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'MTV Shuga': Mass media communication in adolescent girls and young women in South Africa: Can it increase awareness and demand for HIV and sexual health technologies

Journal:	<i>BMJ Open</i>
Manuscript ID	bmjopen-2022-062804
Article Type:	Original research
Date Submitted by the Author:	28-Mar-2022
Complete List of Authors:	Chimbindi, Natsayi; Africa Health Research Institute; University College London, Mthiyane, Nondumiso; Africa Health Research Institute Chidumwa, Glory ; Africa Health Research Institute Zuma, Thembelihle; Africa Health Research Institute; University College London, Dreyer, Jaco; Africa Health Research Institute Birdthistle, Isolde; London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Faculty of Epidemiology and Population Health, Department of Population Health Floyd, Sian; London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, Infectious Disease Epidemiology Kwegombe, Nambusi; London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine Grundy, Chris; London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Faculty of Epidemiology and Population Health, Department of Population Health Cawood, Cherie; Epicentre Health Research Danaviah, Siva; Africa Health Research Institute Smit, Theresa; Africa Health Research Institute Pillay, Deenan; University College London, Baisley, Kathy; London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Faculty of Epidemiology and Population Health; Africa Health Research Institute Harling, Guy; Africa Health Research Institute Seeley, Janet; London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Department of Global Health & Development; Africa Health Research Institute Shahmanesh, Maryam; University College London, Institute for Global Health; Africa Health Research Institute,
Keywords:	HIV & AIDS < INFECTIOUS DISEASES, PUBLIC HEALTH, PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

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Title page

'MTV Shuga': Mass media communication in adolescent girls and young women in South Africa: Can it increase awareness and demand for HIV and sexual health technologies

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Key words (6): HIV, Adolescents, mass communication campaigns, Sexual Health, Teenage Pregnancy, South Africa.

Abstract (word count=300)

Objectives: Mass media edu-dramas have potential to increase demand for HIV and sexual and reproductive health(SRH) services among young people. We investigate the effect of exposure to MTV Shuga Down South(DS) during the scale-up of combination HIV-prevention interventions (DREAMS) on awareness and uptake of SRH and HIV-prevention services by adolescent girls and young women(AGYW).

Design: One longitudinal and three cross-sectional surveys of representative samples of AGYW

Setting: AGYW in four South African districts with high HIV-prevalence (>10%) (May 2017 and September 2019)

Participants: 6341 AGYW aged 12-24

Measures: Using logistic regression we measured the relationship between exposure to MTV Shuga-DS and awareness of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), condom-use at last sex, uptake of HIV-testing or contraception, and incident pregnancy or HSV-2 infection.

Results: Within the rural cohort 2184 (85.5%) of eligible sampled individuals were enrolled, of whom 92.6% had at least one follow-up visit; the urban cross-sectional surveys enrolled 4157 (22.6%) of eligible sampled individuals. Self-report of watching at least one MTV Shuga-DS episode was 14.1% (cohort) and 35.8% (cross-section), while storyline recall was 5.5% (cohort) and 6.7% (cross-section).

In the cohort, after adjustment (for DREAMS-exposure, age, education, SES), MTV Shuga-DS exposure was associated with increased PrEP awareness (aOR=2.06, 95%CI:1.57-2.70), contraception uptake (aOR=2.08, 95%CI:1.45-2.98) and consistent condom-use (aOR=1.84, 95%CI:1.24-2.93), but not with HIV-testing (aOR=1.02,95%CI: 0.77-1.21) or acquiring HSV-2 (aOR=0.92, 95%CI: 0.61-1.38). In the cross-sections, MTV Shuga-DS was associated with greater PrEP awareness (aOR=1.7, 95%CI: 1.20-2.43), but no other outcome.

Conclusions: Among both urban and rural AGYW in South Africa, MTV Shuga-DS exposure was associated with increased PrEP awareness and improved demand for some HIV-prevention and SRH technologies but not sexual health outcomes. However, exposure to MTV Shuga-DS was low. Given these positive indications, supportive programming may be required to raise exposure and allow future evaluation of edu-drama impact in this setting.

Strengths and limitations of this study

- We use the opportunity of MTV Shuga being broadcast in the context of an impact evaluation of DREAMS roll out (January 2016-September 2019) in a representative, population-based sample of young people to describe the real-world reach of nationally broadcast MTV Shuga-DS.
- We employed a longitudinal cohort (n~2000) and cross-sectional surveys (n~5000) of representative samples of AGYW aged 12-24 in four districts of South Africa with a high burden of HIV to measure the reach of MTV Shuga-DS.
- However, as this is an observational study, we cannot exclude the possibility that those who are exposed to MTV Shuga are systematically different in ways that impact on the outcome of interest, for example more exposed to social media and sexual health promotion and innovative technologies to support sexual health than those who were not.

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3 **[word count 4531]**

4 **Introduction**

5 HIV remains one of the gravest health problems facing young people living in sub-Saharan
6 Africa (SSA). There are over 7.6 million people living with HIV in South Africa, with 200,000
7 new HIV infections annually in those aged 15-49 years (1). The highest incidence is in
8 adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) (15-24 years) (1, 2). In response to this the South
9 African government launched the 'She Conquers Campaign', and the US President's
10 Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief and others are supporting the roll-out of Determined,
11 Resilient, Empowered, AIDS free, Mentored, and Safe (DREAMS)(3-5). These programmes
12 provide an evidence-based combination HIV prevention package, including HIV-testing and
13 counselling for adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) and male partners, alongside
14 universal test and treat and improved sexual health services (6, 7).

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23 However, the key ingredient to success of these multicomponent interventions will be the
24 extent to which AGYW and their male partners at most risk of HIV will uptake and adhere to
25 the active components of the intervention. This is challenging: uptake and retention of
26 contraception and HIV treatment cascade by young people, even within population-wide
27 Universal Test and Treat trials, has been suboptimal (2, 8, 9). Data from the baseline analysis
28 for the DREAMS impact evaluation in uMkhanyakude district, rural KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) in
29 2015 suggest that less than 40% of girls (15-19 years) and boys and young men (15-29 years)
30 had ever tested for HIV; linkage to HIV treatment was even lower (10). Contraception use
31 prevalence was 20% in girls (15-19 years) and 50% in young women (20-24 years) and 21%
32 of 15-19 year old girls had ever been pregnant (2).

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41 It is against this backdrop that the fifth series of Shuga: 'MTV Shuga: Down South' (MTV
42 Shuga-DS), a mass media serial edu-drama designed for SA, was broadcast on free-to-air
43 South Africa National television. From March 8th 2017, MTV Shuga aired one episode per
44 week for 12 weeks (with repeats). MTV Shuga is a mass media behaviour change campaign
45 that aims to improve sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR). At the centre of the
46 campaign, which includes radio and social media, is a TV-drama that weaves messages about
47 HIV, family planning, transactional and intergenerational sex, safer and healthy sexual
48 relationships, into storylines with young characters ([http://www.mtvshuga.com/show/series-5/MTV Shuga-down-south/](http://www.mtvshuga.com/show/series-5/MTV-Shuga-down-south/)).

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3 to have an effect (11, 12). MTV Shuga-DS was designed to reduce HIV-related risk behaviour
4 and improve SRHR outcomes in adolescents and young adults in SA. This was expected to
5 be achieved through increasing young people's demand for, and uptake of HIV and SRH
6 prevention and treatment technologies. The show's characters explicitly model how to discuss
7 issues that are sensitive or taboo. Moreover, in 'melodramas', tensions between good and
8 evil are played out through 'good' characters who adopt certain behaviours, and 'evil'
9 characters who reject them. The former are rewarded while the latter punished. A third
10 category of character, the 'transitional' character, begins as ambivalent but changes into a
11 positive role model and promote positive behaviour change. This is a deliberate method to
12 immerse the audience in the action, rather than passively watching or listening (13). Young
13 people, or at least early adopters, are anticipated to be immersed in the serial, able to classify
14 and identify with the transitional characters and their outcomes. Pathways to behaviour
15 change through MTV Shuga, therefore relate to the extent to which the observer, including
16 early adopters, are immersed and critically engaged with the story. It also depends on a
17 context which is supportive rather than disruptive (see the conceptual framework Figure 1
18 below) (14).

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29 **Figure 1 showing conceptual framework for MTV Shuga impact on HIV prevention on**
30 **AGYW in uMkhanyakude**

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33 A cluster randomised controlled trial of community-viewings of MTV Shuga in Nigeria found
34 that exposure to MTV Shuga significantly improved HIV knowledge and testing in both sexes,
35 the intervention arm showing 35% more likely to test for HIV than the control arm. There was
36 also a 60% reduction in genital chlamydia as a marker of recent sexual risk in women, amongst
37 those exposed to MTV Shuga compared to those who were not (15). There were, however,
38 fewer changes in social norms, particularly around gender-based violence. Further work
39 suggested that the impact was greatest in those who were immersed in the narrative. The
40 importance of immersion (classification of characters and identifying with them and observing
41 outcomes) coupled with critical participation and an enabling context were also found in a
42 thematic analysis looking at how storylines in MTV Shuga-DS shaped awareness, knowledge
43 and opinions of sexual health and personal relationships among young people in SA (14).

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52 Whilst the Nigerian and SA studies provide evidence for the efficacy of MTV Shuga impacting
53 on SRHR and HIV-testing behaviours in exposed individuals, there is little evidence of how
54 this will translate into a population-level effect when nationally broadcast and in less controlled
55 environments. In particular, it is not clear how the impact will spill-over to non-viewers and
56 how innovations will diffuse when shown and watched by adolescents and young adults in a
57 real-world scale-up. It is also unclear how such impact will differ according to: setting (rural or
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3 urban); differential digital literacy and access to social media (geographically and
4 socioeconomically), and the dose and context of watching (shared viewing with family, friends
5 or individual experience through social media).
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9 We use the opportunity of MTV Shuga being broadcast in the context of an impact evaluation
10 of DREAMS roll out (January 2016-September 2019) in a representative, population-based
11 sample of young people (10) to describe the real-world reach of nationally broadcast MTV
12 Shuga-DS. Further, we explore the hypothesis that exposure to a mass-media serial edu-
13 drama, like MTV Shuga, will improve SRHR outcomes by increasing demand for, and uptake
14 of, existing combination individual and community-based SRH and HIV prevention services
15 for AGYW in four diverse settings including uMkhanyakude, a socioeconomically deprived
16 rural district with an extremely high burden of HIV: 40% antenatal HIV prevalence and an
17 annual HIV incidence of 5% in girls (15-19 years) and 8% in young women (20-24 years) (2,
18 16) and in three high-prevalence urban districts (HIV prevalence of greater than 10%) of City
19 of Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni, and eThekweni.
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29 **Methods**

30 **Study design**

31 We employed a longitudinal cohort (n~2000) and cross-sectional surveys (n~5000) of
32 representative samples of AGYW aged 12-24 in four districts of South Africa with a high
33 burden of HIV to measure the reach of MTV Shuga-DS. Data were collected between May
34 2017 and September 2019.
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41 We use baseline and follow-up data from a nested cohort of ~2000 AGYW aged 13-22 years,
42 enrolled in 2017 for the DREAMS impact evaluation. The cohort is nested in a large
43 population-based longitudinal HIV surveillance study, in the uMkhanyakude district of
44 KwaZulu-Natal (17, 18). A random sample of 3013 AGYW was selected from the surveillance
45 population, stratified by age (13-17 years and 18-22 years) and geography, and invited to
46 enrol in the nested cohort. Baseline interviews were conducted between May 2017 and
47 February 2018 and follow-up interviews April 2018 and September 2019 in the local language
48 (isiZulu) using a structured quantitative questionnaire programmed in REDCap (10).
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56 The cross-sectional survey was conducted on a household-based representative sample of
57 ~4000 AGYW (between the ages 12-24 years) in three high prevalence (City of Johannesburg,
58 Ekurhuleni and eThekweni) districts. Between August 2017 and July 2018, a stratified cluster-
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3 based sampling was used to select 18500 AGYW aged 12-24 eligible for a cross-sectional
4 survey of individuals, based on an expected response rate of 80%.
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8 The interview included questions on socio-demographics, general health, exposure to
9 DREAMS and to MTV Shuga, sexual relationships, awareness and uptake of DREAMS and
10 DREAMS-like services, migration, and gender norms across the four districts. A Dried Blood
11 Spot (DBS) was taken at baseline and follow-up for Herpes Simplex Virus type 2 (HSV-2)
12 antibody testing in the uMkhanyakude district. For sexual behaviour questions, participants
13 were given a tablet computer to complete a self-interview; the fieldworker was available to
14 provide support as needed.
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20 21 **Study setting and population**

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23 The cohort was nested within the Africa Health Research Institute (AHRI) triannual
24 demographic surveillance of a population of approximately 150,000 people who are members
25 of 15,000 geocoded households in an area of 845 km² (17). The study area is mostly rural
26 and poor with high levels of youth unemployment (over 85% of those aged 18-24 are
27 unemployed) (2, 16). From 2017, AHRI has embedded data collection clerks within the
28 government clinics in the surveillance area to capture electronically any clinical attendance
29 and the reason for the visit. Consenting individuals are linked to their surveillance identification
30 number at the time of the clinic visit. This allows us to link exposure to an intervention with
31 engagement with primary health care, including attendance for HIV care or use of
32 contraceptive services.
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40 The cross-sectional survey was conducted in three districts which were mostly urban with
41 more towns and townships compared to AHRI surveillance area. The three study districts (City
42 of Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni and eThekweni) consist of an estimated 12,073,421 individuals.
43 The eThekweni district in KZN province is among those with the highest HIV prevalence (16.8%
44 HIV prevalence in 2016) in South Africa. Over two-thirds (68%) of eThekweni is considered
45 rural and 32% urban. About 11 963 (3%) AGYW in eThekweni are estimated to be living with
46 HIV. The Gauteng province (GP), whilst geographically the smallest, is the most populous
47 province in South Africa. GP has the fifth highest provincial HIV prevalence in the country with
48 a prevalence of 11.1% among those aged 15 to 49 years old in 2016. The HIV prevalence in
49 the two districts, City of Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni, is 11.1% and 14.3% among 15- to 49-
50 year-olds, respectively. Both districts are densely populated and have high levels of
51 industrialisation. The HIV prevalence amongst AGYW (15 to 24 years old) in the City of
52 Johannesburg is 3%, and similarly 3% in Ekurhuleni in 2012.
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Variables and Measurement:

Outcomes definitions:

We measured the effect of exposure to MTV Shuga on awareness and uptake of HIV prevention and SRHR outcomes at the follow-up visit. Our outcomes were: 1) self-reported HIV-testing in the past 12 months; 2) awareness of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV prevention; 3) condom use at last sex; 4) use of contraception; 5) any new pregnancy since baseline; and 6) any new teenage pregnancy (restricted to those under the age of 20). AGYW were considered to use contraception if they self-reported using modern/hormonal contraception (modern contraception was defined as current use of any modern contraceptives, i.e., excluding traditional methods), or self-reported consistent condom use (using condoms as a contraceptive method and at last sex). Condomless sex was calculated using 2019 data among participants who reported having had sex with the most recent partner in the past 12 months. Recent pregnancy was calculated as any new pregnancy that occurred between baseline and 2019, while teenage pregnancy was calculated as any new pregnancy that occurred between baseline and 2019 among participants aged below 20 years. We also examined the effect of exposure to MTV Shuga on incident HSV-2 infections, among those who were HSV2 negative at baseline.

Exposure definitions:

Exposure to MTV Shuga was defined as ever watched MTV Shuga between 2017 and 2018. The level of exposure was measured based on the content of the series MTV Shuga, defined using 15 questions used to assess knowledge of content of MTV Shuga series. A composite score was developed summing-up the correct responses. The scores ranged between 2 and 14, and the median being 4. The median was used as a cut-off to define level of exposure among those who watched the series. Consequently, the level of exposure was categorized into 3 levels: High (watching a MTV Shuga and being able to correctly respond to 5 or more questions on content); Medium (watching programme and being able to correctly respond to less than 5 questions); and None (not watched any MTV Shuga). This was further categorised into 3 levels: High (watching MTV Shuga and being able to recall the content from MTV Shuga); Medium (watching programme, but unable to recall content); and None (not being aware of and not watched any MTV Shuga).

Potential confounding variables:

We included socio-demographic and sexual behaviour characteristics of AGYW that were measured at baseline and exposure to HIV prevention. The socio-demographic variables included age (as measured at follow-up), household socio-economic status, education broken

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3 down by those who are still in school and those who have completed school, geographic area
4 (rural or peri-urban/urban), and migration in the last 12 months. The socio-economic status
5 (SES) variable was constructed using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) based on
6 ownership of household assets and characteristics such as access to piped water, type of
7 toilet, electricity and type of cooking fuel (19). Further, potential individual-level confounders
8 measured included exposure to DREAMS (defined either as ever been invited to participate
9 in any of the DREAMS activities or ever used any of the DREAMS HIV prevention interventions
10 in the past 12 months or since 2016 and phone ownership at baseline.
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17 **Laboratory:**

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19 The HerpeSelect® 2 ELISA IgG assay (FOCUS Diagnostics, Cypress, California, USA) for the
20 qualitative detection of human IgG class antibodies to HSV-2 was used on Dried blood Spot
21 (DBS) samples collected on Whatman 903 filter cards. The HerpeSelect® 2 ELISA IgG assay
22 uses purified type-specific gG-2 antigen immobilized on polystyrene microwells reducing the
23 cross-reactivity issues as seen with viral lysate assays(20). The assay is validated for use
24 with serum samples but was optimised for use with DBS in the AHRI Diagnostic Research
25 Laboratory following comparative testing with plasma samples. During the initial evaluation
26 of the HerpeSelect® 2 ELISA IgG a select number of plasma samples were also tested by an
27 external accredited pathology laboratory. A 6mm diameter punch of a DBS spot was incubated
28 overnight in 150ul Assay Diluent for no more than 16 hours at 4°C. The assay was performed
29 with 50ul of the eluent in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Following a
30 disproportionately high number of positive results based on other studies and our experience
31 we multiplied the mean cut-off calibrator absorbance values by a factor of 1.5 before
32 determining the index value for each sample (21, 22). The HerpeSelect® 2 ELISA IgG results
33 are reported as positive (index value >1.10), equivocal (index value of ≥ 0.90 but ≤ 1.10) or
34 negative (index value <0.90). All initial equivocal results were re-tested and those that re-
35 tested equivocal are reported as equivocal. An incident HSV-2 was defined as having been
36 negative at baseline and positive at follow-up. Those who were equivocal at either baseline or
37 follow-up were not considered as a sero-conversions.
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51 **Statistical analyses:**

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53 We included only participants who had data available at baseline and follow-up for nested
54 cohorts. We used Chi-square tests to compare baseline characteristics between AGYW who
55 did and did not have any exposure to MTV Shuga. We used logistic regression to examine the
56 effect of MTV Shuga on health outcomes, adjusting for exposure to DREAMS and all other
57 potential confounders. Potential effect-modification of MTV Shuga by exposure to DREAMS
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3 was examined by fitting an interaction term to fully adjusted model: likelihood ratio tests were
4 used to compare models with and without interaction terms.
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8 We calculated the proportion of AGYW who reported an outcome (condomless-sex, recent
9 pregnant) or tested positive for HSV-2 at 12-month or 24-month follow-up; and estimated
10 associations between MTV Shuga and each outcome using a logistic regression, adjusting for
11 potential confounders (age, household and individual socio-demographic characteristics and
12 sexual behaviour). For HSV-2 incidence, we included participants who tested negative at
13 baseline and had at least 1 follow-up test result. For DREAMS exposure, we included data
14 collected at baseline and 12-month follow-up. For health outcomes (consistent condom use,
15 modern contraception, HIV testing, PrEP awareness), we used data collected at 24-month
16 follow-up; and for HSV-2 and pregnancy incidence we used data collected at 12 and 24-month
17 follow-up.
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25 Propensity score logistic regression adjustment was used to estimate the causal effect of MTV
26 Shuga on health outcomes. A propensity or probability of being exposed to MTV Shuga was
27 measured by fitting a logistic regression with MTV Shuga exposure as an outcome and
28 potential confounders. A logistic regression models adjusting for propensity scores were then
29 used to predict the probability of an outcome for all participants and separately by age group,
30 under two scenario (1) exposed to MTV Shuga and (2) Not exposed to MTV Shuga. The
31 predicted probabilities were then used to calculate the marginal risk difference, prevalence
32 ratio and odds ratio. Confidence intervals were generated by using a bootstrap procedure,
33 repeating the estimation procedure described above in 1000 samples that were drawn with
34 replacement from the complete dataset and calculating 95% confidence intervals from the
35 resulting bootstrap distribution using the 2.5% and 97.5% percentiles.
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43 All analyses were performed using Stata version 15 (StataCorp LP, College Station, Texas
44 USA).
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46 **Reporting**

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48 The STROBE reporting guidelines were used to guide synthesis and standardise reporting of
49 our results(23)
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51 **Ethics**

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53 The DREAMS Partnership impact evaluation protocol was reviewed and approved by the
54 University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) Biomedical Research Ethics Committee (BREC) (BFC
55 339/16), the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine Research Ethics Committee (Ref
56 11835) and the AHRI Somkhele Community Advisory Board, the Associate Director of Science
57 of the Center for Global Health (CGH) at the United States Centers for Disease Control and
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3 Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta and the Department of Health, Province of KZN and Gauteng.
4 Approval for the demographic surveillance and data collection in the clinics was granted by
5 UKZN BREC. All participants provided separate informed consent for the questionnaires and
6 the HSV2 sero-survey. Consent for follow-up interviews was provided separately. For
7 participants aged <18 years, written parental consent and participant assent were provided.
8 Individuals attending the clinics in the surveillance area provided informed consent to record
9 the clinic visit and link to their surveillance identification number.
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16 **Patient and public involvement**

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18 The study did not involve patients. AHRI has a Public Engagement Unit which conducts
19 community engagement activities with the local communities as part of study finding
20 dissemination. The Community Advisory Board provided feedback of the study including
21 design before approval from ethics review board. Study findings are being made publicly
22 available to funders, participants and the public through webinars, study reports and open
23 access journal articles.
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29 **Results:**

30 **Participants**

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32 Of 3013 potentially eligible AGYW randomly selected from the surveillance data set, 85.5% of
33 those eligible consented to participate at baseline (Figure 2). Of the 2184 eligible participants
34 that were surveyed at baseline, 2016 (92.3%) had at least one follow-up visit and contributed
35 data to this analysis. From the cross-sectional survey, 4127 (22.6%) eligible participants were
36 surveyed.
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44 **Figure 2 Flowchart showing AGYW follow-up from nested cohorts 2017-2019**

Awareness and exposure to MTV Shuga

MTV Shuga exposure at baseline was low, with a total of 308 (14.1%) respondents reported watching at least one episode. In the cross-sectional analysis of the three districts, a total of 1477 (35.8%) reported watching any MTV Shuga. In the nested cohort 121 (5.5%) recalled any storyline. Similarly in the cross-sectional snapshot 276 (6.7%) recalled the storyline (high exposure).

Social demographic characteristics of adolescents and young people by exposure to MTV Shuga (Table 1&2)

Table 1 summarises the profiles of the nested cohort (n=2184) and cross-sectional surveys (n=4127) AGYW comparing those exposed to MTV Shuga with those not exposed. In summary those who had seen any MTV Shuga were more likely to be from households in the highest socioeconomic tertile (p<0.001) and more urbanised areas (p<0.001). They were also more likely to have also received DREAMS (p=0.015) (Table 1). In the cross-sectional surveys (n=4127), MTV Shuga exposure was associated with older age (p<0.001), tertiary education (p <0.001) and never having sex (p< 0.001) Table 1.

Table 1. Baseline socio-demographic characteristics of adolescent girls and young women (13-22) by exposure to MTV Shuga in the nested cohort (n=2184)

	Overall		Exposed		Not exposed		p-value
	n/N	%	n/N	%	n/N	%	
Age group (4 cats), 2017							
13-14	460/2184	21.1	72/308	23.4	388/1876	20.7	0.216
15-17	688/2184	31.5	107/308	34.7	581/1876	31	
18-19	475/2184	21.7	60/308	19.5	415/1876	22.1	
20-22	561/2184	25.7	69/308	22.4	492/1876	26.2	
Currently in school							
No	540/2184	24.7	67/308	21.8	473/1876	25.2	0.192
Yes	1644/2184	75.3	241/308	78.2	1403/1876	74.8	
Socio-economic status, 2018							
Low	255/2118	12	22/303	7.3	233/1815	12.8	<0.001
Middle	920/2118	43.4	110/303	36.3	810/1815	44.6	
High	943/2118	44.5	171/303	56.4	772/1815	42.5	
Urban or rural							
Rural	1388/2165	64.1	165/305	54.1	1223/1860	65.8	<0.001
Peri-urban/urban	777/2165	35.9	140/305	45.9	637/1860	34.2	
Invited or received DREAMS, 2017/18							
	1101/2184	50.4	175/308	56.8	926/1876	49.4	0.015

	314/1853 17.0		45/228 15.6		269/1565 17.2		0.516
Away from home in the last 12 months							
Baseline socio-demographic characteristics of adolescent girls and young women (12-24) by exposure to MTV Shuga in the cross-sectional survey (n=4127)							
	Overall		Exposed		Not exposed		
	n/N	%	n/N	%	n/N	%	p-value
Age group, (N=4127)							
12-14	958/4127	23.2	307/1477	20.1	651/2650	24.6	0.022
15-19	1628/4127	39.5	599/1477	40.6	1029/2650	38.8	
20-24	1541/4127	37.3	571/1477	38.7	970/2650	36.6	
District							
City of Johannesburg	1146/4127	27.8	476/1477	32.2	670/2650	25.3	<0.001
Ekurhuleni	1635/4127	39.6	521/1477	35.3	1114/2650	42.0	
eThekweni	1342/4127	32.5	480/1477	32.5	862/2650	32.5	
Highest Education (N=4108)							
No schooling	175/4108	4.3	99/1465	6.8	76/2646	2.9	<0.001
Grade R to 7	502/4108	12.2	142/1465	9.7	360/2646	13.6	
Grade 8 to 12	2978/4108	72.5	1022/1465	69.8	1956/2646	74.0	
Tertiary studies							
(complete/incomplete)	453/4108	11.0	202/1465	13.8	251/2646	9.5	
Ever had sex with a boy/man (n=4108)							
	1860/4108	45.3	621/1469	42.3	1239/2639	47.0	0.004
Away from home in the last 12 months (n=4121)							
	183/4121	4.4	66/1474	4.5	117/2647	4.4	0.932

After adjustment for confounders in nested cohorts (Table 2), AGYW from wealthier households (aOR=2.04 95%CI 1.27-3.30), peri-urban or urban areas (aOR=1.54 95%CI 1.19-1.98) and those invited to DREMS (aOR=1.48 95%CI 1.14-1.92) were more likely to be exposed to MTV Shuga than those from poor households, from rural areas and those not invited to DREAMS respectively. Similarly, after adjustment in the cross-sectional surveys (Table 2), AGYW with higher education were more likely to be exposed to MTV Shuga (aOR=2.58 95%CI 1.81-3.69) than those with less and those who ever had sex (aOR=0.68 95%CI 0.57-0.82) were less likely to be exposed to MTV Shuga.

Table 2 Factors associated with exposure to MTV Shuga in the nested cohort of AGYW aged 13-22 (n=2184)

	Unadjusted		Adjusted - All		
	OR	95%CI	OR	95%CI	P-value
Age group, 2017					
13-14	1		1		
15-17	0.99	0.72 -1.37	0.93	0.66 -1.29	
18-19	0.78	0.54 -1.13	0.77	0.51 -1.14	
20-22	0.76	0.53 -1.08	0.78	0.50 -1.21	0.555
Currently in school					
No	1		1		
Yes	1.21	0.91 -1.62	1.06	0.78 -1.43	0.726
Socio-economic status, 2018					
Low	1		1		
Middle	1.44	0.89 -2.33	1.27	0.78 -2.07	
High	2.35	1.47 -3.74	2.04	1.27 -3.30	<0.001
Site					
Rural	1		1		
Peri-urban/ urban	1.63	1.28 -2.08	1.54	1.19 -1.98	0.001
Invited or received DREAMS, 2017/18					
No	1		1		
Yes	1.35	1.06 -1.72	1.48	1.14 -1.92	0.003
Factors associated with exposure to MTV Shuga in the cross-sectional analysis of AGYW aged 12-24 (n=4127)					
	Unadjusted		Adjusted - all		
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	P-value
District					
City of Johannesburg	1		1		
Ekurhuleni	0.69	0.54 - 0.89	0.66	0.52- 0.84	0.001
eThekwini	0.79	0.60 - 1.04	0.78	0.59- 1.04	0.087
Age group					
12-14	1		1		
15-19	1.27	1.06 - 1.53	1.18	0.95- 1.46	0.126
20-24	1.22	1.01 - 1.48	1.16	0.90- 1.49	0.256
Highest education level					
Grade R to 7	1		1		
No schooling	2.88	1.81 - 4.58	3.29	2.01 - 5.38	<0.001
Grade 8 to 12	1.38	1.09 - 1.75	1.42	1.08 - 1.86	0.011

Complete or incomplete tertiary	2.29	1.70 - 3.09	2.58	1.81 - 3.69	<0.001
Ever had sex with a boy/man					
No	1		1		
Yes	0.82	0.71 - 0.95	0.68	0.57- 0.82	<0.001
Away from home in last 12 months					
No	1		1		
Yes	1.15	0.80 - 1.64	1.21	0.83- 1.77	0.309

Relationship between MTV Shuga exposure and HIV and SRHR outcomes (Table 3&4)

In the nested cohorts by 2019, overall 63.3% of those aged 14-23 knew their HIV status, 13.4% were consistently using contraception, 20.0% were using condoms consistently, and about a third were aware of PrEP, 5% had a pregnancy and 15% acquired HSV2. There were higher proportions of contraception use, condom use and PrEP awareness among those exposed to MTV Shuga (Table 3). For survey sites (Table 3) overall, 85.0% knew their HIV status, over a fifth 22.6% were using contraception and about half using condoms 48.4%. About a tenth (7.5%) were aware of PrEP, with higher proportions of these being among those exposed to MTV Shuga.

