

MTV Shuga: Evaluating DREAMS's MTV Shuga through screening episodes in the community

Natsayi Chimbindi & Thembelihle Zuma
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Background and Methods

Background

- Adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) in South Africa are at high risk of HIV and early pregnancy.
- Mass-media edudramas have the potential to increase demand for HIV and sexual health services in large numbers of young people

Aim: To use the opportunity of MTV-Shuga shown concurrently with large scale-up of combination HIV prevention for AGYW (“DREAMS”) and test the hypothesis that mass-media edudrama can improve the sexual health of AGYW

Methods

- Settings: A rural and resource-constrained area of KwaZulu-Natal
- Date: 2016-2018
- Exposure to MTV-Shuga (i.e. reported seeing ≥ 1 of 24 episodes; able to recall any storyline)
- Outcomes: Incident HSV-2; incident pregnancy; condom use at last sex; uptake of HIV-testing and contraception; and awareness of HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP).
- **Social science component**
- **Questions on exposure and experiences with mass media and MTV SHUGA**
- **Conducted a community viewing of MTV SHUGA**

3013 Random sample
of AGYW aged 13-22

2555 eligible

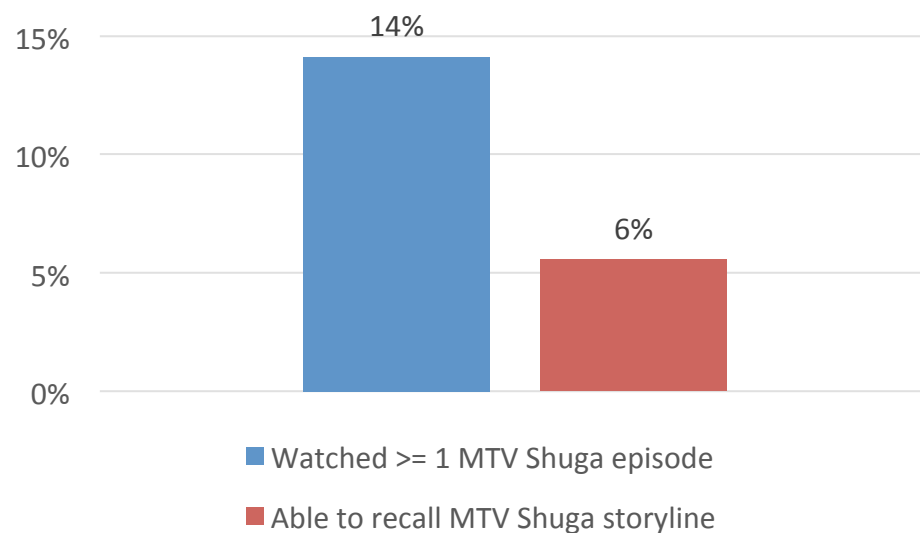
2184 (86%) enrolled at
baseline

1853 (85%) followed-up
at 1 year

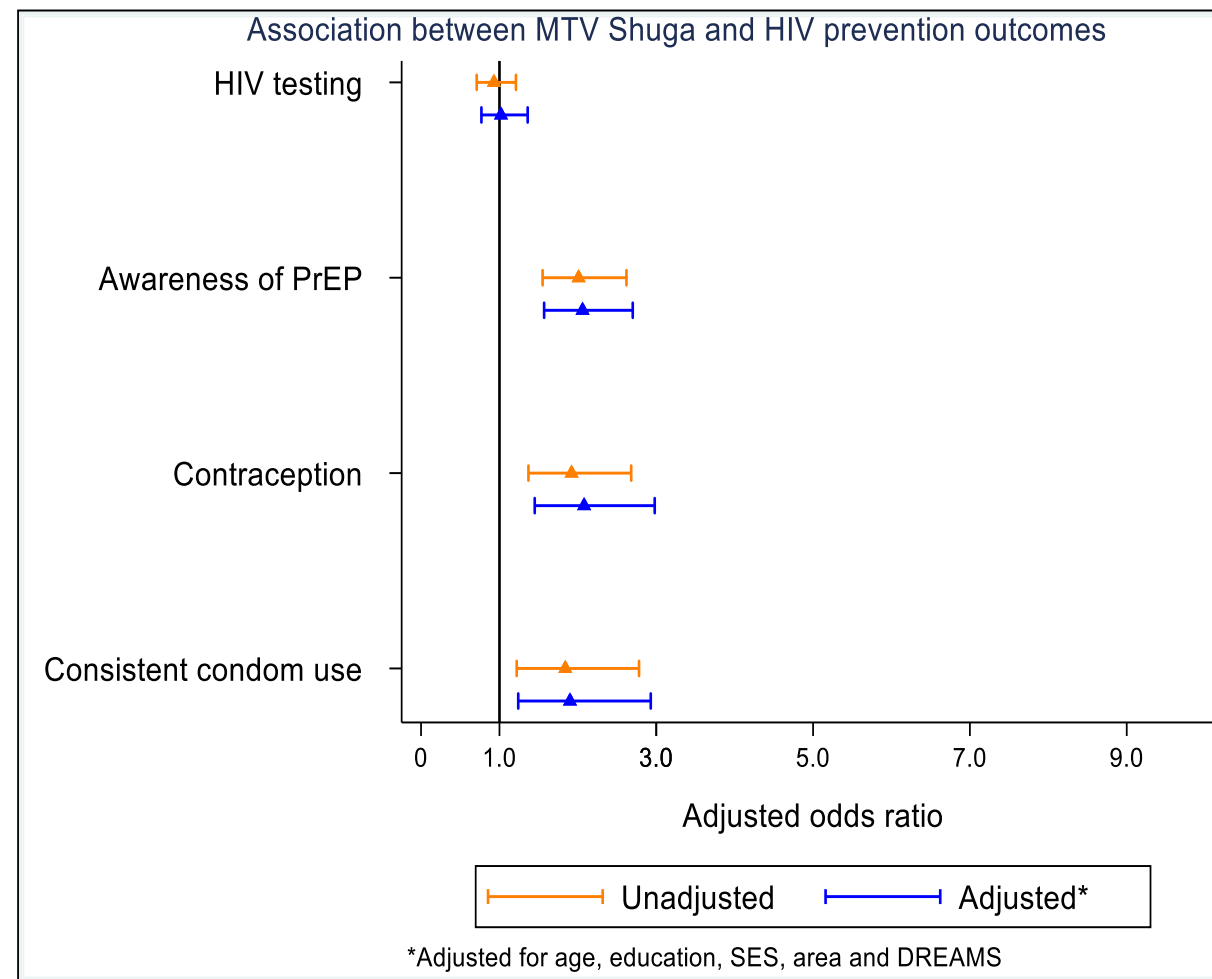
1712 (78%) followed-up
at 2 years

Results

Exposure to MTV Shuga at Baseline



	Incidence/100 person years	95% confidence intervals
Teenage pregnancy	9.1	9.2-11.4
HSV2	15.3	13.5-17.3



Conclusions

- MTV Shuga reached a minority in this rural setting where AGYW remain at high risk for STI, HIV and early pregnancy.
- Those who watched the MTV-Shuga had better HIV prevention and sexual health outcomes.
- Research is needed to understand the pathways through which MTV-Shuga improves demand and uptake of HIV prevention and sexual health technologies.

MTV SHUGA Qualitative Study



Aimed to describe the ways in which MTV-Shuga was experienced by young people within the study setting and to examine the extent to which it may have influenced their behaviour.



Analysis focused on examining the reasons for non-viewing of MTV Shuga when it was aired on national TV. Explored how young people, experienced and engaged with MTV-Shuga. Explored participants' views on the potential for MTV-Shuga to influence their and their peers' behaviour.



