



School-Based Alcohol and HIV Prevention in South Africa

Pamela Cupp, PIRE & University of Kentucky
Rick S. Zimmerman, PIRE & University of Kentucky
Arvin Bhana, Co-PI, Human Sciences Research Council
Sonja Feist Price, University of Kentucky





Background

- We believe that regardless of the setting, school-based interventions need to be novel, stimulating and participatory.
- There is evidence that skills-based programs in schools can be successful at behavior change (Perry et al., Kirby et al.)
- Prevention programs in this South African context need to consider social context and influences as well as individual differences and cognitive training.



Background

- HAPS (HIV and Alcohol Prevention in Schools) research focuses on delaying early sexual debut and reducing the onset and use of alcohol.
- This HAPS South Africa curriculum is an integration and adaptation from two existing curricula: Project Northland *Amazing Alternatives!* (Perry) focusing on alcohol and *Reducing the Risk* (RTR) (Barth) focusing on HIV/pregnancy prevention.

Program Content & Description

- Participatory learning is featured in the “Our Times, Our Choices” curriculum adapted for South African circumstances
- Teachers are assisted by trained peer leaders
- Key to the curricula are the four characters, featured via audio vignettes, who are confronted with choices around risky behavior
- 15 session curriculum includes facts about alcohol and risky sexual behavior, consequences of actions, resisting (peer) pressure, decision-making, etc.

- Lessons included role plays and other opportunities to practice refusal and negotiation skills for sex and alcohol
- Other activities included a myth and truth exercises to refute common misconceptions and discussions about the characters and their choices

Scripted Characters

Madumi (Negative character)

I'm Madumi, doing Grade 9 at Siyahlomula High School. We are not a Model C but siyisgele grand nje. Not that there's anything wrong about Model C schools. The only thing is, life is too serious for my liking there. But even at Siyahlomula things can be boring you know. The school is good but my only problem abantwana mpintshi yami. The girls there are just flat mpintshi. I'm talking about girls that enjoy life and who take alcohol. The girls we have there won't trouble you with talk about HIV/AIDS and condoms. I mean, c'mon we're young and we should enjoy life. What is life without sex? I don't know about you, but I find it very boring.

Lulu (Transitional character)

- I'm Lulu. I'm in Grade 9 at Siyahlomula High—the very same school that gets a good Matric pass rate all the time even though we're just a normal township school. No, we're not a Model C into nje we're committed and abothisha bethu don't take any nonsense. I'll be turning fifteen in a matter of days. That means I'm growing older usuku nosuku. Even at home my parents treat me differently. In the past, my mom would just shout at me, telling me this and that. You know, some of the things she says are really scary. Things like "ubhasobhe abafana and ungalali noma ikanjani because uzomitha ube nengculazi." Not that she's wrong, but just to hear her say it—Oh please! They all need to give me a break. I'll be turning fifteen soon. At that age I don't think I need anyone to baby-sit me—ngimdala mos.

Method

- 8 high schools located in townships near Pietermaritzburg (90km from Durban)
- Each randomly assigned to either an intervention or comparison condition (4 each)
- Intervention group received 15 sessions of skills-based curriculum
- Comparison group received 3 sessions of knowledge-based curriculum



One of our schools



Another school



One of the communities

Sample Characteristics

	N	%
Female	506	52
Age		
14-15	497	54
16-17	343	37
Had alcohol	303	34
Currently have boy/girl friend	472	52
Had sex	Yes = 352	38
Age of 1 st sex	10 or younger=82	23
	11-14 = 128	36
	15 or older =150	41

Selected Measures & Reliabilities

Measure	Reliability
Positive Attitudes about Waiting to have Sex	.82
Sexual Refusal Self-Efficacy	.85
Condom Self-Efficacy	.77
Condom Attitudes	.64

Results for Behavior at 1st follow-up

- In a logistic regression controlling for age, gender, and pretest levels of intention to have sex in the next year, **intervention condition had a significant effect on initiation of sexual activity for those not sexually active at Time 1**. Those in the intervention condition were only 69.7% as likely to initiate sexual activity over the six-month follow-up period as those in the comparison condition (1-tailed $p=.042$).
- There were no intervention effects on condom use at the first follow-up.

Booster Intervention

- Within original randomization, 2 schools in each condition were randomly selected to receive a booster intervention
- The booster consisted of 4 additional classroom sessions plus
- Preparation for and presentation of a grade-wide HIV prevention assembly referred to as "Open Day".

