women's own role in male gender socialisation and the maintenance of gender power hierarchies so they demand more equitable relationships. This need is suggested by research from South Africa that shows women's acquiescence to the social order of male domination both in their expectations of men and their dating preferences.[74,75] Effective women-focused initiatives have sought to strengthen resilience against

violence by combining economic empowerment interventions with efforts to raise awareness of rights and build women's relationship skills.[76]

Intervention developers also need to think about the question of what drives and enables change. Ecological approaches (ie, those that address risk factors operating at several of the levels shown in figure 3) are particularly important to understand what supports social norms within settings and, where relevant, institutions. In particular, the necessity exists to understand the dynamic intersections between factors pertaining to an individual, peer, household, or relationship, and broader community levels (figure 3). This necessity is suggested, for example, by work to change gender norms in schools, which underscores the need to focus on interventions within a classroom (eg, lesson and curriculum), institutional policy (eg, on sexual harassment, corporal punishment), interactions (eg, respect shown by teachers for learners, bullying), and the wider environment (eg, the role of parents in support of schools' teaching).[77,78]

Intervention developers need to select methods based on an empirical understanding of what types of change can be achieved with different types of intervention approaches. Interventions that have reduced violence perpetration have tended to be many hours long, often involved women and men with combined single-sex and mixed group delivery, and have included critical reflection on social norms and building of relationship skills.[38,48] Communication campaigns have an important role to provoke conversation about an issue and can contribute to complex processes that have long-term benefits, but generally do not change behaviour in the short term.[79,80] The outputs and outcomes that are intended should be projected and stated explicitly.

Ways forward

Clear ways forward to enhance violence prevention exist in the form of approaches that involve boys and men in addition to efforts to strengthen women's resilience to violence. As a starting point, this Series paper discussed gender theory to explain that violence against women and girls does not occur in a social vacuum, but arises out of a context of gender inequity and social norms of gender relations that are largely supported by both men and women.[22,75,81] Thus women and men, and younger and older people, all need to be actively involved in prevention efforts for sustainable gender transformation to be achieved, since gender norms are reproduced through generations and operate across the lifecourse and not only among those most at risk of current perpetration.

Some variation in the importance of different risk factors exists across settings, because masculinities, men's histories, traumatic event exposure, and social marginalisation all vary. Therefore, programme planning should be based on local data, including sociological data that provide insight into masculinities and any variations in the known risk factors for perpetration.[14] In many intervention sites, mapping of local versions of
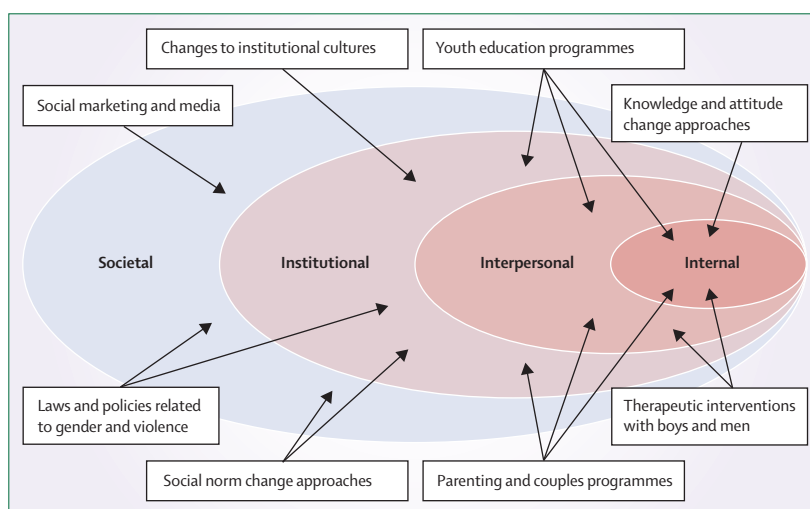

Figure 3: Transformation of masculinities through combined changes across the social ecology

masculinities and their influences can be a useful part of formative research for the intervention design, and can also be part of the intervention. Interventions that address masculinity seem to be more effective than those that remain blind to the powerful influences of gender norms and systems of inequality. Thus, understanding and application of theories of masculinity are important for effective intervention design. Furthermore, the theories suggest a movement away from interventions with primary goals related to individual-level attitude changes, towards a focus on transformation of hegemonic masculinities associated with violence perpetration, with a goal of violence prevention.

Masculinities are embodied and reproduced across the social ecology, and thus interventions must seek changes at multiple levels. One intervention or organisation cannot always do this and so strategic approaches to programming, with collaborations between organisations, can be particularly valuable. Further research is needed into the association between changes among individuals, partnership dyads, and in communities. This is not only a question of the scaling up of discrete interventions, but coordination of separate interventions, which work at different ecological levels and target different risk factors to achieve a reduction in violence.

Some individual risk factors for violence perpetration, particularly exposure to childhood adversity, and subsequent traumatic experiences, substance misuse, and mental ill-health, are also important factors that need specific responses. Mental health services are often underprovided and not focused on assisting trauma victims, but the importance of these services for men and women needs to be recognised.

New generations of interventions need to take the finding that more successful violence prevention programmes have a relatively long participant engagement time as a starting point. Further research is needed to optimise this finding and understand how best to gain

value for money in violence prevention, but, at present, evidence suggests that brief interventions on gender norms might simply not work. Overall, the questions of whether and how diversity among men should be taken into account in interventions, and what the implications of this are for efforts to prevent the occurrence of violence are too little understood.

One of the key controversies in work with men has been the presentation of this approach as a superior alternative to historical work with women on violence prevention and responses. This controversy is increasingly clear as a false dichotomy. Experience shows that violence prevention cannot be undertaken successfully without provision of services for survivors, and indications that social institutions care about violence against women and girls. Successful prevention should involve empowerment of women as individuals, within relationships and across society, and transformation of masculinities should be framed as a complement to these. Furthermore, men need to both change themselves and align themselves with women to deepen and sustain the goals of women's rights and empowerment in economic, political, and domestic terms. Deepening of men's understanding of the need for this change is crucial, including how they can contribute directly, such as by including their daughters in inheritance (or changing laws if this is prohibited), supporting women's work, sharing domestic work, or at a community level through supporting women's participation in political processes.

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