

# Cross-generational sexual relationship in Addis Ababa: A qualitative study

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## Abstract

**Background:** Cross-generational sexual practices are considered unsafe sexual behaviors. The risk of acquiring sexually transmitted infections including HIV is believed to be high among those involved in cross-generational sexual relationship. However, studies addressing why and how people are engaged in such practices are limited. This study attempted to fill this gap. This study therefore explored cross generational sexual relationships and their perceived effects in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

**Methods:** Qualitative research with a phenomenological study design was carried out in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 2014. Individuals who had personal experience of cross-generational sexual relationship (CGSR), and/or who were familiar with the practice were selected using snow balling technique. Six focus group discussions, three key informants and five in-depth interviews and non-participatory observations were conducted to obtain data for the study. All the FGDs and in-depth interviews were audio-recorded. The recorded data were transcribed and analyzed using a thematic approach in which motives, customs, perceived risks were separately identified for young girls and older men.

**Results:** The motives for engaging in CGSR were found to be not the same for young girls and older men. The motives for young girls to get engaged in CGSR were often related with acquiring money and material while older men reported sexual pleasure as their driving force. The findings also revealed that cross-generational sexual relationship between a young girl and an older man did not last long. The economic background of young girls involved in such a practice was found to be mixed. This means that there were girls from poor economic background while also there were girls in the group whose economic background was fairly better off. Similarly, the educational background of the girls involved in CGSR was not found to be uniform. This means that many had either high school or college level educational background. Some in the group claimed to have completed university education. There were also illiterate young girls in the group that participated in the study. In connection with marriage, regardless of their economic background, both married and unmarried older men had this relationship. The young girls may have control on whether or not to engage themselves in CGSR. It should however be stated they either have no or little control on what would happen within relationships including the use of condom during sex. Similarly, asking for proof of HIV test before sex was also found to be a point beyond the relationship.

**Conclusion:** Cross generational sexual relationships in Addis Ababa are likely to be unsafe due to the absence of condom use, absence of proof of HIV test before sex, and presence of multiple sexual partners. Further studies are necessary to measure the extent and effects of CGSRs. [Ethiop. J. Health Dev. 2017;31(4):228-235]

**Keywords:** cross-generational sex, HIV, risky sexual behavior, transactional sex

## Introduction

There is a disparity in reproductive health problems including HIV infection between young male and female. Available evidence in the local context shows that more young girls than young boys have fallen victim to HIV infection. Cross-generational sexual relationship is one among the often mentioned explanations for this (1).

Cross-generational sex often refers to sexual relationships between older men and younger women. The other side of the relationship (CGSR that involved older women and younger boys) is a less observed phenomenon (2). The practice commonly involves an exchange of money and gifts for sexual favors. “Sugar Daddy” and “Sugar Mammy” are the names given to elderly persons in the relationship (men and women) respectively (3).

Cross-generational sexual relationships have been in existence in the history of humankind across countries, societies and cultures (3). A longitudinal study among African American youth reveals females had older sexual partners than their male counterparts across adolescence and young adulthood (4). In Kenya, twenty percent of men were reported to have been involved in a relationship with an age difference of 10 or more years (5). Around a quarter of public high school girls in Botswana were in sexual relations with older men (6). A recent qualitative study in Ethiopia revealed that cross-generational sexual practice is widely practiced in two major cities of Ethiopia; namely, Addis Ababa and Adama (7).

Cross-generational sexual relationships are practiced all over the world; however, such a relationship has been labeled as a substantial problem particularly in sub-Saharan Africa (8) Indeed, an explanation for one possible cause of the high rate of HIV/AIDS infection

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in both older men and younger women in the region can perhaps be found in such sexual practices.

