The Challenges of Conducting International Public Health Research: Data Collection Lessons from the Field

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The challenges of conducting international public health research: Data collection lessons from the field

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RESEARCH APPROACH
Behavioral Interventions

Human subjects
- vulnerable populations
- special ethical considerations

Sensitive topics
- sexual behavior
- HIV
- mental health
- familial illness and death

Participatory & community-engaged research agenda

Teen Advisory Group Annual Retreat – Team building exercise

Photo credit: Andrew Naysmith; participatory documentary film to dissemination research findings

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Collaborative research: Science to inform policy and practice

South African Policymakers

Our studies: Building Resilient Youth and Families

Medical Experts
- Kickpositive
- Red Cross War Memorial
- Children’s Hospital

Community Organizations
- Tholulwazi Uzivikele
- Grassroot Soccer

Advisory Group & Community Consultations
- Youth advisory group team building exercise
RESEARCH STUDIES & MAJOR FINDINGS

Public health campaign on building at research site, KwaZulu Natal
Research studies

Family Challenges (2005-2007)
- Qualitative, exploratory approach
- K=3 focus groups with caregivers of children orphaned by AIDS
- N=15 key informant interviews

Caregiver Wellbeing Study (2007-2009)
- Cross-sectional survey
- N=2477 caregivers aged 18+

Young Carers Study: Kwa-Zulu Natal (2010-2012)
- Mixed methods: cross-sectional survey and embedded qualitative research
- N=4954 children aged 10-17, caregivers aged 18+

- Two group randomized design
- Assessments at baseline, 1- and 3-month post-intervention
- Acceptability and feasibility data

Data collection, KwaZulu Natal research site
Health disparities: HIV affected children at risk for poor mental health

South Africa
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Trauma

Uganda
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Hopelessness

Zimbabwe
- Depression
- Anxiety

China
- Depression
- Trauma
- Loneliness

USA
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Internalizing disorders

Young Carers KZN Study

Statistically significant associations in bold.

Anxiety
- Children not affected by HIV/AIDS: 3%
- Children orphaned by AIDS: 7%

Suicidality
- Children not affected by HIV/AIDS: 4%
- Children orphaned by AIDS: 7%

PTSD
- Children not affected by HIV/AIDS: 19%
- Children orphaned by AIDS: 35%
Health disparities: HIV affected parents at risk for poor mental health

• Depression: 30-36%

• Anxiety: 49-73%

• PTSD: 19%
Syndemic of poor mental health and HIV

***p<0.001

Cumulative Effects of HIV Illness and Caring for Children Orphaned by AIDS on Anxiety Symptoms Among Adults Caring for Children in HIV-Endemic South Africa

Caroline Kuo, MD1,2 Lucie Cluver, MD2,4 Marisa Casale4,5 and Tyler Lane3,4
Adolescents a key group for HIV prevention

- 63% used condoms inconsistently
- >30% engaged in sex with casual or age disparate partners, or while using alcohol or substances
- 14% engaged in transactional sex

Low Perception of HIV Risk among Sexually Active Adolescents

- No chance of getting HIV
- A little chance
- 50/50 chance
- A big chance
- Been tested in past 3 months and know status
- I don't know what HIV is

- 63% used condoms inconsistently
- >30% engaged in sex with casual or age disparate partners, or while using alcohol or substances
- 14% engaged in transactional sex

- 52% No chance of getting HIV
- 27% A little chance
- 10% 50/50 chance
- 10% A big chance
- 10% Been tested in past 3 months and know status
- 10% I don't know what HIV is
Family interventions: Integrating HIV and mental health prevention

Depression and sexual risk
Lehrer et al. 2006
Brown et al. 2006

Negative affect
Shrier et al. 2008

Lower self-efficacy
DiClemente 2001

Rates of HIV risk behavior among children with depression or anxiety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sexually active</th>
<th>Engaged in risky sex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not depressed or anxious</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depressed or anxious</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Parental monitoring
DiClemente et al. 2007

Parent-child communication about sex
Sutton et al. 2014
Risk to resilience paradigm shift

% children with disorder

Caregiver no disorder, Child not AIDS-affected
Caregiver no disorder, Child AIDS-affected
Caregiver disorder, Child not AIDS-affected
Caregiver disorder, Child AIDS-affected

Young Carers KZN Study

***p<0.001
Family solutions for resilience

**MUTUAL CARE:** Adults taking care of the children. Children taking care of the adults. When you see the person with bags you go for help. Not expecting anything in return.

**RECIPROCITY:** Families has to go back in helping each other in terms of a strong family connection. Before, families used to—if my brother is struggling, and he doesn't have something, and I am having, or if a neighbor child is struggling, she doesn't have something, and I can be able to actually help that particular kid, I do. You see? Those ways, strong family ties. That means you don't need to be a biological or parent to actually support another child. Like my children—I've got two grown up children, you see, and now it's that time where I can take another child, one that is not my biological child, but just to give back to the community. You see? To give back to the community and help another person. Could be even—either way that she's not in my family member, or whatever, but just to give back—to give.

**FAMILY SUPPORT:** Well, I think the most important one is for them to work together to be one, not to allow things like stressors and conditions and their circumstances to divide them. You find that a lot of times when families have problems, they allow the problem to break the family to pieces. If families could learn or could be taught how to take the problem and make it something to step onto, make the problem a building block so that from the problem you grow and not let the problem break you, but to let the problem build you.

