

# Assessment of knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of gender-based violence: A cross-sectional study from thirteen counties in Kenya

**Author:** H. Momanyi<sup>1</sup>, L. Ndung'u<sup>1</sup>, C. King'ori<sup>1</sup>, C. Orora<sup>1</sup>, J. Njogu<sup>2</sup>

**Affiliation:** 1. Population Services Kenya      2. Population Services International

## Background

Approximately one-third of global female population has experienced gender-based violence (GBV).<sup>1</sup> In Kenya, evidence indicates that prevalence of GBV is substantial with 34% of females reporting ever experienced physical violence since age 15.<sup>2</sup> To address the GBV problem, a five-year “*Accelerate*” program by Population Services Kenya (PSK), Gender Violence Recovery Centre (GVRC) and Population Services International (PSI), is currently being implemented across 13 underserved counties in Kenya (2021-2025). The program aims to improve sexual health, rights, and wellbeing through supply- and demand-side interventions. On the demand-side, *Accelerate* is conducting a range of social and behavior change activities including program-led community dialogue meetings to catalyse change in social norms.

## Objective

This study aimed to assess awareness, attitudes, and perception of GBV among communities residing in 13 *Accelerate* supported counties.

## Method

A cross-sectional design was adopted to collect data across all *Accelerate* counties which were grouped into 5 research clusters based on cultural similarities. Members of the community were randomly interviewed as they exited from *Accelerate*-led GBV dialogue meetings. Interviews were held between January and December 2022.

## Results

A total of 1,326 individuals were interviewed on exit from a GBV dialogue meeting. Of these, majority were adolescent boys/girls (47%), followed by women (35%) and men (18%). Overall, majority of respondents (72%) reported prior exposure to SRHR/GBV messaging in the last 6 months preceding the date of the interview (range: 52-93%). Just 37% of respondents affirmed that a woman has a right to refuse sex for any of reasons, suggesting sub-optimal sexual autonomy (cluster range: 17-54%). Male partner use of violence toward their partner was endorsed by 45% of the participants, indicating that domestic violence was widely normalized (cluster range: 20-62%). Of concern, only 53% of the female participants knew a local GBV resource where a survivor can seek for care and support (cluster range: 30-80%).

## Recommendations

Sector-wide strategies should be scaled up to address harmful practices which continue to normalize violence against women and girls. There is a need to sensitize communities through grassroots duty bearers including Community Health Promoters (CHPs) and local administrators to mainstream GBV reporting and promote referral for prompt care and support.

## **References**

1. WHO. (2013). Global and Regional Estimates of Violence Against Women: Prevalence and Health Effects of Intimate Partner Violence and Nonpartner Sexual Violence. . Geneva, Switzerland: WHO.
2. KNBS and ICF. 2023. Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 2022. Key Indicators Report. Nairobi, Kenya, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: KNBS and ICF.

**Word count:** 350/350