Table 3: HIV and SRHR outcomes by exposure to MTV Shuga nested cohort 13-22 year olds n= 2167)

	Overall		Exposed (n=308)		Not exposed (n=1878)		P-value
	n/N	%	n/N	%	n/N	%	
Knowledge of HIV status, 2019	1083/1712	63.3	175/283	61.8	908/1429	63.5	0.587
Modern contraception, 2019	221/1651	13.4	56/271	20.7	165/1380	12	<0.001
Consistent condom use, 2019	168/838	20	41/141	29.1	127/697	18.2	0.003
Aware of PrEP, 2019	523/1712	30.5	124/283	43.8	399/1429	27.9	0.302
Pregnant in 2018/19	124/2184	5.7	20/308	6.5	104/1876	5.5	0.504
Teenage pregnancy	72/1395	5.16	55/1187	4.63	17/208	8.17	0.033
HSV-2 2018/19	241/1562	15.4	35/237	14.8	206/1325	15.5	0.760
HIV and SRHR outcomes by exposure to MTV Shuga weighted for sampling (cross sectional survey 12-24 year olds n=4127)							
	Overall		Exposed		Not exposed		
	n/N	%	n/N	%	n/N	%	p-value

PrEP awareness (N=4127)	310/4127	7.5	148/1477	10.0	162/2650	6.1	<0.001
HIV test (self-report) (N=4127)	2529/2156	85.3	656/797	82.3	1500/1732	86.6	0.005
Condom use at last sex (N=1898)‡	918/1898	48.4	320/640	50.0	598/1258	47.5	0.310
Contraception use (N=4127)	934/4127	22.6	302/1477	20.5	632/2650	23.9	0.012

‡Restricted to those who ever had sex with man

At follow up, incident HSV-2 and teenage pregnancy were high, HSV-2 incidence was 15.26 and teenage pregnancy incidence was 9.86 per 100 person-years, respectively (Table 4).

Table 4: Rate of SRHR outcome by exposure to MTV Shuga (nested cohort 13-22 year olds n=2167)

HSV-2 incidence rate						
	person-time	n with HSV-2	Rate/100 py	[95% Conf.	Interval]	
MTV Shuga Not exposed	1303.0	206	15.81	13.79	18.12	
MTV Shuga Exposed	276.3	35	12.67	9.09	17.64	
Total	1579.3	241	15.26	13.45	17.31	
Pregnancy incidence rates among all AGYW						
	person-time	n pregnant	Rate/100 py	[95% Conf.	Interval]	
MTV Shuga Not exposed	1068.7	104	9.73	8.03	11.79	
MTV Shuga Exposed	188.5	20	10.61	6.84	16.44	
Total	1257.2	124	9.86	8.27	11.76	
Pregnancy incidence rates among girls below 19 years						
	person-time	n pregnant	Rate/100 py	[95% Conf.	Interval]	
MTV Shuga Not exposed	668.7	55	8.22	6.31	10.71	
MTV Shuga Exposed	123.9	17	13.72	8.53	22.07	
Total	792.6	72	9.08	7.21	11.44	

MTV Shuga and HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake

In the nested cohort after adjusting for age, education, SES, area and DREAMS, MTV Shuga exposure in the AGYW cohort was associated with significantly greater awareness of PrEP (aOR=2.06, 95%CI: 1.57-2.70), contraception uptake (aOR=2.08, 95%CI: 1.45-2.98), and consistent condom use (aOR=1.84, 95%CI: 1.24-2.93). Watching MTV-Shuga was not associated with HIV testing (aOR=1.02,95%CI: 0.77-1.21) (Figure 3 and Supplementary Tables S1-S4). There was no effect modification by DREAMS exposure.

Figure 3 Forest plots showing the association between MTV Shuga exposure and HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake in the nested cohorts.

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3 Similarly, in the cross-sectional analysis, after adjusting for age, education, district, migration
4 and sexual history, exposure to MTV-Shuga watching was associated with greater awareness
5 of PrEP (aOR=1.7, 95%CI 1.20 - 2.43). However, there was no association with contraception,
6 lower self-reported HIV testing, or condom use as shown in Figure 4 below (Supplementary
7 Table 5).
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13 **Figure 4 Forest plots showing association between MTV Shuga exposure and HIV**
14 **prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake in the cross-sectional surveys**
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16 **Causal effect of MTV Shuga on health outcomes – HSV2**
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18 The causal analysis similarly finds no effect of MTV Shuga on HSV2, with a risk difference of
19 1.10 95% CI (-2.82- 5.38)%. Findings in the younger age group (aged 13-17) and the older
20 age group (18-22) was similar (Supplementary Table 6).
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24 **Discussion**
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26 In our study of the population-level effect of a national broadcast of a TV-based edu-drama on
27 HIV prevention and SRHR, exposure to MTV Shuga was associated with higher awareness
28 of a novel HIV prevention intervention (PrEP). However, despite a very high incidence of HSV-
29 2 and teenage pregnancy, MTV Shuga exposure was not significantly associated with safer
30 sexual behaviour, uptake of contraception and HIV-testing or prevention of teenage
31 pregnancy. Notably though, the size of the relationship and direction of effect between
32 exposure to MTV Shuga, condom use and markers of unprotected sex (HSV-2 and
33 pregnancy) was consistent with a possible relationship. These findings may be partly
34 explained by our finding that less than one in 12 of the target age group had any exposure to
35 MTV Shuga and only half of these had high exposure (defined as watching the MTV Shuga
36 South African series and being able to recall the content), suggesting that one of the limiting
37 factors for the effective use of TV-based edu-drama maybe the dose that young people are
38 exposed to, particularly in rural and resource-constrained settings most affected by HIV.
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49 Our inability to find a measurable population effect of mass-media edu-drama behaviour
50 change campaign compared to the trial findings of the RCT is disappointing (15). However,
51 firstly the direction and size of the relationships suggest that we may have been able to see
52 an effect if the proportion exposed had been greater than 7%. Secondly, AGYW in urban
53 settings were more likely to have been exposed to MTV Shuga and they are also more likely
54 to be living in small towns and townships. Data from our settings suggest that young people
55 in small towns and townships are more vulnerable to HIV (24) and sexual risk (25) and
56 therefore it is possible that a real effect of MTV Shuga on this group was masked by their
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3 greater risk for the outcome. Due to the low numbers with high levels of exposure to MTV
4 Shuga we did not have the power to explore this hypothesis by looking at effect modification
5 by geography or socioeconomic status.
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9 The finding of a differential association of MTV Shuga exposure with awareness of PrEP,
10 compared to uptake of HIV and contraception, suggests that whilst educational mass
11 entertainment may be able to increase awareness and possibly demand for a service, it does
12 not impact on accessibility of the service: i.e. it impacts the first two steps of the prevention
13 cascade and not the final step(26). Well described barriers to uptake of HIV-testing and
14 contraception in this area are internalized and externalized stigma, fear of judgement from
15 health care workers and the social costs of accessing care in busy primary health care
16 settings(27-29). Behaviour change intervention including mass communication campaigns
17 can be constrained or facilitated by the context in which people live (14, 30). To optimise MTV
18 Shuga's effect there may need to be parallel innovations in SRHR and HIV service delivery
19 that makes the services easier to access. We aim to test this hypothesis by providing
20 community-based delivery of HIV and SRHR services in the context of the MTV Shuga.
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30 The behaviour change theory that underpins edu-drama as a vehicle for mass behaviour
31 change communication (13) explicitly suggests that the audience, and especially the early
32 adopters, need to be actively watching, rather than passively watching or listening (14, 15).
33 TV watching in rural homesteads can be in the context of large, often grandparent-led
34 households and competing chores and priorities. This coupled with the relatively late timing of
35 the shows may explain why so few girls and young women were sufficiently engaged or
36 immersed to be able to recall characters or story lines. Moreover, the timing of this analysis
37 may have allowed insufficient time for early adopters to convey the message of the show.
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45 **Limitations**

46 The limitations of our study are that a meaningful exposure to MTV Shuga was low and so
47 whilst the size of the relationship and direction of effect between exposure to MTV Shuga,
48 condom use, and markers of unprotected sex (HSV-2 and pregnancy) suggested a possible
49 effect we did not have the power to show a significant relationship between exposure to MTV
50 Shuga and SRHR outcomes. We also do not have the power to see a difference by dose and
51 immersion. Furthermore, as this is an observational study, we cannot exclude the possibility
52 that those who are exposed to MTV Shuga are systematically different in ways that impact on
53 the outcome of interest, for example more exposed to social media and sexual health
54 promotion and innovative technologies to support sexual health than those who were not.
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Conclusions and implications for the future

- Meaningful exposure to MTV Shuga was low across rural and urban settings in South Africa and so additional efforts need to be made to reach young people and increase their immersion in promising edu-drama if it is to have the desired effect, especially in rural and deprived settings.
- MTV Shuga was an effective vehicle to raise awareness and promote newer HIV prevention technologies such as HIV PrEP.
- There was some suggestion that MTV Shuga improved uptake of some HIV prevention and sexual health technologies (contraception and condoms)
- There was less evidence from this observational study that it improved SRHR and HIV outcomes

We highlight the importance of evaluating the real-world scale up of promising interventions to understand both the reach and population effect as well as inform interventions to increase impact and equity.

Efforts to increase exposure, which have been rolled out as part of MTV Shuga in SA, such as social media, school-based or community-based MTV Shuga film clubs will need to be evaluated, both to understand whether or not they increase exposure and coverage and improve SRH and HIV outcomes. However, to have a significant impact on the HIV and SRH prevention and treatment cascades, demand generation in AGYW needs to be delivered in parallel with accessible service delivery models that support adherence and retention (26).

Contributorship

M.S., N.C., J.D., T.Z. N.K, G.H. and C.C. developed the study tools and performed the research. M.S., J.S. D.P., K.B., I.B., and S.F. designed the research study. T.S. and S.D. conducted the laboratory analysis. N.M. supported by K.B. conducted the statistical analysis and C.G. M.S wrote the first and final draft of the paper with input from N.C., N.M., G.H., J.S., I.B., G.C., K.B., C.C., T.S., and N.K. All authors have approved the final draft of the paper.

Competing interests

All authors declare they have no conflict of interest

Funding

The authors are grateful to the communities of the Hlabisa sub-district, Ekurhuleni district, Thekwini district and City of Johannesburg who contributed their data to this study and to all the staff at Africa Health Research Institute and EpiCentre who collected the data. We acknowledge Eskindir Shambullo for his input in this manuscript.

The impact evaluation of DREAMS and MTV Shuga is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (OPP1136774 and OPP1171600, <http://www.gatesfoundation.org>). Foundation staff advised the study team, but did not substantively affect the study design, instruments, interpretation of data, or decision to publish. The research leading to these results has received funding from the People Programme (Marie Curie Actions) of the European Union's seventh Framework Programme FP7/2007-2013 under REA grant agreement n° 612216. MS National Institutes of Health 5R01MH114560-03 funding acknowledgement Africa Health Research Institute is supported by core funding from the Wellcome Trust [Core grant number (201433/Z/16/Z)]. GH is supported by a fellowship from the Royal Society and the Wellcome Trust [Grant number 210479/Z/18/Z]. MS work is also supported by a BMGF 3ie grant at AHRI. This research was funded in whole, or in part, by the Wellcome Trust [Grant number 210479/Z/18/Z]. For the purpose of open access, the author has applied a CC BY public copyright licence to any Author Accepted Manuscript version arising from this submission.

Data sharing statement

Data are available on reasonable request.

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Figure legends

Figure 1 showing conceptual framework for MTV Shuga impact on HIV prevention on AGYW in uMkhanyakude

Figure 2 Flowchart showing AGYW follow-up from nested cohorts 2017-2019

Figure 3 Forest plots showing the association between MTV Shuga exposure and HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake in the nested cohorts.

Figure 4 Forest plots showing association between MTV Shuga exposure and HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake in the cross-sectional surveys

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Figure 1: Conceptual framework for MTV Shuga impact on HIV prevention in uMkhanyakude

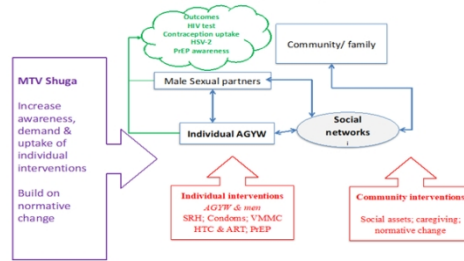


Figure 1 showing conceptual framework for MTV Shuga impact on HIV prevention on AGYW in uMkhanyakude

Figure 1 showing conceptual framework for MTV Shuga impact on HIV prevention on AGYW in uMkhanyakude

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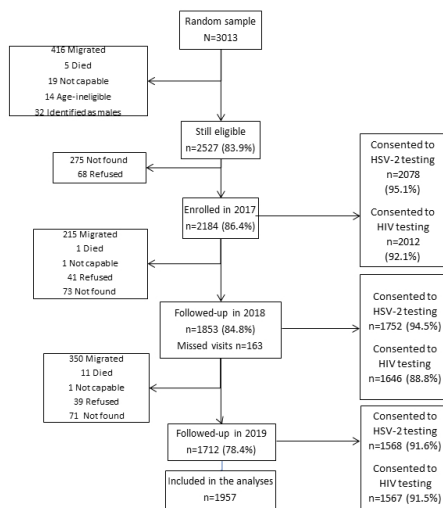


Figure 2 Flowchart showing AGYW follow-up from nested cohorts 2017-2019

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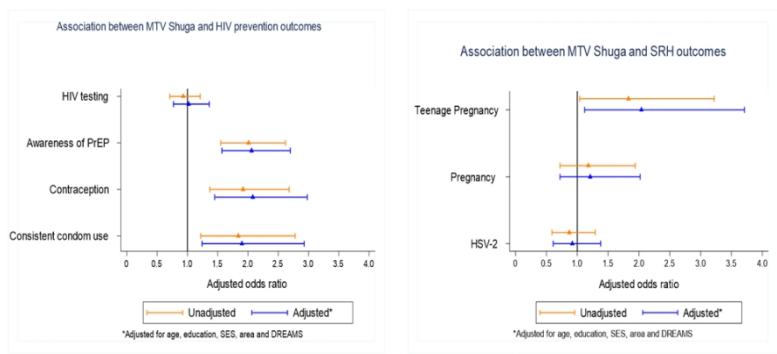


Figure 3 Forest plots showing the association between MTV Shuga exposure and HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake in the nested cohorts.

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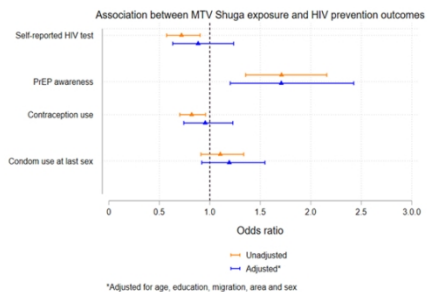


Figure 4 Forest plots showing association between MTV Shuga exposure and HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake in the cross-sectional surveys

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Supplementary Table 1 Exposure to MTV Shuga and PrEP awareness in the nested cohort of AGYW aged 13-22 (n=2184)

	Unadjusted		Shuga adjusted		p-value	Adjusted-All		
	OR	95%CI	OR	95%CI		OR	95%CI	p-value
Ever watched MTV Shuga, 2018/19								
No	1					1		
Yes	2.01	1.55 -2.62				2.06	1.57 -2.70	<0.001
Age	1.12	1.08-1.16	1.12	1.08-1.17	<0.001	1.11	1.06-1.17	<0.001
Currently in school								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	0.6	0.47 -0.76	0.59	0.46 -0.75	<0.001	0.89	0.65 -1.23	0.488
Socio-economic status, 2018								
Low	1		1			1		
Middle	0.99	0.71 -1.39	0.96	0.68 -1.35		1.01	0.71 -1.44	
High	1.13	0.81 -1.58	1.05	0.75 -1.47	0.744	1.11	0.78 -1.58	0.699
Urban or rural								
Rural	1		1			1		
Peri-urban/urban	0.98	0.79 -1.22	0.93	0.75 -1.16	0.525	0.92	0.73 -1.15	0.459
Invited or received DREAMS, 2017/18								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	0.89	0.73 -1.10	0.88	0.71 -1.08	0.212	0.99	0.79 -1.23	0.897

Supplementary Table 2 Exposure to MTV Shuga and contraception uptake in the nested cohort of AGYW aged 13-22 (n=2184)

	Unadjusted		Shuga adjusted		p-value	Adjusted-All		
	OR	95%CI	OR	95%CI		OR	95%CI	p-value
Ever watched MTV Shuga, 2018/19								
No	1					1		
Yes	1.92	1.37 -2.68				2.08	1.45-2.98	<0.001
Age	1.26	1.19-1.33	1.27	1.20-1.34	<0.001	1.32	1.24-1.42	<0.001
Currently in school								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	0.6	0.44 -0.83	0.59	0.43-0.82	0.001	1.7	1.13-2.55	0.01
Socio-economic status, 2018								
Low	1		1			1		
Middle	0.79	0.51 -1.22	0.76	0.49-1.19		0.8	0.51-1.28	
High	0.86	0.55 -1.34	0.8	0.51-1.24	0.489	0.83	0.52-1.32	0.646
Urban or rural								
Rural	1		1			1		
Peri-urban/urban	0.91	0.68 -1.24	0.86	0.64-1.17	0.345	0.89	0.64-1.24	0.49
Invited or received DREAMS, 2017/18								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	0.84	0.63 -1.11	0.83	0.62-1.10	0.191	1.04	0.76-1.42	0.813

Supplementary Table 3 Exposure to MTV Shuga and consistent condom use in the nested cohort of AGYW aged 13-22 (n=2184)

	Unadjusted		Shuga adjusted			Adjusted-All		
	OR	95%CI	OR	95%CI	p-value	OR	95%CI	p-value
Ever watched MTV Shuga, 2018/19								
No	1					1		
Yes	1.84	1.22-2.78				1.9	1.24-2.93	0.003
Age	0.94	0.86-1.01	0.94	0.87-1.02	0.157	1	0.91-1.10	0.984
Currently in school								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	1.76	1.22-2.53	1.73	1.20-2.49	0.003	1.78	1.15-2.76	0.01
Socio-economic status, 2018								
Low	1		1			1		
Middle	1.01	0.60-1.70	0.97	0.58-1.63		0.98	0.58-1.67	
High	0.87	0.52-1.47	0.8	0.47-1.36	0.552	0.86	0.50-1.48	0.753
Urban or rural								
Rural	1		1			1		
Peri-urban/urban	0.7	0.48-1.02	0.67	0.46-0.97	0.035	0.71	0.48-1.05	0.088
Invited or received DREAMS, 2017/18								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	1.13	0.81-1.59	1.13	0.80-1.59	0.486	0.97	0.67-1.40	0.875

Supplementary Table 4 Exposure to MTV Shuga and HIV testing in the nested cohort of AGYW aged 13-22 (n=2184)

	Unadjusted		Shuga adjusted		p-value	Adjusted-All		
	OR	95%CI	OR	95%CI		OR	95%CI	p-value
Ever watched MTV Shuga, 2018/19								
No	1					1		
Yes	0.93	0.71-1.21				1.02	0.77-1.36	0.885
Age	1.3	1.25-1.35	1.3	1.24-1.35	<0.001	1.3	1.24-1.37	<0.001
Currently in school								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	0.37	0.28-0.48	0.37	0.28-0.48	0	1.07	0.74-1.53	0.726
Socio-economic status, 2018								
Low	1		1			1		
Middle	0.67	0.48-0.94	0.67	0.48-0.95		0.71	0.49-1.02	
High	0.58	0.41-0.81	0.58	0.41-0.81	0.007	0.6	0.41-0.86	0.018
Urban or rural								
Rural	1		1			1		
Peri-urban/urban	0.84	0.68-1.03	0.84	0.69-1.04	0.104	0.89	0.71-1.11	0.298
Invited or received DREAMS, 2017/18								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	0.84	0.69-1.02	0.84	0.69-1.02	0.081	0.98	0.79-1.23	0.89

Supplementary Table 5: Exposure to MTV Shuga with HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake in the cross-sectional analysis of AGYW aged 12-24 (n=4127)

	aOR (95% Confidence Interval)	P-value
District		
City of Johannesburg	1	
Ekurhuleni	0.66 (0.47-0.91)	0.013
eThekweni	0.78 (0.54-1.13)	0.186
Age group		
12-14	1	
15-19	1.75 (0.35-8.84)	0.499
20-24	1.60 (0.32-8.07)	0.570
Highest education level		
Grade R to 7	1	
No schooling	3.84 (1.05-14.02)	0.041
Grade 8 to 12	3.17 (0.93-10.77)	0.065
Complete or incomplete tertiary	6.52 (1.90-22.33)	0.003
Ever had sex with a boy/man		
No	1	
Yes	0.67 (0.32-1.40)	0.286
Away from home		
No	1	
Yes	1.48 (0.93-2.37)	0.099
PrEP awareness		
No	1	
Yes	1.71 (1.20-2.43)	0.003
Contraception use		
No	1	
Yes	0.95 (0.74-1.23)	0.718
Condom use at last sex		
No	1	
Yes	1.19 (0.92-1.55)	0.183
HIV test (self-report)		
No	1	
Yes	0.88 (0.63-1.24)	0.471

Supplementary Table 6 Estimated causal effect of MTV Shuga on HSV-2 incidence, overall and by age group

Estimated causal effect of MTV Shuga on HSV-2 incidence, overall and by age group											
	% Outcome in total study population	Estimated % Outcome if no Shuga	95% CI	Estimated % Outcome if all get Shuga	95% CI	Risk Difference (%; PS adjusted)	95% CI	Prevalence Ratio (%; PS adjusted)	95% CI	Odds Ratio (%; PS adjusted)	95% CI
PS adjustment: Primary results											
Overall	17.3	17.2	14.71 - 19.67	18.0	14.51 - 22.32	0.80	-3.24 - 5.71	1.0	0.82 - 1.36	1.06	0.79 - 1.46
13-17 Years	13.2	12.4	9.85 - 15.16	15.7	11.63 - 20.26	3.34	-1.60 - 8.25	1.2	0.89 - 1.79	1.32	0.87 - 1.98
18-22 Years	24.3	25.8	21.01 - 30.74	22.0	15.19 - 30.17	-3.76	-11.92 - 5.68	0.8	0.59 - 1.24	0.81	0.51 - 1.34
Sensitivity analyses											
<u>Regression under counterfactual framework</u>											
Overall	17.3	17.2	14.74 - 19.66	17.8	14.50 - 22.08	0.65	-3.42 - 5.72	1.0	0.82 - 1.36	1.05	0.78 - 1.46
13-17 Years	13.2	12.42	9.86 - 15.21	15.9	11.85 - 20.49	3.47	-1.54 - 8.63	1.2	0.89 - 1.80	1.33	0.88 - 1.99
18-22 Years	24.3	25.7	20.78 - 30.63	21.3	14.88 - 28.28	-4.42	-12.28 - 4.95	0.8	0.57 - 1.22	0.78	0.48 - 1.31
<u>PS stratification</u>											
Overall	17.3	17.1	14.68 - 19.68	17.9	14.53 - 22.13	0.80	-3.21 - 5.52	1.0	0.84 - 1.40	1.11	0.82 - 1.51
<u>PS weighting</u>											

Overall	17.3	17.08	14.74 - 19.48	17.22	13.99 - 21.10	0.13	-3.76 - 4.63	1.0	0.79 - 1.30	1.01	0.76 - 1.37
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For peer review only

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STROBE Statement—checklist of items that should be included in reports of observational studies

	Item No	Recommendation	Page No
Title and abstract	1	(a) Indicate the study's design with a commonly used term in the title or the abstract	1
		(b) Provide in the abstract an informative and balanced summary of what was done and what was found	2
Introduction			
Background/rationale	2	Explain the scientific background and rationale for the investigation being reported	4
Objectives	3	State specific objectives, including any prespecified hypotheses	6
Methods			
Study design	4	Present key elements of study design early in the paper	6-7
Setting	5	Describe the setting, locations, and relevant dates, including periods of recruitment, exposure, follow-up, and data collection	7
Participants	6	(a) <i>Cohort study</i> —Give the eligibility criteria, and the sources and methods of selection of participants. Describe methods of follow-up <i>Case-control study</i> —Give the eligibility criteria, and the sources and methods of case ascertainment and control selection. Give the rationale for the choice of cases and controls <i>Cross-sectional study</i> —Give the eligibility criteria, and the sources and methods of selection of participants	7
		(b) <i>Cohort study</i> —For matched studies, give matching criteria and number of exposed and unexposed <i>Case-control study</i> —For matched studies, give matching criteria and the number of controls per case	
Variables	7	Clearly define all outcomes, exposures, predictors, potential confounders, and effect modifiers. Give diagnostic criteria, if applicable	8-9
Data sources/ measurement	8*	For each variable of interest, give sources of data and details of methods of assessment (measurement). Describe comparability of assessment methods if there is more than one group	8-10
Bias	9	Describe any efforts to address potential sources of bias	9-10
Study size	10	Explain how the study size was arrived at	6-7
Quantitative variables	11	Explain how quantitative variables were handled in the analyses. If applicable, describe which groupings were chosen and why	8
Statistical methods	12	(a) Describe all statistical methods, including those used to control for confounding	9-10
		(b) Describe any methods used to examine subgroups and interactions	10
		(c) Explain how missing data were addressed	10
		(d) <i>Cohort study</i> —If applicable, explain how loss to follow-up was addressed <i>Case-control study</i> —If applicable, explain how matching of cases and controls was addressed <i>Cross-sectional study</i> —If applicable, describe analytical methods taking account of sampling strategy	10
		(e) Describe any sensitivity analyses	10

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60**Results**

Participants	13*	(a) Report numbers of individuals at each stage of study—eg numbers potentially eligible, examined for eligibility, confirmed eligible, included in the study, completing follow-up, and analysed	11
		(b) Give reasons for non-participation at each stage	11
		(c) Consider use of a flow diagram	11
Descriptive data	14*	(a) Give characteristics of study participants (eg demographic, clinical, social) and information on exposures and potential confounders	11
		(b) Indicate number of participants with missing data for each variable of interest	
		(c) <i>Cohort study</i> —Summarise follow-up time (eg, average and total amount)	
Outcome data	15*	<i>Cohort study</i> —Report numbers of outcome events or summary measures over time	12
		<i>Case-control study</i> —Report numbers in each exposure category, or summary measures of exposure	
		<i>Cross-sectional study</i> —Report numbers of outcome events or summary measures	12
Main results	16	(a) Give unadjusted estimates and, if applicable, confounder-adjusted estimates and their precision (eg, 95% confidence interval). Make clear which confounders were adjusted for and why they were included	12- 16
		(b) Report category boundaries when continuous variables were categorized	12- 16
		(c) If relevant, consider translating estimates of relative risk into absolute risk for a meaningful time period	
Other analyses	17	Report other analyses done—eg analyses of subgroups and interactions, and sensitivity analyses	17

Discussion

Key results	18	Summarise key results with reference to study objectives	17- 18
Limitations	19	Discuss limitations of the study, taking into account sources of potential bias or imprecision. Discuss both direction and magnitude of any potential bias	18
Interpretation	20	Give a cautious overall interpretation of results considering objectives, limitations, multiplicity of analyses, results from similar studies, and other relevant evidence	18- 19
Generalisability	21	Discuss the generalisability (external validity) of the study results	17- 19

Other information

Funding	22	Give the source of funding and the role of the funders for the present study and, if applicable, for the original study on which the present article is based	20
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*Give information separately for cases and controls in case-control studies and, if applicable, for exposed and unexposed groups in cohort and cross-sectional studies.

Note: An Explanation and Elaboration article discusses each checklist item and gives methodological background and published examples of transparent reporting. The STROBE checklist is best used in conjunction with this article (freely available on the Web sites of PLoS Medicine at <http://www.plosmedicine.org/>, Annals of Internal Medicine at <http://www.annals.org/>, and Epidemiology at <http://www.epidem.com/>). Information on the STROBE Initiative is available at www.strobe-statement.org.

BMJ Open

Evaluating use of mass-media communication intervention 'MTV-Shuga' on increased awareness and demand for HIV and sexual health services by adolescent girls and young women in South Africa: An observational study

Journal:	<i>BMJ Open</i>
Manuscript ID	bmjopen-2022-062804.R1
Article Type:	Original research
Date Submitted by the Author:	07-Sep-2022
Complete List of Authors:	Chimbindi, Natsayi; Africa Health Research Institute; University College London, Mthiyane, Nondumiso; Africa Health Research Institute Chidumwa, Glory ; Africa Health Research Institute Zuma, Thembelihle; Africa Health Research Institute; University College London, Dreyer, Jaco; Africa Health Research Institute Birdthistle, Isolde; London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Faculty of Epidemiology and Population Health, Department of Population Health Floyd, Sian; London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, Infectious Disease Epidemiology Kwegombe, Nambusi; London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine Grundt, Chris; London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Faculty of Epidemiology and Population Health, Department of Population Health Cawood, Cherie; Epicentre Health Research Danaviah, Siva; Africa Health Research Institute Smit, Theresa; Africa Health Research Institute Pillay, Deenan; University College London, Baisley, Kathy; London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Faculty of Epidemiology and Population Health; Africa Health Research Institute Harling, Guy; Africa Health Research Institute Seeley, Janet; London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Department of Global Health & Development; Africa Health Research Institute Shahmanesh, Maryam; University College London, Institute for Global Health; Africa Health Research Institute,
Primary Subject Heading:	Sexual health
Secondary Subject Heading:	HIV/AIDS, Public health, Sexual health
Keywords:	HIV & AIDS < INFECTIOUS DISEASES, PUBLIC HEALTH, PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

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4 Title page
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7 Revised Title: **Evaluating use of mass-media communication intervention ‘MTV-**
8 **Shuga’ on increased awareness and demand for HIV and sexual health**
9 **services by adolescent girls and young women in South Africa: An**
10 **observational study**
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54 Key words (6): HIV, Adolescents, mass communication campaigns, Sexual Health,
55 Teenage Pregnancy, South Africa.
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57 **Abstract (word count=300)**
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3 **Objectives:** Mass media edu-dramas have potential to increase demand for HIV and sexual
4 and reproductive health(SRH) services among young people. MTVShuga:‘MTV Shuga:Down
5 South’(MTV Shuga-DS) is a serial mass media edu-drama designed to reduce HIV-related
6 risk-behaviour and improve SRH outcomes in adolescents and young adults in South Africa.
7 We investigate the effect of exposure to MTVShuga-DS during the scale-up of combination
8 HIV-prevention interventions(DREAMS) on awareness and uptake of SRH and HIV-
9 prevention services by adolescent girls and young women(AGYW).
10

11 **Design:** One longitudinal and three cross-sectional surveys of representative samples of
12 AGYW
13

14 **Setting:** AGYW in four South African districts with high HIV-prevalence(>10%) (May 2017 and
15 September 2019)
16

17 **Participants:** 6311AGYW aged 12-24
18

19 **Measures:** Using logistic-regression we measured the relationship between exposure to MTV
20 Shuga-DS and awareness of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis(PrEP), condom-use at last sex,
21 uptake of HIV-testing or contraception, and incident pregnancy or HSV-2 infection.
22

23 **Results:** Within the rural cohort 2184(85.5%) of eligible sampled individuals were enrolled, of
24 whom 92.6% had at least one follow-up visit; the urban cross-sectional surveys enrolled
25 4127(22.6%) of eligible sampled individuals. Self-report of watching at least one MTV Shuga-
26 DS episode was 14.1%(cohort) and 35.8%(cross-section), while storyline recall was
27 5.5%(cohort) and 6.7%(cross-section).
28

29 In the cohort, after adjustment (for DREAMS-exposure, age, education, SES), MTVShuga-DS
30 exposure was associated with increased PrEP awareness(aOR=2.06,95%CI:1.57-2.70),
31 contraception uptake(aOR=2.08,95%CI:1.45-2.98) and consistent condom-use(aOR=1.84,
32 95%CI:1.24-2.93), but not with HIV-testing(aOR=1.02,95%CI:0.77-1.21) or acquiring HSV-2
33 (aOR=0.92, 95%CI:0.61-1.38). In the cross-sections, MTVShuga-DS was associated with
34 greater PrEP awareness(aOR=1.7, 95%CI:1.20-2.43), but no other outcome.
35

36 **Conclusions:** Among both urban and rural AGYW in South Africa, MTVShuga-DS exposure
37 was associated with increased PrEP awareness and improved demand for some HIV-
38 prevention and SRH technologies but not sexual health outcomes. However, exposure to
39 MTVShuga-DS was low. Given these positive indications, supportive programming may be
40 required to raise exposure and allow future evaluation of edu-drama impact in this setting.
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Strengths and limitations of this study

- Evaluated the real-world reach of nationally broadcast edu-drama focusing on adolescent sexual health in South Africa.
- Data collection focused on a vulnerable population of AGYW across four diverse high HIV-burden districts of South Africa that included both rural and urban settings.
- Study measured the reach of MTV-Shuga and the relationship between exposure to the edu-drama on awareness and demand for HIV prevention technologies in representative longitudinal cohort and cross-sectional samples of young women.
- Observational studies give no opportunity to infer the cause–effect relationship, in this case exposure to MTV-Shuga and impact on uptake of sexual health promotion and innovative technologies.