Eight **Public screenings** of MTV Shuga

A total of n=25 **IDIs**

Females n=20 males n=5 aged 15-20 years old

A total of n= 13 **focus group discussions**

41 males and 68 females aged 15-30 years old



Emerging insights about (non) viewing of MTV SHUGA

Access to TV and engagement with MTV-SHUGA:

- Generally watched from homes and public spaces including taverns and bars
- Other platforms included– Facebook, YouTube and DSTV – App, Explorer. However, those were not used due to related data costs.
- Access usually during the weekend
- TV was mostly watched with parents, siblings, and neighbours.
- A few participants did not have access to a TV or had no TV within their homes, as such, had not watched MTV SHUGA.
- Young people who had been part of the public screening felt that MTV-SHUGA had valuable lessons and they reported having discussed positive characters with their peers
- A few participants reported not discussing with anyone after watching, they reported not having anyone to discuss with.

“We watch TVs at home we watch it with our parents in the evenings, during the day we don’t watch it because we’d be at school”.
(MTVEMSO1, FDG, P1)

“There are a lot of platforms because young people can use phones and even laptops in their rooms. There is a lot of platforms, now you can watch tv programs when you are not near the tv”. (MTVBXSC01, FGD, P8)



Influence of MTV-SHUGA on young people

Scenes (and characters) described as those that could influence young people to manifest negative behaviours	Positive influences gained from watching MTV-Shuga
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical Abuse Partying Abortion Dating Sugar Daddies (Blessers) Bunking school <p>Participants felt that there are young people who could copy these negative behaviours and end up facing the same consequences as the characters who were involved in these “risky” and “wrong” behaviours.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual health and HIV Education Taking responsibility The value of good friendships Reporting GBV Having positive role models HIV status disclosure <p>Participants felt that the episodes they saw provided valuable information around sexual health and HIV education and they mentioned characters who taught them how to take responsibility of their lives as young people</p>

“I don’t have anyone if I can say, there was no one that you can learn something good from on that episode because of what they were doing, they were doing wrong things. I saw the other one who was getting his girlfriend drunk because he wanted to have sex with her...”. (MTVEMSO1, FGD, P3)

“Not giving up is a good thing, no matter how small your thing is or how less you believe in it, but for the fact that you had an idea of doing it, do not give up on your dream. I think that is a good thing, which has a positive impact to everyone, either young or old.” (MTVA001, IDI)



How MTV SHUGA is influenced by the social context

- Gender and intergenerational sexual norms are deeply embedded
- For young women – gender norms, expectation that they should not engage in sexual activity until they had reached age 21 or had completed school
- Participants critically engaged with scenes which encouraged submission and silence in females and control and coercion in males
- Using contraceptives, not getting HIV, and reporting gender-based violence as shown on MTV-SHUGA

“Others would not welcome it [the use of condoms], because of the people they are in relationships with, they will think they don’t trust them, that will create problems in that relationship” (MTVDFS04, FGD)

“when you start engaging in sexual intercourse, you should know, what you are doing and at what time....., you should know what will happen if you fall pregnant or maybe what will help you if you get infected with HIV” – (MTVDFS04, FGD)

Practical lessons for community-based screening

- Public viewings of MTV-Shuga - normally in the afternoon
- Rescheduled if they clashed with other school activities or examinations.
- Participants valued the space the viewings provided to discuss topics including, HIV, ART, contraceptives, and other sexual and reproductive health issues “alone” as young people.
- Most participants had not watched MTV-Shuga prior to the public viewing, as such, their insight was limited to one episode
- No ethical issues were observed during screenings and all aspects of data collection



Conclusions from Qualitative Results

- MTV-Shuga was well received
- Most young people had not watched MTV SHUGA due to who controls TV watching at home, not having a TV or due to high data costs
- MTV SHUGA **provided and improved sexual health and HIV education** and encouraged young people to take responsibility of their lives.
- However, it also showed episodes on physical abuse, partying, abortion, and relationships with older people which drove transactional sex. Participants said **negative storylines could also influence young people to manifest negative behaviours.**
- MTV-Shuga demonstrated that there are opportunities for interventions to influence the household context and influence gender roles, attitudes, and practices to support adolescent sexual and reproductive health.

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