A desk review of different studies from a number of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa has showed that young girls are engaged in sexual relations with older men for different reasons. Some are engaged, simply, because they enjoy such a sexual relationship. Others get engaged in such sexual practice through some kind of coercion and violence- they are forced into accepting it. Yet, others are engaged in it because it is a means of earning income (7). The motivations for older men to engage in cross-generational sexual relationships are reported to range from a desire to redress sexual opportunities they missed when they were younger to a belief that sex with a virgin provides a cure for HIV (1).

Nevertheless, several studies reveal strong relationships between cross-generational sex, unsafe behaviors, and HIV risk (10, 11). According to a study in South Africa, age mixing in sexual relationships creates risk imbalance i.e. young people who have little exposure to sex are sexually connected to adults whose sexually transmitted infection rates are likely to be higher (9).

Thus, cross-generational sex and its implication for unsafe sexual behaviors and its potential for increased HIV risk make CGSR a priority concern for the country (12). In recognition of this concern, this study explored cross-generational sexual practices in Addis Ababa and their perceived effects. The findings of study are therefore hoped to generate evidence that will guide programs targeting CGSR and its consequences.

## Methods

**Study setting:** The setting of this study was Addis Ababa. A phenomenological study design was used to explore CGSRs in Addis Ababa. Addis Ababa is the federal capital of Ethiopia. The city has become a melting pot of diverse customs and varied cultures that it embraces a complex variety of peoples who have differences in their ethnicity or linguistic background (13). Based on the 2007 Census (CSA), Addis Ababa has a total population of 2.7 million. Of these, 1.3 million were men and 1.4 million women (14).

**Study population:** Individuals who consented to participate in the study and had personal experience of CGSR were considered in this study. Besides, those who did not have personal experience of CGSR but who were familiar with the practices did also participate in the study. Thus participants of the study included young girls, older men and young boys of the background explained above.

**Data collection:** Recruitment of the study subjects were through snowball technique. The researcher spent considerable time around the schools that were selected for the study on the basis of information generated from the community about the school. Other places where potential participants in CGSR were thought to have frequented were also visited. Hotels, cafeterias,

groceries, pensions, shisha houses, gymnasiums were among such places. Besides, there was a young male guide who volunteered to assist in the research process. The assistant helped much in accessing particularly male study participants in the early phase of the study.

A total of forty-nine participants were involved in this study. Twenty-nine of these were female and twenty were male. Six FGDs were completed - four with younger girls, one FGD was with older men and the other one was with young boys. Overall, forty-one people participated in the FGDs.

In-depth (IDI) and key informant (KII) interviews were used to generate evidences. Three KIIs and five IDIs were completed to collect data for the study. Three of the interviews were with young girls, three were with older men and one was with young boy who was a broker linking young girls with older men.

Non-participatory observations were also undertaken. This means that some sexual CGSR partners were observed and their communication codes, dating places, timing, physical and other behavioral characteristics were identified.

The observations took place in a natural setting. Observations were made around the meeting places of the sexual partners. School gates, hotels, cafeterias, groceries, pensions, shisha houses, and gymnasiums were among the meeting places. Observation started immediately after the first two rounds FGDs and continued until the end of the data collection process. Data were collected for three months. Time suitable for observation was decided based on FGD participants and key informants suggestion. Accordingly, weekdays from 2:00 - 4:00 P.M. were chosen and used for the actual observations. The observers collected data without interacting or reacting visibly with the participants' activities. This helped to see how the practice actually happened rather than how study participants perceived its happening.

The observation did not interrupt the natural flow of the CGSR participants' activities. No notes were taken; no audio-tapings were made during the observation periods. In order not to miss any important information, the observers had to keep themselves adequately focused on the significant aspects earlier identified for observation. Communication codes, talking topics, ways they addressed each other, etc., were some of the aspects observed.

The principal investigator interviewed all the key informants and moderated all the FGDs. Preliminary data analysis was taking places hand-in-hand with data collection process. This helped the researcher to give exceptional cases further attention. This yielded additional insights to the topic. The preliminary analysis gave the investigator an opportunity to review the main concepts, themes, issues and questions seen during the contact. The final data reduction process took place after the data collection had been completed.

