

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AGAINST ADOLESCENT AND YOUNG ADULT WOMEN IN LOW AND MIDDLE INCOME COUNTRIES¹

Michele R. Decker², Suzumi Yasutake³, Saifuddin Ahmed², Freya Sonenstein², Robert Blum², Nan Astone²

OBJECTIVE

Globally, an estimated one in three women experience gender-based violence, with well-documented health implications including sexually transmitted infection including HIV, unintended pregnancy, addiction, and mental health issues. Youth are thought to be disproportionately burdened by gender-based violence. Developmentally, they are young and may be inexperienced with relationships. Young women, particularly those married to older men, and/or married as children or adolescents, often have little power within marriage. Yet to date, the global prevalence of intimate partner violence and forced first sex among adolescent and young adult women remains unclear. To fill this gap, we examine the prevalence of gender-based violence among adolescent and young adult women in low and middle income countries.

METHODS

We harnessed data from recent Demographic and Health Surveys. We provide lifetime and past-year estimates of physical and sexual intimate partner violence among ever-partnered women (26 nations), and forced sexual debut among sexually experienced women (14 nations), by age group within nation. Results are summarized via meta-analysis.

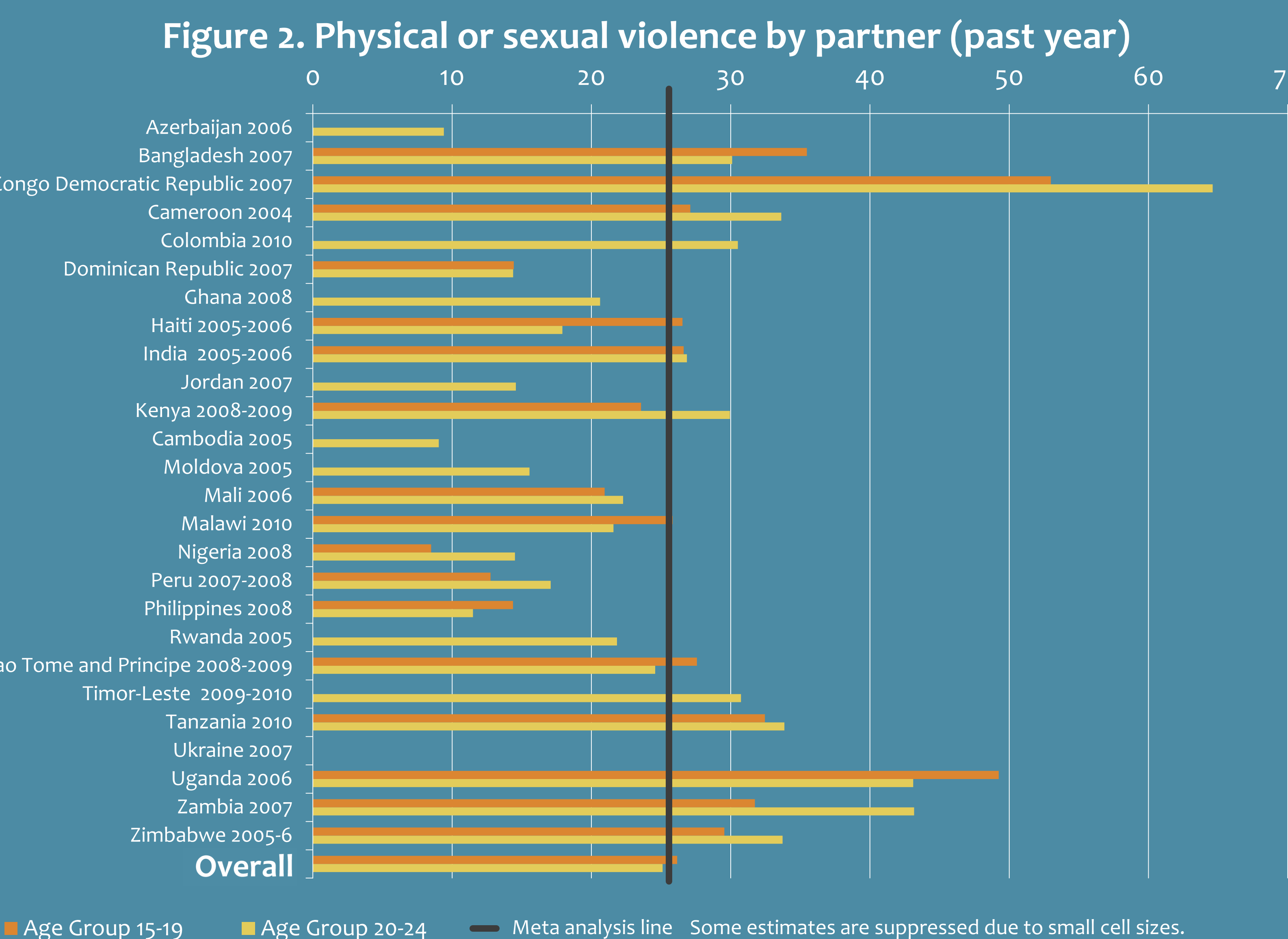
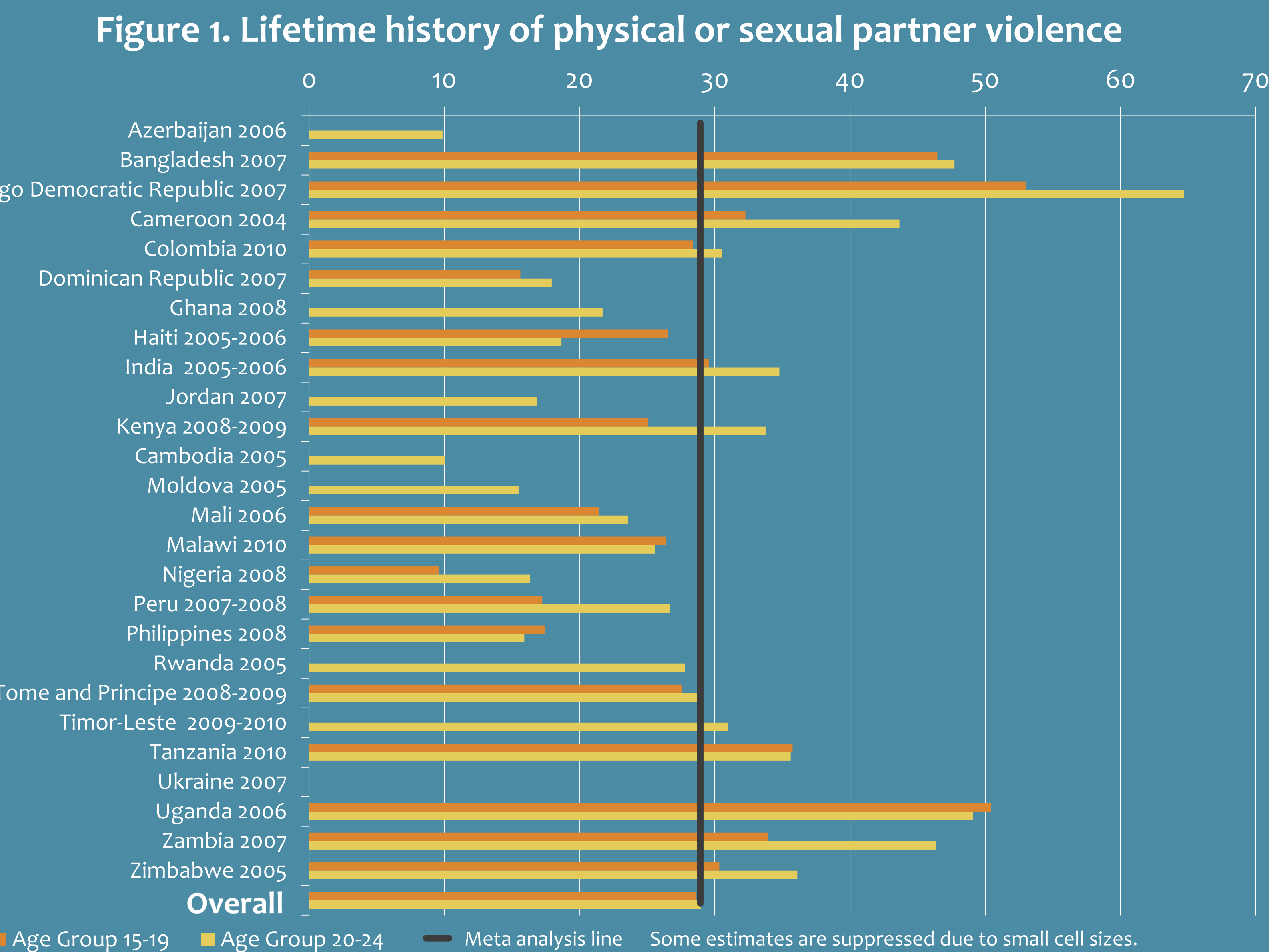


