

# Mentor Mothers' Willingness to Engage Male Partners and Screen for Domestic Violence among HIV-Positive Women in Rural Nigeria

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## Background

Domestic violence (DV) data among HIV+ Nigerian women is scarce. Due to HIV and DV stigma, these women likely do not seek or receive help for DV. Mentor Mothers (MMs) are HIV-positive women trained to provide psychosocial support to other HIV-positive women. We evaluated the willingness of MMs to engage male partners and screen clients for DV.

## Methods

Seven Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted among MMs in rural North-Central Nigeria. Discussions were audio-recorded. Transcription was done verbatim for English FGDs while Hausa FGDs were translated into English transcripts by bilingual facilitators. Thematic and content analysis was performed by 8 paired researchers. Common themes and quotes were extracted and conclusions drawn from group triangulations.

## Findings

Thirty six MMs: 72% Christians, 28% Muslim, were recruited; half were married. MM age range was 22 to 48 years, and nearly 70% had received some secondary-level education (**Table 1.**)

**While engaging male partners was seen as beneficial, MMs recommended male partners be engaged by other males because of strong gender norms:** *“However, you know it is preferable for the same sex to open up to each other. That is why men do not like attending our support group meetings.”*

**MMs acknowledged the occurrence of DV among their clients.** *“Yes, we have had such cases before where husbands beat up their wives, what we normally do is that we counsel the man and try to reconcile them but some of the men do not stop being violent to their wives.”*

**MMs were in favor of screening clients for DV:** *“Yes! Not just screening but also training us on what to do. After the screening, how do we help them out, what do we tell them? How do we go about it? Where do we link them to get certain support for those that are willing to share their stories with others, those that need support, how do we help them?”*

## Interpretation

MMs recommended same-gender counsellors for male partners. There was willingness to provide DV screening and to link victims to further services. Further studies are needed to determine DV prevalence among HIV-positive women so that DV programming could be integrated with HIV and/or MCH services.

**Table 1. Socio-demographic Characteristics of Mentor Mothers Participating in Focus Group Discussions**

Characteristic	Total (N=36) n (%)
<b>Age, years</b>	
21 – 30	14 (40.0)
>30 – 41	16 (45.7)
>41 – 50	5 (14.3)
No response	1
<b>Formal education</b>	
< Secondary	12 (33.3)
≥ Secondary	24 (66.7)
<b>Religious affiliation</b>	
Christian	26 (72.2)
Muslim	10 (27.8)
<b>Marital status</b>	
Single, Widowed, Divorced	18 (50.0)
Married	18 (50.0)
<b>MM work experience, years</b>	
1	2 (5.6)
2 - 3	11 (30.6)
4 - 5	14 (38.9)
≥6	9 (25.0)

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