**Data quality assurance:** The trustworthiness of this study was insured in various ways. For example, key informants were carefully selected. Field work or observation was undertaken for a long period of time. The rapport established with the study participants was good enough to keep us work together until the end of the data collection period. In addition, different data collection instruments and different data sources were used for methodological and data triangulation. Striking incidents, whenever observed, were given further follow-up and attention.

**Data analysis:** The data collection process came to an end when the investigator assured the appearance of redundant information. Following that, the audio-taped interviews and FGD data were first transcribed and then translated to English. Translation was needed because the Amharic language was the medium used during the interview as well as the FGDs. The field notes taken on different occasions during the data collection period were used to understand non-verbal communications during the interview and discussion sessions.

Then data from audio recordings and field notes were transferred to qualitative data management software (Open Code), by which open coding, selective coding and theoretical coding were made. Then, data were analyzed using thematic approach in which *motives*, *customs*, and *perceived risks* were identified separately for the young girls and the older men.

## Results

**Background of the study participants:** The age of the study participants ranged from 16 to 52 years. A similar variation also characterized the educational status of the participants. There were participants who never attended school as much as were those who claimed completing their graduate studies. Similar differences were also observed in religion, ethnicity, marital status, social, and economic background among the participants.

**Terms used to describe CGSR:** This study discovered different terms used to describe CGSR in Addis Ababa. Customs, behaviors, and phenomena are some among such metaphors designated to identify people who practiced CGSR. Beyond insiders and their close friends, not many can find these terms easy to understand. Wo-Me-Sh was one of the terms noted in the finding of this study. Wo-Me-Sh - the first two letters of the three words - Wotat-Messay-Shimagele Amharic words were used to coin a new word whose meaning is *an old man pretending to look young* is the commonest name given (apparently by girls) to older men who had sexual relationship with the young girls. Wo-Me-Sh signifies the older men's wish, ambition and effort to look young (data from FGD).

Other terms the young girls used to refer to their sexual partner include Shebaw (Old man), Yesheku Dembegnye (my sugar client), Diplomat and BMW (Be My Wife). There was also another term - Terre/Teraterie (easy to tap) - that the girls used to

address older men they found easy to take much money from.

Young girls usually said, 'I got a sponsor or I got scholarship' to express their getting huge expenses covered by Sugar Daddies. The young girls, in particular, used obscure terms to refer to the type of sexual activity they performed with their customers. One of these terms is *singing* or *laughing*. *Singing* or *laughing* refers to oral sex. Oral sex is expensive and the girls charge their customers high. The thought of this high payment is what makes the girls laugh.

Sex without condom is referred to as *bemelataw* (*bald head*). Fuchet (whistling) is kissing with no sex. Chibcheba (clapping) is 'sex with finger'. In both fuchet and chibcheba there is no deep penetration.

Expressions such as enifletew, (let's split him) enilebew (let's milk him), eniblaw (let's eat him up) and sabiw (suck him) are terms used by girls to refer to a single time dating. These terms seem to refer to the early phase of the dating.

When they plan to run away after the initial meeting but before having sex, they use expressions like Enamilt (let's escape), lash-enbel (let's suddenly disappear), enkeyis (let's plan), enkentis (let's nip).

Older men as well used different terms to refer to the young girls. Mitu (Tiny), konjit (Pretty), nebo/nebit (The Bee), chocolate, berero (cockroach), irgbit (The Pigeon). Sugar Daddies know young girls are scavenging their money. To express this, they call them girissa, (Pests), wofcho (wind-mill), etc. When older men go out to trap young girls, they say 'Let us play bingo,' (Let's go gambling'. This means, if they are lucky, they get sex, if not, it is just ...).