**GENEROSITY:** There is this word Ubuntu that is being generous. We are getting, people that—people that helping each other in the community. Like if you are part of a church and then you speak about your child that is in the church, people volunteer to help you. Some people access that. Also, if there is an income, I think that’s—I cannot leave that behind. If there is an income and the family’s able to survive, that is a strong factor that keeps the family really going.
DATA SYSTEMS: FILE STORAGE, SECURITY, AND ACCESS
Multiple sites, multiple time zones, large international teams
Large data, but slow upload and download speed

Watch our documentary film on YouTube!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnOAVf9iAY4
Cloud based data systems with encryption and compression

- Cloud based data systems via Dropbox + Security “fence” through nCrypted Cloud
  - Compression of files
  - Encryption of files
  - Secured sharing
    - Turning on/off access for individuals sharing folders
    - Different levels access for folders and files
      - Pin-enabled files
      - Download and upload privileges
      - Watermarking of documents
  - Statistics on user activity
Investing in local staff and capacity building
User manuals and remote access

Our Family Our Future
Family Prevention of HIV Risk and Depression in South Africa
Dr. Caroline C. Kuo
Standard Operating Procedures Manual

www.teamviewer.com
DATA SYSTEMS: DATA COLLECTION
### Data Collection Needs: Visual Data Collection for Low-Literate Populations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>No / Cha</th>
<th>Yes / Yebo</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1a: electricity? / ugesi?</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1b: radio? / umsakazo?</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1c: television? / umabonakude?</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1d: telephone? / ucingo?</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1e: refrigerator? / isibandisi?</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1f: personal computer or pc? / i-computer?</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data collection needs: Visual data for engaging child populations

**My Journey**

Home Visit #1

Program Enrollment & Session 1

Session 2

Family Meeting

Session 3

Home Visit #2

Home Visit #3

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**TEEN TALK SOUTH AFRICA**

Whatever you say is confidential. This means we will not report your real name.

Please write your name here:

........................................

Now, please think of a different name which we can use when we are writing about this research. You can pick any name you want!

........................................

Questionnaire number: .............. Boy/Girl
Place of interview: ........................................
School/org: ........................................ Grade: ...
ID number: ........................................
Interviewer: ........................................ Date: ....
Enumeration Area Number: ........................................
GPS latitude (S): S 0° 0' 0"
GPS longitude (E): E 0° 0' 0"

Would you mind if we contacted you again? Please write your address and telephone number so we can get in touch:

Address: ........................................
........................................
Telephone: ........................................

*This is a test. There are no right or wrong answers! This research aims to help young people in South Africa. Thank you for taking the time to help.*
Large data images

Image Credit: Dr. Lucie Cluver’s Studies
Low cost data collection software: visual deployment of questionnaire and visual image data capture

- Cost of software
- Cost for data collection quantity (by survey)
- Image collection capable

Try SurveyToGo, free

www.dooblo.net/stgi/surveytogo.aspx
SECURITY OF HUMAN SUBJECTS DATA AND STAFF SAFETY
High crime field sites including theft

Cartels Battle for Supremacy in South Africa’s Taxi Wars

The shattered windshield of a taxi owned by Khonzani Mono, who was killed last month in a shooting near Cape Town, a taxi cartel feud. More Photos >

Angry crowd stoned armed thug to death

A 22-YEAR-OLD thug was stoned to death by angry residents as he attempted to catch the thug.

The thug had robbed residents of their cash at Enkanini informal settlement on Tuesday.

Police Captain Thembani Mbelwa said he was shot dead when he attempted to catch the thug.

Mbelwa said the thug had returned to the community after buying bread, when he saw the mob chasing after the thug. He tried to stop the outbreak, who pulled out a gun and shot Mbelwa.

Mbelwa said that the protest continued for some time at residents, but that did not stop them from continuing with the chaos.

They cornered him at the Nkathi informal settlement and stoned him to death.

At this stage, we are investigating two counts of murder,” said Mbelwa.

He appealed to the community not to take the law into their own hands.
Protection of data: Secure access

• Password controlled phone
• Password controlled data collection access
• Encryption of data
Protection of data: Remote lock, wipe, ring of phone with location capabilities
Theft possible: Limit data and minutes on phone with pay-as-you-go accounts with township phone stores
Data Systems: Overcoming Data Collection Challenges
Sensitive behavioral data: Audio computer assisted self-interviewing (A-CASI)

✓ A-CASI capability

How many times have you had vaginal sex? By "vaginal sex" we mean when a man puts his penis in a woman's vagina.

Have you and your child ever talked about condoms?
Remote field sites: Mobile data systems

- Multiple device capability (phone, tablet, computer)
- Platform: Windows, Android vs. IOS device
Tracking and tracing participants for repeat measures: Location data

- GPS capable
- GPS capture automated

![Location data screenshot](image-url)
Continued GPS Challenges

Metal sheeting for roofs and walls

Heavy African bush obscuring satellite access
Limited electricity and internet: Offline data capability, quick sync, long life battery systems

- Online data collection
- **Offline data** collection with fast loading speed
- Choice of device with long battery life

Lack of electricity or undependable electricity (and internet)
Things go wrong: **Remote troubleshooting**

- Linked to computer based software
- Web accessible from any location

[www.mobizen.com](http://www.mobizen.com)
THANK YOU!

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Mentors and Research Collaborators

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R24 NICHD 077976, PIs: Lurie, Colvin, Co-I: Kuo

Health Economics and HIV/AIDS Research Division

QUESTIONS

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THANK YOU!
Research driven by families in South Africa for families in South Africa.

Photo credit: Andrew Naysmith

QUESTIONS
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