COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH / EPIDEMIOLOGY

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Social capital and sexual health risk behaviors in agricultural plantation residents in Tanzania

BACKGROUND

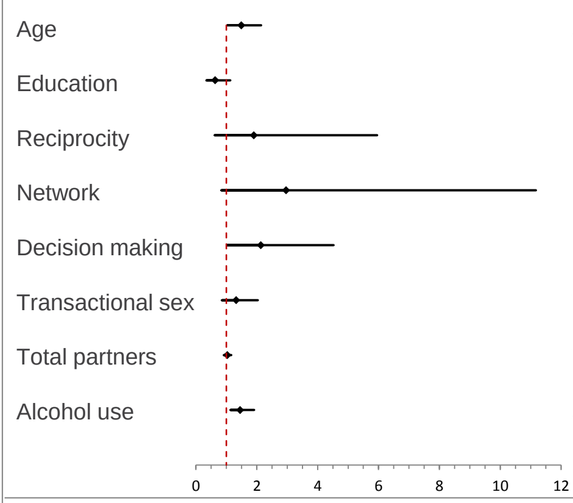
- Sexually transmitted infection (STIs) are leading causes of mortality & morbidity worldwide.
- **Social capital** is based on reciprocity & mutual trust within a community, connecting people to resources & healthy coping methods.
- Research on relationships between social capital & health has yielded contradicting results.
- ***Objective*:** Investigate relationship between social capital & sexual health (measured by concurrent partnerships & infection with at least one STI [HIV, HSV-2, syphilis]).

METHODS

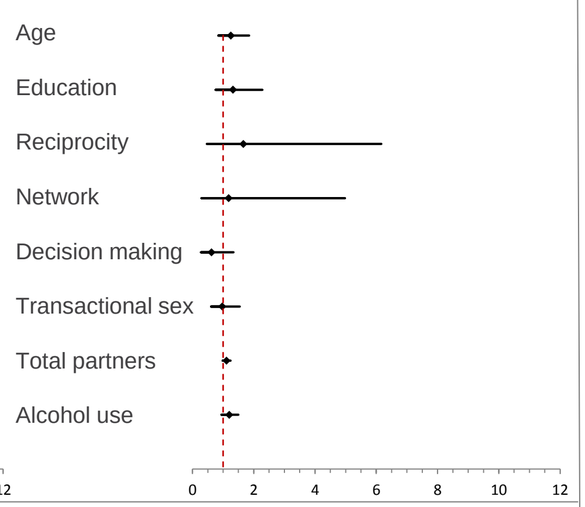
- Secondary data analysis
- Quantitative data collected via Swahili questionnaire using audio computer-assisted self-interview software, clinical data collected via on-site STI testing
- Data analysis performed using JMP

RESULTS

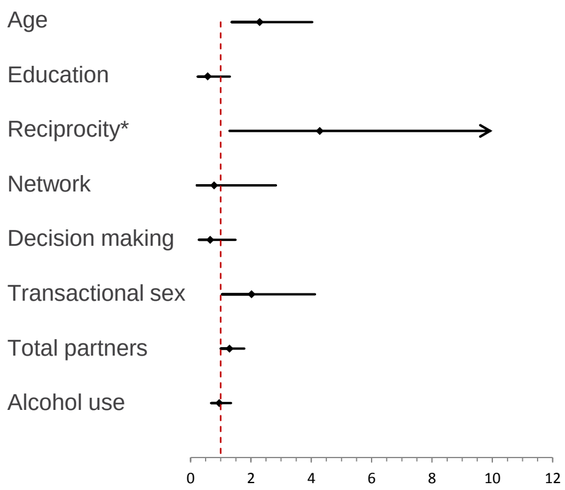
Odds ratios (95% CI) for infection with an STI (men)



Odds ratios (95% CI) for concurrent partnerships (men)

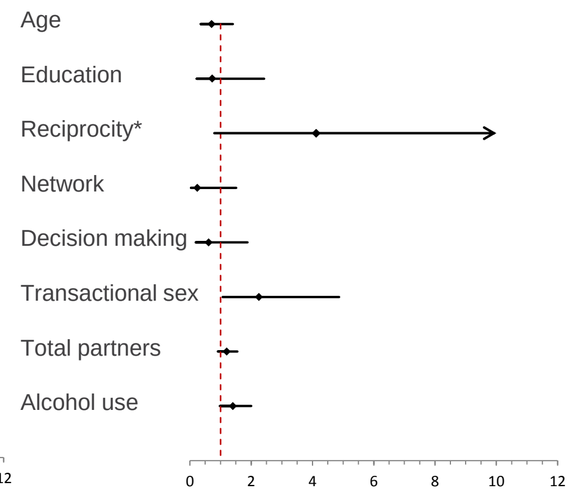


Odds ratios (95% CI) for infection with an STI (women)



*Upper CI limit = 15.19

Odds ratios (95% CI) for concurrent partnerships (women)



*Upper CI limit = 26.2

CONCLUSIONS

- Some measures of social capital were significantly associated with *increased* odds of STI infection. In women, reciprocity increased odds of prevalent STI, & in men participation in decision making increased odds of prevalent STI.
- Common risk factors (alcohol use, transactional sex, high number of sexual partners) were either associated with or appeared to have no effect on prevalent STIs & concurrent partnerships. In women, transactional sex was significantly associated with both outcomes.
- Limitations to this cross-sectional study include an inability to determine causality, potential response bias, & a relatively small amount of variance explained by social capital components after principal components analysis.
- **Implications:** More research is necessary to develop a uniform measure for social capital & understand its relationship with health. Targeting known risk behaviors may be more effective at improving sexual health.