Both young girls and old men know that their practices are not acceptable by the society. Sugar Daddies are stigmatized as kiletam, yeshemagele kelal, worada and likiskis. (These are Amharic terms used, in general, to describe undesirable and disrespectful acts of the men.). The young girls are also called sost kuter (code 3 - vehicles given this code serve commercial purposes). Expressions such as targa yaletefech (cars with plate numbers) are also commonly heard to refer to young girls involved in such a practice (Young boys in the FGD).

**Types and features of CGSR:** CGSRs in Addis Ababa took different forms. The sexual behaviors, ways of introduction and the likely outcomes of the relationship varied following the types of CGSRs. A young girl who was in CGSR was quoted saying, 'Our love keeps us together; I loved him even before I knew he had money'. Here, the girl's motive was just love. Such CGSRs were mostly characterized by HIV testing before sex. Discussion and faithfulness characterize this type of relationship though the man is often the decision maker. Individuals in this type of relationship may eventually get married. A young girl mentioned family pressure as a driving force for such kind of

CGSR “Even my families prefer those old and rich men to be our partner. They think older rich men would most likely give us a comfortable life,” (Interview).

In the second kind of CGSR, only one of the partners is in love. Study participants characterized one sided love in CGSRs by absence of HIV testing but persistence of condom use. The relationship may last long but care is taken not to fall in love. One female participant has to say this: ‘In such a relationship you have to keep yourself conscious not to fall in love because it does not lead to long term relationship’ (Interview).

The third kind of CGSR is purely transactional for both partners. This kind of relationship is considered to be mutually beneficial. Transactional relationships are often short-lived and the chances for HIV testing and negotiations for condom use are low. Multiple sexual partnerships are also common in this type of relationship. It is like ‘give and take thing’ (Interview).

Though all forms of CGSR are practiced in Addis Ababa, the transactional form is reported to be the most common. This is what is commonly referred to as Sugar Daddy relationship. The study participants said that in the Sugar Daddy relationship type, the young girls are not given money directly. Instead, they create some means through which they get money from the relationship. The following were mentioned as examples of the mechanisms.

I have a wedding.  
My father/mother is sick.  
Deadline for registration is approaching.  
I need money to pay house rent  
I have to go the hairdresser’s  
My small business is getting stuck  
I lost my mobile phone (apparatus)

Whether or not the old men believe the story, the desire to keep the relationship to continue would force them to cover the cost (Interview).

During the FGD, the participants (particularly the older men participants,) said that all these lies are the girls’ aspirations to make the relationship look different from transactional sex.

**Motives to engage in CGSR:** Older men get access to a better sexual pleasure and young girls are paid in return. Changing family life, changing livelihood, securing job opportunity, securing access to travel abroad, enjoyment and relaxation are other benefits girls reported to be among the motives for engagement in the practice. A young girl who participated in the FGD said, “We want to dress the way our friends do, and Sugar Daddies are the most available options to fulfill what our parents cannot afford. Young girls also wish to do something for their families”.

Older men list their benefits as follows:  
For example, an old man who was a key informant said *I want the relationship to up-date my sexual skill and feel young inside again. I also like the relationship*

*because I want some compensation for my sexual dissatisfaction at home. Sex with wife is not as such interesting... my wife doesn't like to watch a sex movie ... no romance in general.*

**Participants in CGSR:** As explained earlier, some female participants in CGSR come from poor economic background while the economic background of other participants is not so low. Reference was also made earlier to the educational background of the participants. Some have not attended school at all. The educational background of others ranges from high school to university. The majority of the participants of the study claimed to have come from college. A young girl FGD participant had this explanation for this: “College students usually live alone or with friends in a rented house; they do not live with their families as high school students do or they do not live in the dormitory as university students do. Besides, high schools students have full day class schedule and a closer parents’ follow up”. (Many of the study participants had a similar opinion).

Nearly all informants reported that older men who are trapping young girls are usually married. “Sugar Daddies are married and had children; that is why they are called Daddies, their name implies that they have children at home who call them Daddy,” (Interview).

“Sugar Daddies are mostly educated, working at the managerial positions, or have their own business,” (a young girl in the FGD).