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3 **[word count 4531]**

4 **Introduction**

5 HIV remains one of the gravest health problems facing young people living in sub-Saharan
6 Africa (SSA). There are over 7.7 million people living with HIV in South Africa, with more than
7 200,000 new HIV infections annually in those aged 15-49 years (1). The highest incidence is
8 in adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) (15-24 years) (1, 2). Although HIV incidence
9 has been declining in South Africa, a 43% decline in the overall incidence rate between 2012
10 and 2017, from 4.0 to 2.3 seroconversion events per 100 person-years among 15-49 year old;
11 it still remains high among AGYW in South Africa (3). In uMkhanyakude, HIV incidence was
12 lower during roll-out of combination HIV prevention for AGYW (2016 to 2018) than in the
13 previous 5-year period among 15- to 19-year-old females (4.5 new infections per 100 person-
14 years as compared with 2.8; and lower among 20- to 24-year-olds (7.1/100 person-years as
15 compared with 5.8) (4).
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25 In response to the high HIV incidence in young people, the South African government
26 launched the 'She Conquers Campaign', and the US President's Emergency Fund for AIDS
27 Relief and others are supporting the roll-out of Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS free,
28 Mentored, and Safe (DREAMS)(5-7). These programmes provide an evidence-based
29 combination HIV prevention package, including HIV-testing and counselling for adolescent
30 girls and young women (AGYW) and their male sexual partners, alongside universal test and
31 treat and improved sexual health services (8, 9).
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38 However, the key ingredient to the success of these multicomponent interventions will be the
39 extent to which AGYW and their male partners at most risk of HIV will uptake and adhere to
40 the active components of the intervention. This is challenging: uptake and retention of
41 contraception and HIV treatment cascade by young people, even within population-wide
42 Universal Test and Treat trials, has been suboptimal (2, 10, 11). Data from the baseline
43 analysis for the DREAMS impact evaluation in uMkhanyakude district, rural KwaZulu-Natal
44 (KZN) in 2015 suggest that less than 40% of girls (15-19 years) and boys and young men (15-
45 29 years) had ever tested for HIV; linkage to HIV treatment was even lower (12).
46 Contraception use prevalence was 20% in girls (15-19 years) and 50% in young women (20-
47 24 years) and 21% of 15-19 year old girls had ever been pregnant (2).
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55 It is against this backdrop that the fifth series of Shuga: 'MTV Shuga: Down South' (MTV
56 Shuga-DS), a mass media serial edu-drama designed for SA, was broadcast on free-to-air
57 South Africa National television. From March 8th 2017, MTV Shuga aired one episode per
58 week for 12 weeks (with repeats). MTV Shuga is a mass media behaviour change campaign
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3 that aims to improve sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR). At the centre of the
4 campaign, which includes radio and social media, is a TV-drama that weaves messages about
5 HIV, family planning, transactional and intergenerational sex, safer and healthy sexual
6 relationships, into storylines with young characters ([http://www.mtvshuga.com/show/series-5/MTV Shuga-down-south/](http://www.mtvshuga.com/show/series-5/MTV-Shuga-down-south/)).
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11 Mass media campaigns, have the potential to reach a large number of people and have been
12 shown to improve knowledge and health behaviour of a range of health conditions, with more
13 recent data suggesting that theoretically informed and targeted interventions are more likely
14 to have an effect (13, 14). MTV Shuga-DS was designed to reduce HIV-related risk behaviour
15 and improve SRHR outcomes in adolescents and young adults in SA. This was expected to
16 be achieved through increasing young people's awareness of their sexual and reproductive
17 health rights and demand for, and uptake of HIV and SRH prevention and treatment
18 technologies. The show's characters explicitly model how to discuss issues that are sensitive
19 or taboo. MTV Shuga use the technique of 'melodramas', where drama is created through
20 the battles between stereotypical goodies and baddies, and the way in which the 'transitional'
21 (often empathetic) character, begins as ambivalent but changes into a positive role model to
22 promote positive behaviour change(15). This is a deliberate method to immerse the audience
23 in the action, rather than passively watching or listening (16). AGYW, or at least early adopters,
24 are anticipated to be immersed in the serial, able to classify and identify with the transitional
25 characters and their outcomes. Pathways to behaviour change through MTV Shuga, therefore
26 relate to the extent to which the observer, including early adopters, are immersed and critically
27 engaged with the story. It also depends on a context which is supportive rather than disruptive
28 (see the conceptual framework Figure 1 below) (17).
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41 **Figure 1 showing conceptual framework for MTV Shuga impact on HIV prevention on**
42 **AGYW in uMkhanyakude**
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44 A cluster randomised controlled trial of community-viewings of MTV Shuga in Nigeria found
45 that exposure to MTV Shuga significantly improved HIV knowledge and testing in both sexes,
46 the intervention arm showing 35% more likely to test for HIV than the control arm. There was
47 also a 60% reduction in genital chlamydia as a marker of recent sexual risk in women, amongst
48 those exposed to MTV Shuga compared to those who were not (18). There were, however,
49 fewer changes in social norms, particularly around gender-based violence. Further work
50 suggested that the impact was greatest in those who were immersed in the narrative. The
51 importance of immersion (classification of characters and identifying with them and observing
52 outcomes) coupled with critical participation and an enabling context were also found in a
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3 thematic analysis looking at how storylines in MTV Shuga-DS shaped awareness, knowledge
4 and opinions of sexual health and personal relationships among young people in SA (17).
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8 Whilst the Nigerian and SA studies provide evidence for the efficacy of MTV Shuga impacting
9 on SRHR and HIV-testing behaviours in exposed individuals, there is little evidence of how
10 this will translate into a population-level effect when nationally broadcast and in less controlled
11 environments. In particular, it is not clear how the impact will spill-over to non-viewers and
12 how innovations will diffuse when shown and watched by adolescents and young adults in a
13 real-world scale-up. It is also unclear how such impact will differ according to: setting (rural or
14 urban); differential digital literacy and access to social media (geographically and
15 socioeconomically), and the dose and context of watching (shared viewing with family, friends
16 or individual experience through social media).
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23 We use the opportunity of MTV Shuga being broadcast in the context of an impact evaluation
24 of DREAMS roll out (January 2016-September 2019) in a representative, population-based
25 sample of young people (12) to describe the real-world reach of nationally broadcast MTV
26 Shuga-DS. Further, we explore the hypothesis that exposure to a mass-media serial edu-
27 drama, like MTV Shuga, will improve SRHR outcomes by increasing demand for, and uptake
28 of, existing combination individual and community-based SRH and HIV prevention services
29 for AGYW in four diverse settings including uMkhanyakude, a socioeconomically deprived
30 rural district with an extremely high burden of HIV: 40% antenatal HIV prevalence and an
31 annual HIV incidence of 5% in girls (15-19 years) and 8% in young women (20-24 years) (2,
32 19) and in three high-prevalence urban districts (HIV prevalence of greater than 10%) of City
33 of Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni, and eThekweni.
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43 **Methods**

44 **Study design**

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48 We employed a longitudinal cohort and cross-sectional surveys of representative samples of
49 AGYW aged 12-24 in four districts of South Africa with a high burden of HIV to measure the
50 reach of MTV Shuga-DS. Data were collected between May 2017 and September 2019.
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54 We used baseline and follow-up data from a nested cohort of 2184 AGYW aged 13-22 years,
55 enrolled in 2017 for the DREAMS impact evaluation. The cohort is nested in a large
56 population-based longitudinal HIV surveillance study, in the uMkhanyakude district of
57 KwaZulu-Natal (20, 21). A random sample of 3013 AGYW was selected from the surveillance
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3 population, stratified by age (13-17 years and 18-22 years) and geography, and invited to
4 enrol in the nested cohort. Baseline interviews were conducted between May 2017 and
5 February 2018 and follow-up interviews April 2018 and September 2019 in the local language
6 (isiZulu) using a structured quantitative questionnaire programmed in REDCap (12).
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11 The cross-sectional survey was conducted on a household-based representative sample of
12 4127 AGYW (between the ages 12-24 years) in three high prevalence (City of Johannesburg,
13 Ekurhuleni and eThekweni) districts. Between August 2017 and July 2018, a stratified cluster-
14 based sampling strategy was used to select 18500 AGYW aged 12-24 eligible for a cross-
15 sectional survey of individuals, based on an expected response rate of 80% (22).
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20 The interview included questions on socio-demographics, general health, exposure to
21 DREAMS and to MTV Shuga, sexual relationships, awareness and uptake of DREAMS and
22 DREAMS-like services, migration, and gender norms across the four districts. A Dried Blood
23 Spot (DBS) was taken at baseline and follow-up for Herpes Simplex Virus type 2 (HSV-2)
24 antibody testing in the uMkhanyakude district. For sexual behaviour questions, participants
25 were given a tablet computer to complete a self-interview; the fieldworker was available to
26 provide support as needed.
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32 33 **Study setting and population**

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35 The cohort was nested within the Africa Health Research Institute (AHRI) triannual
36 demographic surveillance of a population of approximately 150,000 people who are members
37 of 15,000 geocoded households in an area of 845 km² (20). The study area is mostly rural
38 and poor with high levels of youth unemployment (over 85% of those aged 18-24 are
39 unemployed) (2, 19).
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45 The cross-sectional survey was conducted in three districts which were mostly urban with
46 more towns and townships compared to AHRI surveillance area. The three study districts (City
47 of Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni and eThekweni) consist of an estimated 12,073,421 individuals.
48 The eThekweni district in KZN province is among those with the highest HIV prevalence (16.8%
49 HIV prevalence in 2016) in South Africa. Over two-thirds (68%) of eThekweni is considered
50 rural and 32% urban. About 11 963 (3%) AGYW in eThekweni are estimated to be living with
51 HIV. The Gauteng province (GP), whilst geographically the smallest, is the most populous
52 province in South Africa. GP has the fifth highest provincial HIV prevalence in the country with
53 a prevalence of 11.1% among those aged 15 to 49 years old in 2016. The HIV prevalence in
54 the two districts, City of Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni, is 11.1% and 14.3% among 15- to 49-
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3 year-olds, respectively. Both districts are densely populated and have high levels of
4 industrialisation. The HIV prevalence amongst AGYW (15 to 24 years old) in the City of
5 Johannesburg is 3%, and similarly 3% in Ekurhuleni in 2012.
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10 **Variables and Measurement:**

11 ***Outcomes definitions:***

12 We measured the effect of exposure to MTV Shuga on awareness and uptake of HIV
13 prevention and SRHR outcomes at the follow-up visit. Our outcomes were: 1) self-reported
14 HIV-testing in the past 12 months; 2) awareness of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV
15 prevention; 3) condom use at last sex; 4) use of contraception; 5) any new pregnancy since
16 baseline; and 6) any new teenage pregnancy (restricted to those under the age of 20). AGYW
17 were considered to use contraception if they self-reported using pill, injection, Intrauterine
18 Device (IUD), implant, sterilisation or self-reported consistent condom use (using condoms
19 as a contraceptive method and at last sex). Condomless sex was calculated using 2019 data
20 among participants who reported having had sex with the most recent partner in the past 12
21 months. Recent pregnancy was calculated as any new pregnancy that occurred between
22 baseline and 2019, while teenage pregnancy was calculated as any new pregnancy that
23 occurred between baseline and 2019 among participants aged below 20 years. We also
24 examined the effect of exposure to MTV Shuga on incident HSV-2 infections, among those
25 who were HSV2 negative at baseline.
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39 ***Exposure definitions:***

40 Exposure to MTV Shuga was defined as ever watched MTV Shuga between 2017 and 2018.
41 The level of exposure was measured based on the content of the series MTV Shuga, defined
42 using 15 questions used to assess knowledge of content of MTV Shuga series. A composite
43 score was developed summing-up the correct responses. The scores ranged between 2 and
44 14, and the median being 4. The median was used as a cut-off to define level of exposure
45 among those who watched the series. Consequently, the level of exposure was categorized
46 into 3 levels: High (watching a MTV Shuga and being able to correctly respond to 5 or more
47 questions on content); Medium (watching programme and being able to correctly respond to
48 less than 5 questions); and None (not watched any MTV Shuga). This was further categorised
49 into 3 levels: High (watching MTV Shuga and being able to recall the content from MTV
50 Shuga); Medium (watching programme, but unable to recall content); and None (not being
51 aware of and not watched any MTV Shuga).
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Potential confounding variables:

We included socio-demographic and sexual behaviour characteristics of AGYW that were measured at baseline and exposure to HIV prevention. The socio-demographic variables included age (as measured at follow-up), household socio-economic status, education broken down by those who are still in school and those who have completed school, geographic area (rural or peri-urban/urban), and migration in the last 12 months. The socio-economic status (SES) variable was constructed using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) based on ownership of household assets and characteristics such as access to piped water, type of toilet, electricity and type of cooking fuel (23). Further, potential individual-level confounders measured included exposure to DREAMS (defined either as ever been invited to participate in any of the DREAMS activities or ever used any of the DREAMS HIV prevention interventions in the past 12 months or since 2016 and phone ownership at baseline.

Laboratory:

The HerpeSelect® 2 ELISA IgG assay (FOCUS Diagnostics, Cypress, California, USA) for the qualitative detection of human IgG class antibodies to HSV-2 was used on Dried blood Spot (DBS) samples collected on Whatman 903 filter cards. The HerpeSelect® 2 ELISA IgG assay uses purified type-specific gG-2 antigen immobilized on polystyrene microwells reducing the cross-reactivity issues as seen with viral lysate assays(24). The assay is validated for use with serum samples but was optimised for use with DBS in the AHRI Diagnostic Research Laboratory following comparative testing with plasma samples. During the initial evaluation of the HerpeSelect® 2 ELISA IgG a select number of plasma samples were also tested by an external accredited pathology laboratory. A 6mm diameter punch of a DBS spot was incubated overnight in 150ul Assay Diluent for no more than 16 hours at 4°C. The assay was performed with 50ul of the eluent in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Following a disproportionately high number of positive results based on other studies and our experience we multiplied the mean cut-off calibrator absorbance values by a factor of 1.5 before determining the index value for each sample (25, 26). The HerpeSelect® 2 ELISA IgG results are reported as positive (index value >1.10), equivocal (index value of ≥ 0.90 but ≤ 1.10) or negative (index value <0.90). All initial equivocal results were re-tested and those that re-tested equivocal are reported as equivocal. An incident HSV-2 was defined as having been negative at baseline and positive at follow-up. Those who were equivocal at either baseline or follow-up were not considered as a sero-conversions.

Statistical analyses:

We conducted two separate analyses for cohort and cross-sectional data. For the nested cohort, we included only participants who had data available at baseline and follow-up. We used Chi-square tests to compare baseline characteristics between AGYW who did and did not have any exposure to MTV Shuga. We used logistic regression to examine the effect of MTV Shuga on health outcomes, adjusting for exposure to DREAMS and all other potential confounders. Potential effect-modification of MTV Shuga by exposure to DREAMS was examined by fitting an interaction term to fully adjusted model: likelihood ratio tests were used to compare models with and without interaction terms.

We calculated the proportion of AGYW who reported an outcome (condomless-sex, recent pregnant) or tested positive for HSV-2 at 12-month or 24-month follow-up; and estimated associations between MTV Shuga and each outcome using a logistic regression, adjusting for potential confounders (age, household and individual socio-demographic characteristics and sexual behaviour). For HSV-2 incidence, we included participants who tested negative at baseline and had at least 1 follow-up test result. For DREAMS exposure, we included data collected at baseline and 12-month follow-up. For health outcomes (consistent condom use, modern contraception, HIV testing, PrEP awareness), we used data collected at 24-month follow-up; and for HSV-2 and pregnancy incidence we used data collected at 12 and 24-month follow-up.

Propensity score logistic regression adjustment was used to estimate the causal effect of MTV Shuga on health outcomes. A propensity or probability of being exposed to MTV Shuga was measured by fitting a logistic regression with MTV Shuga exposure as an outcome and potential confounders. A logistic regression models adjusting for propensity scores were then used to predict the probability of an outcome for all participants and separately by age group, under two scenario (1) exposed to MTV Shuga and (2) Not exposed to MTV Shuga. The predicted probabilities were then used to calculate the marginal risk difference, prevalence ratio and odds ratio. Confidence intervals were generated by using a bootstrap procedure, repeating the estimation procedure described above in 1000 samples that were drawn with replacement from the complete dataset and calculating 95% confidence intervals from the resulting bootstrap distribution using the 2.5% and 97.5% percentiles. We also used propensity score stratification and probability weighting methods to check the consistency of our findings.

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3 For cross-sectional survey, we used Chi square test to compare the characteristics of AGYW
4 who did and did not have any exposure to MTV Shuga; and logistic regression models
5 adjusting for potential confounders were used to examine the association between exposure
6 to MTV Shuga and health outcomes. Sampling weights were applied to achieve proportionality
7 between groups of participants in the survey.

8 All analyses were performed using Stata version 15 (StataCorp LP, College Station, Texas
9 USA).

16 Reporting

17 The STROBE reporting guidelines were used to guide synthesis and standardise reporting of
18 our results(27)

23 Patient and public involvement

24 The study did not involve patients. AHRI has a Public Engagement Unit which conducts
25 community engagement activities with the local communities as part of study findings
26 dissemination. The Community Advisory Board provided feedback of the study including
27 design before approval from ethics review board. Study findings are being made publicly
28 available to funders, participants and the public through webinars, study reports and open
29 access journal articles.

36 Results:

39 Participants

40 Of 3013 potentially eligible AGYW randomly selected from the surveillance data set, 85.5% of
41 those eligible consented to participate at baseline (Figure 2). Of the 2184 eligible participants
42 that were surveyed at baseline, 2016 (92.3%) had at least one follow-up visit and contributed
43 data to this analysis. From the cross-sectional survey, 4127 (22.6%) eligible participants were
44 surveyed.

51 Figure 2 Flowchart showing AGYW follow-up from nested cohorts 2017-2019

54 Awareness and exposure to MTV Shuga

55 MTV Shuga exposure at baseline was low, with a total of 308 (14.1%) respondents reported
56 watching at least one episode. In the cross-sectional analysis of the three districts, a total of
57 1477 (35.8%) reported watching any MTV Shuga. In the nested cohort 121 (5.5%) recalled
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any storyline. Similarly in the cross-sectional snapshot 276 (6.7%) recalled the storyline (high exposure).

Social demographic characteristics of adolescents and young people by exposure to MTV Shuga (Table 1&2)

Table 1 summarises the profiles of the nested cohort (n=2184) and cross-sectional surveys (n=4127) AGYW comparing those exposed to MTV Shuga with those not exposed. In summary those who had seen any MTV Shuga were more likely to be from households in the highest socioeconomic tertile (p<0.001) and more urbanised areas (p<0.001). They were also more likely to have also received DREAMS (p=0.015) (Table 1). In the cross-sectional surveys (n=4127), MTV Shuga exposure was associated with older age (p<0.001), tertiary education (p <0.001) and never having sex (p< 0.001) Table 1.

Table 1. Baseline socio-demographic characteristics of adolescent girls and young women (13-22) by exposure to MTV Shuga in the nested cohort (n=2184)

	Overall		Exposed		Not exposed		p-value
	n/N	%	n/N	%	n/N	%	
Age group (4 cats), 2017							
13-14	460/2184	21.1	72/308	23.4	388/1876	20.7	
15-17	688/2184	31.5	107/308	34.7	581/1876	31	
18-19	475/2184	21.7	60/308	19.5	415/1876	22.1	
20-22	561/2184	25.7	69/308	22.4	492/1876	26.2	0.216
Currently in school							
No	540/2184	24.7	67/308	21.8	473/1876	25.2	
Yes	1644/2184	75.3	241/308	78.2	1403/1876	74.8	0.192
Socio-economic status, 2018							
Low	255/2118	12	22/303	7.3	233/1815	12.8	
Middle	920/2118	43.4	110/303	36.3	810/1815	44.6	
High	943/2118	44.5	171/303	56.4	772/1815	42.5	<0.001
Urban or rural							
Rural	1388/2165	64.1	165/305	54.1	1223/1860	65.8	
Peri-urban/urban	777/2165	35.9	140/305	45.9	637/1860	34.2	<0.001
Invited or received DREAMS, 2017/18							
	1101/2184	50.4	175/308	56.8	926/1876	49.4	0.015
Away from home in the last 12 months							
	314/1853	17.0	45/228	15.6	269/1565	17.2	0.516
Baseline socio-demographic characteristics of adolescent girls and young women (12-24) by exposure to MTV Shuga in the cross-sectional survey (n=4127)							
	Overall		Exposed		Not exposed		

	n/N	%	n/N	%	n/N	%	p-value
Age group, (N=4127)							
12-14	958/4127	23.2	307/1477	20.1	651/2650	24.6	0.022
15-19	1628/4127	39.5	599/1477	40.6	1029/2650	38.8	
20-24	1541/4127	37.3	571/1477	38.7	970/2650	36.6	
District							
City of Johannesburg	1146/4127	27.8	476/1477	32.2	670/2650	25.3	<0.001
Ekurhuleni	1635/4127	39.6	521/1477	35.3	1114/2650	42.0	
eThekweni	1342/4127	32.5	480/1477	32.5	862/2650	32.5	
Highest Education (N=4108)							
No schooling	175/4108	4.3	99/1465	6.8	76/2646	2.9	<0.001
Grade R to 7	502/4108	12.2	142/1465	9.7	360/2646	13.6	
Grade 8 to 12	2978/4108	72.5	1022/1465	69.8	1956/2646	74.0	
Tertiary studies (complete/incomplete)	453/4108	11.0	202/1465	13.8	251/2646	9.5	
Ever had sex with a boy/man (n=4108)	1860/4108	45.3	621/1469	42.3	1239/2639	47.0	0.004
Away from home in the last 12 months (n=4121)	183/4121	4.4	66/1474	4.5	117/2647	4.4	0.932

After adjustment for confounders in nested cohorts (Table 2), AGYW from wealthier households (aOR=2.04 95%CI 1.27-3.30), peri-urban or urban areas (aOR=1.54 95%CI 1.19-1.98) and those invited to DREAMS (aOR=1.48 95%CI 1.14-1.92) were more likely to be exposed to MTV Shuga than those from poor households, from rural areas and those not invited to DREAMS respectively. Similarly, after adjustment in the cross-sectional surveys (Table 2), AGYW with higher education were more likely to be exposed to MTV Shuga (aOR=2.58 95%CI 1.81-3.69) than those with less and those who ever had sex (aOR=0.68 95%CI 0.57-0.82) were less likely to be exposed to MTV Shuga.

Table 2 Factors associated with exposure to MTV Shuga in the nested cohort of AGYW aged 13-22 (n=2184)

	Unadjusted		Adjusted - All		
	OR	95%CI	OR	95%CI	P-value
Age group, 2017					
13-14	1		1		
15-17	0.99	0.72 -1.37	0.93	0.66 -1.29	
18-19	0.78	0.54 -1.13	0.77	0.51 -1.14	
20-22	0.76	0.53 -1.08	0.78	0.50 -1.21	0.555
Currently in school					
No	1		1		
Yes	1.21	0.91 -1.62	1.06	0.78 -1.43	0.726

Socio-economic status, 2018					
Low	1		1		
Middle	1.44	0.89 -2.33	1.27	0.78 -2.07	
High	2.35	1.47 -3.74	2.04	1.27 -3.30	<0.001
Site					
Rural	1		1		
Peri-urban/ urban	1.63	1.28 -2.08	1.54	1.19 -1.98	0.001
Invited or received DREAMS, 2017/18					
No	1		1		
Yes	1.35	1.06 -1.72	1.48	1.14 -1.92	0.003
Factors associated with exposure to MTV Shuga in the cross-sectional analysis of AGYW aged 12-24 (n=4127)					
	Unadjusted		Adjusted - all		
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	P-value
District					
City of Johannesburg	1		1		
Ekurhuleni	0.69	0.54 - 0.89	0.66	0.52- 0.84	0.001
eThekweni	0.79	0.60 - 1.04	0.78	0.59- 1.04	0.087
Age group					
12-14	1		1		
15-19	1.27	1.06 - 1.53	1.18	0.95- 1.46	0.126
20-24	1.22	1.01 - 1.48	1.16	0.90- 1.49	0.256
Highest education level					
Grade R to 7	1		1		
No schooling	2.88	1.81 - 4.58	3.29	2.01 - 5.38	<0.001
Grade 8 to 12	1.38	1.09 - 1.75	1.42	1.08 - 1.86	0.011
Complete or incomplete tertiary	2.29	1.70 - 3.09	2.58	1.81 - 3.69	<0.001
Ever had sex with a boy/man					
No	1		1		
Yes	0.82	0.71 - 0.95	0.68	0.57- 0.82	<0.001
Away from home in last 12 months					
No	1		1		
Yes	1.15	0.80 - 1.64	1.21	0.83- 1.77	0.309

Relationship between MTV Shuga exposure and HIV and SRHR outcomes (Table 3&4)

In the nested cohorts by 2019, overall 63.3% of those aged 14-23 knew their HIV status, 13.4% were consistently using contraception, 20.0% were using condoms consistently, and about a third were aware of PrEP, 5% had a pregnancy and 15% acquired HSV2. There were higher proportions of contraception use, condom use and PrEP awareness among those exposed to MTV Shuga (Table 3). For survey sites (Table 3) overall, 85.0% knew their HIV status, over a fifth 22.6% were using contraception and about half using condoms 48.4%. About a tenth (7.5%) were aware of PrEP, with higher proportions of these being among those exposed to MTV Shuga.

Table 3: HIV and SRHR outcomes by exposure to MTV Shuga nested cohort 13-22 year olds (n= 2167)

	Overall		Exposed (n=308)		Not exposed (n=1878)		P-value
	n/N	%	n/N	%	n/N	%	
Knowledge of HIV status, 2019	1083/1712	63.3	175/283	61.8	908/1429	63.5	0.587
Modern contraception, 2019	221/1651	13.4	56/271	20.7	165/1380	12	<0.001
Consistent condom use, 2019	168/838	20	41/141	29.1	127/697	18.2	0.003
Aware of PrEP, 2019	523/1712	30.5	124/283	43.8	399/1429	27.9	0.302
Pregnant in 2018/19	124/2184	5.7	20/308	6.5	104/1876	5.5	0.504
Teenage pregnancy	72/1395	5.16	55/1187	4.63	17/208	8.17	0.033
HSV-2 2018/19	241/1562	15.4	35/237	14.8	206/1325	15.5	0.760
HIV and SRHR outcomes by exposure to MTV Shuga weighted for sampling cross sectional survey 12-24 year olds (n=4127)							
	Overall		Exposed		Not exposed		p-value
	n/N	%	n/N	%	n/N	%	
PrEP awareness (N=4127)	310/4127	7.5	148/1477	10.0	162/2650	6.1	<0.001
HIV test (self-report) (N=2529)	2156/2529	85.3	656/797	82.3	1500/1732	86.6	0.005
Condom use at last sex (N=1898)‡	918/1898	48.4	320/640	50.0	598/1258	47.5	0.310
Contraception use (N=4127)	934/4127	22.6	302/1477	20.5	632/2650	23.9	0.012

‡Restricted to those who ever had sex with man

At follow up, incident HSV-2 and teenage pregnancy were high, HSV-2 incidence was 15.26 and teenage pregnancy incidence was 9.86 per 100 person-years, respectively (Table 4).

Table 4: Rate of SRHR outcome by exposure to MTV Shuga (nested cohort 13-22 year olds n=2167)

HSV-2 incidence rate					
	person-time	n with HSV-2	Rate/100 py	[95% Conf.	Interval]
MTV Shuga Not exposed	1303.0	206	15.81	13.79	18.12
MTV Shuga Exposed	276.3	35	12.67	9.09	17.64
Total	1579.3	241	15.26	13.45	17.31
Pregnancy incidence rates among all AGYW					
	person-time	n pregnant	Rate/100 py	[95% Conf.	Interval]
MTV Shuga Not exposed	1068.7	104	9.73	8.03	11.79
MTV Shuga Exposed	188.5	20	10.61	6.84	16.44
Total	1257.2	124	9.86	8.27	11.76
Pregnancy incidence rates among girls below 19 years					
	person-time	n pregnant	Rate/100 py	[95% Conf.	Interval]
MTV Shuga Not exposed	668.7	55	8.22	6.31	10.71
MTV Shuga Exposed	123.9	17	13.72	8.53	22.07
Total	792.6	72	9.08	7.21	11.44

MTV Shuga and HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake

In the nested cohort after adjusting for age, education, SES, area and DREAMS, MTV Shuga exposure in the AGYW cohort was associated with significantly greater awareness of PrEP (aOR=2.06, 95%CI: 1.57-2.70), contraception uptake (aOR=2.08, 95%CI: 1.45-2.98), and consistent condom use (aOR=1.84, 95%CI: 1.24-2.93). Watching MTV-Shuga was not associated with HIV testing (aOR=1.02,95%CI: 0.77-1.21) (Figure 3 and Supplementary Tables S1-S4). There was no effect modification by DREAMS exposure.

