Measuring the Impact of Parenting Interventions in Low-Resource and Humanitarian Settings

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Why parenting interventions?

Improving Positive Parenting Skills and Reducing Harsh and Abusive Parenting in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: A Systematic Review

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Abstract Family and youth violence are increasingly recognized as key public health issues in developing countries. Parenting interventions form an important evidence-based strategy for preventing violence, both against and by children, yet most rigorous trials of parenting interventions have been conducted in high-income countries, with far fewer in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). This systematic review of available evidence, performed using a systematic search of databases and hand searching, aimed to synthesize the existing body of evidence for interventions to improve parenting skills and reduce harsh and abusive parenting. Given the substantial body of evidence for such interventions, an important next step is to conduct further research that demonstrates the effectiveness of these interventions in low- and middle-income settings.
Before, the house is big and then it gets smaller and smaller when we fold the paper. If the house is big, we can live as we want. But when it gets small, we have to live united as a family.

- 38 year-old mother
Research questions

1. Can an evidence-based parenting and family skills intervention be implemented in a low-resource, conflict-affected setting?

2. Does the intervention have an impact on:
   a) Parenting practices
   b) Family functioning
   c) Child behavior, psychosocial wellbeing and resilience

3. What are the processes through which participation in the intervention influences these outcomes?
Diverse Settings

- Conflict-affected Burundi,
- Post-conflict rural Liberia,
- Migration and displacement-affected Thai-Burma border
Intervention

Varying use of existing, evidence-based interventions versus context and culture-specific adaptation

- Locally developed (Burundi)
- Nurturing Parenting + adaptations (Liberia)
- Strengthening Families Program + adaptations

Target population

- Caregivers of children aged 10-14 (Burundi), 3-7 (Liberia) or 8-12 (Thai-Burma border)

Structure and content

- 10-12 weekly group discussion sessions
- 3 home visits (Liberia only)
- Topics included: anger and stress management; behavior management techniques; consequences of harsh punishment; communication and problem solving skills
Evaluation design and methodology

1. Measuring long term outcomes
## 2. Creating and adapting the best measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome of Interest</th>
<th>Measure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parenting practices (positive and negative)</td>
<td>• Parental Acceptance and Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) (Rohner 2005)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Parent Behavior Scale (developed from qualitative research)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>• Discipline Interview (Lansford et al. 2005)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Discipline Module of Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) (Unicef 2006)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family functioning</td>
<td>• Burmese Family Functioning Scale (developed from qualitative research)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child behavior, psychosocial wellbeing and resilience</td>
<td>• Child Behavior Checklist/Youth Self Report (Achenbach 2001)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Child Resilience Scale (developed from qualitative research)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unintended effects and pathways of change</td>
<td>• Qualitative methods</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Adapting and testing alternative forms of measurement beyond self-report

Confidence intervals: 95%
* indicates statistical significance
Alternative measures in Liberia

• Dyadic Parent-Child Interaction Coding System (DPICS): allows for coding multiple types of parent verbalizations during 5-minute play interactions with their child: praise, negative statements, etc.

• Lessons: audio not enough. Now using video to see the interactions. and to add non-verbal codes such as physical touch, tone of voice..

• Also piloting discreet choice with pictures of parents. “Which one is more like you” (Puffer, Chase & Green)
4. Improving child measures – particularly for young children

Confidence intervals: 95%
* indicates statistical significance
5. Measuring implementation variables and understanding pathways

Intervention was feasible and acceptable to program participants.
- 87% average attendance
- Over 60% completed intervention

Qualitative findings suggest two potential pathways of change
- Knowledge gained from intervention
- “Controlling the mind”
6. Measuring unintended consequences

Qualitative findings suggest potential unanticipated impacts on caregiver mental health, and relationships with family and community members.

IRC current focus on

- links between IPV and child maltreatment
- parenting in emergencies with a component of trauma recovery
7. Understanding relative effectiveness and cost effectiveness

IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING: COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Impact on Test Scores (in SD), with 90% Confidence Interval

Unconditional cash transfers, Malawi 1
Minimum conditional cash transfers, Malawi 2
Girls merit scholarships, Kenya 3
Village-based schools, Afghanistan 4
Providing earnings information, Madagascar 5
Reducing class size, Kenya 6
Textbooks, Kenya 7a
Flip charts, Kenya 8
Reducing class size, India 9
Building/improving libraries, India 10
School committee grants, Indonesia 11
School committee grants, Gambia 12

Additional SD per $100 (Log Scale)
Thank you!