

# The effect of a prosocial video game on young people's attitudes towards victims of domestic violence

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## Background

- Violence against women is prevalent in the Caribbean [1].
- Key to reducing such violence are innovative educational strategies [2].
- Prior research has documented that playing prosocial video games increases empathy and prosocial behaviour [3].

**Objective:** To test the effectiveness of pro-social gaming in increasing empathy toward victims of domestic violence among young people

## Methods

### Participants and design

**172 young people** (89 boys) from **Barbados** aged 9 to 17 years ( $M = 12.27$ ) were assigned to one of the two conditions (experimental vs. control). Participants were recruited in 3 primary schools, 2 secondary schools, and 2 youth offending centres.

### Procedure and materials

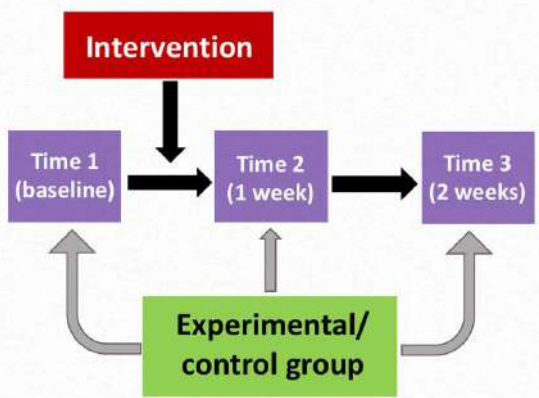
Participants in the experimental group played 'Jesse' (a prosocial video game dealing with the issue of domestic violence) for a week. The outcome measure (None in Three Victim Responsiveness Assessment [Ni3: VRA]) assessed affective and cognitive responsiveness towards victims of domestic violence at 3 time points.

## Data Analysis

### Propensity score matching

- For ethical reasons, random assignment to groups was not possible.
- We used propensity score to match subjects in each group based on observed covariates.

### Mixed within (pre/post-game exposure) and between (control/ experimental group) ANOVA

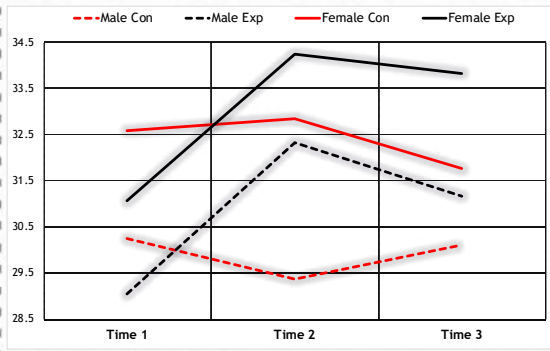


## Results

### Gender differences on DV

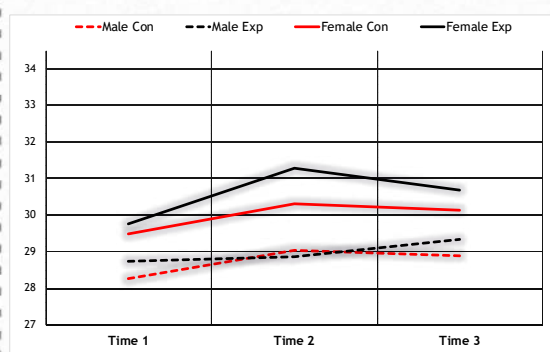
- Girls** ( $M = 31.87, SD = 5.36$ ) scored significantly higher than **boys** ( $M = 29.69, SD = 6.17$ ) on T1 affective responsiveness ( $t = -2.39, p = .018$ ).
- Further analyses were conducted separately for the two genders.

### Game evaluation: Affective responsiveness



- Boys:** Wilks' Lambda = .60,  $F(2) = 13.05, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .40$
- Girls:** Wilks' Lambda = .59,  $F(2) = 14.61, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .41$

### Game evaluation: Cognitive responsiveness

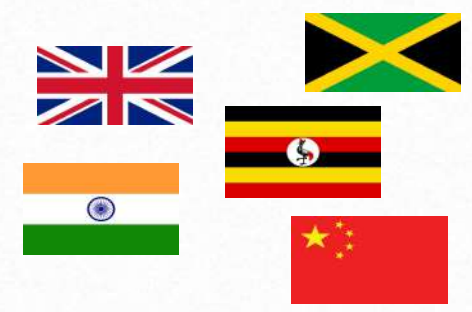


## Conclusion

- A significant increase in affective responsiveness was observed for girls and boys in experimental group at Time 2 and this change was sustained at Time 3.
- No significant change in cognitive responsiveness.
- Cognitive changes may require a longer game exposure.

### What's next?

- Ni3 Research Centre** will design and test prosocial video games in 5 different countries (£4.6m funding).



## References

[1] Jeremiah, R. D., & Gamache, P. E. (2013). Beyond behavioral adjustments: How determinants of contemporary Caribbean masculinities thwart efforts to eliminate domestic violence. *International Journal of Men's Health, 12*(3), 228-244.

[2] WHO. (2016). *Violence against women: Intimate partner violence and sexual violence against women*.

[3] Greitmeyer, T., & Mugge, D. (2014). Video games do affect social outcomes: A met-analytic review of the effects of violence and prosocial video game play. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 40*(5), 578-589.