Figure 3. Physical or sexual partner violence (past year) women 15-19 vs 35+

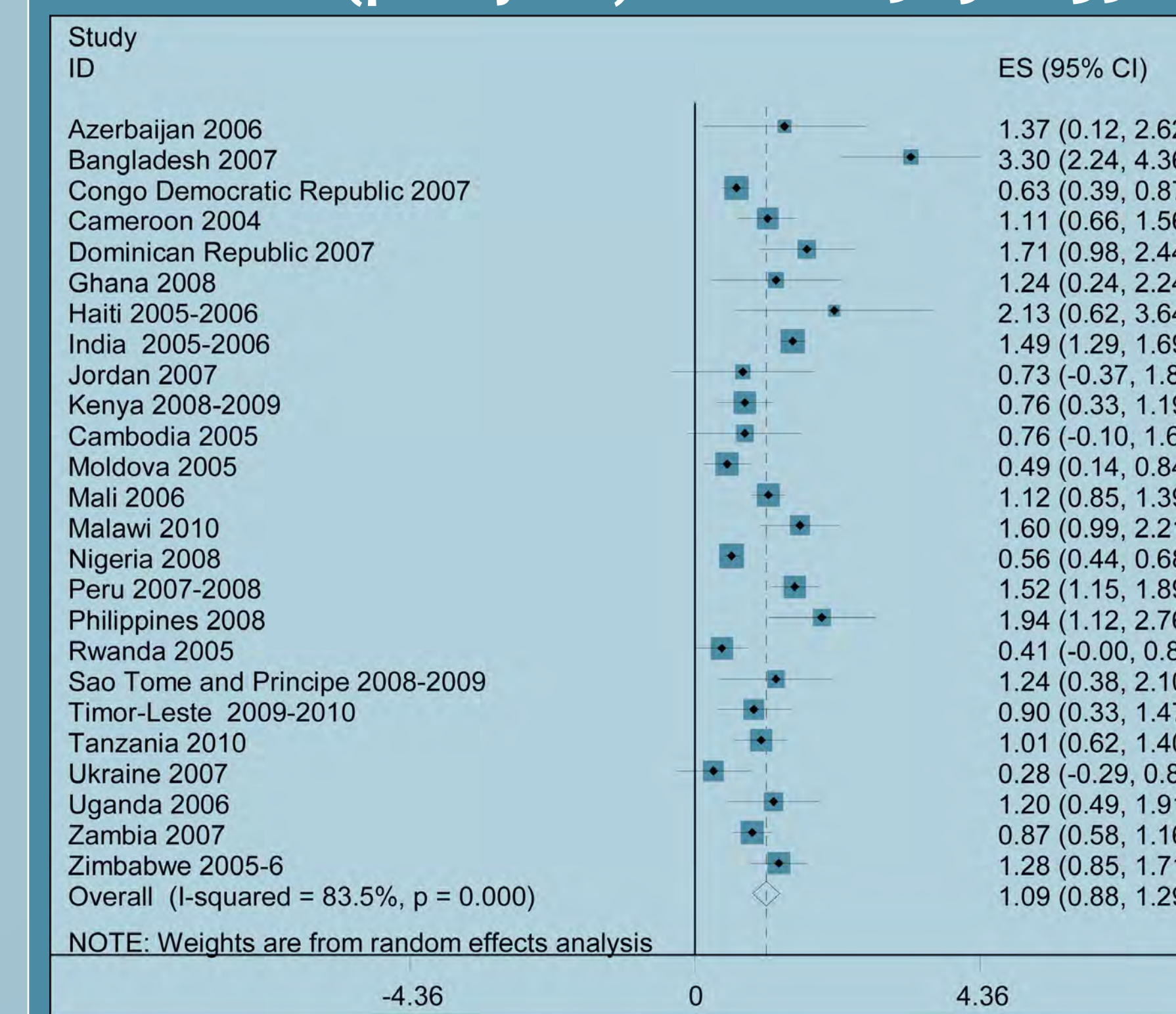