In reference to misconceptions, one young girl had to say this about old men:

*Some people think Sugar Daddies are aged people with folded skin all over their bodies. Others also think Sugar Daddies have big belly, and grey/white hair. It is true many may have grey/white hair, but they are actually well dressed, tidy and smart. Their perfumes and body spray are of marvelous scent. Many drive exceptionally expensive cars. They are really sophisticated people when you get used to them* (Interview).

A young boy who was used as an informant described Sugar Daddies as: “... people who spent much of their youth in academic world. Some could be people who were outstanding students and who spent time tied to reading in schools. They never had an opportunity to have a girlfriend with whom they could .... At old age, they like to get back the luxury of sex they never had a chance to enjoy. Now they have money, they can do it.

In an interview, an old man who himself was involved in this relationship type was asked if married persons are involved in this type of sexual relationship. In reply, he said, “All married men go to young girls for sexual relation; the thing is they kept it secret”.

**Starting and maintaining CGSR:** CGSR relationships can be established in many ways. The most common are asking potential Sugar Daddies for a ride, visiting hotels, going to ‘shisha’ houses, through friends or

relatives, or through social media such as Facebook. Simply, young girls attract attention by their dressing style, walking styles, by their look, by exposing parts of their bodies in public, or by asking to borrow mobile phones or through intermediaries.

Often CGSR are kept secret and both partners avoid publicizing the relationship. The relationship is often kept hidden from friends and families of both parties.

### **Meeting Time**

Afternoons of weekdays are preferred by students and working men. In this connection, one young girl informant has this to say: "Working days are better because the girl's family think she is at school and the wife of the man thinks her husband is at work". Another key (older man) informant was quoted saying: "Working days are good... because both my wife is at work and the child is at school".

"Afternoon is better; we can have longer time in the afternoon. In addition, I usually spend the morning sleeping and going to the beauty salon" (Interview).

### **Meeting Places**

With reference to meeting places, one young girl FGD participant had to say this: "Most of the time men prefer to go out of the city or they may use luxury hotels or their unmarried friend's home".

**Norms and Unique Behavior in CGSR:** Data from the study participants reveal that in CGSR young girls are not given money directly. They create a means through which they obtain money from their older sexual partner. The following were mentioned as examples of ways young girls get money from older men. Some say they have to attend a wedding, others say father/mother fell ill. Those who are college students have reasons related to registration fee. There are also girls who ask money for house rent or money to go to the beauty salon. There are also girls who ask for money either to start a new business or to continue running small business they claim to have started earlier. Claims such as losing mobile phones are also common pretexts used by girls to ask for money. The trustworthiness of the claimed reasons does not matter as much as losing friendship does. This means there is little resistance on the part of the older men to pay as much as or nearly so much as they were asked.

Older men also have their own ways of understanding and talking about the relationship. Below is how one of the older men explained the case in an interview.

*In Sugar Daddy relationships there is no process of making a deal to have sex and to give/receive a payback. You might not even give money or reward every time after sex. You could have a longer romantic time other than sex. From the moral aspect you do not feel like you are buying a girl; rather you consider her as your girlfriend. This minimizes your feeling of guilt especially if you are cheating on your wife. These girls do not have sex with many men like prostitutes. This type of relationship is better than the type of*

*relationship one has with prostitutes working in the bar. In fact, it is also a better means for girls to escape from a social taboo of being labeled prostitutes.*

Observation data obtained from various sites in Addis Ababa tends to reveal that CGSR is usually associated more with drinking than other forms of substance abuse. Older men prefer drinking whisky while wine is the girls' preferred choice. Young girls engaged in CGSR usually smoke, but not many older men were observed smoking. Some young girls were observed dancing although no evidence in the data revealed old man doing the same. There were instances in which the young girls who went to the club with their older partners were observed dancing with other younger guys they met there and then.

