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| Title of PhD project | Development of a new measure of violence against children in Uganda | |
| Supervisor | Dr Sarah Smith | LSHTM |
| Co-Supervisor | Professor Karen Devries | LSHTM |
| Co-Supervisor | Dr Godfrey Siu | LSHTM |
| Brief description of project | <p>Measuring violence against younger children in Uganda</p> <p>We are recruiting a student to bring modern measurement science to the study of violence against children. More than 1 billion children experience violence every year, yet there are currently no widely used, valid, reliable instruments developed for sub-Saharan Africa which allow children below adolescent age to self-report their experience of violence³. Consequently, policy and programmatic decisions about how to prevent and respond to violence in these younger children are often made based on data collected from adolescents, or parental reports. This is highly problematic—the forms and perpetrators of violence differ markedly by age, and parents are often the main perpetrators of physical violence against young children.</p> <p>The student will receive training in modern psychometric methods and on violence from leading researchers in the field. The PhD will involve developing a psychometrically robust measure of violence experience for children aged about 7-10 years in Uganda. The project objectives are to determine whether it is possible to: 1) develop a conceptual framework of violence for younger children in Uganda; 2) develop a questionnaire-based measurement instrument that reflects this construct; 3) evaluate the performance of the questionnaire against established psychometric criteria 4) make the new instrument and guidance publicly available and encourage use.</p> <p>Techniques and Methods:</p> <p>The student will use a combination of a review of existing literature and qualitative methods to develop a conceptual framework that incorporates both existing international (“top down”) and local (“bottom up”) concepts of ‘violence’. With the</p> | |

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| | <p>new conceptual framework, the student will design and test questions in a survey with about 200 participants, using modern Rasch-based psychometric methods to develop a new measure.</p> <p>This will be a significant contribution to the literature, as no current widely used survey measures for adolescents or children have systematically included the views of their target population as part of the instrument development process, and we are not aware of any that have included local conceptualisations of violence from any age group in sub-Saharan Africa. Existing measures therefore do not follow the principles of co-creation⁴ or patient involvement, considered essential for high-quality instrument development⁵. Similarly, very little psychometric research has been conducted on existing violence measures. Those that have undergone limited psychometric evaluation⁹, have been based on now out-dated classical test theory.</p> |
| Skills we expect a student to develop/acquire whilst pursuing this project | Qualitative interviewing, focus group facilitation, conceptual thinking to understand a construct/develop a framework, questionnaire item writing, critical understanding of psychometric paradigms (including both Classical Test Theory and Rasch Measurement Theory), ability to undertake and interpret Rasch analysis |
| Particular <u>prior</u> educational requirements for a student undertaking this project | MSc in a quantitative discipline (epidemiology, psychology or similar) however also see later response about suitability criteria |
| Project key words | Psychometrics Violence Measurement Abuse Children |
| Possible under 1+4 route? Master's options identified. | Yes LSHTM – MSc Public Health SGUL – Global Health |
| MRC Core Skills developed through this project | Quantitative skills Interdisciplinary skills |
| MRC LID themes | Global Health |
| Further reading | Adaptation and psychometric properties of the ISPCAN Child Abuse Screening Tool for use in trials (ICAST-Trial) among South African adolescents and their primary caregivers |

[Measuring violence against children: The adequacy of the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect \(ISPCAN\) child abuse screening tool - Child version in 9 Balkan countries](#)

[The problem with health measurement](#)