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Title: Prevention of gender-based violence in sub-Saharan African universities: A multinational network approach

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Background: Gender-based violence (GBV) constitutes a global public health crisis occurring across geographic and cultural contexts, with acute and chronic health consequences. Despite the ubiquity of GBV, there has been very little focus on GBV at universities in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).
Aim: This symposium will describe the work of the *Sub-Saharan Africa University Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response Network (SUBVERT).*
Methods: The collaborative work will be described in phases: 1) Phase I will focus on best practices for decolonizing research networks and the co-creation of the framework and structure for SUBVERT; 2) Phase II will describe a policy analysis including a nominal group technique to identify best practices for policy development at universities in SSA; and 3) Phase III will describe the culturally-tailored development (using cognitive interviews and consensus) and analysis of an anonymous 71-item online GBV survey with 3,512 respondents across nine campuses in SSA.
Results: From Phase I, major themes for network development include: 1) imbalance of power, 2) economic resources, 3) capacity building, 4) trust, 5) definition of roles, and 6) promoting good governance. We describe how these themes influenced the development of the SUBVERT organizational structure, membership criteria, cooperative agreement, and research priorities. From Phase II, thirteen policies **(**seven university policies and six national policies) from six countries (Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Zimbabwe) were reviewed to identify eight key elements for GBV policy development for universities in SSA. From Phase III, the prevalence of GBV was high among university students (physical=30.9%, sexual=18.7%, psychological=64.9%, stalking=63.7%), and many of these assaults were perpetrated by a partner or friend. Student perceptions of their GBV knowledge seem favorable; however, most have not received any training related to GBV since arriving on campus.

Conclusions: The network has demonstrated a good model in addressing GBV in SSA through the formation of a strong interdisciplinary team from high-income and low- and middle-income countries. The co-creation research approach and multiple layers of interaction has provided a new lens for collaborative cross-campus research to allow for sharing of best practices and lessons learned.