**Perceived risks and benefits of CGSR:** Cross Generational Sexual Relationship is considered mutually beneficial. It is like "give and take" thing. Older men get access to a better sex and young girls receive benefit of some kind. Girls mentioned drawing various forms of benefits from the relationship. Improving one's life style is one mentioned benefit. Changing family life is another benefit. Simply, enjoying sex is yet another benefit though not mentioned by many. Enjoyment and relaxation are other less mentioned benefits by the young girls considered in the FGDs.

Older men on their part mentioned that CGSR helps them to up-date their sexual skill. This, they said, makes them feel young again. However the risks of the relationship seem to outweigh the perceived benefits. For example, the majority of the study participants characterize CGSR as something that lacks a sense of true love. They said the relationship is full of cheating or lies. Worse than most is the presence of multiple sexual partners in this relationship type and the frequent change of partners in the system. The unprotected sexual practice is an easy means to contract HIV (FGD data).

**HIV risk perception:** Young girls as well as older men in CGSR perceive that the relationship has no HIV risk. Many do not seem to mind practicing unsafe sex. The following are some of the misconceptions quoted.

*Young girls are most likely free from STIs/HIV. They are young and new comers to sexual life, especially if they are found virgin (old man, key informant).*

Many of the young girls contacted in this study tend to hold the perception that Sugar Daddies are educated, rich, smart and responsible people who can keep themselves away from any means that exposes them to acquiring STDs including HIV. *If a man is married, he can be considered HIV negative, particularly men who have little kids cannot be suspected (a young girl in the FGD).*

**HIV testing before sex and condom use:** Many of the young girls in this study, particularly those in CGS Relationship, explained that it is unthinkable to

negotiate safe sexual practices including, HIV testing before sex or condom use with their older men sexual partners. In particular, one participant (young girl) said, even if they raised the question of HIV testing before sex or condom usage, the old man morally 'forced' them by any means. Some often told them they returned from abroad (usually U.S.A.) just a week or two earlier. Others often lied to them saying that their wives gave birth in the previous week. All these false explanations are efforts used by sexual their partners to convince them into accepting unprotected sex.

**Sexual networking and implications:** Young girls who are engaged in CGSR also have boyfriends of their own age. The young girls have a common way, quoted below, of expressing these relationships: *The young man is for love and the old man is for money.* Older men also have sexual relation with their wives as well. Worse still, both the young girls and the older men frequently change partners.

From among the girls used as key informant, one young girl's apt expression may summarize the relationship well.

*Relationship with Sugar Daddy is like a part time job. It is, in addition to your age matched, boyfriend. It is just a source of money – money that we spend with friends.*

An older man in FGD had been quoted saying *When you get bored and fed up with her lies, you will turn to another young lady. They are very fast; they make up different stories to get money out of you. . . . They are headache.*

There is a condition in CGSR in which pregnancy is not feared. This is how a young girl described the situation.

*If you get pregnant, things would be fulfilled for the birth and growth of the child. The old man will either rent or buy a house and allocate enough money for the wellbeing of the child and the mother. The relationship can be easily maintained secretly and 'indefinitely'.*

Nearly half of the young girls in the study participants shared this participant's opinion.

Another young girl in the FGD also mentioned cases in which previously unknown children showed up at the funeral of their father. She said the secret of the married old man who earlier had a hidden sexual affair was made public up on the death of the man. The man could not include the child or children into the inheritance of his property, Because of this, she said, the issue had to be taken to court for a resolution.

Others also suggested abortion as an option, with all its consequences, in case pregnancy occurs in the CGSR

## Discussion

A review of studies on cross-generational sex in sub-Saharan Africa found CGSR as mostly transactional in

which girls receive money or goods in exchange for sex (10). This study characterized the relationship as *give and take* business in which young girls receive money or gifts as a pay back in sexual relationships with older men. In this regard, the finding of the present study agrees with other similar findings in Africa.