Figure 3 Forest plots showing the association between MTV Shuga exposure and HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake in the nested cohorts.

Similarly, in the cross-sectional analysis, after adjusting for age, education, district, migration and sexual history, exposure to MTV-Shuga watching was associated with greater awareness of PrEP (aOR=1.70, 95%CI 1.20 - 2.43). However, there was no association with contraception, lower self-reported HIV testing, or condom use as shown in Figure 4 below (Supplementary Table 5).

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3 **Figure 4 Forest plots showing association between MTV Shuga exposure and**
4 **HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake in the cross-sectional**
5 **surveys**
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9 **Causal effect of MTV Shuga on health outcomes – HSV2**

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11 The causal analysis similarly finds no effect of MTV Shuga on HSV2, with a risk difference of
12 1.10 95% CI (-2.82- 5.38)%. Findings in the younger age group (aged 13-17) and the older
13 age group (18-22) was similar (Supplementary Table 6).
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18 **Discussion**
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20 In our study of the population-level effect of a national broadcast of a TV-based edu-drama on
21 HIV prevention and SRHR, exposure to MTV Shuga was associated with higher awareness
22 of a novel HIV prevention intervention (PrEP). However, despite a very high incidence of HSV-
23 2 and teenage pregnancy, MTV Shuga exposure was not significantly associated with safer
24 sexual behaviour, uptake of contraception and HIV-testing or prevention of teenage
25 pregnancy. Notably though, the size of the relationship and direction of effect between
26 exposure to MTV Shuga, condom use and markers of unprotected sex (HSV-2 and
27 pregnancy) was consistent with a possible relationship. These findings may be partly
28 explained by our finding that less than one in 12 of the target age group had any exposure to
29 MTV Shuga and only half of these had high exposure (defined as watching the MTV Shuga
30 South African series and being able to recall the content), suggesting that one of the limiting
31 factors for the effective use of TV-based edu-drama maybe the dose that young people are
32 exposed to, particularly in rural and resource-constrained settings most affected by HIV.
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42 Our inability to find a measurable population effect of mass-media edu-drama behaviour
43 change campaign compared to the trial findings of the RCT is disappointing (18). However,
44 firstly the direction and size of the relationships suggest that we may have been able to see
45 an effect if the proportion exposed had been greater than 7%. Secondly, AGYW in urban
46 settings were more likely to have been exposed to MTV Shuga and they are also more likely
47 to be living in small towns and townships. Data from our settings suggest that young people
48 in small towns and townships are more vulnerable to HIV (28) and sexual risk (29) and
49 therefore it is possible that a real effect of MTV Shuga on this group was masked by their
50 greater risk for the outcome. Due to the low numbers with high levels of exposure to MTV
51 Shuga we did not have the power to explore this hypothesis by looking at effect modification
52 by geography or socioeconomic status.
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3 The finding of a differential association of MTV Shuga exposure with awareness of PrEP,
4 compared to uptake of HIV and contraception, suggests that whilst educational mass
5 entertainment may be able to increase awareness and possibly demand for a service, it does
6 not impact on accessibility of the service: i.e. it impacts the first two steps of the prevention
7 cascade and not the final step(30). Well described barriers to uptake of HIV-testing and
8 contraception in this area are internalized and externalized stigma, fear of judgement from
9 health care workers and the social costs of accessing care in busy primary health care
10 settings(31-33). Behaviour change intervention including mass communication campaigns
11 can be constrained or facilitated by the context in which people live (17, 34). To optimise MTV
12 Shuga's effect there may need to be parallel innovations in SRHR and HIV service delivery
13 that makes the services easier to access. We aim to test this hypothesis by providing
14 community-based delivery of HIV and SRHR services in the context of the MTV Shuga.
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24 The behaviour change theory that underpins edu-drama as a vehicle for mass behaviour
25 change communication (16) explicitly suggests that the audience, and especially the early
26 adopters, need to be actively watching, rather than passively watching or listening (17, 18).
27 TV watching in rural homesteads can be in the context of large, often grandparent-led
28 households and competing chores and priorities. This coupled with the relatively late timing of
29 the shows may explain why so few girls and young women were sufficiently engaged or
30 immersed to be able to recall characters or story lines. Moreover, the timing of this analysis
31 may have allowed insufficient time for early adopters to convey the message of the show.
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38 **Limitations**

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40 The limitations of our study are that a meaningful exposure to MTV Shuga was low and so
41 whilst the size of the relationship and direction of effect between exposure to MTV Shuga,
42 condom use, and markers of unprotected sex (HSV-2 and pregnancy) suggested a possible
43 effect we did not have the power to show a significant relationship between exposure to MTV
44 Shuga and SRHR outcomes. We also do not have the power to see a difference by dose and
45 immersion. Furthermore, as this is an observational study, we cannot exclude the possibility
46 that those who are exposed to MTV Shuga are systematically different in ways that impact on
47 the outcome of interest, for example more exposed to social media and sexual health
48 promotion and innovative technologies to support sexual health than those who were not.
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56 **Conclusions and implications for the future**

- 57 • Meaningful exposure to MTV Shuga was low across rural and urban settings in
58 South Africa and so additional efforts need to be made to reach young people and
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3 increase their immersion in promising edu-drama if it is to have the desired effect,
4 especially in rural and deprived settings.

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6 • MTV Shuga was an effective vehicle to raise awareness and promote newer HIV
7 prevention technologies such as HIV PrEP.
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9 • There was some suggestion that MTV Shuga improved uptake of some HIV
10 prevention and sexual health technologies (contraception and condoms)
- 11
12 • There was less evidence from this observational study that it improved SRHR and
13 HIV outcomes
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18 We highlight the importance of evaluating the real-world scale up of promising interventions
19 to understand both the reach and population effect as well as inform interventions to increase
20 impact and equity.
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24 Efforts to increase exposure, which have been rolled out as part of MTV Shuga in SA, such
25 as social media, school-based or community-based MTV Shuga film clubs will need to be
26 evaluated, both to understand whether or not they increase exposure and coverage and
27 improve SRH and HIV outcomes. However, to have a significant impact on the HIV and SRH
28 prevention and treatment cascades, demand generation in AGYW needs to be delivered in
29 parallel with accessible service delivery models that support adherence and retention (30).
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34 35 36 **Contributorship**

37
38 M.S., N.C., J.D., T.Z. N.K, G.H. and C.C. developed the study tools and performed the
39 research. M.S., J.S. D.P., K.B., I.B., and S.F. designed the research study. T.S. and S.D.
40 conducted the laboratory analysis. N.M. supported by K.B. conducted the statistical analysis
41 and G.C. M.S wrote the first and final draft of the paper with input from N.C., N.M., G.H., J.S.,
42 I.B., G.C., K.B., C.C., T.S., T.Z, D.P and N.K. All the authors critically reviewed the manuscript.
43
44 All authors have approved the final draft of the paper.
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49 50 51 **Competing interests**

52 All authors declare they have no conflict of interest
53

54 55 56 **Funding**

57 The impact evaluation of DREAMS and MTV Shuga is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates
58 Foundation (OPP1136774 and OPP1171600, <http://www.gatesfoundation.org>). Foundation
59 staff advised the study team, but did not substantively affect the study design, instruments,
60

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3 interpretation of data, or decision to publish. The research leading to these results has
4 received funding from the People Programme (Marie Curie Actions) of the European Union's
5 seventh Framework Programme FP7/2007-2013 under REA grant agreement n° 612216.
6 MS National Institutes of Health 5R01MH114560-03 funding acknowledgement. This
7 research was funded in whole, or in part, by the Africa Health Research Institute through the
8 Wellcome [Strategic Core award: 201433/Z/16/A]. For the purpose of open access, the
9 author has applied a CC BY public copyright licence to any Author Accepted Manuscript
10 version arising from this submission. N.C is supported by a training fellowship from the
11 National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) (using the UK's Official Development
12 Assistance (ODA) Funding) and Wellcome [grant reference number 224309/Z/21/Z] under
13 the NIHR-Wellcome Partnership for Global Health Research. The views expressed are
14 those of the authors and not necessarily those of Wellcome, the NIHR or the Department of
15 Health and Social Care. GH is supported by a fellowship from the Royal Society and the
16 Wellcome Trust [Grant number 210479/Z/18/Z]. MS work is also supported by a BMGF 3ie
17 grant at AHRI. This research was funded in whole, or in part, by the Wellcome Trust [Grant
18 number 210479/Z/18/Z]. For the purpose of open access, the author has applied a CC BY
19 public copyright licence to any Author Accepted Manuscript version arising from this
20 submission.
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33 **Data sharing statement**

34 Data are available on reasonable request.
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38 **Ethics statement**

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40 The DREAMS Partnership impact evaluation protocol was reviewed and approved by the
41 University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) Biomedical Research Ethics Committee (BREC) (BFC
42 339/16), the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine Research Ethics Committee (Ref
43 11835) and the AHRI Somkhele Community Advisory Board, the Associate Director of Science
44 of the Center for Global Health (CGH) at the United States Centers for Disease Control and
45 Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta and the Department of Health, Province of KZN and Gauteng.
46 Approval for the demographic surveillance and data collection in the clinics was granted by
47 UKZN BREC. All participants provided separate informed consent for the questionnaires and
48 the HSV2 sero-survey. Consent for follow-up interviews was provided separately. For
49 participants aged <18 years, written parental consent and participant assent were provided.
50 Individuals attending the clinics in the surveillance area provided informed consent to record
51 the clinic visit and link to their surveillance identification number.
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Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful to the communities of the Hlabisa sub-district, Ekurhuleni district, Thekwini district and City of Johannesburg who contributed their data to this study and to all the staff at Africa Health Research Institute and EpiCentre who collected the data. We acknowledge Eskindir Shambullo for his input in this manuscript.

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Figure legends

Figure 1 showing conceptual framework for MTV Shuga impact on HIV prevention on AGYW in uMkhanyakude

Figure 2 Flowchart showing AGYW follow-up from nested cohorts 2017-2019

Figure 3 Forest plots showing the association between MTV Shuga exposure and HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake in the nested cohorts.

Figure 4 Forest plots showing association between MTV Shuga exposure and HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake in the cross-sectional surveys

Figure 1: Conceptual framework for MTV Shuga impact on HIV prevention in uMkhanyakude

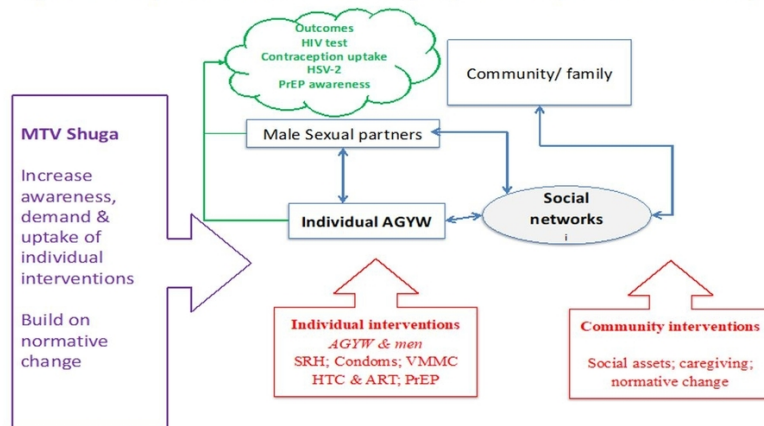


Figure 1 showing conceptual framework for MTV Shuga impact on HIV prevention on AGYW in uMkhanyakude

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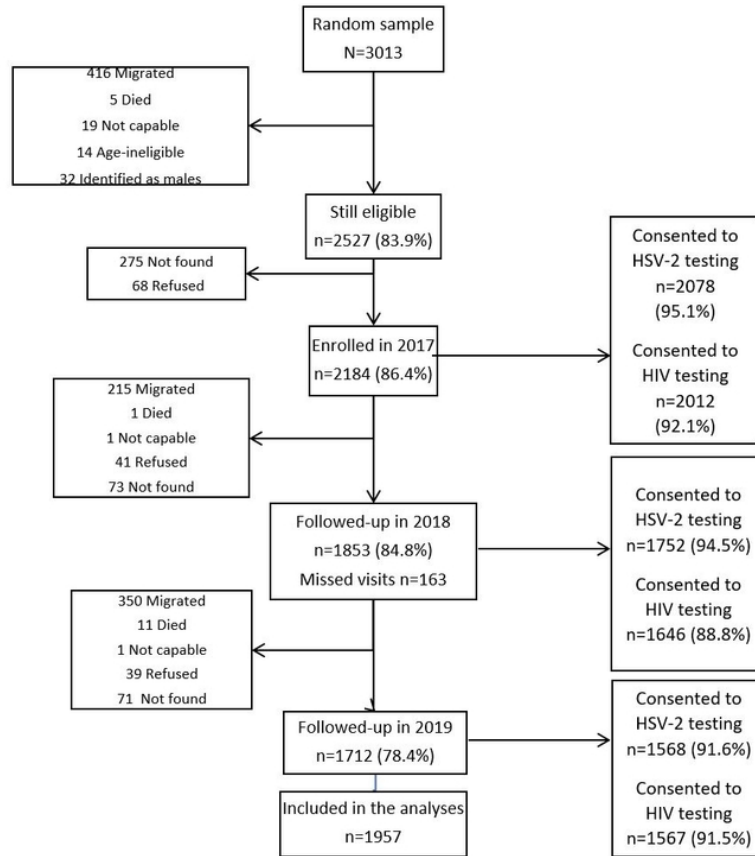


Figure 2 Flowchart showing AGYW follow-up from nested cohorts 2017-2019

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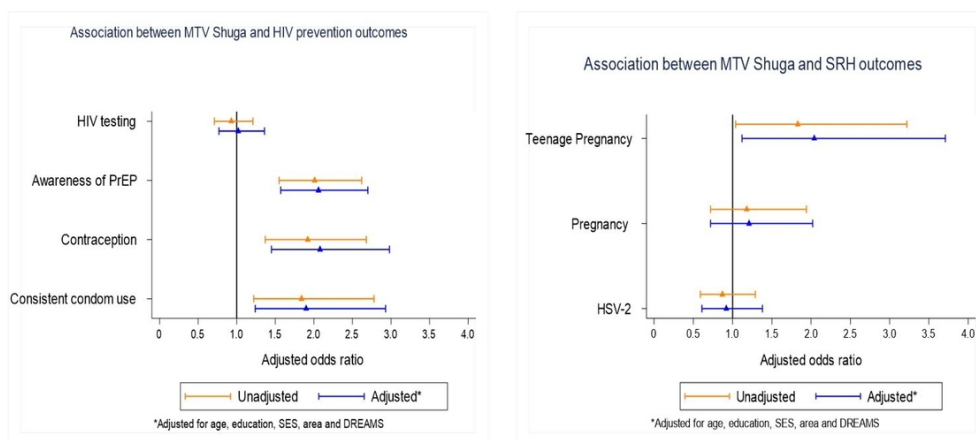


Figure 3 Forest plots showing the association between MTV Shuga exposure and HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake in the nested cohorts.

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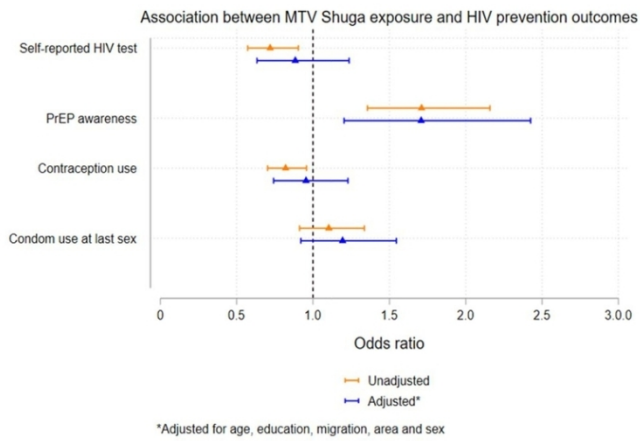


Figure 4 Forest plots showing association between MTV Shuga exposure and HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake in the cross-sectional surveys

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Supplementary Table 1 Exposure to MTV Shuga and PrEP awareness in the nested cohort of AGYW aged 13-22 (n=2184)

	Unadjusted		Shuga adjusted		p-value	Adjusted-All		
	OR	95%CI	OR	95%CI		OR	95%CI	p-value
Ever watched MTV Shuga, 2018/19								
No	1					1		
Yes	2.01	1.55 -2.62				2.06	1.57 -2.70	<0.001
Age	1.12	1.08-1.16	1.12	1.08-1.17	<0.001	1.11	1.06-1.17	<0.001
Currently in school								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	0.6	0.47 -0.76	0.59	0.46 -0.75	<0.001	0.89	0.65 -1.23	0.488
Socio-economic status, 2018								
Low	1		1			1		
Middle	0.99	0.71 -1.39	0.96	0.68 -1.35		1.01	0.71 -1.44	
High	1.13	0.81 -1.58	1.05	0.75 -1.47	0.744	1.11	0.78 -1.58	0.699
Urban or rural								
Rural	1		1			1		
Peri-urban/urban	0.98	0.79 -1.22	0.93	0.75 -1.16	0.525	0.92	0.73 -1.15	0.459
Invited or received DREAMS, 2017/18								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	0.89	0.73 -1.10	0.88	0.71 -1.08	0.212	0.99	0.79 -1.23	0.897

Supplementary Table 2 Exposure to MTV Shuga and contraception uptake in the nested cohort of AGYW aged 13-22 (n=2184)

	Unadjusted		Shuga adjusted		p-value	Adjusted-All		p-value
	OR	95%CI	OR	95%CI		OR	95%CI	
Ever watched MTV Shuga, 2018/19								
No	1					1		
Yes	1.92	1.37 -2.68				2.08	1.45-2.98	<0.001
Age	1.26	1.19-1.33	1.27	1.20-1.34	<0.001	1.32	1.24-1.42	<0.001
Currently in school								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	0.6	0.44 -0.83	0.59	0.43-0.82	0.001	1.7	1.13-2.55	0.01
Socio-economic status, 2018								
Low	1		1			1		
Middle	0.79	0.51 -1.22	0.76	0.49-1.19		0.8	0.51-1.28	
High	0.86	0.55 -1.34	0.8	0.51-1.24	0.489	0.83	0.52-1.32	0.646
Urban or rural								
Rural	1		1			1		
Peri-urban/urban	0.91	0.68 -1.24	0.86	0.64-1.17	0.345	0.89	0.64-1.24	0.49
Invited or received DREAMS, 2017/18								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	0.84	0.63 -1.11	0.83	0.62-1.10	0.191	1.04	0.76-1.42	0.813

Supplementary Table 3 Exposure to MTV Shuga and consistent condom use in the nested cohort of AGYW aged 13-22 (n=2184)

	Unadjusted		Shuga adjusted		p-value	Adjusted-All		p-value
	OR	95%CI	OR	95%CI		OR	95%CI	
Ever watched MTV Shuga, 2018/19								
No	1					1		
Yes	1.84	1.22-2.78				1.9	1.24-2.93	0.003
Age	0.94	0.86-1.01	0.94	0.87-1.02	0.157	1	0.91-1.10	0.984
Currently in school								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	1.76	1.22-2.53	1.73	1.20-2.49	0.003	1.78	1.15-2.76	0.01
Socio-economic status, 2018								
Low	1		1			1		
Middle	1.01	0.60-1.70	0.97	0.58-1.63		0.98	0.58-1.67	
High	0.87	0.52-1.47	0.8	0.47-1.36	0.552	0.86	0.50-1.48	0.753
Urban or rural								
Rural	1		1			1		
Peri-urban/urban	0.7	0.48-1.02	0.67	0.46-0.97	0.035	0.71	0.48-1.05	0.088
Invited or received DREAMS, 2017/18								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	1.13	0.81-1.59	1.13	0.80-1.59	0.486	0.97	0.67-1.40	0.875

Supplementary Table 4 Exposure to MTV Shuga and HIV testing in the nested cohort of AGYW aged 13-22 (n=2184)

	Unadjusted		Shuga adjusted		p-value	Adjusted-All		
	OR	95%CI	OR	95%CI		OR	95%CI	p-value
Ever watched MTV Shuga, 2018/19								
No	1					1		
Yes	0.93	0.71-1.21				1.02	0.77-1.36	0.885
Age	1.3	1.25-1.35	1.3	1.24-1.35	<0.001	1.3	1.24-1.37	<0.001
Currently in school								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	0.37	0.28-0.48	0.37	0.28-0.48	0	1.07	0.74-1.53	0.726
Socio-economic status, 2018								
Low	1		1			1		
Middle	0.67	0.48-0.94	0.67	0.48-0.95		0.71	0.49-1.02	
High	0.58	0.41-0.81	0.58	0.41-0.81	0.007	0.6	0.41-0.86	0.018
Urban or rural								
Rural	1		1			1		
Peri-urban/urban	0.84	0.68-1.03	0.84	0.69-1.04	0.104	0.89	0.71-1.11	0.298
Invited or received DREAMS, 2017/18								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	0.84	0.69-1.02	0.84	0.69-1.02	0.081	0.98	0.79-1.23	0.89

Supplementary Table 5: Exposure to MTV Shuga with HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake in the cross-sectional analysis of AGYW aged 12-24 (n=4127)

	aOR (95% Confidence Interval)	P-value
District		
City of Johannesburg	1	
Ekurhuleni	0.66 (0.47-0.91)	0.013
eThekweni	0.78 (0.54-1.13)	0.186
Age group		
12-14	1	
15-19	1.75 (0.35-8.84)	0.499
20-24	1.60 (0.32-8.07)	0.570
Highest education level		
Grade R to 7	1	
No schooling	3.84 (1.05-14.02)	0.041
Grade 8 to 12	3.17 (0.93-10.77)	0.065
Complete or incomplete tertiary	6.52 (1.90-22.33)	0.003
Ever had sex with a boy/man		
No	1	
Yes	0.67 (0.32-1.40)	0.286
Away from home		
No	1	
Yes	1.48 (0.93-2.37)	0.099
PrEP awareness		
No	1	
Yes	1.71 (1.20-2.43)	0.003
Contraception use		
No	1	
Yes	0.95 (0.74-1.23)	0.718
Condom use at last sex		
No	1	
Yes	1.19 (0.92-1.55)	0.183
HIV test (self-report)		
No	1	
Yes	0.88 (0.63-1.24)	0.471

Supplementary Table 6 Estimated causal effect of MTV Shuga on HSV-2 incidence, overall and by age group

Estimated causal effect of MTV Shuga on HSV-2 incidence, overall and by age group											
	% Outcome in total study population	Estimated % Outcome if no Shuga	95% CI	Estimated % Outcome if all get Shuga	95% CI	Risk Difference (%; PS adjusted)	95% CI	Prevalence Ratio (%; PS adjusted)	95% CI	Odds Ratio (%; PS adjusted)	95% CI
PS adjustment: Primary results											
Overall	17.3	17.2	14.71 - 19.67	18.0	14.51 - 22.32	0.80	-3.24 - 5.71	1.0	0.82 - 1.36	1.06	0.79 - 1.46
13-17 Years	13.2	12.4	9.85 - 15.16	15.7	11.63 - 20.26	3.34	-1.60 - 8.25	1.2	0.89 - 1.79	1.32	0.87 - 1.98
18-22 Years	24.3	25.8	21.01 - 30.74	22.0	15.19 - 30.17	-3.76	-11.92 - 5.68	0.8	0.59 - 1.24	0.81	0.51 - 1.34
Sensitivity analyses											
<u>Regression under counterfactual framework</u>											
Overall	17.3	17.2	14.74 - 19.66	17.8	14.50 - 22.08	0.65	-3.42 - 5.72	1.0	0.82 - 1.36	1.05	0.78 - 1.46
13-17 Years	13.2	12.42	9.86 - 15.21	15.9	11.85 - 20.49	3.47	-1.54 - 8.63	1.2	0.89 - 1.80	1.33	0.88 - 1.99
18-22 Years	24.3	25.7	20.78 - 30.63	21.3	14.88 - 28.28	-4.42	-12.28 - 4.95	0.8	0.57 - 1.22	0.78	0.48 - 1.31
<u>PS stratification</u>											
Overall	17.3	17.1	14.68 - 19.68	17.9	14.53 - 22.13	0.80	-3.21 - 5.52	1.0	0.84 - 1.40	1.11	0.82 - 1.51
<u>PS weighting</u>											

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Overall	17.3	17.08	14.74 - 19.48	17.22	13.99 - 21.10	0.13	-3.76 - 4.63	1.0	0.79 - 1.30	1.01	0.76 - 1.37
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STROBE Statement—checklist of items that should be included in reports of observational studies

	Item No	Recommendation	Page No
Title and abstract	1	(a) Indicate the study's design with a commonly used term in the title or the abstract	1
		(b) Provide in the abstract an informative and balanced summary of what was done and what was found	2
Introduction			
Background/rationale	2	Explain the scientific background and rationale for the investigation being reported	4
Objectives	3	State specific objectives, including any prespecified hypotheses	6
Methods			
Study design	4	Present key elements of study design early in the paper	6-7
Setting	5	Describe the setting, locations, and relevant dates, including periods of recruitment, exposure, follow-up, and data collection	7
Participants	6	(a) <i>Cohort study</i> —Give the eligibility criteria, and the sources and methods of selection of participants. Describe methods of follow-up <i>Case-control study</i> —Give the eligibility criteria, and the sources and methods of case ascertainment and control selection. Give the rationale for the choice of cases and controls <i>Cross-sectional study</i> —Give the eligibility criteria, and the sources and methods of selection of participants	7
		(b) <i>Cohort study</i> —For matched studies, give matching criteria and number of exposed and unexposed <i>Case-control study</i> —For matched studies, give matching criteria and the number of controls per case	
Variables	7	Clearly define all outcomes, exposures, predictors, potential confounders, and effect modifiers. Give diagnostic criteria, if applicable	8-9
Data sources/ measurement	8*	For each variable of interest, give sources of data and details of methods of assessment (measurement). Describe comparability of assessment methods if there is more than one group	8-10
Bias	9	Describe any efforts to address potential sources of bias	9-10
Study size	10	Explain how the study size was arrived at	6-7
Quantitative variables	11	Explain how quantitative variables were handled in the analyses. If applicable, describe which groupings were chosen and why	8
Statistical methods	12	(a) Describe all statistical methods, including those used to control for confounding	9-10
		(b) Describe any methods used to examine subgroups and interactions	10
		(c) Explain how missing data were addressed	10
		(d) <i>Cohort study</i> —If applicable, explain how loss to follow-up was addressed <i>Case-control study</i> —If applicable, explain how matching of cases and controls was addressed <i>Cross-sectional study</i> —If applicable, describe analytical methods taking account of sampling strategy	10
		(e) Describe any sensitivity analyses	10

Continued on next page

Results			
Participants	13*	(a) Report numbers of individuals at each stage of study—eg numbers potentially eligible, examined for eligibility, confirmed eligible, included in the study, completing follow-up, and analysed	11
		(b) Give reasons for non-participation at each stage	11
		(c) Consider use of a flow diagram	11
Descriptive data	14*	(a) Give characteristics of study participants (eg demographic, clinical, social) and information on exposures and potential confounders	11
		(b) Indicate number of participants with missing data for each variable of interest	
		(c) <i>Cohort study</i> —Summarise follow-up time (eg, average and total amount)	
Outcome data	15*	<i>Cohort study</i> —Report numbers of outcome events or summary measures over time	12
		<i>Case-control study</i> —Report numbers in each exposure category, or summary measures of exposure	
		<i>Cross-sectional study</i> —Report numbers of outcome events or summary measures	12
Main results	16	(a) Give unadjusted estimates and, if applicable, confounder-adjusted estimates and their precision (eg, 95% confidence interval). Make clear which confounders were adjusted for and why they were included	12- 16
		(b) Report category boundaries when continuous variables were categorized	12- 16
		(c) If relevant, consider translating estimates of relative risk into absolute risk for a meaningful time period	
Other analyses	17	Report other analyses done—eg analyses of subgroups and interactions, and sensitivity analyses	17
Discussion			
Key results	18	Summarise key results with reference to study objectives	17- 18
Limitations	19	Discuss limitations of the study, taking into account sources of potential bias or imprecision. Discuss both direction and magnitude of any potential bias	18
Interpretation	20	Give a cautious overall interpretation of results considering objectives, limitations, multiplicity of analyses, results from similar studies, and other relevant evidence	18- 19
Generalisability	21	Discuss the generalisability (external validity) of the study results	17- 19
Other information			
Funding	22	Give the source of funding and the role of the funders for the present study and, if applicable, for the original study on which the present article is based	20

*Give information separately for cases and controls in case-control studies and, if applicable, for exposed and unexposed groups in cohort and cross-sectional studies.

Note: An Explanation and Elaboration article discusses each checklist item and gives methodological background and published examples of transparent reporting. The STROBE checklist is best used in conjunction with this article (freely available on the Web sites of PLoS Medicine at <http://www.plosmedicine.org/>, Annals of Internal Medicine at <http://www.annals.org/>, and Epidemiology at <http://www.epidem.com/>). Information on the STROBE Initiative is available at www.strobe-statement.org.

BMJ Open

Evaluating use of mass-media communication intervention 'MTV-Shuga' on increased awareness and demand for HIV and sexual health services by adolescent girls and young women in South Africa: An observational study

Journal:	<i>BMJ Open</i>
Manuscript ID	bmjopen-2022-062804.R2
Article Type:	Original research
Date Submitted by the Author:	03-Jan-2023
Complete List of Authors:	Chimbindi, Natsayi; Africa Health Research Institute; University College London, Mthiyane, Nondumiso; Africa Health Research Institute Chidumwa, Glory ; Africa Health Research Institute Zuma, Thembelihle; Africa Health Research Institute; University College London, Dreyer, Jaco; Africa Health Research Institute Birdthistle, Isolde; London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Faculty of Epidemiology and Population Health, Department of Population Health Floyd, Sian; London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, Infectious Disease Epidemiology Kwegombe, Nambusi; London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine Grundy, Chris; London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Faculty of Epidemiology and Population Health, Department of Population Health Cawood, Cherie; Epicentre Health Research Danaviah, Siva; Africa Health Research Institute Smit, Theresa; Africa Health Research Institute Pillay, Deenan; University College London, Baisley, Kathy; London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Faculty of Epidemiology and Population Health; Africa Health Research Institute Harling, Guy; Africa Health Research Institute Seeley, Janet; London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Department of Global Health & Development; Africa Health Research Institute Shahmanesh, Maryam; University College London, Institute for Global Health; Africa Health Research Institute,
Primary Subject Heading:	Sexual health
Secondary Subject Heading:	HIV/AIDS, Public health, Sexual health
Keywords:	HIV & AIDS < INFECTIOUS DISEASES, PUBLIC HEALTH, PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

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3 Title page
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5 Revised Title: **Evaluating use of mass-media communication intervention ‘MTV-**
6 **Shuga’ on increased awareness and demand for HIV and sexual health**
7 **services by adolescent girls and young women in South Africa: An**
8 **observational study**
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53 Key words (6): HIV, Adolescents, mass communication campaigns, Sexual Health,
54 Teenage Pregnancy, South Africa.
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Abstract (word count=272)

Objective: To investigate the effect of exposure to MTV Shuga:Down South' (MTVShuga-DS) during the scale-up of combination HIV-prevention interventions on awareness and uptake of SRH and HIV-prevention services by adolescent girls and young women (AGYW).

