



GT4AFRICA



Gender Transformation for Africa: A Sexual, Reproductive and Maternal Health Research Collaborative

Transformation du genre pour l'Afrique: Une recherche concertée sur la santé sexuelle, reproductive et maternelle

Cohort Writing Meeting

9-13 September 2024

Sunsquare Hotel, Cape Town

The Gender Transformation for Africa (GT4Africa) cohort brings together seven implementation research projects (2022–2025) across Ghana, Niger, Nigeria, The Gambia, Burkina Faso, Malawi, and South Africa. Supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the cohort addresses critical gaps in gender-transformative approaches to sexual, reproductive, and maternal health (SRMH).

As part of this effort, the cohort has hosted a series of interactive webinars to strengthen capacity and foster collaboration. These sessions facilitate cross-project learning and knowledge exchange. The slides are from one of these events.



GRADE Africa



NACOSA



African Population and Health Research Center

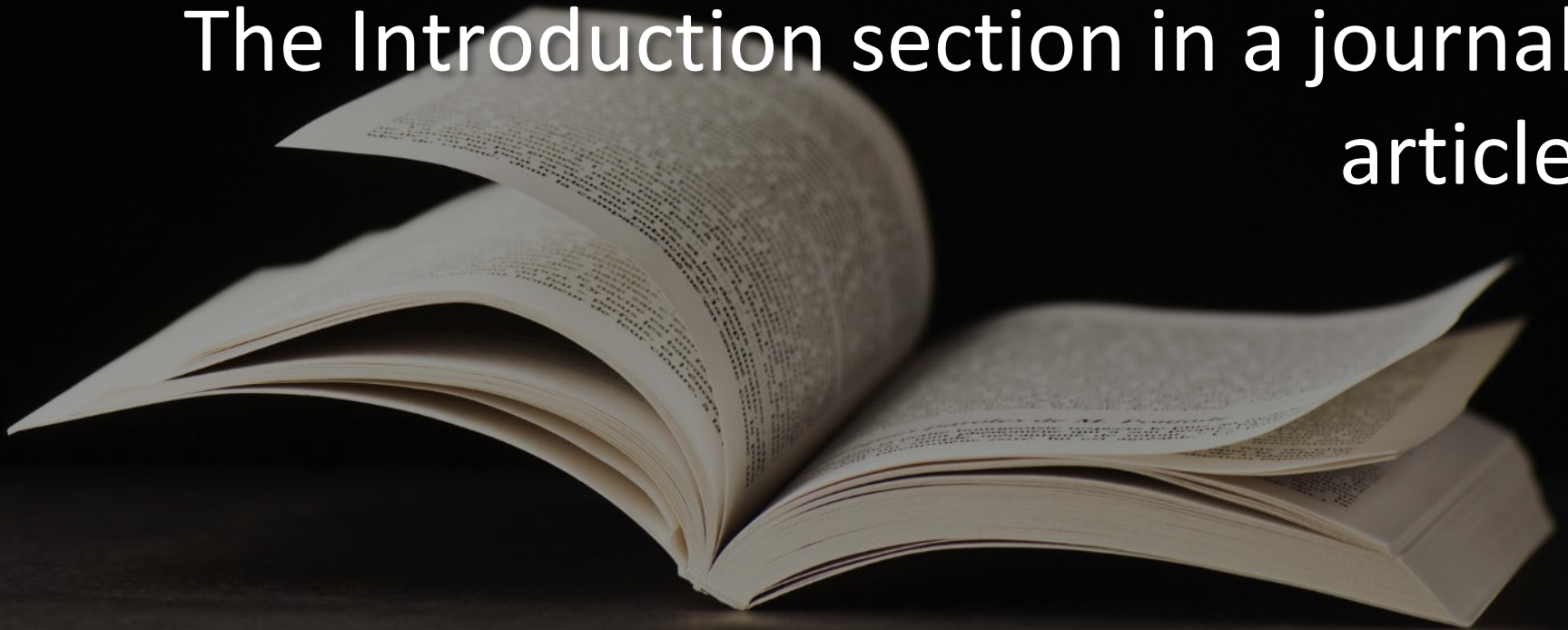


HOPE AFRICA



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The Introduction section in a journal article



Purpose and components

Purpose

- ❖ Provide adequate background information to understand the context of the study
- ❖ Explain why the topic is important
- ❖ Stimulate interest in reading the article

Components

- General Background: Broad introduction to the topic (one paragraph)
- Specific Background: Sub-area addressed by the paper and what is already known about it - **i.e. brief literature review of what is known** (rest of the introduction)
- Knowledge gap: What we do not know - with a focus of the topic addressed in the article - **also part of the** literature review
- Objectives: What this article aims to do to address the gap (one brief paragraph)