In connection with type of young girls engaged in CGSR, this study illustrated the involvement of many college students in CGSR. This is contrary to the findings of the study among African American youth where youth who did not complete high school were more likely to have older sex partners than those who completed high school education (4). These observations may indicate that poverty is the likely driving force for the practice to a large extent although girls with varying economic backgrounds were reported to be engaged in the practice (15).

This study revealed that the older men engaged in CGSR in this study had various backgrounds: married, educated, rich, people with managerial positions, etc., All were reported to be participants in the relationship. This agrees with the study carried out in Zimbabwe (16).

Once the relationship was in place, partners in CGSR mostly exercised the behavior outside the city or in the city but in very expensive hotels, hotels rarely visited by ordinary persons. Beside, these people prefer afternoons of working days while others are at their work place. Findings of different studies also showed factors like living and working conditions of men and living and schooling conditions of girls as factors keep the relationship out of sight (10).

Regarding the perceived benefits of the relationship, this study noted money and material acquisition as major reasons for young girls' engagement in such a relationship. Their supplementary motivations were found to be varied from experience sharing to enjoying true love (9).

The finding also noted that both young girls and older men were attracted to the associated benefits and enjoyment of sex. Fear of diseases did not seem to worry them much.

The mechanisms by which cross-generational sex may facilitate HIV transmission are discussed in various studies as follows. There is likely to be significant power differences when the ages of the partners are so much different. This makes condoms to be a less likely option to be used in most CGSRs. (8). In this connection, this study revealed significant relationships between CGSR, unsafe behaviors, and risk of contracting HIV. Due to the long period of infection, HIV prevalence accumulates with increasing age and older men are more likely to be infected than younger men. Thus, when young girls engage in sexual relations with older men, the direction of transmission is likely from the man to the woman. In closer age gaps, the direction of transmission is likely to be the reverse, as

young women have higher prevalence than their same-age male peers (1).

Absence of HIV testing before sex, absence of condom use, absence of free discussion of sexual matters and frequent partner change are the common factors to make the relationship inherently risky. These factors have also been reported in other studies (5, 10, and 1). In Kenya, Sugar Daddy partnerships and the largest age and economic asymmetries were associated with decreased odds of condom use (5). Another recent research in urban Zimbabwe also supports this (16). Studies in Uganda and Benin reported the frequency of

unprotected sex associated with age difference relations (17, 18).

Moreover, this study revealed that pregnancy was not a prominent fear and extra marital birth could happen in CGSR. Findings of other studies in sub-Saharan Africa also disclosed a similar tendency. Adolescent girls were reported to have better control over pregnancy, maternity, and decisions of abortion. Pregnancy was often held as a mechanism used by girls to keep the relationship continues (11). The financial implication of continued sexual CGSR is not difficult to imagine.

## Annex I

Table 1: **Types of Cross-generational sexual relationships in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

Types of CGSR	Ways of introduction	Sexual behaviors	Duration in a relation
1. Truly for love from both sides	- Through families and relatives - Neighbors. - Facebook.	- There is HIV testing before sex. - There is free discussion and faithfulness. - man is the decision maker.	They usually get married.
2. One sided love	- at work, - through friends,  - Through friends.	-no HIV testing, but they use condom.  - no HIV testing	Usually stays longer In relationship  Short term relationships
3. No love from both sides (commercial)	- In hotels, bars, shisha houses and other recreational areas. - giving ride	- no condom usage - frequent partner change and presence of multiple sexual partner	

### Conclusions:

This study provided a rare glimpse of cross generational sexual practices in Addis Ababa. The relationship appears to be risky because of poor preventive practices against sexually transmitted diseases. Therefore, it is important to design edutainment projects to change the low risk perceptions of CGSR. Mobilizing and empowering young women to adopt healthy lifestyles is another possible mechanism. Addressing social and gender norms, power imbalances, inequity, and poverty at the grass root level are essential. Besides, more studies on CGSR are needed to show the magnitude of CGSR.

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### Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest for anyone involved in this research.

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