Design: One longitudinal and three cross-sectional surveys of representative samples of AGYW.

Setting: AGYW in four South African districts with high HIV-prevalence (>10%) (May 2017 and September 2019).

Participants: 6311 AGYW aged 12-24.

Measures: Using logistic-regression we measured the relationship between exposure to MTV Shuga-DS and awareness of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), condom-use at last sex, uptake of HIV-testing or contraception, and incident pregnancy or HSV-2 infection.

Results: Within the rural cohort 2184 (85.5%) of eligible sampled individuals were enrolled, of whom 92.6% had at least one follow-up visit; the urban cross-sectional surveys enrolled 4127 (22.6%) of eligible sampled individuals. Self-report of watching at least one MTV Shuga-DS episode was 14.1% (cohort) and 35.8% (cross-section), while storyline recall was 5.5% (cohort) and 6.7% (cross-section).

In the cohort, after adjustment (for HIV-prevention intervention-exposure, age, education, SES), MTVShuga-DS exposure was associated with increased PrEP awareness (aOR=2.06,95%CI:1.57-2.70), contraception uptake (aOR=2.08,95%CI:1.45-2.98) and consistent condom-use (aOR=1.84, 95%CI:1.24-2.93), but not with HIV-testing (aOR=1.02,95%CI:0.77-1.21) or acquiring HSV-2 (aOR=0.92, 95%CI:0.61-1.38). In the cross-sections, MTVShuga-DS was associated with greater PrEP awareness (aOR=1.7, 95%CI:1.20-2.43), but no other outcome.

Conclusions: Among both urban and rural AGYW in South Africa, MTVShuga-DS exposure was associated with increased PrEP awareness and improved demand for some HIV-prevention and SRH technologies but not sexual health outcomes. However, exposure to MTVShuga-DS was low. Given these positive indications, supportive programming may be required to raise exposure and allow future evaluation of edu-drama impact in this setting.

Strengths and limitations of this study

- Evaluated the real-world reach of nationally broadcast edu-drama focusing on adolescent sexual health in South Africa.
- Data collection focused on a vulnerable population of AGYW across four diverse high HIV-burden districts of South Africa that included both rural and urban settings.
- The strength of this study is the use of longitudinal data from a cohort of AGYW nested in a larger population-based longitudinal HIV surveillance. In addition data were drawn from cross-sectional representative samples of AGYW from four districts of South Africa. These data enabled us to measure the reach of MTV-Shuga and the relationship between exposure to the edu-drama on awareness and demand for HIV prevention technologies in young women.
- The limitation of observational studies is that they do not infer the cause-effect relationship, in this case we cannot ascertain causality/impact of exposure to MTV-Shuga on uptake of sexual health promotion and innovative technologies.

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3 **[word count 4531]**

4 **Introduction**

5 HIV remains one of the gravest health problems facing young people living in sub-Saharan
6 Africa (SSA). There are over 7.7 million people living with HIV in South Africa, with more than
7 200,000 new HIV infections annually in those aged 15-49 years (1). The highest incidence is
8 in adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) (15-24 years) (1, 2). Although HIV incidence
9 has been declining in South Africa, a 43% decline in the overall incidence rate between 2012
10 and 2017, from 4.0 to 2.3 seroconversion events per 100 person-years among 15-49 year old;
11 it still remains high among AGYW in South Africa (3). In uMkhanyakude, HIV incidence was
12 lower during roll-out of combination HIV prevention for AGYW (2016 to 2018) than in the
13 previous 5-year period among 15- to 19-year-old females (4.5 new infections per 100 person-
14 years as compared with 2.8; and lower among 20- to 24-year-olds (7.1/100 person-years as
15 compared with 5.8) (4).
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25 In response to the high HIV incidence in young people, the South African government
26 launched the 'She Conquers Campaign', and the US President's Emergency Fund for AIDS
27 Relief and others are supporting the roll-out of Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS free,
28 Mentored, and Safe (DREAMS)(5-7). These programmes provide an evidence-based
29 combination HIV prevention package, including HIV-testing and counselling for adolescent
30 girls and young women (AGYW) and their male sexual partners, alongside universal test and
31 treat and improved sexual health services (8, 9).
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38 However, the key ingredient to the success of these multicomponent interventions will be the
39 extent to which AGYW and their male partners at most risk of HIV will uptake and adhere to
40 the active components of the intervention. This is challenging: uptake and retention of
41 contraception and HIV treatment cascade by young people, even within population-wide
42 Universal Test and Treat trials, has been suboptimal (2, 10, 11). Data from the baseline
43 analysis for the DREAMS impact evaluation in uMkhanyakude district, rural KwaZulu-Natal
44 (KZN) in 2015 suggest that less than 40% of girls (15-19 years) and boys and young men (15-
45 29 years) had ever tested for HIV; linkage to HIV treatment was even lower (12).
46 Contraception use prevalence was 20% in girls (15-19 years) and 50% in young women (20-
47 24 years) and 21% of 15-19 year old girls had ever been pregnant (2).
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55 It is against this backdrop that the fifth series of Shuga: 'MTV Shuga: Down South' (MTV
56 Shuga-DS), a mass media serial edu-drama designed for SA, was broadcast on free-to-air
57 South Africa National television. From March 8th 2017, MTV Shuga aired one episode per
58 week for 12 weeks (with repeats). MTV Shuga is a mass media behaviour change campaign
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3 that aims to improve sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR). At the centre of the
4 campaign, which includes radio and social media, is a TV-drama that weaves messages about
5 HIV, family planning, transactional and intergenerational sex, sexual identity, safer and healthy
6 sexual relationships, into storylines with young characters
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8 ([http://www.mtvshuga.com/show/series-5/MTV Shuga-down-south/](http://www.mtvshuga.com/show/series-5/MTV%20Shuga-down-south/)).

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11 Mass media campaigns, have the potential to reach a large number of people and have been
12 shown to improve knowledge and health behaviour of a range of health conditions, with more
13 recent data suggesting that theoretically informed and targeted interventions are more likely
14 to have an effect (13, 14). MTV Shuga-DS was designed to reduce HIV-related risk behaviour
15 and improve SRHR outcomes in adolescents and young adults in SA. This was expected to
16 be achieved through increasing young people's awareness of their sexual and reproductive
17 health rights and demand for, and uptake of HIV and SRH prevention and treatment
18 technologies. The show's characters explicitly model how to discuss issues that are sensitive
19 or taboo. MTV Shuga use the technique of 'melodramas', where drama is created through
20 the battles between stereotypical goodies and baddies, and the way in which the 'transitional'
21 (often empathetic) character, begins as ambivalent but changes into a positive role model to
22 promote positive behaviour change(15). This is a deliberate method to immerse the audience
23 in the action, rather than passively watching or listening (16). AGYW, or at least early adopters,
24 are anticipated to be immersed in the serial, able to classify and identify with the transitional
25 characters and their outcomes. Pathways to behaviour change through MTV Shuga, therefore
26 relate to the extent to which the observer, including early adopters, are immersed and critically
27 engaged with the story. It also depends on a context which is supportive rather than disruptive
28 (see the conceptual framework Figure 1 below) (17).

40 **Figure 1 showing conceptual framework for MTV Shuga impact on HIV prevention on** 41 **AGYW in uMkhanyakude**

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44 A cluster randomised controlled trial of community-viewings of MTV Shuga in Nigeria found
45 that exposure to MTV Shuga significantly improved HIV knowledge and testing in both sexes,
46 the intervention arm showing 35% more likely to test for HIV than the control arm. There was
47 also a 60% reduction in genital chlamydia as a marker of recent sexual risk in women, amongst
48 those exposed to MTV Shuga compared to those who were not (18). There were, however,
49 fewer changes in social norms, particularly around gender-based violence. Further work
50 suggested that the impact was greatest in those who were immersed in the narrative. The
51 importance of immersion (classification of characters and identifying with them and observing
52 outcomes) coupled with critical participation and an enabling context were also found in a
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3 thematic analysis looking at how storylines in MTV Shuga-DS shaped awareness, knowledge
4 and opinions of sexual health and personal relationships among young people in SA (17).
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8 Whilst the Nigerian and SA studies provide evidence for the efficacy of MTV Shuga impacting
9 on SRHR and HIV-testing behaviours in exposed individuals, there is little evidence of how
10 this will translate into a population-level effect when nationally broadcast and in less controlled
11 environments. In particular, it is not clear how the impact will spill-over to non-viewers and
12 how innovations will diffuse when shown and watched by adolescents and young adults in a
13 real-world scale-up. It is also unclear how such impact will differ according to: setting (rural or
14 urban); differential digital literacy and access to social media (geographically and
15 socioeconomically), and the dose and context of watching (shared viewing with family, friends
16 or individual experience through social media).
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23 We use the opportunity of MTV Shuga being broadcast in the context of an impact evaluation
24 of DREAMS roll out (January 2016-September 2019) in a representative, population-based
25 sample of young people (12) to describe the real-world reach of nationally broadcast MTV
26 Shuga-DS. Further, we explore the hypothesis that exposure to a mass-media serial edu-
27 drama, like MTV Shuga, will improve SRHR outcomes by increasing demand for, and uptake
28 of, existing combination individual and community-based SRH and HIV prevention services
29 for AGYW in four diverse settings including uMkhanyakude, a socioeconomically deprived
30 rural district with an extremely high burden of HIV: 40% antenatal HIV prevalence and an
31 annual HIV incidence of 5% in girls (15-19 years) and 8% in young women (20-24 years) (2,
32 19) and in three high-prevalence urban districts (HIV prevalence of greater than 10%) of City
33 of Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni, and eThekweni.
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43 **Methods**

44 **Study design**

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48 We employed a longitudinal cohort and cross-sectional surveys of representative samples of
49 AGYW aged 12-24 in four districts of South Africa with a high burden of HIV to measure the
50 reach of MTV Shuga-DS. Data were collected between May 2017 and September 2019.
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54 We used baseline and follow-up data from a nested cohort of 2184 AGYW aged 13-22 years,
55 enrolled in 2017 for the DREAMS impact evaluation. The cohort is nested in a large
56 population-based longitudinal HIV surveillance study, in the uMkhanyakude district of
57 KwaZulu-Natal (20, 21). A random sample of 3013 AGYW was selected from the surveillance
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3 population, stratified by age (13-17 years and 18-22 years) and geography, and invited to
4 enrol in the nested cohort. Baseline interviews were conducted between May 2017 and
5 February 2018 and follow-up interviews April 2018 and September 2019 in the local language
6 (isiZulu) using a structured quantitative questionnaire programmed in REDCap (12).
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11 The cross-sectional survey was conducted on a household-based representative sample of
12 4127 AGYW (between the ages 12-24 years) in three high prevalence (City of Johannesburg,
13 Ekurhuleni and eThekweni) districts. Between August 2017 and July 2018, a stratified cluster-
14 based sampling strategy was used to select 18500 AGYW aged 12-24 eligible for a cross-
15 sectional survey of individuals, based on an expected response rate of 80% (22).
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20 The interview included questions on socio-demographics, general health, exposure to
21 DREAMS and to MTV Shuga, sexual relationships, awareness and uptake of DREAMS and
22 DREAMS-like services, migration, and gender norms across the four districts. A Dried Blood
23 Spot (DBS) was taken at baseline and follow-up for Herpes Simplex Virus type 2 (HSV-2)
24 antibody testing in the uMkhanyakude district. For sexual behaviour questions, participants
25 were given a tablet computer to complete a self-interview; the fieldworker was available to
26 provide support as needed.
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32 33 **Study setting and population**

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35 The cohort was nested within the Africa Health Research Institute (AHRI) triannual
36 demographic surveillance of a population of approximately 150,000 people who are members
37 of 15,000 geocoded households in an area of 845 km² (20). The study area is mostly rural
38 and poor with high levels of youth unemployment (over 85% of those aged 18-24 are
39 unemployed) (2, 19).
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45 The cross-sectional survey was conducted in three districts which were mostly urban with
46 more towns and townships compared to AHRI surveillance area. The three study districts (City
47 of Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni and eThekweni) consist of an estimated 12,073,421 individuals.
48 The eThekweni district in KZN province is among those with the highest HIV prevalence (16.8%
49 HIV prevalence in 2016) in South Africa. Over two-thirds (68%) of eThekweni is considered
50 rural and 32% urban. About 11 963 (3%) AGYW in eThekweni are estimated to be living with
51 HIV. The Gauteng province (GP), whilst geographically the smallest, is the most populous
52 province in South Africa. GP has the fifth highest provincial HIV prevalence in the country with
53 a prevalence of 11.1% among those aged 15 to 49 years old in 2016. The HIV prevalence in
54 the two districts, City of Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni, is 11.1% and 14.3% among 15- to 49-
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3 year-olds, respectively. Both districts are densely populated and have high levels of
4 industrialisation. The HIV prevalence amongst AGYW (15 to 24 years old) in the City of
5 Johannesburg is 3%, and similarly 3% in Ekurhuleni in 2012.
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10 **Variables and Measurement:**

11 ***Outcomes definitions:***

12 We measured the effect of exposure to MTV Shuga on awareness and uptake of HIV
13 prevention and SRHR outcomes at the follow-up visit. Our outcomes were: 1) self-reported
14 HIV-testing in the past 12 months; 2) awareness of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV
15 prevention; 3) condom use at last sex; 4) use of contraception; 5) any new pregnancy since
16 baseline; and 6) any new teenage pregnancy (restricted to those under the age of 20). AGYW
17 were considered to use contraception if they self-reported using pill, injection, Intrauterine
18 Device (IUD), implant, sterilisation or self-reported consistent condom use (using condoms
19 as a contraceptive method and at last sex). Condomless sex was calculated using 2019 data
20 among participants who reported having had sex with the most recent partner in the past 12
21 months. Recent pregnancy was calculated as any new pregnancy that occurred between
22 baseline and 2019, while teenage pregnancy was calculated as any new pregnancy that
23 occurred between baseline and 2019 among participants aged below 20 years. We also
24 examined the effect of exposure to MTV Shuga on incident HSV-2 infections, among those
25 who were HSV2 negative at baseline.
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39 ***Exposure definitions:***

40 Exposure to MTV Shuga was defined as ever watched MTV Shuga between 2017 and 2018.
41 The level of exposure was measured based on the content of the series MTV Shuga, defined
42 using 15 questions used to assess knowledge of content of MTV Shuga series. A composite
43 score was developed summing-up the correct responses. The scores ranged between 2 and
44 14, and the median being 4. The median was used as a cut-off to define level of exposure
45 among those who watched the series. Consequently, the level of exposure was categorized
46 into 3 levels: High (watching a MTV Shuga and being able to correctly respond to 5 or more
47 questions on content); Medium (watching programme and being able to correctly respond to
48 less than 5 questions); and None (not watched any MTV Shuga). This was further categorised
49 into 3 levels: High (watching MTV Shuga and being able to recall the content from MTV
50 Shuga); Medium (watching programme, but unable to recall content); and None (not being
51 aware of and not watched any MTV Shuga).
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Potential confounding variables:

We included socio-demographic and sexual behaviour characteristics of AGYW that were measured at baseline and exposure to HIV prevention. The socio-demographic variables included age (as measured at follow-up), household socio-economic status, education broken down by those who are still in school and those who have completed school, geographic area (rural or peri-urban/urban), and migration in the last 12 months. The socio-economic status (SES) variable was constructed using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) based on ownership of household assets and characteristics such as access to piped water, type of toilet, electricity and type of cooking fuel (23). Further, potential individual-level confounders measured included exposure to DREAMS (defined either as ever been invited to participate in any of the DREAMS activities or ever used any of the DREAMS HIV prevention interventions in the past 12 months or since 2016 and phone ownership at baseline.

Laboratory:

The HerpeSelect® 2 ELISA IgG assay (FOCUS Diagnostics, Cypress, California, USA) for the qualitative detection of human IgG class antibodies to HSV-2 was used on Dried blood Spot (DBS) samples collected on Whatman 903 filter cards. The HerpeSelect® 2 ELISA IgG assay uses purified type-specific gG-2 antigen immobilized on polystyrene microwells reducing the cross-reactivity issues as seen with viral lysate assays(24). The assay is validated for use with serum samples but was optimised for use with DBS in the AHRI Diagnostic Research Laboratory following comparative testing with plasma samples. During the initial evaluation of the HerpeSelect® 2 ELISA IgG a select number of plasma samples were also tested by an external accredited pathology laboratory. A 6mm diameter punch of a DBS spot was incubated overnight in 150ul Assay Diluent for no more than 16 hours at 4°C. The assay was performed with 50ul of the eluent in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Following a disproportionately high number of positive results based on other studies and our experience we multiplied the mean cut-off calibrator absorbance values by a factor of 1.5 before determining the index value for each sample (25, 26). The HerpeSelect® 2 ELISA IgG results are reported as positive (index value >1.10), equivocal (index value of ≥ 0.90 but ≤ 1.10) or negative (index value <0.90). All initial equivocal results were re-tested and those that re-tested equivocal are reported as equivocal. An incident HSV-2 was defined as having been negative at baseline and positive at follow-up. Those who were equivocal at either baseline or follow-up were not considered as a sero-conversions.

Statistical analyses:

We conducted two separate analyses for cohort and cross-sectional data. For the nested cohort, we included only participants who had data available at baseline and follow-up. We used Chi-square tests to compare baseline characteristics between AGYW who did and did not have any exposure to MTV Shuga. We used logistic regression to examine the effect of MTV Shuga on health outcomes, adjusting for exposure to DREAMS and all other potential confounders. Potential effect-modification of MTV Shuga by exposure to DREAMS was examined by fitting an interaction term to fully adjusted model: likelihood ratio tests were used to compare models with and without interaction terms.

We calculated the proportion of AGYW who reported an outcome (condomless-sex, recent pregnant) or tested positive for HSV-2 at 12-month or 24-month follow-up; and estimated associations between MTV Shuga and each outcome using a logistic regression, adjusting for potential confounders (age, household and individual socio-demographic characteristics and sexual behaviour). For HSV-2 incidence, we included participants who tested negative at baseline and had at least 1 follow-up test result. For DREAMS exposure, we included data collected at baseline and 12-month follow-up. For health outcomes (consistent condom use, modern contraception, HIV testing, PrEP awareness), we used data collected at 24-month follow-up; and for HSV-2 and pregnancy incidence we used data collected at 12 and 24-month follow-up.

Propensity score logistic regression adjustment was used to estimate the causal effect of MTV Shuga on health outcomes. A propensity or probability of being exposed to MTV Shuga was measured by fitting a logistic regression with MTV Shuga exposure as an outcome and potential confounders. A logistic regression models adjusting for propensity scores were then used to predict the probability of an outcome for all participants and separately by age group, under two scenario (1) exposed to MTV Shuga and (2) Not exposed to MTV Shuga. The predicted probabilities were then used to calculate the marginal risk difference, prevalence ratio and odds ratio. Confidence intervals were generated by using a bootstrap procedure, repeating the estimation procedure described above in 1000 samples that were drawn with replacement from the complete dataset and calculating 95% confidence intervals from the resulting bootstrap distribution using the 2.5% and 97.5% percentiles. We also used propensity score stratification and probability weighting methods to check the consistency of our findings.

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3 For cross-sectional survey, we used Chi square test to compare the characteristics of AGYW
4 who did and did not have any exposure to MTV Shuga; and logistic regression models
5 adjusting for potential confounders were used to examine the association between exposure
6 to MTV Shuga and health outcomes. Sampling weights were applied to achieve proportionality
7 between groups of participants in the survey.

8 All analyses were performed using Stata version 15 (StataCorp LP, College Station, Texas
9 USA).

16 Reporting

17 The STROBE reporting guidelines were used to guide synthesis and standardise reporting of
18 our results(27)

23 Patient and public involvement

24 The study did not involve patients. AHRI has a Public Engagement Unit which conducts
25 community engagement activities with the local communities as part of study findings
26 dissemination. The Community Advisory Board provided feedback of the study including
27 design before approval from ethics review board. Study findings are being made publicly
28 available to funders, participants and the public through webinars, study reports and open
29 access journal articles.

36 Results:

39 Participants

40 Of 3013 potentially eligible AGYW randomly selected from the surveillance data set, 85.5% of
41 those eligible consented to participate at baseline (Figure 2). Of the 2184 eligible participants
42 that were surveyed at baseline, 2016 (92.3%) had at least one follow-up visit and contributed
43 data to this analysis. From the cross-sectional survey, 4127 (22.6%) eligible participants were
44 surveyed.

51 Figure 2 Flowchart showing AGYW follow-up from nested cohorts 2017-2019

54 Awareness and exposure to MTV Shuga

55 MTV Shuga exposure at baseline was limited, with a total of only 308 (14.1%) respondents
56 reported watching at least one episode. In the cross-sectional analysis of the three districts, a
57 total of 1477 (35.8%) reported watching any MTV Shuga. In the nested cohort 121 (5.5%)
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recalled any storyline. Similarly in the cross-sectional snapshot 276 (6.7%) recalled the storyline (high exposure).

Social demographic characteristics of adolescents and young people by exposure to MTV Shuga (Table 1&2)

Table 1 summarises the profiles of the nested cohort (n=2184) and cross-sectional surveys (n=4127) AGYW comparing those exposed to MTV Shuga with those not exposed. In summary those who had seen any MTV Shuga were more likely to be from households in the highest socioeconomic tertile (p<0.001) and more urbanised areas (p<0.001). They were also more likely to have also received DREAMS (p=0.015) (Table 1). In the cross-sectional surveys (n=4127), MTV Shuga exposure was associated with older age (p<0.001), tertiary education (p <0.001) and never having sex (p< 0.001) Table 1.

Table 1. Baseline socio-demographic characteristics of adolescent girls and young women (13-22) by exposure to MTV Shuga in the nested cohort (n=2184)

	Overall		Exposed		Not exposed		p-value
	n/N	%	n/N	%	n/N	%	
Age group (4 cats), 2017							
13-14	460/2184	21.1	72/308	23.4	388/1876	20.7	
15-17	688/2184	31.5	107/308	34.7	581/1876	31	
18-19	475/2184	21.7	60/308	19.5	415/1876	22.1	
20-22	561/2184	25.7	69/308	22.4	492/1876	26.2	0.216
Currently in school							
No	540/2184	24.7	67/308	21.8	473/1876	25.2	
Yes	1644/2184	75.3	241/308	78.2	1403/1876	74.8	0.192
Socio-economic status, 2018							
Low	255/2118	12	22/303	7.3	233/1815	12.8	
Middle	920/2118	43.4	110/303	36.3	810/1815	44.6	
High	943/2118	44.5	171/303	56.4	772/1815	42.5	<0.001
Urban or rural							
Rural	1388/2165	64.1	165/305	54.1	1223/1860	65.8	
Peri-urban/urban	777/2165	35.9	140/305	45.9	637/1860	34.2	<0.001
Invited or received DREAMS, 2017/18							
	1101/2184	50.4	175/308	56.8	926/1876	49.4	0.015
Away from home in the last 12 months							
	314/1853	17.0	45/228	15.6	269/1565	17.2	0.516
Baseline socio-demographic characteristics of adolescent girls and young women (12-24) by exposure to MTV Shuga in the cross-sectional survey (n=4127)							
	Overall		Exposed		Not exposed		

	n/N	%	n/N	%	n/N	%	p-value
Age group, (N=4127)							
12-14	958/4127	23.2	307/1477	20.1	651/2650	24.6	0.022
15-19	1628/4127	39.5	599/1477	40.6	1029/2650	38.8	
20-24	1541/4127	37.3	571/1477	38.7	970/2650	36.6	
District							
City of Johannesburg	1146/4127	27.8	476/1477	32.2	670/2650	25.3	<0.001
Ekurhuleni	1635/4127	39.6	521/1477	35.3	1114/2650	42.0	
eThekweni	1342/4127	32.5	480/1477	32.5	862/2650	32.5	
Highest Education (N=4108)							
No schooling	175/4108	4.3	99/1465	6.8	76/2646	2.9	<0.001
Grade R to 7	502/4108	12.2	142/1465	9.7	360/2646	13.6	
Grade 8 to 12	2978/4108	72.5	1022/1465	69.8	1956/2646	74.0	
Tertiary studies (complete/incomplete)	453/4108	11.0	202/1465	13.8	251/2646	9.5	
Ever had sex with a boy/man (n=4108)	1860/4108	45.3	621/1469	42.3	1239/2639	47.0	0.004
Away from home in the last 12 months (n=4121)	183/4121	4.4	66/1474	4.5	117/2647	4.4	0.932

After adjustment for confounders in nested cohorts (Table 2), AGYW from wealthier households (aOR=2.04 95%CI 1.27-3.30), peri-urban or urban areas (aOR=1.54 95%CI 1.19-1.98) and those invited to DREAMS (aOR=1.48 95%CI 1.14-1.92) were more likely to be exposed to MTV Shuga than those from poor households, from rural areas and those not invited to DREAMS respectively. Similarly, after adjustment in the cross-sectional surveys (Table 2), AGYW with higher education were more likely to be exposed to MTV Shuga (aOR=2.58 95%CI 1.81-3.69) than those with less and those who ever had sex (aOR=0.68 95%CI 0.57-0.82) were less likely to be exposed to MTV Shuga.

Table 2 Factors associated with exposure to MTV Shuga in the nested cohort of AGYW aged 13-22 (n=2184)

	Unadjusted		Adjusted - All		
	OR	95%CI	OR	95%CI	P-value
Age group, 2017					
13-14	1		1		
15-17	0.99	0.72 -1.37	0.93	0.66 -1.29	
18-19	0.78	0.54 -1.13	0.77	0.51 -1.14	
20-22	0.76	0.53 -1.08	0.78	0.50 -1.21	0.555
Currently in school					
No	1		1		
Yes	1.21	0.91 -1.62	1.06	0.78 -1.43	0.726

Socio-economic status, 2018					
Low	1		1		
Middle	1.44	0.89 -2.33	1.27	0.78 -2.07	
High	2.35	1.47 -3.74	2.04	1.27 -3.30	<0.001
Site					
Rural	1		1		
Peri-urban/ urban	1.63	1.28 -2.08	1.54	1.19 -1.98	0.001
Invited or received DREAMS, 2017/18					
No	1		1		
Yes	1.35	1.06 -1.72	1.48	1.14 -1.92	0.003
Factors associated with exposure to MTV Shuga in the cross-sectional analysis of AGYW aged 12-24 (n=4127)					
	Unadjusted		Adjusted - all		
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	P-value
District					
City of Johannesburg	1		1		
Ekurhuleni	0.69	0.54 - 0.89	0.66	0.52- 0.84	0.001
eThekweni	0.79	0.60 - 1.04	0.78	0.59- 1.04	0.087
Age group					
12-14	1		1		
15-19	1.27	1.06 - 1.53	1.18	0.95- 1.46	0.126
20-24	1.22	1.01 - 1.48	1.16	0.90- 1.49	0.256
Highest education level					
Grade R to 7	1		1		
No schooling	2.88	1.81 - 4.58	3.29	2.01 - 5.38	<0.001
Grade 8 to 12	1.38	1.09 - 1.75	1.42	1.08 - 1.86	0.011
Complete or incomplete tertiary	2.29	1.70 - 3.09	2.58	1.81 - 3.69	<0.001
Ever had sex with a boy/man					
No	1		1		
Yes	0.82	0.71 - 0.95	0.68	0.57- 0.82	<0.001
Away from home in last 12 months					
No	1		1		
Yes	1.15	0.80 - 1.64	1.21	0.83- 1.77	0.309

Relationship between MTV Shuga exposure and HIV and SRHR outcomes (Table 3&4)

In the nested cohorts by 2019, overall 63.3% of those aged 14-23 knew their HIV status, 13.4% were consistently using contraception, 20.0% were using condoms consistently, and about a third were aware of PrEP, 5% had a pregnancy and 15% acquired HSV2. There were higher proportions of contraception use, condom use and PrEP awareness among those exposed to MTV Shuga (Table 3). For survey sites (Table 3) overall, 85.0% knew their HIV status, over a fifth 22.6% were using contraception and about half using condoms 48.4%. About a tenth (7.5%) were aware of PrEP, with higher proportions of these being among those exposed to MTV Shuga.

Table 3: HIV and SRHR outcomes by exposure to MTV Shuga nested cohort 13-22 year olds (n= 2167)

	Overall		Exposed (n=308)		Not exposed (n=1878)		P-value
	n/N	%	n/N	%	n/N	%	
Knowledge of HIV status, 2019	1083/1712	63.3	175/283	61.8	908/1429	63.5	0.587
Modern contraception, 2019	221/1651	13.4	56/271	20.7	165/1380	12	<0.001
Consistent condom use, 2019	168/838	20	41/141	29.1	127/697	18.2	0.003
Aware of PrEP, 2019	523/1712	30.5	124/283	43.8	399/1429	27.9	0.302
Pregnant in 2018/19	124/2184	5.7	20/308	6.5	104/1876	5.5	0.504
Teenage pregnancy	72/1395	5.16	55/1187	4.63	17/208	8.17	0.033
HSV-2 2018/19	241/1562	15.4	35/237	14.8	206/1325	15.5	0.760
HIV and SRHR outcomes by exposure to MTV Shuga weighted for sampling cross sectional survey 12-24 year olds (n=4127)							
	Overall		Exposed		Not exposed		p-value
	n/N	%	n/N	%	n/N	%	
PrEP awareness (N=4127)	310/4127	7.5	148/1477	10.0	162/2650	6.1	<0.001
HIV test (self-report) (N=2529)	2156/2529	85.3	656/797	82.3	1500/1732	86.6	0.005
Condom use at last sex (N=1898)‡	918/1898	48.4	320/640	50.0	598/1258	47.5	0.310
Contraception use (N=4127)	934/4127	22.6	302/1477	20.5	632/2650	23.9	0.012

‡Restricted to those who ever had sex with man

At follow up, incident HSV-2 and teenage pregnancy were high, HSV-2 incidence was 15.26 and teenage pregnancy incidence was 9.86 per 100 person-years, respectively (Table 4).