Specific Background - the brief literature review

- ❖ Not intended to be a comprehensive literature review. Focus only on aspects of the literature that are essential to contextualise the specific issue being address in the article.
- ❖ The literature cited should logically lead the reader to identify the same questions that are addressed in the article.
- ❖ Not written as a collection of summaries of individual articles, author by author.
- ❖ Grouped thematically, synthesising all articles that speak to each theme.
- ❖ Arranged in a logical sequence

Associations between spousal gender equity and recent unintended pregnancy among married adolescent girls and their husbands in rural Niger

OPENING
PARAGRAPH

Adolescent marriage of girls aged 13 to 19 is a societal and public health challenge that limits the autonomy and health of girls around the world. In addition to violating girls' autonomy and limiting their education¹, adolescent marriage has important health consequences, such as increased risk of intimate partner violence, unintended pregnancy and unmet need for contraception²⁻⁴. This study takes place among married adolescent girls and their husbands in rural Niger. Niger has the highest rate of adolescent marriage in the world, with three out of four girls marrying before their 18th birthday⁵. Family planning use is low among Nigerien adolescents⁵⁻⁷ possibly because many Nigerien women and girls wait to seek contraception until after the birth of their first child⁸. Niger ranked 187th out of 188 countries in the United Nations' 2016 Human Development Index⁹, with extremely high gender inequality and poverty. Niger also holds the highest adolescent fertility rate in the world¹⁰. Unintended pregnancy among adolescents can also result from early marriage and low use of contraception. In one study in rural Niger, nearly one in three married adolescents aged 17-19 described their most recent birth as unintended¹¹. Given this high-need context, it is important for researchers to identify the factors that can improve reproductive health outcomes for married adolescents in Niger.

Example of a brief literature review (two paragraphs)

Gender equity attitudes are molded during early adolescence^{12,13} and have been shown to be associated with reproductive health outcomes in sub-Saharan Africa. For example, in Ethiopia, researchers found that women's gender equitable attitudes were associated with the power to decide to use current contraception¹⁴. In Nigeria, women's higher scores of individual attitudes supporting gender equity were also associated with increased adoption and continued use of contraception¹⁵. Gender equity attitudes can also influence men's use of family planning, although fewer studies examine this association; one multi-country study found that in rural Ethiopia and Kenya, men's gender equitable attitudes were associated with self-reported family planning use¹⁶. It is rare for studies of the association between gender equity attitudes and reproductive health to consider both partners' attitudes. One 2013 study of couple attitudes in Tanzania found that more gender equitable attitudes among wives' was positively associated with increased contraceptive use reported by wives, but husbands' gender equity attitudes did not have a similar association with contraceptive use reported by wives¹⁷.

Given incongruent findings between wives' and husbands' gender equity attitudes and reproductive health outcomes, it is important to consider the impact of these gender equity attitudes in combination, a topic that has not been studied in Niger. One study in Nigeria found that, in couples in which both the husband and wife endorsed wife beating, the odds of using contraception was 2.44 times higher compared to couples who both did not feel wife beating was justified, and in couples where either the husband or wife endorsed restrictions on the wife's activities, the woman was less likely to use modern contraception¹⁸. Spousal gender equity attitudes may also play an important role in increasing the likelihood of unintended pregnancy. One 2014 review of research on individual women's empowerment and fertility found the literature to be inconclusive on the role between empowerment variables and unintended pregnancy¹⁹. Women's and girls' pregnancies are often a result of male partners' behavior; therefore, researchers need to examine how male partners' attitudes and discordance of partner attitudes could further complicate the relationship between women's empowerment and unintended pregnancy.

Knowledge gap and need for the study

Many behavioral interventions to reduce negative reproductive health outcomes in married couples focus on increasing either the equitable attitudes of husbands or of wives, while few focus on the attitudes of both members of the couple at the same time²⁰. This study aims to fill a gap in the literature by examining the relationships between spousal gender equity attitudes and reproductive health outcomes among married adolescent girls and their husbands in Niger. As a couple-level study of a vulnerable adolescent population, our findings contribute to a wider understanding of the role that gender equity interventions can play in addressing pressing reproductive health needs for married adolescent girls across the world.

(Article hyperlink to be provided. See pdf of article attached)

Sources referred - also useful resources

1. Nundy S, Kakar A and Bhutta ZA (2022). How to write an introduction to a scientific paper? In Nundy et al. (eds). How to practice academic medicine and publish from developing countries? A practical guide. Singapore, Springer.
<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-981-16-5248-6>
2. Clemens A. How to write a scientific paper introduction.
<https://annaclemens.com/blog/introduction-section-scientific-paper-article/>
3. Cals, JWL, and Daniel K (2013). Effective Writing and Publishing Scientific Papers, Part III: Introduction. Journal of Clinical Epidemiology 66 (7): 702.
4. Journal article: Introduction. <https://mitcommlab.mit.edu/broad/commkit/journal-article-introduction/>



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Thank you