

## ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Coerced First Sex among Adolescent Girls in Sub-Saharan Africa: Prevalence and Context

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## Abstract

Coercive experiences at sexual debut have been shown to be associated with other sexual risks throughout the life course. Using nationally representative surveys from 12-19 year old girls in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Malawi, and Uganda collected in 2004, we examine the prevalence of sexual coercion at sexual debut among unmarried girls and its correlates. In Malawi, 38 percent of girls said that they were "not willing at all" at their first sexual experience followed by Ghana at 30 percent, Uganda at 23 percent and Burkina Faso at 15 percent. In-depth interviews collected in 2003 with the same demographic shows that there are four primary types of sexual coercion: forced sex; pressure through money or gifts; flattery, pestering, and threatening to have sex with other girls; and passive acceptance. The article concludes with the research and policy implications of these findings.

**Keywords:** sexual coercion, sexual debut, girls

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