Table 4: Rate of SRHR outcome by exposure to MTV Shuga (nested cohort 13-22 year olds n=2167)

HSV-2 incidence rate					
	person-time	n with HSV-2	Rate/100 py	[95% Conf.	Interval]
MTV Shuga Not exposed	1303.0	206	15.81	13.79	18.12
MTV Shuga Exposed	276.3	35	12.67	9.09	17.64
Total	1579.3	241	15.26	13.45	17.31
Pregnancy incidence rates among all AGYW					
	person-time	n pregnant	Rate/100 py	[95% Conf.	Interval]
MTV Shuga Not exposed	1068.7	104	9.73	8.03	11.79
MTV Shuga Exposed	188.5	20	10.61	6.84	16.44
Total	1257.2	124	9.86	8.27	11.76
Pregnancy incidence rates among girls below 19 years					
	person-time	n pregnant	Rate/100 py	[95% Conf.	Interval]
MTV Shuga Not exposed	668.7	55	8.22	6.31	10.71
MTV Shuga Exposed	123.9	17	13.72	8.53	22.07
Total	792.6	72	9.08	7.21	11.44

MTV Shuga and HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake

In the nested cohort after adjusting for age, education, SES, area and DREAMS, MTV Shuga exposure in the AGYW cohort was associated with significantly greater awareness of PrEP (aOR=2.06, 95%CI: 1.57-2.70), contraception uptake (aOR=2.08, 95%CI: 1.45-2.98), and consistent condom use (aOR=1.84, 95%CI: 1.24-2.93). Watching MTV-Shuga was not associated with HIV testing (aOR=1.02,95%CI: 0.77-1.21) (Figure 3 and Supplementary Tables S1-S4). There was no effect modification by DREAMS exposure.

Figure 3 Forest plots showing the association between MTV Shuga exposure and HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake in the nested cohorts.

Similarly, in the cross-sectional analysis, after adjusting for age, education, district, migration and sexual history, exposure to MTV-Shuga watching was associated with greater awareness of PrEP (aOR=1.70, 95%CI 1.20 - 2.43). However, there was no association with contraception, lower self-reported HIV testing, or condom use as shown in Figure 4 below (Supplementary Table 5).

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3 **Figure 4 Forest plots showing association between MTV Shuga exposure and**
4 **HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake in the cross-sectional**
5 **surveys**
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9 **Causal effect of MTV Shuga on health outcomes – HSV2**

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11 The causal analysis similarly finds no effect of MTV Shuga on HSV2, with a risk difference of
12 1.10 95% CI (-2.82- 5.38)%. Findings in the younger age group (aged 13-17) and the older
13 age group (18-22) was similar (Supplementary Table 6).
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18 **Discussion**
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20 In our study of the population-level effect of a national broadcast of a TV-based edu-drama on
21 HIV prevention and SRHR, exposure to MTV Shuga was associated with higher awareness
22 of a novel HIV prevention intervention (PrEP). However, despite a very high incidence of HSV-
23 2 and teenage pregnancy, MTV Shuga exposure was not significantly associated with safer
24 sexual behaviour, uptake of contraception and HIV-testing or prevention of teenage
25 pregnancy. Notably though, the size of the relationship and direction of effect between
26 exposure to MTV Shuga, condom use and markers of unprotected sex (HSV-2 and
27 pregnancy) was consistent with a possible relationship. These findings may be partly
28 explained by our finding that less than one in 12 of the target age group had any exposure to
29 MTV Shuga and only half of these had high exposure (defined as watching the MTV Shuga
30 South African series and being able to recall the content), suggesting that one of the limiting
31 factors for the effective use of TV-based edu-drama maybe the dose that young people are
32 exposed to, particularly in rural and resource-constrained settings most affected by HIV.
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42 Our inability to find a measurable population effect of mass-media edu-drama behaviour
43 change campaign compared to the trial findings of the RCT is disappointing (18). However,
44 firstly the direction and size of the relationships suggest that we may have been able to see
45 an effect if the proportion exposed had been greater than 7%. Secondly, AGYW in urban
46 settings were more likely to have been exposed to MTV Shuga and they are also more likely
47 to be living in small towns and townships. Data from our settings suggest that young people
48 in small towns and townships are more vulnerable to HIV (28) and sexual risk (29) and
49 therefore it is possible that a real effect of MTV Shuga on this group was masked by their
50 greater risk for the outcome. Due to the low numbers with high levels of exposure to MTV
51 Shuga we did not have the power to explore this hypothesis by looking at effect modification
52 by geography or socioeconomic status.
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3 The finding of a differential association of MTV Shuga exposure with awareness of PrEP,
4 compared to uptake of HIV and contraception, suggests that whilst educational mass
5 entertainment may be able to increase awareness and possibly demand for a service, it does
6 not impact on accessibility of the service: i.e. it impacts the first two steps of the prevention
7 cascade and not the final step(30). Well described barriers to uptake of HIV-testing and
8 contraception in this area are internalized and externalized stigma, fear of judgement from
9 health care workers and the social costs of accessing care in busy primary health care
10 settings(31-33). Behaviour change intervention including mass communication campaigns
11 can be constrained or facilitated by the context in which people live (17, 34). To optimise MTV
12 Shuga's effect there may need to be parallel innovations in SRHR and HIV service delivery
13 that makes the services easier to access. We aim to test this hypothesis by providing
14 community-based delivery of HIV and SRHR services in the context of the MTV Shuga.
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24 The behaviour change theory that underpins edu-drama as a vehicle for mass behaviour
25 change communication (16) explicitly suggests that the audience, and especially the early
26 adopters, need to be actively watching, rather than passively watching or listening (17, 18).
27 TV watching in rural homesteads can be in the context of large, often grandparent-led
28 households and competing chores and priorities. This coupled with the relatively late timing of
29 the shows may explain why so few girls and young women were sufficiently engaged or
30 immersed to be able to recall characters or story lines. Moreover, the timing of this analysis
31 may have allowed insufficient time for early adopters to convey the message of the show.
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38 **Limitations**

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40 The limitations of our study are that a meaningful exposure to MTV Shuga was low and so
41 whilst the size of the relationship and direction of effect between exposure to MTV Shuga,
42 condom use, and markers of unprotected sex (HSV-2 and pregnancy) suggested a possible
43 effect, but we did not have the power to show a significant relationship between exposure to
44 MTV Shuga and SRHR outcomes. We also do not have the power to see a difference by
45 dose and immersion. Furthermore, as this is an observational study, we cannot exclude the
46 possibility that those who are exposed to MTV Shuga are systematically different in ways that
47 impact on the outcome of interest, for example more exposed to social media and sexual
48 health promotion and innovative technologies to support sexual health than those who were
49 not.
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Conclusions and implications for the future

- Meaningful exposure to MTV Shuga was low across rural and urban settings in South Africa and so additional efforts need to be made to reach young people and increase their immersion in promising edu-drama if it is to have the desired effect, especially in rural and deprived settings.
- MTV Shuga was an effective vehicle to raise awareness and promote newer HIV prevention technologies such as HIV PrEP.
- There was some suggestion that MTV Shuga improved uptake of some HIV prevention and sexual health technologies (contraception and condoms)
- There was less evidence from this observational study that it improved SRHR and HIV outcomes

We highlight the importance of evaluating the real-world scale up of promising interventions to understand both the reach and population effect as well as inform interventions to increase impact and equity.

Efforts to increase exposure, which have been rolled out as part of MTV Shuga in SA, such as social media, school-based or community-based MTV Shuga film clubs will need to be evaluated, both to understand whether or not they increase exposure and coverage and improve SRH and HIV outcomes. However, to have a significant impact on the HIV and SRH prevention and treatment cascades, demand generation in AGYW needs to be delivered in parallel with accessible service delivery models that support adherence and retention (30).

Contributorship

M.S., N.C., J.D., T.Z. N.K, G.H. and C.C. developed the study tools and performed the research. M.S., J.S. D.P., K.B., I.B., and S.F. designed the research study. T.S. and S.D. conducted the laboratory analysis. N.M. supported by K.B. conducted the statistical analysis and G.C. M.S wrote the first and final draft of the paper with input from N.C., N.M., G.H., J.S., I.B., G.C., K.B., C.C., T.S., T.Z, D.P and N.K. All the authors critically reviewed the manuscript. All authors have approved the final draft of the paper.

Competing interests

All authors declare they have no conflict of interest

Funding

The impact evaluation of DREAMS and MTV Shuga is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (OPP1136774 and OPP1171600, <http://www.gatesfoundation.org>). Foundation staff advised the study team, but did not substantively affect the study design, instruments, interpretation of data, or decision to publish. The research leading to these results has received funding from the People Programme (Marie Curie Actions) of the European Union's seventh Framework Programme FP7/2007-2013 under REA grant agreement n° 612216. MS National Institutes of Health 5R01MH114560-03 funding acknowledgement. This research was funded in whole, or in part, by the Africa Health Research Institute through the Wellcome [Strategic Core award: 201433/Z/16/A]. For the purpose of open access, the author has applied a CC BY public copyright licence to any Author Accepted Manuscript version arising from this submission. N.C is supported by a training fellowship from the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) (using the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) Funding) and Wellcome [grant reference number 224309/Z/21/Z] under the NIHR-Wellcome Partnership for Global Health Research. The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of Wellcome, the NIHR or the Department of Health and Social Care. GH is supported by a fellowship from the Royal Society and the Wellcome Trust [Grant number 210479/Z/18/Z]. MS work is also supported by a BMGF 3ie grant at AHRI. This research was funded in whole, or in part, by the Wellcome Trust [Grant number 210479/Z/18/Z]. For the purpose of open access, the author has applied a CC BY public copyright licence to any Author Accepted Manuscript version arising from this submission.

Data sharing statement

Data are available on reasonable request.

Ethics statement

The DREAMS Partnership impact evaluation protocol was reviewed and approved by the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) Biomedical Research Ethics Committee (BREC) (BFC 339/16), the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine Research Ethics Committee (Ref 11835) and the AHRI Somkhele Community Advisory Board, the Associate Director of Science of the Center for Global Health (CGH) at the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta and the Department of Health, Province of KZN and Gauteng. Approval for the demographic surveillance and data collection in the clinics was granted by UKZN BREC. Participation in the study was voluntary. All participants provided separate informed consent to take part in data collection through the questionnaires and the HSV2 sero-

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3 survey. Consent for follow-up interviews was provided separately. For participants aged <18
4 years, written parental consent and participant assent were provided. All data were
5 anonymised for analysis.
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10 Acknowledgements

11 The authors are grateful to the communities of the Hlabisa sub-district, Ekurhuleni district,
12 Thekwini district and City of Johannesburg who contributed their data to this study and to all
13 the staff at Africa Health Research Institute and EpiCentre who collected the data. We
14 acknowledge Eskindir Shambullo for his input in this manuscript.
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Figure legends

Figure 1 showing conceptual framework for MTV Shuga impact on HIV prevention on AGYW in uMkhanyakude

Figure 2 Flowchart showing AGYW follow-up from nested cohorts 2017-2019

Figure 3 Forest plots showing the association between MTV Shuga exposure and HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake in the nested cohorts.

Figure 4 Forest plots showing association between MTV Shuga exposure and HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake in the cross-sectional surveys

Figure 1: Conceptual framework for MTV Shuga impact on HIV prevention in uMkhanyakude

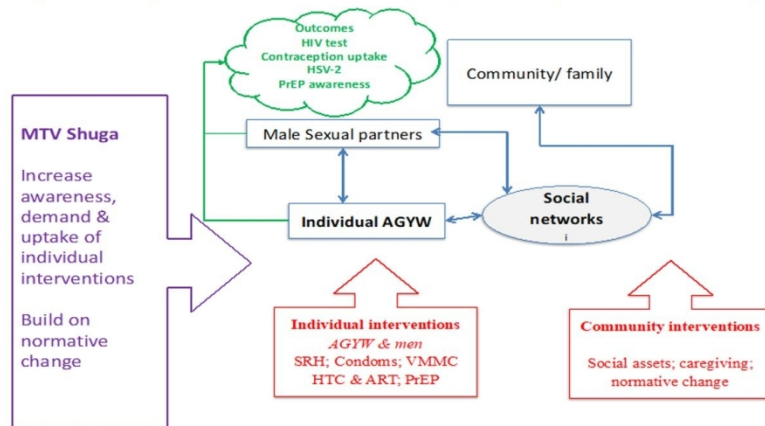


Figure 1 showing conceptual framework for MTV Shuga impact on HIV prevention on AGYW in uMkhanyakude

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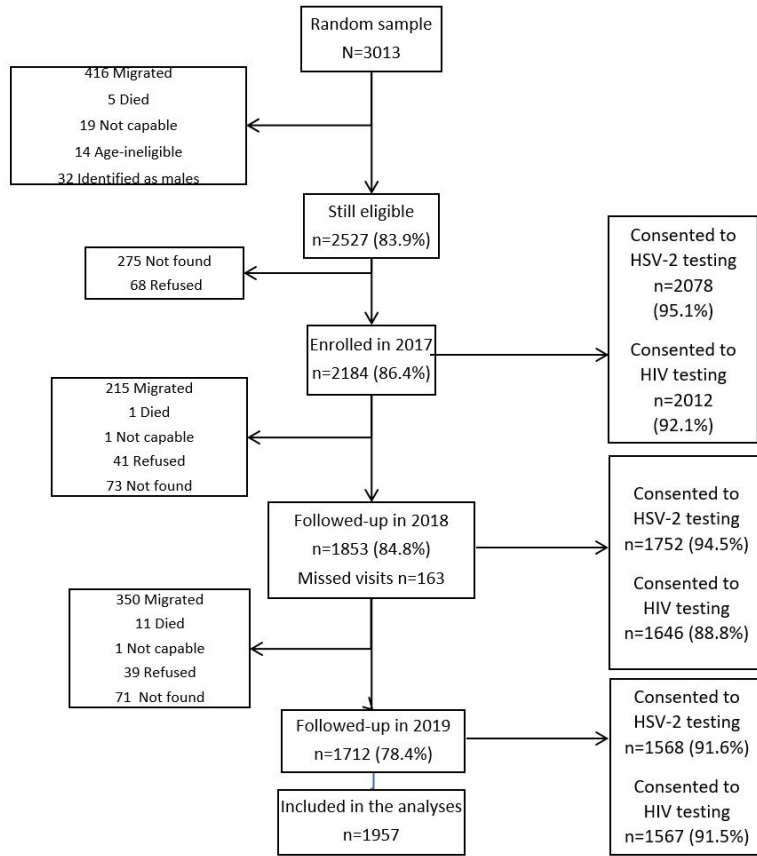


Figure 2 Flowchart showing AGYW follow-up from nested cohorts 2017-2019

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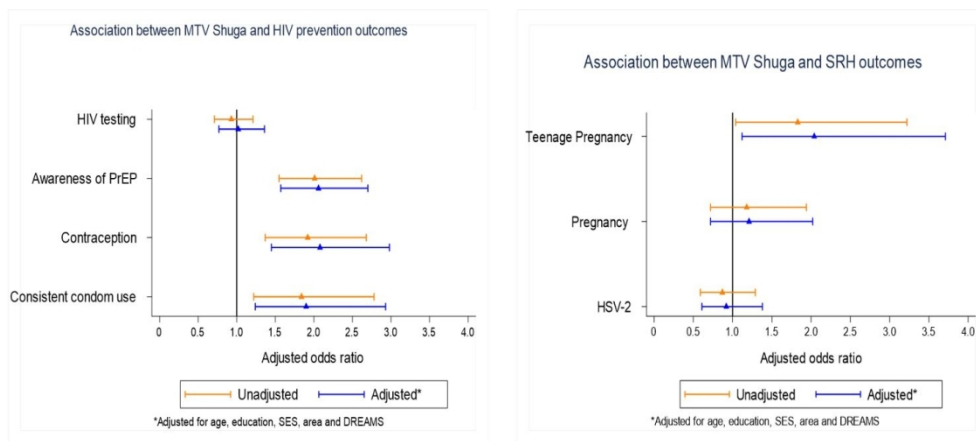


Figure 3 Forest plots showing the association between MTV Shuga exposure and HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake in the nested cohorts.

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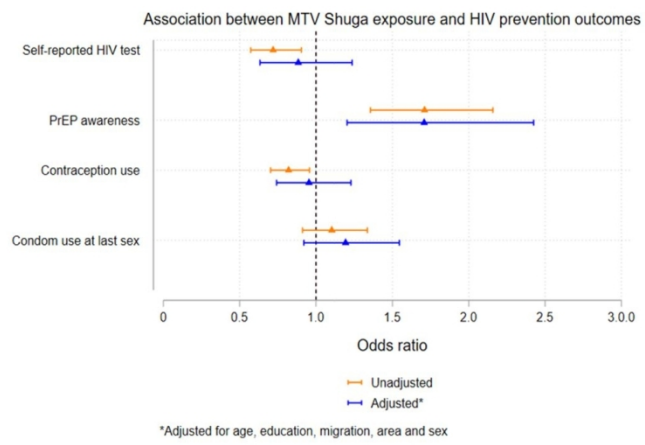


Figure 4 Forest plots showing association between MTV Shuga exposure and HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake in the cross-sectional surveys

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Supplementary Table 1 Exposure to MTV Shuga and PrEP awareness in the nested cohort of AGYW aged 13-22 (n=2184)

	Unadjusted		Shuga adjusted		p-value	Adjusted-All		
	OR	95%CI	OR	95%CI		OR	95%CI	p-value
Ever watched MTV Shuga, 2018/19								
No	1					1		
Yes	2.01	1.55 -2.62				2.06	1.57 -2.70	<0.001
Age	1.12	1.08-1.16	1.12	1.08-1.17	<0.001	1.11	1.06-1.17	<0.001
Currently in school								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	0.6	0.47 -0.76	0.59	0.46 -0.75	<0.001	0.89	0.65 -1.23	0.488
Socio-economic status, 2018								
Low	1		1			1		
Middle	0.99	0.71 -1.39	0.96	0.68 -1.35		1.01	0.71 -1.44	
High	1.13	0.81 -1.58	1.05	0.75 -1.47	0.744	1.11	0.78 -1.58	0.699
Urban or rural								
Rural	1		1			1		
Peri-urban/urban	0.98	0.79 -1.22	0.93	0.75 -1.16	0.525	0.92	0.73 -1.15	0.459
Invited or received DREAMS, 2017/18								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	0.89	0.73 -1.10	0.88	0.71 -1.08	0.212	0.99	0.79 -1.23	0.897

Supplementary Table 2 Exposure to MTV Shuga and contraception uptake in the nested cohort of AGYW aged 13-22 (n=2184)

	Unadjusted		Shuga adjusted		p-value	Adjusted-All		
	OR	95%CI	OR	95%CI		OR	95%CI	p-value
Ever watched MTV Shuga, 2018/19								
No	1					1		
Yes	1.92	1.37 -2.68				2.08	1.45-2.98	<0.001
Age	1.26	1.19-1.33	1.27	1.20-1.34	<0.001	1.32	1.24-1.42	<0.001
Currently in school								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	0.6	0.44 -0.83	0.59	0.43-0.82	0.001	1.7	1.13-2.55	0.01
Socio-economic status, 2018								
Low	1		1			1		
Middle	0.79	0.51 -1.22	0.76	0.49-1.19		0.8	0.51-1.28	
High	0.86	0.55 -1.34	0.8	0.51-1.24	0.489	0.83	0.52-1.32	0.646
Urban or rural								
Rural	1		1			1		
Peri-urban/urban	0.91	0.68 -1.24	0.86	0.64-1.17	0.345	0.89	0.64-1.24	0.49
Invited or received DREAMS, 2017/18								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	0.84	0.63 -1.11	0.83	0.62-1.10	0.191	1.04	0.76-1.42	0.813

Supplementary Table 3 Exposure to MTV Shuga and consistent condom use in the nested cohort of AGYW aged 13-22 (n=2184)

	Unadjusted		Shuga adjusted		p-value	Adjusted-All		p-value
	OR	95%CI	OR	95%CI		OR	95%CI	
Ever watched MTV Shuga, 2018/19								
No	1					1		
Yes	1.84	1.22-2.78				1.9	1.24-2.93	0.003
Age	0.94	0.86-1.01	0.94	0.87-1.02	0.157	1	0.91-1.10	0.984
Currently in school								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	1.76	1.22-2.53	1.73	1.20-2.49	0.003	1.78	1.15-2.76	0.01
Socio-economic status, 2018								
Low	1		1			1		
Middle	1.01	0.60-1.70	0.97	0.58-1.63		0.98	0.58-1.67	
High	0.87	0.52-1.47	0.8	0.47-1.36	0.552	0.86	0.50-1.48	0.753
Urban or rural								
Rural	1		1			1		
Peri-urban/urban	0.7	0.48-1.02	0.67	0.46-0.97	0.035	0.71	0.48-1.05	0.088
Invited or received DREAMS, 2017/18								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	1.13	0.81-1.59	1.13	0.80-1.59	0.486	0.97	0.67-1.40	0.875

Supplementary Table 4 Exposure to MTV Shuga and HIV testing in the nested cohort of AGYW aged 13-22 (n=2184)

	Unadjusted		Shuga adjusted		p-value	Adjusted-All		
	OR	95%CI	OR	95%CI		OR	95%CI	p-value
Ever watched MTV Shuga, 2018/19								
No	1					1		
Yes	0.93	0.71-1.21				1.02	0.77-1.36	0.885
Age	1.3	1.25-1.35	1.3	1.24-1.35	<0.001	1.3	1.24-1.37	<0.001
Currently in school								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	0.37	0.28-0.48	0.37	0.28-0.48	0	1.07	0.74-1.53	0.726
Socio-economic status, 2018								
Low	1		1			1		
Middle	0.67	0.48-0.94	0.67	0.48-0.95		0.71	0.49-1.02	
High	0.58	0.41-0.81	0.58	0.41-0.81	0.007	0.6	0.41-0.86	0.018
Urban or rural								
Rural	1		1			1		
Peri-urban/urban	0.84	0.68-1.03	0.84	0.69-1.04	0.104	0.89	0.71-1.11	0.298
Invited or received DREAMS, 2017/18								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	0.84	0.69-1.02	0.84	0.69-1.02	0.081	0.98	0.79-1.23	0.89

Supplementary Table 5: Exposure to MTV Shuga with HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake in the cross-sectional analysis of AGYW aged 12-24 (n=4127)

	aOR (95% Confidence Interval)	P-value
District		
City of Johannesburg	1	
Ekurhuleni	0.66 (0.47-0.91)	0.013
eThekweni	0.78 (0.54-1.13)	0.186
Age group		
12-14	1	
15-19	1.75 (0.35-8.84)	0.499
20-24	1.60 (0.32-8.07)	0.570
Highest education level		
Grade R to 7	1	
No schooling	3.84 (1.05-14.02)	0.041
Grade 8 to 12	3.17 (0.93-10.77)	0.065
Complete or incomplete tertiary	6.52 (1.90-22.33)	0.003
Ever had sex with a boy/man		
No	1	
Yes	0.67 (0.32-1.40)	0.286
Away from home		
No	1	
Yes	1.48 (0.93-2.37)	0.099
PrEP awareness		
No	1	
Yes	1.71 (1.20-2.43)	0.003
Contraception use		
No	1	
Yes	0.95 (0.74-1.23)	0.718
Condom use at last sex		
No	1	
Yes	1.19 (0.92-1.55)	0.183
HIV test (self-report)		
No	1	
Yes	0.88 (0.63-1.24)	0.471

Supplementary Table 6 Estimated causal effect of MTV Shuga on HSV-2 incidence, overall and by age group

Estimated causal effect of MTV Shuga on HSV-2 incidence, overall and by age group											
	% Outcome in total study population	Estimated % Outcome if no Shuga	95% CI	Estimated % Outcome if all get Shuga	95% CI	Risk Difference (%; PS adjusted)	95% CI	Prevalence Ratio (%; PS adjusted)	95% CI	Odds Ratio (%; PS adjusted)	95% CI
PS adjustment: Primary results											
Overall	17.3	17.2	14.71 - 19.67	18.0	14.51 - 22.32	0.80	-3.24 - 5.71	1.0	0.82 - 1.36	1.06	0.79 - 1.46
13-17 Years	13.2	12.4	9.85 - 15.16	15.7	11.63 - 20.26	3.34	-1.60 - 8.25	1.2	0.89 - 1.79	1.32	0.87 - 1.98
18-22 Years	24.3	25.8	21.01 - 30.74	22.0	15.19 - 30.17	-3.76	-11.92 - 5.68	0.8	0.59 - 1.24	0.81	0.51 - 1.34
Sensitivity analyses											
<u>Regression under counterfactual framework</u>											
Overall	17.3	17.2	14.74 - 19.66	17.8	14.50 - 22.08	0.65	-3.42 - 5.72	1.0	0.82 - 1.36	1.05	0.78 - 1.46
13-17 Years	13.2	12.42	9.86 - 15.21	15.9	11.85 - 20.49	3.47	-1.54 - 8.63	1.2	0.89 - 1.80	1.33	0.88 - 1.99
18-22 Years	24.3	25.7	20.78 - 30.63	21.3	14.88 - 28.28	-4.42	-12.28 - 4.95	0.8	0.57 - 1.22	0.78	0.48 - 1.31
<u>PS stratification</u>											
Overall	17.3	17.1	14.68 - 19.68	17.9	14.53 - 22.13	0.80	-3.21 - 5.52	1.0	0.84 - 1.40	1.11	0.82 - 1.51
<u>PS weighting</u>											

Overall	17.3	17.08	14.74 - 19.48	17.22	13.99 - 21.10	0.13	-3.76 - 4.63	1.0	0.79 - 1.30	1.01	0.76 - 1.37
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STROBE Statement—checklist of items that should be included in reports of observational studies

	Item No	Recommendation	Page No
Title and abstract	1	(a) Indicate the study's design with a commonly used term in the title or the abstract	1
		(b) Provide in the abstract an informative and balanced summary of what was done and what was found	2
Introduction			
Background/rationale	2	Explain the scientific background and rationale for the investigation being reported	4
Objectives	3	State specific objectives, including any prespecified hypotheses	6
Methods			
Study design	4	Present key elements of study design early in the paper	6-7
Setting	5	Describe the setting, locations, and relevant dates, including periods of recruitment, exposure, follow-up, and data collection	7
Participants	6	(a) <i>Cohort study</i> —Give the eligibility criteria, and the sources and methods of selection of participants. Describe methods of follow-up <i>Case-control study</i> —Give the eligibility criteria, and the sources and methods of case ascertainment and control selection. Give the rationale for the choice of cases and controls <i>Cross-sectional study</i> —Give the eligibility criteria, and the sources and methods of selection of participants	7
		(b) <i>Cohort study</i> —For matched studies, give matching criteria and number of exposed and unexposed <i>Case-control study</i> —For matched studies, give matching criteria and the number of controls per case	
Variables	7	Clearly define all outcomes, exposures, predictors, potential confounders, and effect modifiers. Give diagnostic criteria, if applicable	8-9
Data sources/ measurement	8*	For each variable of interest, give sources of data and details of methods of assessment (measurement). Describe comparability of assessment methods if there is more than one group	8-10
Bias	9	Describe any efforts to address potential sources of bias	9-10
Study size	10	Explain how the study size was arrived at	6-7
Quantitative variables	11	Explain how quantitative variables were handled in the analyses. If applicable, describe which groupings were chosen and why	8
Statistical methods	12	(a) Describe all statistical methods, including those used to control for confounding	9-10
		(b) Describe any methods used to examine subgroups and interactions	10
		(c) Explain how missing data were addressed	10
		(d) <i>Cohort study</i> —If applicable, explain how loss to follow-up was addressed <i>Case-control study</i> —If applicable, explain how matching of cases and controls was addressed <i>Cross-sectional study</i> —If applicable, describe analytical methods taking account of sampling strategy	10
		(e) Describe any sensitivity analyses	10

Continued on next page

Results			
Participants	13*	(a) Report numbers of individuals at each stage of study—eg numbers potentially eligible, examined for eligibility, confirmed eligible, included in the study, completing follow-up, and analysed	11
		(b) Give reasons for non-participation at each stage	11
		(c) Consider use of a flow diagram	11
Descriptive data	14*	(a) Give characteristics of study participants (eg demographic, clinical, social) and information on exposures and potential confounders	11
		(b) Indicate number of participants with missing data for each variable of interest	
		(c) <i>Cohort study</i> —Summarise follow-up time (eg, average and total amount)	
Outcome data	15*	<i>Cohort study</i> —Report numbers of outcome events or summary measures over time	12
		<i>Case-control study</i> —Report numbers in each exposure category, or summary measures of exposure	
		<i>Cross-sectional study</i> —Report numbers of outcome events or summary measures	12
Main results	16	(a) Give unadjusted estimates and, if applicable, confounder-adjusted estimates and their precision (eg, 95% confidence interval). Make clear which confounders were adjusted for and why they were included	12- 16
		(b) Report category boundaries when continuous variables were categorized	12- 16
		(c) If relevant, consider translating estimates of relative risk into absolute risk for a meaningful time period	
Other analyses	17	Report other analyses done—eg analyses of subgroups and interactions, and sensitivity analyses	17
Discussion			
Key results	18	Summarise key results with reference to study objectives	17- 18
Limitations	19	Discuss limitations of the study, taking into account sources of potential bias or imprecision. Discuss both direction and magnitude of any potential bias	18
Interpretation	20	Give a cautious overall interpretation of results considering objectives, limitations, multiplicity of analyses, results from similar studies, and other relevant evidence	18- 19
Generalisability	21	Discuss the generalisability (external validity) of the study results	17- 19
Other information			
Funding	22	Give the source of funding and the role of the funders for the present study and, if applicable, for the original study on which the present article is based	20

*Give information separately for cases and controls in case-control studies and, if applicable, for exposed and unexposed groups in cohort and cross-sectional studies.

Note: An Explanation and Elaboration article discusses each checklist item and gives methodological background and published examples of transparent reporting. The STROBE checklist is best used in conjunction with this article (freely available on the Web sites of PLoS Medicine at <http://www.plosmedicine.org/>, Annals of Internal Medicine at <http://www.annals.org/>, and Epidemiology at <http://www.epidem.com/>). Information on the STROBE Initiative is available at www.strobe-statement.org.