Contents of the Booster

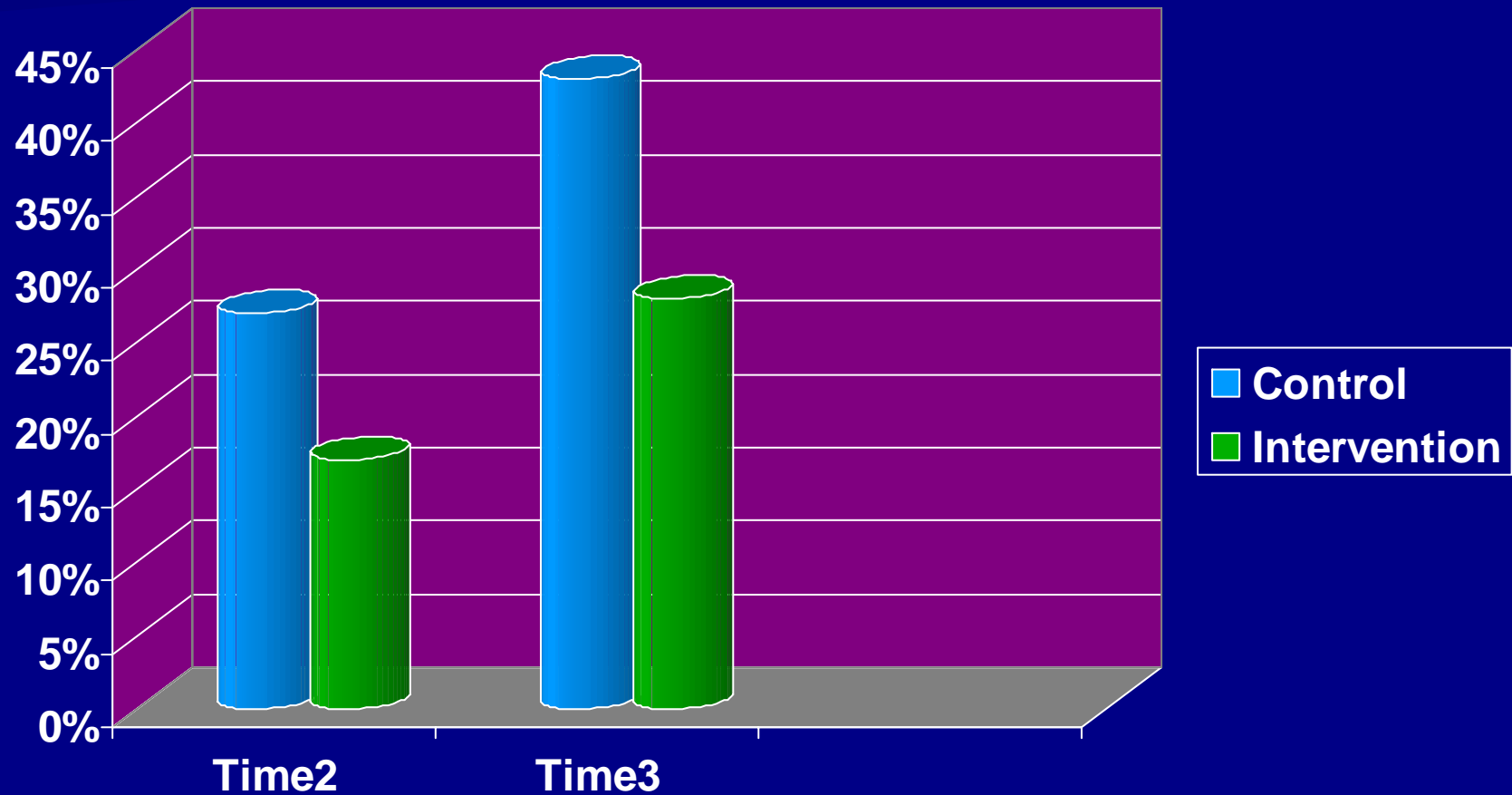
- A short theatrical presentation (that was written by an individual who scripted the original characters)
- Music
- Dance
- Poetry and Essays
- Art

Results for Behavior at 2nd follow-up

(after main and booster intervention)

- Occurred 18 months after main intervention and 6 months after booster intervention
- Of those for whom we collected follow-up data, learners in the MAIN experimental intervention condition (regardless of the booster condition that they received) had more positive attitudes toward waiting to have sex, greater refusal self-efficacy, weaker intentions to have sex, and were less likely to have initiated sexual activity.
- Again, there were no intervention effects on condom use at the first follow-up.
- Results for the effects on alcohol use and for the booster condition are not being reported here.

Initiation of Intercourse



Review of Intervention Results

■ 6 months

- Greater increase in positive attitudes about waiting
- Greater increase in sexual refusal self-efficacy
- Less of an increase in intentions to have sex
- Less increase in intention to use alcohol with sex
- Less initiation of sexual activity

■ 18 months

- Greater increase in sex. refusal self-efficacy
- Less increase in intentions to have sex
- Less initiation of sexual activity

Conclusion

- Impact of program on skills and attitudes related to both sexual activity was significant at the first and second follow-ups.
- We have demonstrated that a curriculum developed in the West can be successfully adapted after careful formative research and it can be effective in changing both sexual attitudes and behavior of adolescents over a 18 month period in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

Recommended Future Research

- Focus on teacher factors that influence the success of the curriculum
- Focus on cultural issues that may need to continue to be addressed at the individual level and/or may require more systemic types of interventions
- Focus on the role that gender and power issues have in effective HIV prevention

Acknowledgments

NIAAA Grant R01 AA13927-01 for funding the project.

