GIRLS' ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

THE BEST CONTRACEPTIVE?
A RANDOMIZED CONTROLLED TRIAL IN TANZANIA

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Early Pregnancies

- Are highly prevalent in low income countries
  - 13 births per 1000 women in the ages 15-19 in high income countries vs 96 in low income countries

- Are associated with negative effects on:
  - Women’s health: leading cause of death among teenage girls in SSA.
  - Child’s health: risk of being still born or dying in the first weeks is 50 percent higher when the mother is under 20 years old.
  - Education and drop-out rates
  - Future employment and economic opportunities
People act upon their *mindset* (*preferences and beliefs*), under *constraints* (or according to *opportunities*).

Policies can affect both through interventions:
- Mindset: Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information
- Constraints: Entrepreneurship training

Interventions that develop *opportunities*, or *both mindset and opportunities*, seem much more effective.

Interpretation: despite negative consequences of early pregnancy, motherhood may have been the best alternative.
First large scale study to test and compare *mindset vs opportunity vs both*

- Four groups:
  - Mindset: Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information
  - Opportunity: Entrepreneurship training
  - Both combined
  - Pure control

- Cluster randomized control trial:
  - 4 regions of Tanzania, 20 schools per arm, around 3500 girls in total
  - Age 16-18
Findings

- **Short-term – Impact on knowledge and life plans**
  - Both entrepreneurship and SRH interventions improve business/health knowledge and change life plans.

- **Mid-term – Impact on economic activities**
  - Entrepreneurship training (alone or in combination with SRH) has stronger impact than SRH only...
  - On business plans, and business outcomes, but also on locus of control and happiness

- **Long-term: Impact on sexuality and health (ongoing)**
  - We are currently collecting medical data on pregnancy and STIs, and have so far reached 72% of the girls, aiming for 90%!
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