BMJ Open

Evaluating use of mass-media communication intervention 'MTV-Shuga' on increased awareness and demand for HIV and sexual health services by adolescent girls and young women in South Africa: An observational study

Journal:	<i>BMJ Open</i>
Manuscript ID	bmjopen-2022-062804.R3
Article Type:	Original research
Date Submitted by the Author:	21-Apr-2023
Complete List of Authors:	Chimbindi, Natsayi; Africa Health Research Institute; University College London, Mthiyane, Nondumiso; Africa Health Research Institute Chidumwa, Glory ; Africa Health Research Institute; Wits Reproductive Health and HIV Institute, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand Zuma, Thembelihle; Africa Health Research Institute; University College London, Dreyer, Jaco; Africa Health Research Institute Birdthistle, Isolde; London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Faculty of Epidemiology and Population Health, Department of Population Health Floyd, Sian; London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, Infectious Disease Epidemiology Kwegombe, Nambusi; London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine Grundy, Chris; London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Faculty of Epidemiology and Population Health, Department of Population Health Cawood, Cherie; Epicentre Health Research Danaviah, Siva; Africa Health Research Institute Smit, Theresa; Africa Health Research Institute Pillay, Deenan; University College London, Baisley, Kathy; London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Faculty of Epidemiology and Population Health; Africa Health Research Institute Harling, Guy; Africa Health Research Institute; University College London Seeley, Janet; London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Department of Global Health & Development; Africa Health Research Institute Shahmanesh, Maryam; University College London, Institute for Global Health; Africa Health Research Institute,
Primary Subject Heading:	Sexual health
Secondary Subject Heading:	HIV/AIDS, Public health, Sexual health
Keywords:	HIV & AIDS < INFECTIOUS DISEASES, PUBLIC HEALTH, PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

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3 Title page
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5 Revised Title: **Evaluating use of mass-media communication intervention ‘MTV-**
6 **Shuga’ on increased awareness and demand for HIV and sexual health**
7 **services by adolescent girls and young women in South Africa: An**
8 **observational study**
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50 Key words (6): HIV, Adolescents, mass communication campaigns, Sexual Health,
51 Teenage Pregnancy, South Africa.
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58 **Abstract (word count=272)**
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60 **Objective:** To investigate the effect of exposure to MTV Shuga:Down South’ (MTVShuga-DS)

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3 during the scale-up of combination HIV-prevention interventions on awareness and uptake of
4 sexual reproductive health (SRH) and HIV-prevention services by adolescent girls and young
5 women (AGYW).
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8 **Design:** One longitudinal and three cross-sectional surveys of representative samples of
9 AGYW.
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11 **Setting:** AGYW in four South African districts with high HIV-prevalence (>10%) (May 2017
12 and September 2019).
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14 **Participants:** 6311 AGYW aged 12-24.
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16 **Measures:** Using logistic-regression we measured the relationship between exposure to MTV
17 Shuga-DS and awareness of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), condom-use at last sex,
18 uptake of HIV-testing or contraception, and incident pregnancy or Herpes simplex virus 2
19 (HSV-2) infection.
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22 **Results:** Within the rural cohort 2184 (85.5%) of eligible sampled individuals were enrolled,
23 of whom 92.6% had at least one follow-up visit; the urban cross-sectional surveys enrolled
24 4127 (22.6%) of eligible sampled individuals. Self-report of watching at least one MTV Shuga-
25 DS episode was 14.1% (cohort) and 35.8% (cross-section), while storyline recall was 5.5%
26 (cohort) and 6.7% (cross-section).
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30 In the cohort, after adjustment (for HIV-prevention intervention-exposure, age, education,
31 socio-economic status (SES)), MTVShuga-DS exposure was associated with increased PrEP
32 awareness (adjusted odds ratio (aOR)=2.06,95% confidence interval (CI):1.57-2.70),
33 contraception uptake (aOR=2.08,95%CI:1.45-2.98) and consistent condom-use (aOR=1.84,
34 95%CI:1.24-2.93), but not with HIV-testing (aOR=1.02,95%CI:0.77-1.21) or acquiring HSV-2
35 (aOR=0.92, 95%CI:0.61-1.38). In the cross-sections, MTVShuga-DS was associated with
36 greater PrEP awareness (aOR=1.7, 95%CI:1.20-2.43), but no other outcome.
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40 **Conclusions:** Among both urban and rural AGYW in South Africa, MTVShuga-DS exposure
41 was associated with increased PrEP awareness and improved demand for some HIV-
42 prevention and SRH technologies but not sexual health outcomes. However, exposure to
43 MTVShuga-DS was low. Given these positive indications, supportive programming may be
44 required to raise exposure and allow future evaluation of edu-drama impact in this setting.
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Strengths and limitations of this study

- Evaluated the real-world reach of nationally broadcast edu-drama focusing on adolescent sexual health in South Africa.
- Data collection focused on a vulnerable population of AGYW across four diverse high HIV-burden districts of South Africa that included both rural and urban settings.
- Strength of the study is measurement of exposure to MTV Shuga on HIV and SRH outcomes in representative sample of AGYW during a real-world implementation in different South African settings.
- The limitation of observational studies is that they do not infer the cause-effect relationship, in this case we cannot ascertain causality/impact of exposure to MTV-Shuga on uptake of sexual health promotion and innovative technologies.

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Introduction

HIV remains one of the gravest health problems facing young people living in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). There are over 7.7 million people living with HIV in South Africa (SA), with more than 200,000 new HIV infections annually in those aged 15-49 years (1). The highest incidence is in adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) (15-24 years) (1, 2). Although HIV incidence has been declining in South Africa, a 43% decline in the overall incidence rate between 2012 and 2017, from 4.0 to 2.3 seroconversion events per 100 person-years among 15-49 year old; it still remains high among AGYW in South Africa (3). In uMkhanyakude, HIV incidence was lower during roll-out of combination HIV prevention for AGYW (2016 to 2018) than in the previous 5-year period among 15- to 19-year-old females (4.5 new infections per 100 person-years as compared with 2.8; and lower among 20- to 24-year-olds (7.1/100 person-years as compared with 5.8) (4).

In response to the high HIV incidence in young people, the South African government launched the 'She Conquers Campaign', and the US President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief and others are supporting the roll-out of Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS free, Mentored, and Safe (DREAMS)(5-7). These programmes provide an evidence-based combination HIV prevention package, including HIV-testing and counselling for adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) and their male sexual partners, alongside universal test and treat and improved sexual health services (8, 9).

However, the key ingredient to the success of these multicomponent interventions will be the extent to which AGYW and their male partners at most risk of HIV will uptake and adhere to the active components of the intervention. This is challenging: uptake and retention of contraception and HIV treatment cascade by young people, even within population-wide Universal Test and Treat trials, has been suboptimal (2, 10, 11). Data from the baseline analysis for the DREAMS impact evaluation in uMkhanyakude district, rural KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) in 2015 suggest that less than 40% of girls (15-19 years) and boys and young men (15-29 years) had ever tested for HIV; linkage to HIV treatment was even lower (12). Contraception use prevalence was 20% in girls (15-19 years) and 50% in young women (20-24 years) and 21% of 15-19 year old girls had ever been pregnant (2).

It is against this backdrop that the fifth series of Shuga: 'MTV Shuga: Down South' (MTV Shuga-DS), a mass media serial edu-drama designed for SA, was broadcast on free-to-air South Africa National television. From March 8th 2017, MTV Shuga aired one episode per week for 12 weeks (with repeats). MTV Shuga is a mass media behaviour change campaign

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3 that aims to improve sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR). At the centre of the
4 campaign, which includes radio and social media, is a TV-drama that weaves messages about
5 HIV, family planning, transactional and intergenerational sex, sexual identity, safer and healthy
6 sexual relationships, into storylines with young characters
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8 ([http://www.mtvshuga.com/show/series-5/MTV Shuga-down-south/](http://www.mtvshuga.com/show/series-5/MTV_Shuga-down-south/)).

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11 Mass media campaigns, have the potential to reach a large number of people and have been
12 shown to improve knowledge and health behaviour of a range of health conditions, with more
13 recent data suggesting that theoretically informed and targeted interventions are more likely
14 to have an effect (13, 14). MTV Shuga-DS was designed to reduce HIV-related risk behaviour
15 and improve SRHR outcomes in adolescents and young adults in SA. This was expected to
16 be achieved through increasing young people's awareness of their sexual and reproductive
17 health rights and demand for, and uptake of HIV and sexual reproductive health (SRH)
18 prevention and treatment technologies. The show's characters explicitly model how to discuss
19 issues that are sensitive or taboo. MTV Shuga use the technique of 'melodramas', where
20 drama is created through the battles between stereotypical goodies and baddies, and the way
21 in which the 'transitional' (often empathetic) character, begins as ambivalent but changes into
22 a positive role model to promote positive behaviour change(15). This is a deliberate method
23 to immerse the audience in the action, rather than passively watching or listening (16). AGYW,
24 or at least early adopters, are anticipated to be immersed in the serial, able to classify and
25 identify with the transitional characters and their outcomes. Pathways to behaviour change
26 through MTV Shuga, therefore relate to the extent to which the observer, including early
27 adopters, are immersed and critically engaged with the story. It also depends on a context
28 which is supportive rather than disruptive (see the conceptual framework Figure 1 below) (17).

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41 **Figure 1 showing conceptual framework for MTV Shuga impact on HIV prevention on**
42 **AGYW in uMkhanyakude**

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45 A cluster randomised controlled trial of community-viewings of MTV Shuga in Nigeria found
46 that exposure to MTV Shuga significantly improved HIV knowledge and testing in both sexes,
47 the intervention arm showing 35% more likely to test for HIV than the control arm. There was
48 also a 60% reduction in genital chlamydia as a marker of recent sexual risk in women, amongst
49 those exposed to MTV Shuga compared to those who were not (18). There were, however,
50 fewer changes in social norms, particularly around gender-based violence. Further work
51 suggested that the impact was greatest in those who were immersed in the narrative. The
52 importance of immersion (classification of characters and identifying with them and observing
53 outcomes) coupled with critical participation and an enabling context were also found in a
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3 thematic analysis looking at how storylines in MTV Shuga-DS shaped awareness, knowledge
4 and opinions of sexual health and personal relationships among young people in SA (17).
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8 Whilst the Nigerian and SA studies provide evidence for the efficacy of MTV Shuga impacting
9 on SRHR and HIV-testing behaviours in exposed individuals, there is little evidence of how
10 this will translate into a population-level effect when nationally broadcast and in less controlled
11 environments. In particular, it is not clear how the impact will spill-over to non-viewers and
12 how innovations will diffuse when shown and watched by adolescents and young adults in a
13 real-world scale-up. It is also unclear how such impact will differ according to: setting (rural or
14 urban); differential digital literacy and access to social media (geographically and
15 socioeconomically), and the dose and context of watching (shared viewing with family, friends
16 or individual experience through social media).
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23 We use the opportunity of MTV Shuga being broadcast in the context of an impact evaluation
24 of DREAMS roll out (January 2016-September 2019) in a representative, population-based
25 sample of young people (12) to describe the real-world reach of nationally broadcast MTV
26 Shuga-DS. Further, we explore the hypothesis that exposure to a mass-media serial edu-
27 drama, like MTV Shuga, will improve SRHR outcomes by increasing demand for, and uptake
28 of, existing combination individual and community-based SRH and HIV prevention services
29 for AGYW in four diverse settings including uMkhanyakude, a socioeconomically deprived
30 rural district with an extremely high burden of HIV: 40% antenatal HIV prevalence and an
31 annual HIV incidence of 5% in girls (15-19 years) and 8% in young women (20-24 years) (2,
32 19) and in three high-prevalence urban districts (HIV prevalence of greater than 10%) of City
33 of Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni, and eThekweni.
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43 **Methods**

44 **Study design**

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48 We employed a longitudinal cohort and cross-sectional surveys of representative samples of
49 AGYW aged 12-24 in four districts of South Africa with a high burden of HIV to measure the
50 reach of MTV Shuga-DS. Data were collected between May 2017 and September 2019.
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54 We used baseline and follow-up data from a nested cohort of 2184 AGYW aged 13-22 years,
55 enrolled in 2017 for the DREAMS impact evaluation. The cohort is nested in a large
56 population-based longitudinal HIV surveillance study, in the uMkhanyakude district of
57 KwaZulu-Natal (20, 21). A random sample of 3013 AGYW was selected from the surveillance
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3 population, stratified by age (13-17 years and 18-22 years) and geography, and invited to
4 enrol in the nested cohort. Baseline interviews were conducted between May 2017 and
5 February 2018 and follow-up interviews April 2018 and September 2019 in the local language
6 (isiZulu) using a structured quantitative questionnaire programmed in REDCap software (12).
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11 The cross-sectional survey was conducted on a household-based representative sample of
12 4127 AGYW (between the ages 12-24 years) in three high prevalence (City of Johannesburg,
13 Ekurhuleni and eThekweni) districts. Between August 2017 and July 2018, a stratified cluster-
14 based sampling strategy was used to select 18500 AGYW aged 12-24 eligible for a cross-
15 sectional survey of individuals, based on an expected response rate of 80% (22).
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20 The interview included questions on socio-demographics, general health, exposure to
21 DREAMS and to MTV Shuga, sexual relationships, awareness and uptake of DREAMS and
22 DREAMS-like services, migration, and gender norms across the four districts. A Dried Blood
23 Spot (DBS) was taken at baseline and follow-up for Herpes Simplex Virus type 2 (HSV-2)
24 antibody testing in the uMkhanyakude district. For sexual behaviour questions, participants
25 were given a tablet computer to complete a self-interview; the fieldworker was available to
26 provide support as needed.
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32 33 **Study setting and population**

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35 The cohort was nested within the Africa Health Research Institute (AHRI) triannual
36 demographic surveillance of a population of approximately 150,000 people who are members
37 of 15,000 geocoded households in an area of 845 km² (20). The study area is mostly rural
38 and poor with high levels of youth unemployment (over 85% of those aged 18-24 are
39 unemployed) (2, 19).
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45 The cross-sectional survey was conducted in three districts which were mostly urban with
46 more towns and townships compared to AHRI surveillance area. The three study districts (City
47 of Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni and eThekweni) consist of an estimated 12,073,421 individuals.
48 The eThekweni district in KZN province is among those with the highest HIV prevalence (16.8%
49 HIV prevalence in 2016) in South Africa. Over two-thirds (68%) of eThekweni is considered
50 rural and 32% urban. About 11 963 (3%) AGYW in eThekweni are estimated to be living with
51 HIV. The Gauteng province (GP), whilst geographically the smallest, is the most populous
52 province in South Africa. GP has the fifth highest provincial HIV prevalence in the country with
53 a prevalence of 11.1% among those aged 15 to 49 years old in 2016. The HIV prevalence in
54 the two districts, City of Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni, is 11.1% and 14.3% among 15- to 49-
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3 year-olds, respectively. Both districts are densely populated and have high levels of
4 industrialisation. The HIV prevalence amongst AGYW (15 to 24 years old) in the City of
5 Johannesburg is 3%, and similarly 3% in Ekurhuleni in 2012.
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10 **Variables and Measurement:**

11 ***Outcomes definitions:***

12 We measured the effect of exposure to MTV Shuga on awareness and uptake of HIV
13 prevention and SRHR outcomes at the follow-up visit. Our outcomes were: 1) self-reported
14 HIV-testing in the past 12 months; 2) awareness of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV
15 prevention; 3) condom use at last sex; 4) use of contraception; 5) any new pregnancy since
16 baseline; and 6) any new teenage pregnancy (restricted to those under the age of 20). AGYW
17 were considered to use contraception if they self-reported using pill, injection, Intrauterine
18 Device (IUD), implant, sterilisation or self-reported consistent condom use (using condoms as
19 a contraceptive method and at last sex). Condomless sex was calculated using 2019 data
20 among participants who reported having had sex with the most recent partner in the past 12
21 months. Recent pregnancy was calculated as any new pregnancy that occurred between
22 baseline and 2019, while teenage pregnancy was calculated as any new pregnancy that
23 occurred between baseline and 2019 among participants aged below 20 years. We also
24 examined the effect of exposure to MTV Shuga on incident HSV-2 infections, among those
25 who were HSV-2 negative at baseline.
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38 ***Exposure definitions:***

39 Exposure to MTV Shuga was defined as ever watched MTV Shuga between 2017 and 2018.
40 The level of exposure was measured based on the content of the series MTV Shuga, defined
41 using 15 questions used to assess knowledge of content of MTV Shuga series. A composite
42 score was developed summing-up the correct responses. The scores ranged between 2 and
43 14, and the median being 4. The median was used as a cut-off to define level of exposure
44 among those who watched the series. Consequently, the level of exposure was categorized
45 into 3 levels: High (watching a MTV Shuga and being able to correctly respond to 5 or more
46 questions on content); Medium (watching programme and being able to correctly respond to
47 less than 5 questions); and None (not watched any MTV Shuga). This was further categorised
48 into 3 levels: High (watching MTV Shuga and being able to recall the content from MTV
49 Shuga); Medium (watching programme, but unable to recall content); and None (not being
50 aware of and not watched any MTV Shuga).
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Potential confounding variables:

We included socio-demographic and sexual behaviour characteristics of AGYW that were measured at baseline and exposure to HIV prevention. The socio-demographic variables included age (as measured at follow-up), household socio-economic status (SES), education broken down by those who are still in school and those who have completed school, geographic area (rural or peri-urban/urban), and migration in the last 12 months. The socio-economic status (SES) variable was constructed using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) based on ownership of household assets and characteristics such as access to piped water, type of toilet, electricity and type of cooking fuel (23). Further, potential individual-level confounders measured included exposure to DREAMS (defined either as ever been invited to participate in any of the DREAMS activities or ever used any of the DREAMS HIV prevention interventions in the past 12 months or since 2016) and phone ownership at baseline.

Laboratory:

The HerpeSelect® 2 ELISA IgG assay (FOCUS Diagnostics, Cypress, California, USA) for the qualitative detection of human Immunoglobulin G (IgG) class antibodies to HSV-2 was used on Dried blood Spot (DBS) samples collected on Whatman 903 filter cards. The HerpeSelect® 2 ELISA IgG assay uses purified type-specific gG-2 antigen immobilized on polystyrene microwells reducing the cross-reactivity issues as seen with viral lysate assays(24). The assay is validated for use with serum samples but was optimised for use with DBS in the AHRI Diagnostic Research Laboratory following comparative testing with plasma samples. During the initial evaluation of the HerpeSelect® 2 ELISA IgG a select number of plasma samples were also tested by an external accredited pathology laboratory. A 6mm diameter punch of a DBS spot was incubated overnight in 150ul Assay Diluent for no more than 16 hours at 4°C. The assay was performed with 50ul of the eluent in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Following a disproportionately high number of positive results based on other studies and our experience we multiplied the mean cut-off calibrator absorbance values by a factor of 1.5 before determining the index value for each sample (25, 26). The HerpeSelect® 2 ELISA IgG results are reported as positive (index value >1.10), equivocal (index value of ≥ 0.90 but ≤ 1.10) or negative (index value <0.90). All initial equivocal results were re-tested and those that re-tested equivocal are reported as equivocal. An incident HSV-2 was defined as having been negative at baseline and positive at follow-up. Those who were equivocal at either baseline or follow-up were not considered as a sero-conversions.

Statistical analyses:

We conducted two separate analyses for cohort and cross-sectional data. For the nested cohort, we included only participants who had data available at baseline and follow-up. We used Chi-square tests to compare baseline characteristics between AGYW who did and did not have any exposure to MTV Shuga. We used logistic regression to examine the effect of MTV Shuga on health outcomes, adjusting for exposure to DREAMS and all other potential confounders. Potential effect-modification of MTV Shuga by exposure to DREAMS was examined by fitting an interaction term to fully adjusted model: likelihood ratio tests were used to compare models with and without interaction terms.

We calculated the proportion of AGYW who reported an outcome (condomless-sex, recent pregnant) or tested positive for HSV-2 at 12-month or 24-month follow-up; and estimated associations between MTV Shuga and each outcome using a logistic regression, adjusting for potential confounders (age, household and individual socio-demographic characteristics and sexual behaviour). For HSV-2 incidence, we included participants who tested negative at baseline and had at least 1 follow-up test result. For DREAMS exposure, we included data collected at baseline and 12-month follow-up. For health outcomes (consistent condom use, modern contraception, HIV testing, PrEP awareness), we used data collected at 24-month follow-up; and for HSV-2 and pregnancy incidence we used data collected at 12 and 24-month follow-up.

Propensity score logistic regression adjustment was used to estimate the causal effect of MTV Shuga on health outcomes. A propensity or probability of being exposed to MTV Shuga was measured by fitting a logistic regression with MTV Shuga exposure as an outcome and potential confounders. A logistic regression models adjusting for propensity scores were then used to predict the probability of an outcome for all participants and separately by age group, under two scenario (1) exposed to MTV Shuga and (2) Not exposed to MTV Shuga. The predicted probabilities were then used to calculate the marginal risk difference, prevalence ratio and odds ratio (OR). Confidence intervals (CI) were generated by using a bootstrap procedure, repeating the estimation procedure described above in 1000 samples that were drawn with replacement from the complete dataset and calculating 95% confidence intervals from the resulting bootstrap distribution using the 2.5% and 97.5% percentiles. We also used propensity score stratification and probability weighting methods to check the consistency of our findings.

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3 For cross-sectional survey, we used Chi square test to compare the characteristics of AGYW
4 who did and did not have any exposure to MTV Shuga; and logistic regression models
5 adjusting for potential confounders were used to examine the association between exposure
6 to MTV Shuga and health outcomes. Sampling weights were applied to achieve proportionality
7 between groups of participants in the survey.

8 All analyses were performed using Stata version 15 (StataCorp LP, College Station, Texas
9 USA).

16 Reporting

17 The STROBE reporting guidelines were used to guide synthesis and standardise reporting of
18 our results(27)

23 Patient and public involvement

24 The study did not involve patients. AHRI has a Public Engagement Unit which conducts
25 community engagement activities with the local communities as part of study findings
26 dissemination. The Community Advisory Board provided feedback of the study including
27 design before approval from ethics review board. Study findings are being made publicly
28 available to funders, participants and the public through webinars, study reports and open
29 access journal articles.

36 Results:

39 Participants

40 Of 3013 potentially eligible AGYW randomly selected from the surveillance data set, 85.5% of
41 those eligible consented to participate at baseline (Figure 2). Of the 2184 eligible participants
42 that were surveyed at baseline, 2016 (92.3%) had at least one follow-up visit and contributed
43 data to this analysis. From the cross-sectional survey, 4127 (22.6%) eligible participants were
44 surveyed.

51 Figure 2 Flowchart showing AGYW follow-up from nested cohorts 2017-2019

54 Awareness and exposure to MTV Shuga

55 MTV Shuga exposure at baseline was limited, with a total of only 308 (14.1%) respondents
56 reported watching at least one episode. In the cross-sectional analysis of the three districts, a
57 total of 1477 (35.8%) reported watching any MTV Shuga. In the nested cohort 121 (5.5%)
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recalled any storyline. Similarly in the cross-sectional snapshot 276 (6.7%) recalled the storyline (high exposure).

Social demographic characteristics of adolescents and young people by exposure to MTV Shuga (Table 1&2)

Table 1 summarises the profiles of the nested cohort (n=2184) and cross-sectional surveys (n=4127) AGYW comparing those exposed to MTV Shuga with those not exposed. In summary those who had seen any MTV Shuga were more likely to be from households in the highest socioeconomic tertile (p<0.001) and more urbanised areas (p<0.001). They were also more likely to have also received DREAMS (p=0.015) (Table 1). In the cross-sectional surveys (n=4127), MTV Shuga exposure was associated with older age (p<0.001), tertiary education (p <0.001) and never having sex (p< 0.001) Table 1.

Table 1. Baseline socio-demographic characteristics of adolescent girls and young women (13-22) by exposure to MTV Shuga in the nested cohort (n=2184)

	Overall		Exposed		Not exposed		p-value
	n/N	%	n/N	%	n/N	%	
Age group (4 cats), 2017							
13-14	460/2184	21.1	72/308	23.4	388/1876	20.7	
15-17	688/2184	31.5	107/308	34.7	581/1876	31	
18-19	475/2184	21.7	60/308	19.5	415/1876	22.1	
20-22	561/2184	25.7	69/308	22.4	492/1876	26.2	0.216
Currently in school							
No	540/2184	24.7	67/308	21.8	473/1876	25.2	
Yes	1644/2184	75.3	241/308	78.2	1403/1876	74.8	0.192
Socio-economic status, 2018							
Low	255/2118	12	22/303	7.3	233/1815	12.8	
Middle	920/2118	43.4	110/303	36.3	810/1815	44.6	
High	943/2118	44.5	171/303	56.4	772/1815	42.5	<0.001
Urban or rural							
Rural	1388/2165	64.1	165/305	54.1	1223/1860	65.8	
Peri-urban/urban	777/2165	35.9	140/305	45.9	637/1860	34.2	<0.001
Invited or received DREAMS, 2017/18							
	1101/2184	50.4	175/308	56.8	926/1876	49.4	0.015
Away from home in the last 12 months							
	314/1853	17.0	45/228	15.6	269/1565	17.2	0.516
Baseline socio-demographic characteristics of adolescent girls and young women (12-24) by exposure to MTV Shuga in the cross-sectional survey (n=4127)							
	Overall		Exposed		Not exposed		

	n/N	%	n/N	%	n/N	%	p-value
Age group, (N=4127)							
12-14	958/4127	23.2	307/1477	20.1	651/2650	24.6	0.022
15-19	1628/4127	39.5	599/1477	40.6	1029/2650	38.8	
20-24	1541/4127	37.3	571/1477	38.7	970/2650	36.6	
District							
City of Johannesburg	1146/4127	27.8	476/1477	32.2	670/2650	25.3	<0.001
Ekurhuleni	1635/4127	39.6	521/1477	35.3	1114/2650	42.0	
eThekweni	1342/4127	32.5	480/1477	32.5	862/2650	32.5	
Highest Education (N=4108)							
No schooling	175/4108	4.3	99/1465	6.8	76/2646	2.9	<0.001
Grade R to 7	502/4108	12.2	142/1465	9.7	360/2646	13.6	
Grade 8 to 12	2978/4108	72.5	1022/1465	69.8	1956/2646	74.0	
Tertiary studies (complete/incomplete)	453/4108	11.0	202/1465	13.8	251/2646	9.5	
Ever had sex with a boy/man (n=4108)	1860/4108	45.3	621/1469	42.3	1239/2639	47.0	0.004
Away from home in the last 12 months (n=4121)	183/4121	4.4	66/1474	4.5	117/2647	4.4	0.932

After adjustment for confounders in nested cohorts (Table 2), AGYW from wealthier households (adjusted Odds Ratio (aOR)=2.04 95%CI 1.27-3.30), peri-urban or urban areas (aOR=1.54 95%CI 1.19-1.98) and those invited to DREAMS (aOR=1.48 95%CI 1.14-1.92) were more likely to be exposed to MTV Shuga than those from poor households, from rural areas and those not invited to DREAMS respectively. Similarly, after adjustment in the cross-sectional surveys (Table 2), AGYW with higher education were more likely to be exposed to MTV Shuga (aOR=2.58 95%CI 1.81-3.69) than those with less and those who ever had sex (aOR=0.68 95%CI 0.57-0.82) were less likely to be exposed to MTV Shuga.

Table 2 Factors associated with exposure to MTV Shuga in the nested cohort of AGYW aged 13-22 (n=2184)

	Unadjusted		Adjusted - All		
	OR	95%CI	OR	95%CI	P-value
Age group, 2017					
13-14	1		1		
15-17	0.99	0.72 -1.37	0.93	0.66 -1.29	
18-19	0.78	0.54 -1.13	0.77	0.51 -1.14	
20-22	0.76	0.53 -1.08	0.78	0.50 -1.21	0.555
Currently in school					
No	1		1		
Yes	1.21	0.91 -1.62	1.06	0.78 -1.43	0.726

Socio-economic status, 2018					
Low	1		1		
Middle	1.44	0.89 -2.33	1.27	0.78 -2.07	
High	2.35	1.47 -3.74	2.04	1.27 -3.30	<0.001
Site					
Rural	1		1		
Peri-urban/ urban	1.63	1.28 -2.08	1.54	1.19 -1.98	0.001
Invited or received DREAMS, 2017/18					
No	1		1		
Yes	1.35	1.06 -1.72	1.48	1.14 -1.92	0.003
Factors associated with exposure to MTV Shuga in the cross-sectional analysis of AGYW aged 12-24 (n=4127)					
	Unadjusted		Adjusted - all		
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	P-value
District					
City of Johannesburg	1		1		
Ekurhuleni	0.69	0.54 - 0.89	0.66	0.52- 0.84	0.001
eThekweni	0.79	0.60 - 1.04	0.78	0.59- 1.04	0.087
Age group					
12-14	1		1		
15-19	1.27	1.06 - 1.53	1.18	0.95- 1.46	0.126
20-24	1.22	1.01 - 1.48	1.16	0.90- 1.49	0.256
Highest education level					
Grade R to 7	1		1		
No schooling	2.88	1.81 - 4.58	3.29	2.01 - 5.38	<0.001
Grade 8 to 12	1.38	1.09 - 1.75	1.42	1.08 - 1.86	0.011
Complete or incomplete tertiary	2.29	1.70 - 3.09	2.58	1.81 - 3.69	<0.001
Ever had sex with a boy/man					
No	1		1		
Yes	0.82	0.71 - 0.95	0.68	0.57- 0.82	<0.001
Away from home in last 12 months					
No	1		1		
Yes	1.15	0.80 - 1.64	1.21	0.83- 1.77	0.309

Relationship between MTV Shuga exposure and HIV and SRHR outcomes (Table 3&4)

In the nested cohorts by 2019, overall 63.3% of those aged 14-23 knew their HIV status, 13.4% were consistently using contraception, 20.0% were using condoms consistently, and about a third were aware of PrEP, 5% had a pregnancy and 15% acquired HSV-2. There were higher proportions of contraception use, condom use and PrEP awareness among those exposed to MTV Shuga (Table 3). For survey sites (Table 3) overall, 85.0% knew their HIV status, over a fifth 22.6% were using contraception and about half using condoms 48.4%. About a tenth (7.5%) were aware of PrEP, with higher proportions of these being among those exposed to MTV Shuga.

Table 3: HIV and SRHR outcomes by exposure to MTV Shuga nested cohort 13-22 year olds (n= 2167)

	Overall		Exposed (n=308)		Not exposed (n=1878)		P-value
	n/N	%	n/N	%	n/N	%	
Knowledge of HIV status, 2019	1083/1712	63.3	175/283	61.8	908/1429	63.5	0.587
Modern contraception, 2019	221/1651	13.4	56/271	20.7	165/1380	12	<0.001
Consistent condom use, 2019	168/838	20	41/141	29.1	127/697	18.2	0.003
Aware of PrEP, 2019	523/1712	30.5	124/283	43.8	399/1429	27.9	0.302
Pregnant in 2018/19	124/2184	5.7	20/308	6.5	104/1876	5.5	0.504
Teenage pregnancy	72/1395	5.16	55/1187	4.63	17/208	8.17	0.033
HSV-2 2018/19	241/1562	15.4	35/237	14.8	206/1325	15.5	0.760
HIV and SRHR outcomes by exposure to MTV Shuga weighted for sampling cross sectional survey 12-24 year olds (n=4127)							
	Overall		Exposed		Not exposed		p-value
	n/N	%	n/N	%	n/N	%	
PrEP awareness (N=4127)	310/4127	7.5	148/1477	10.0	162/2650	6.1	<0.001
HIV test (self-report) (N=2529)	2156/2529	85.3	656/797	82.3	1500/1732	86.6	0.005
Condom use at last sex (N=1898)‡	918/1898	48.4	320/640	50.0	598/1258	47.5	0.310
Contraception use (N=4127)	934/4127	22.6	302/1477	20.5	632/2650	23.9	0.012

‡Restricted to those who ever had sex with man

At follow up, incident HSV-2 and teenage pregnancy were high, HSV-2 incidence was 15.26 and teenage pregnancy incidence was 9.86 per 100 person-years, respectively (Table 4).

Table 4: Rate of SRHR outcome by exposure to MTV Shuga (nested cohort 13-22 year olds n=2167)

HSV-2 incidence rate					
	person-time	n with HSV-2	Rate/100 person-years (py)	[95% Conf.	Interval]
MTV Shuga Not exposed	1303.0	206	15.81	13.79	18.12
MTV Shuga Exposed	276.3	35	12.67	9.09	17.64
Total	1579.3	241	15.26	13.45	17.31
Pregnancy incidence rates among all AGYW					
	person-time	n pregnant	Rate/100 py	[95% Conf.	Interval]
MTV Shuga Not exposed	1068.7	104	9.73	8.03	11.79
MTV Shuga Exposed	188.5	20	10.61	6.84	16.44
Total	1257.2	124	9.86	8.27	11.76
Pregnancy incidence rates among girls below 19 years					
	person-time	n pregnant	Rate/100 py	[95% Conf.	Interval]
MTV Shuga Not exposed	668.7	55	8.22	6.31	10.71
MTV Shuga Exposed	123.9	17	13.72	8.53	22.07
Total	792.6	72	9.08	7.21	11.44

MTV Shuga and HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake

In the nested cohort after adjusting for age, education, SES, area and DREAMS, MTV Shuga exposure in the AGYW cohort was associated with significantly greater awareness of PrEP (aOR=2.06, 95%CI: 1.57-2.70), contraception uptake (aOR=2.08, 95%CI: 1.45-2.98), and consistent condom use (aOR=1.84, 95%CI: 1.24-2.93). Watching MTV-Shuga was not associated with HIV testing (aOR=1.02, 95%CI: 0.77-1.21) (Figure 3 and Supplementary Tables S1-S4). There was no effect modification by DREAMS exposure.

Figure 3 Forest plots showing the association between MTV Shuga exposure and HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake in the nested cohorts.

Similarly, in the cross-sectional analysis, after adjusting for age, education, district, migration and sexual history, exposure to MTV-Shuga watching was associated with greater awareness of PrEP (aOR=1.70, 95%CI 1.20 - 2.43). However, there was no association with contraception, lower self-reported HIV testing, or condom use as shown in Figure 4 below (Supplementary Table 5).

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5 **Figure 4 Forest plots showing association between MTV Shuga exposure and**
6 **HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake in the cross-sectional**
7 **surveys**
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11 **Causal effect of MTV Shuga on health outcomes – HSV-2**
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13 The causal analysis similarly finds no effect of MTV Shuga on HSV-2, with a risk difference
14 of 1.10 95% CI (-2.82- 5.38)%. Findings in the younger age group (aged 13-17) and the
15 older age group (18-22) was similar (Supplementary Table 6).
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19 **Discussion**
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21 In our study of the population-level effect of a national broadcast of a TV-based edu-drama on
22 HIV prevention and SRHR, exposure to MTV Shuga was associated with higher awareness
23 of a novel HIV prevention intervention (PrEP). However, despite a very high incidence of HSV-
24 2 and teenage pregnancy, MTV Shuga exposure was not significantly associated with safer
25 sexual behaviour, uptake of contraception and HIV-testing or prevention of teenage
26 pregnancy. Notably though, the size of the relationship and direction of effect between
27 exposure to MTV Shuga, condom use and markers of unprotected sex (HSV-2 and
28 pregnancy) was consistent with a possible relationship. These findings may be partly
29 explained by our finding that less than one in 12 of the target age group had any exposure to
30 MTV Shuga and only half of these had high exposure (defined as watching the MTV Shuga
31 South African series and being able to recall the content), suggesting that one of the limiting
32 factors for the effective use of TV-based edu-drama maybe the dose that young people are
33 exposed to, particularly in rural and resource-constrained settings most affected by HIV.
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44 Our inability to find a measurable population effect of mass-media edu-drama behaviour
45 change campaign compared to the trial findings of the randomised controlled trial is
46 disappointing (18). However, firstly the direction and size of the relationships suggest that we
47 may have been able to see an effect if the proportion exposed had been greater than 7%.
48 Secondly, AGYW in urban settings were more likely to have been exposed to MTV Shuga and
49 they are also more likely to be living in small towns and townships. Data from our settings
50 suggest that young people in small towns and townships are more vulnerable to HIV (28) and
51 sexual risk (29) and therefore it is possible that a real effect of MTV Shuga on this group was
52 masked by their greater risk for the outcome. Due to the low numbers with high levels of
53 exposure to MTV Shuga we did not have the power to explore this hypothesis by looking at
54 effect modification by geography or socioeconomic status.
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5 The finding of a differential association of MTV Shuga exposure with awareness of PrEP,
6 compared to uptake of HIV and contraception, suggests that whilst educational mass
7 entertainment may be able to increase awareness and possibly demand for a service, it does
8 not impact on accessibility of the service: i.e. it impacts the first two steps of the prevention
9 cascade and not the final step(30). Well described barriers to uptake of HIV-testing and
10 contraception in this area are internalized and externalized stigma, fear of judgement from
11 health care workers and the social costs of accessing care in busy primary health care
12 settings(31-33). Behaviour change intervention including mass communication campaigns
13 can be constrained or facilitated by the context in which people live (17, 34). To optimise MTV
14 Shuga's effect there may need to be parallel innovations in SRHR and HIV service delivery
15 that makes the services easier to access. We aim to test this hypothesis by providing
16 community-based delivery of HIV and SRHR services in the context of the MTV Shuga.
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25 The behaviour change theory that underpins edu-drama as a vehicle for mass behaviour
26 change communication (16) explicitly suggests that the audience, and especially the early
27 adopters, need to be actively watching, rather than passively watching or listening (17, 18).
28 TV watching in rural homesteads can be in the context of large, often grandparent-led
29 households and competing chores and priorities. This coupled with the relatively late timing of
30 the shows may explain why so few girls and young women were sufficiently engaged or
31 immersed to be able to recall characters or story lines. Moreover, the timing of this analysis
32 may have allowed insufficient time for early adopters to convey the message of the show.
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40 **Limitations**

41 The limitations of our study are that a meaningful exposure to MTV Shuga was low and so
42 whilst the size of the relationship and direction of effect between exposure to MTV Shuga,
43 condom use, and markers of unprotected sex (HSV-2 and pregnancy) suggested a possible
44 effect, but we did not have the power to show a significant relationship between exposure to
45 MTV Shuga and SRHR outcomes. We also do not have the power to see a difference by
46 dose and immersion. Furthermore, as this is an observational study, we cannot exclude the
47 possibility that those who are exposed to MTV Shuga are systematically different in ways that
48 impact on the outcome of interest, for example more exposed to social media and sexual
49 health promotion and innovative technologies to support sexual health than those who were
50 not.
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Conclusions and implications for the future

- Meaningful exposure to MTV Shuga was low across rural and urban settings in South Africa and so additional efforts need to be made to reach young people and increase their immersion in promising edu-drama if it is to have the desired effect, especially in rural and deprived settings.
- MTV Shuga was an effective vehicle to raise awareness and promote newer HIV prevention technologies such as HIV PrEP.
- There was some suggestion that MTV Shuga improved uptake of some HIV prevention and sexual health technologies (contraception and condoms)
- There was less evidence from this observational study that it improved SRHR and HIV outcomes

We highlight the importance of evaluating the real-world scale up of promising interventions to understand both the reach and population effect as well as inform interventions to increase impact and equity.

Efforts to increase exposure, which have been rolled out as part of MTV Shuga in SA, such as social media, school-based or community-based MTV Shuga film clubs will need to be evaluated, both to understand whether or not they increase exposure and coverage and improve SRH and HIV outcomes. However, to have a significant impact on the HIV and SRH prevention and treatment cascades, demand generation in AGYW needs to be delivered in parallel with accessible service delivery models that support adherence and retention (30).

Contributorship

M.S., N.C., J.D., T.Z. N.K, G.H. and C.C. developed the study tools and performed the research. M.S., J.S. D.P., K.B., I.B., and S.F. designed the research study. T.S. and S.D. conducted the laboratory analysis. N.M. supported by K.B. conducted the statistical analysis and G.C. M.S wrote the first and final draft of the paper with input from N.C., N.M., G.H., J.S., I.B., G.C., K.B., C.C., T.S., T.Z, D.P and N.K. All the authors critically reviewed the manuscript. All authors have approved the final draft of the paper.

Competing interests

All authors declare they have no conflict of interest

Funding

The impact evaluation of DREAMS and MTV Shuga is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (OPP1136774 and OPP1171600, <http://www.gatesfoundation.org>). Foundation staff advised the study team, but did not substantively affect the study design, instruments, interpretation of data, or decision to publish. The research leading to these results has received funding from the People Programme (Marie Curie Actions) of the European Union's seventh Framework Programme FP7/2007-2013 under REA grant agreement n° 612216. MS National Institutes of Health 5R01MH114560-03 funding acknowledgement. This research was funded in whole, or in part, by the Africa Health Research Institute through the Wellcome [Strategic Core award: 201433/Z/16/A]. For the purpose of open access, the author has applied a CC BY public copyright licence to any Author Accepted Manuscript version arising from this submission. N.C is supported by a training fellowship from the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) (using the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) Funding) and Wellcome [grant reference number 224309/Z/21/Z] under the NIHR-Wellcome Partnership for Global Health Research. The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of Wellcome, the NIHR or the Department of Health and Social Care. GH is supported by a fellowship from the Royal Society and the Wellcome Trust [Grant number 210479/Z/18/Z]. MS work is also supported by a BMGF 3ie grant at AHRI. This research was funded in whole, or in part, by the Wellcome Trust [Grant number 210479/Z/18/Z]. For the purpose of open access, the author has applied a CC BY public copyright licence to any Author Accepted Manuscript version arising from this submission.

Data sharing statement

Data are available on reasonable request.

Ethics statement

The DREAMS Partnership impact evaluation protocol was reviewed and approved by the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) Biomedical Research Ethics Committee (BREC) (BFC 339/16), the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine Research Ethics Committee (Ref 11835) and the AHRI Somkhele Community Advisory Board, the Associate Director of Science of the Center for Global Health (CGH) at the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta and the Department of Health, Province of KZN and Gauteng. Approval for the demographic surveillance and data collection in the clinics was granted by UKZN BREC. Participation in the study was voluntary. All participants provided separate informed consent to take part in data collection through the questionnaires and the HSV2 sero-

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3 survey. Consent for follow-up interviews was provided separately. For participants aged <18
4 years, written parental consent and participant assent were provided. All data were
5 anonymised for analysis.
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10 Acknowledgements

11 The authors are grateful to the communities of the Hlabisa sub-district, Ekurhuleni district,
12 Thekwini district and City of Johannesburg who contributed their data to this study and to all
13 the staff at Africa Health Research Institute and EpiCentre who collected the data. We
14 acknowledge Eskindir Shambullo for his input in this manuscript.
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Figure legends

Figure 1 showing conceptual framework for MTV Shuga impact on HIV prevention on AGYW in uMkhanyakude

Figure 2 Flowchart showing AGYW follow-up from nested cohorts 2017-2019

Figure 3 Forest plots showing the association between MTV Shuga exposure and HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake in the nested cohorts.

Figure 4 Forest plots showing association between MTV Shuga exposure and HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake in the cross-sectional surveys

Figure 1: Conceptual framework for MTV Shuga impact on HIV prevention in uMkhanyakude

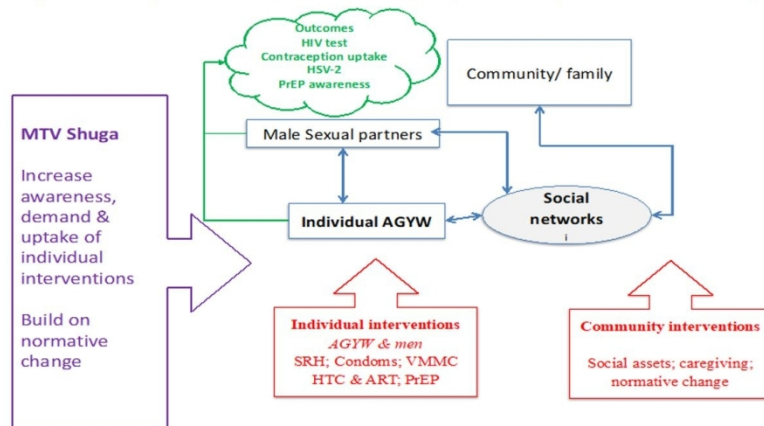


Figure 1 showing conceptual framework for MTV Shuga impact on HIV prevention on AGYW in uMkhanyakude

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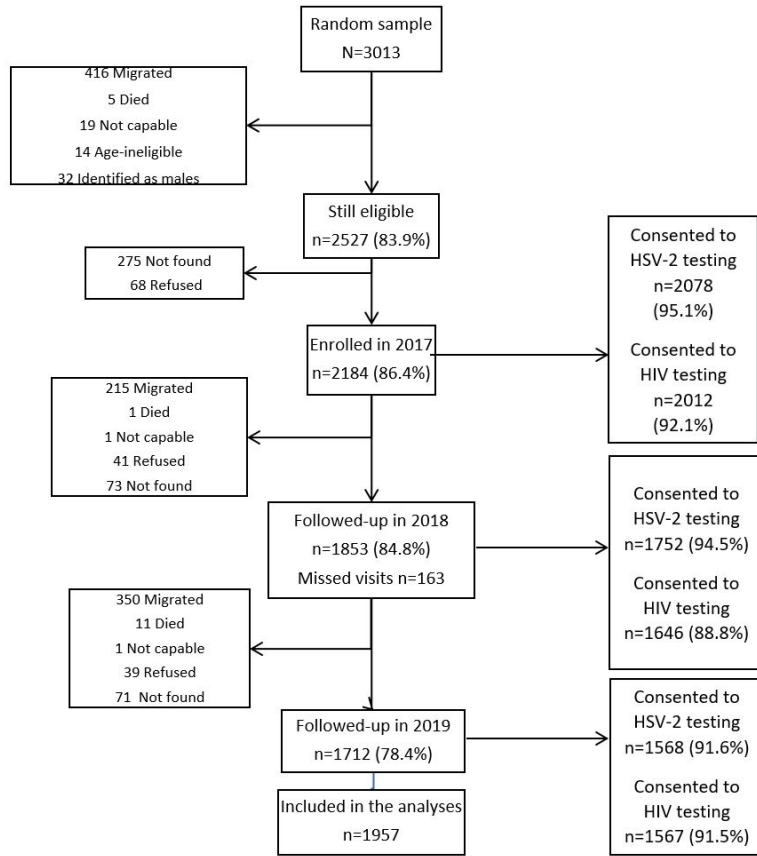


Figure 2 Flowchart showing AGYW follow-up from nested cohorts 2017-2019

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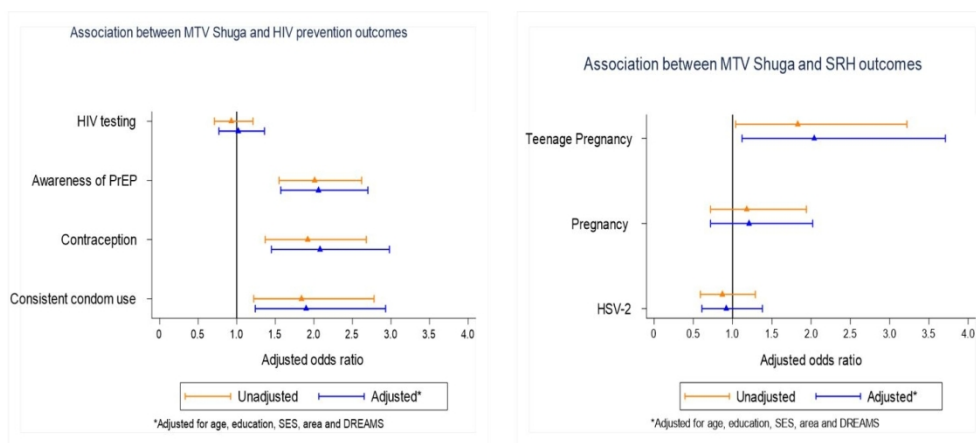


Figure 3 Forest plots showing the association between MTV Shuga exposure and HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake in the nested cohorts.

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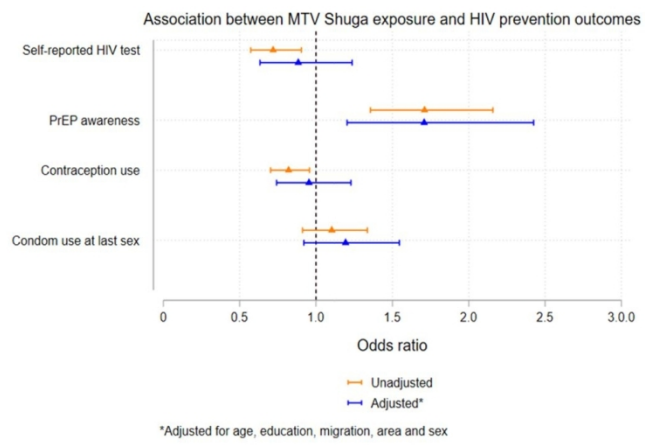


Figure 4 Forest plots showing association between MTV Shuga exposure and HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake in the cross-sectional surveys

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Supplementary Table 1 Exposure to MTV Shuga and PrEP awareness in the nested cohort of AGYW aged 13-22 (n=2184)

	Unadjusted		Shuga adjusted		p-value	Adjusted-All		
	OR	95%CI	OR	95%CI		OR	95%CI	p-value
Ever watched MTV Shuga, 2018/19								
No	1					1		
Yes	2.01	1.55 -2.62				2.06	1.57 -2.70	<0.001
Age	1.12	1.08-1.16	1.12	1.08-1.17	<0.001	1.11	1.06-1.17	<0.001
Currently in school								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	0.6	0.47 -0.76	0.59	0.46 -0.75	<0.001	0.89	0.65 -1.23	0.488
Socio-economic status, 2018								
Low	1		1			1		
Middle	0.99	0.71 -1.39	0.96	0.68 -1.35		1.01	0.71 -1.44	
High	1.13	0.81 -1.58	1.05	0.75 -1.47	0.744	1.11	0.78 -1.58	0.699
Urban or rural								
Rural	1		1			1		
Peri-urban/urban	0.98	0.79 -1.22	0.93	0.75 -1.16	0.525	0.92	0.73 -1.15	0.459
Invited or received DREAMS, 2017/18								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	0.89	0.73 -1.10	0.88	0.71 -1.08	0.212	0.99	0.79 -1.23	0.897

Supplementary Table 2 Exposure to MTV Shuga and contraception uptake in the nested cohort of AGYW aged 13-22 (n=2184)

	Unadjusted		Shuga adjusted		p-value	Adjusted-All		p-value
	OR	95%CI	OR	95%CI		OR	95%CI	
Ever watched MTV Shuga, 2018/19								
No	1					1		
Yes	1.92	1.37 -2.68				2.08	1.45-2.98	<0.001
Age	1.26	1.19-1.33	1.27	1.20-1.34	<0.001	1.32	1.24-1.42	<0.001
Currently in school								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	0.6	0.44 -0.83	0.59	0.43-0.82	0.001	1.7	1.13-2.55	0.01
Socio-economic status, 2018								
Low	1		1			1		
Middle	0.79	0.51 -1.22	0.76	0.49-1.19		0.8	0.51-1.28	
High	0.86	0.55 -1.34	0.8	0.51-1.24	0.489	0.83	0.52-1.32	0.646
Urban or rural								
Rural	1		1			1		
Peri-urban/urban	0.91	0.68 -1.24	0.86	0.64-1.17	0.345	0.89	0.64-1.24	0.49
Invited or received DREAMS, 2017/18								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	0.84	0.63 -1.11	0.83	0.62-1.10	0.191	1.04	0.76-1.42	0.813

Supplementary Table 3 Exposure to MTV Shuga and consistent condom use in the nested cohort of AGYW aged 13-22 (n=2184)

	Unadjusted		Shuga adjusted		p-value	Adjusted-All		p-value
	OR	95%CI	OR	95%CI		OR	95%CI	
Ever watched MTV Shuga, 2018/19								
No	1					1		
Yes	1.84	1.22-2.78				1.9	1.24-2.93	0.003
Age	0.94	0.86-1.01	0.94	0.87-1.02	0.157	1	0.91-1.10	0.984
Currently in school								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	1.76	1.22-2.53	1.73	1.20-2.49	0.003	1.78	1.15-2.76	0.01
Socio-economic status, 2018								
Low	1		1			1		
Middle	1.01	0.60-1.70	0.97	0.58-1.63		0.98	0.58-1.67	
High	0.87	0.52-1.47	0.8	0.47-1.36	0.552	0.86	0.50-1.48	0.753
Urban or rural								
Rural	1		1			1		
Peri-urban/urban	0.7	0.48-1.02	0.67	0.46-0.97	0.035	0.71	0.48-1.05	0.088
Invited or received DREAMS, 2017/18								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	1.13	0.81-1.59	1.13	0.80-1.59	0.486	0.97	0.67-1.40	0.875

Supplementary Table 4 Exposure to MTV Shuga and HIV testing in the nested cohort of AGYW aged 13-22 (n=2184)

	Unadjusted		Shuga adjusted		p-value	Adjusted-All		
	OR	95%CI	OR	95%CI		OR	95%CI	p-value
Ever watched MTV Shuga, 2018/19								
No	1					1		
Yes	0.93	0.71-1.21				1.02	0.77-1.36	0.885
Age	1.3	1.25-1.35	1.3	1.24-1.35	<0.001	1.3	1.24-1.37	<0.001
Currently in school								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	0.37	0.28-0.48	0.37	0.28-0.48	0	1.07	0.74-1.53	0.726
Socio-economic status, 2018								
Low	1		1			1		
Middle	0.67	0.48-0.94	0.67	0.48-0.95		0.71	0.49-1.02	
High	0.58	0.41-0.81	0.58	0.41-0.81	0.007	0.6	0.41-0.86	0.018
Urban or rural								
Rural	1		1			1		
Peri-urban/urban	0.84	0.68-1.03	0.84	0.69-1.04	0.104	0.89	0.71-1.11	0.298
Invited or received DREAMS, 2017/18								
No	1		1			1		
Yes	0.84	0.69-1.02	0.84	0.69-1.02	0.081	0.98	0.79-1.23	0.89

Supplementary Table 5: Exposure to MTV Shuga with HIV prevention and SRHR awareness and uptake in the cross-sectional analysis of AGYW aged 12-24 (n=4127)

	aOR (95% Confidence Interval)	P-value
District		
City of Johannesburg	1	
Ekurhuleni	0.66 (0.47-0.91)	0.013
eThekweni	0.78 (0.54-1.13)	0.186
Age group		
12-14	1	
15-19	1.75 (0.35-8.84)	0.499
20-24	1.60 (0.32-8.07)	0.570
Highest education level		
Grade R to 7	1	
No schooling	3.84 (1.05-14.02)	0.041
Grade 8 to 12	3.17 (0.93-10.77)	0.065
Complete or incomplete tertiary	6.52 (1.90-22.33)	0.003
Ever had sex with a boy/man		
No	1	
Yes	0.67 (0.32-1.40)	0.286
Away from home		
No	1	
Yes	1.48 (0.93-2.37)	0.099
PrEP awareness		
No	1	
Yes	1.71 (1.20-2.43)	0.003
Contraception use		
No	1	
Yes	0.95 (0.74-1.23)	0.718
Condom use at last sex		
No	1	
Yes	1.19 (0.92-1.55)	0.183
HIV test (self-report)		
No	1	
Yes	0.88 (0.63-1.24)	0.471

Supplementary Table 6 Estimated causal effect of MTV Shuga on HSV-2 incidence, overall and by age group

Estimated causal effect of MTV Shuga on HSV-2 incidence, overall and by age group											
	% Outcome in total study population	Estimated % Outcome if no Shuga	95% CI	Estimated % Outcome if all get Shuga	95% CI	Risk Difference (%; PS adjusted)	95% CI	Prevalence Ratio (%; PS adjusted)	95% CI	Odds Ratio (%; PS adjusted)	95% CI
PS adjustment: Primary results											
Overall	17.3	17.2	14.71 - 19.67	18.0	14.51 - 22.32	0.80	-3.24 - 5.71	1.0	0.82 - 1.36	1.06	0.79 - 1.46
13-17 Years	13.2	12.4	9.85 - 15.16	15.7	11.63 - 20.26	3.34	-1.60 - 8.25	1.2	0.89 - 1.79	1.32	0.87 - 1.98
18-22 Years	24.3	25.8	21.01 - 30.74	22.0	15.19 - 30.17	-3.76	-11.92 - 5.68	0.8	0.59 - 1.24	0.81	0.51 - 1.34
Sensitivity analyses											
<u>Regression under counterfactual framework</u>											
Overall	17.3	17.2	14.74 - 19.66	17.8	14.50 - 22.08	0.65	-3.42 - 5.72	1.0	0.82 - 1.36	1.05	0.78 - 1.46
13-17 Years	13.2	12.42	9.86 - 15.21	15.9	11.85 - 20.49	3.47	-1.54 - 8.63	1.2	0.89 - 1.80	1.33	0.88 - 1.99
18-22 Years	24.3	25.7	20.78 - 30.63	21.3	14.88 - 28.28	-4.42	-12.28 - 4.95	0.8	0.57 - 1.22	0.78	0.48 - 1.31
<u>PS stratification</u>											
Overall	17.3	17.1	14.68 - 19.68	17.9	14.53 - 22.13	0.80	-3.21 - 5.52	1.0	0.84 - 1.40	1.11	0.82 - 1.51
<u>PS weighting</u>											

Overall	17.3	17.08	14.74 - 19.48	17.22	13.99 - 21.10	0.13	-3.76 - 4.63	1.0	0.79 - 1.30	1.01	0.76 - 1.37
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STROBE Statement—checklist of items that should be included in reports of observational studies

	Item No	Recommendation	Page No
Title and abstract	1	(a) Indicate the study's design with a commonly used term in the title or the abstract	1
		(b) Provide in the abstract an informative and balanced summary of what was done and what was found	2
Introduction			
Background/rationale	2	Explain the scientific background and rationale for the investigation being reported	4
Objectives	3	State specific objectives, including any prespecified hypotheses	6
Methods			
Study design	4	Present key elements of study design early in the paper	6-7
Setting	5	Describe the setting, locations, and relevant dates, including periods of recruitment, exposure, follow-up, and data collection	7
Participants	6	(a) <i>Cohort study</i> —Give the eligibility criteria, and the sources and methods of selection of participants. Describe methods of follow-up <i>Case-control study</i> —Give the eligibility criteria, and the sources and methods of case ascertainment and control selection. Give the rationale for the choice of cases and controls <i>Cross-sectional study</i> —Give the eligibility criteria, and the sources and methods of selection of participants	7
		(b) <i>Cohort study</i> —For matched studies, give matching criteria and number of exposed and unexposed <i>Case-control study</i> —For matched studies, give matching criteria and the number of controls per case	
Variables	7	Clearly define all outcomes, exposures, predictors, potential confounders, and effect modifiers. Give diagnostic criteria, if applicable	8-9
Data sources/ measurement	8*	For each variable of interest, give sources of data and details of methods of assessment (measurement). Describe comparability of assessment methods if there is more than one group	8-10
Bias	9	Describe any efforts to address potential sources of bias	9-10
Study size	10	Explain how the study size was arrived at	6-7
Quantitative variables	11	Explain how quantitative variables were handled in the analyses. If applicable, describe which groupings were chosen and why	8
Statistical methods	12	(a) Describe all statistical methods, including those used to control for confounding	9-10
		(b) Describe any methods used to examine subgroups and interactions	10
		(c) Explain how missing data were addressed	10
		(d) <i>Cohort study</i> —If applicable, explain how loss to follow-up was addressed <i>Case-control study</i> —If applicable, explain how matching of cases and controls was addressed <i>Cross-sectional study</i> —If applicable, describe analytical methods taking account of sampling strategy	10
		(e) Describe any sensitivity analyses	10

Continued on next page

Results			
Participants	13*	(a) Report numbers of individuals at each stage of study—eg numbers potentially eligible, examined for eligibility, confirmed eligible, included in the study, completing follow-up, and analysed	11
		(b) Give reasons for non-participation at each stage	11
		(c) Consider use of a flow diagram	11
Descriptive data	14*	(a) Give characteristics of study participants (eg demographic, clinical, social) and information on exposures and potential confounders	11
		(b) Indicate number of participants with missing data for each variable of interest	
		(c) <i>Cohort study</i> —Summarise follow-up time (eg, average and total amount)	
Outcome data	15*	<i>Cohort study</i> —Report numbers of outcome events or summary measures over time	12
		<i>Case-control study</i> —Report numbers in each exposure category, or summary measures of exposure	
		<i>Cross-sectional study</i> —Report numbers of outcome events or summary measures	12
Main results	16	(a) Give unadjusted estimates and, if applicable, confounder-adjusted estimates and their precision (eg, 95% confidence interval). Make clear which confounders were adjusted for and why they were included	12- 16
		(b) Report category boundaries when continuous variables were categorized	12- 16
		(c) If relevant, consider translating estimates of relative risk into absolute risk for a meaningful time period	
Other analyses	17	Report other analyses done—eg analyses of subgroups and interactions, and sensitivity analyses	17
Discussion			
Key results	18	Summarise key results with reference to study objectives	17- 18
Limitations	19	Discuss limitations of the study, taking into account sources of potential bias or imprecision. Discuss both direction and magnitude of any potential bias	18
Interpretation	20	Give a cautious overall interpretation of results considering objectives, limitations, multiplicity of analyses, results from similar studies, and other relevant evidence	18- 19
Generalisability	21	Discuss the generalisability (external validity) of the study results	17- 19
Other information			
Funding	22	Give the source of funding and the role of the funders for the present study and, if applicable, for the original study on which the present article is based	20

*Give information separately for cases and controls in case-control studies and, if applicable, for exposed and unexposed groups in cohort and cross-sectional studies.

Note: An Explanation and Elaboration article discusses each checklist item and gives methodological background and published examples of transparent reporting. The STROBE checklist is best used in conjunction with this article (freely available on the Web sites of PLoS Medicine at <http://www.plosmedicine.org/>, Annals of Internal Medicine at <http://www.annals.org/>, and Epidemiology at <http://www.epidem.com/>). Information on the STROBE Initiative is available at www.strobe-statement.org.