Figure 4. Physical or sexual partner violence (past year) women 20-24 vs 35+

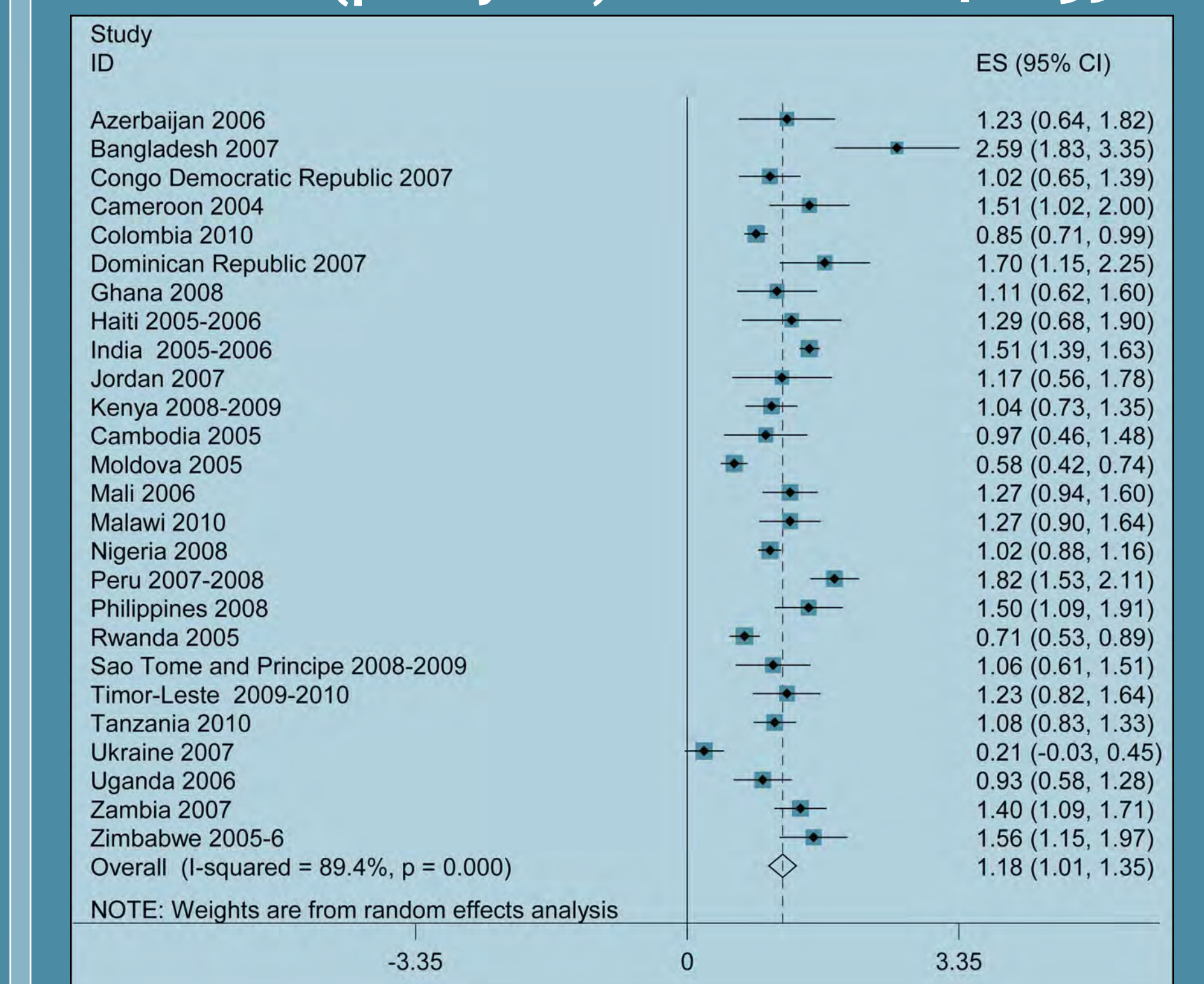
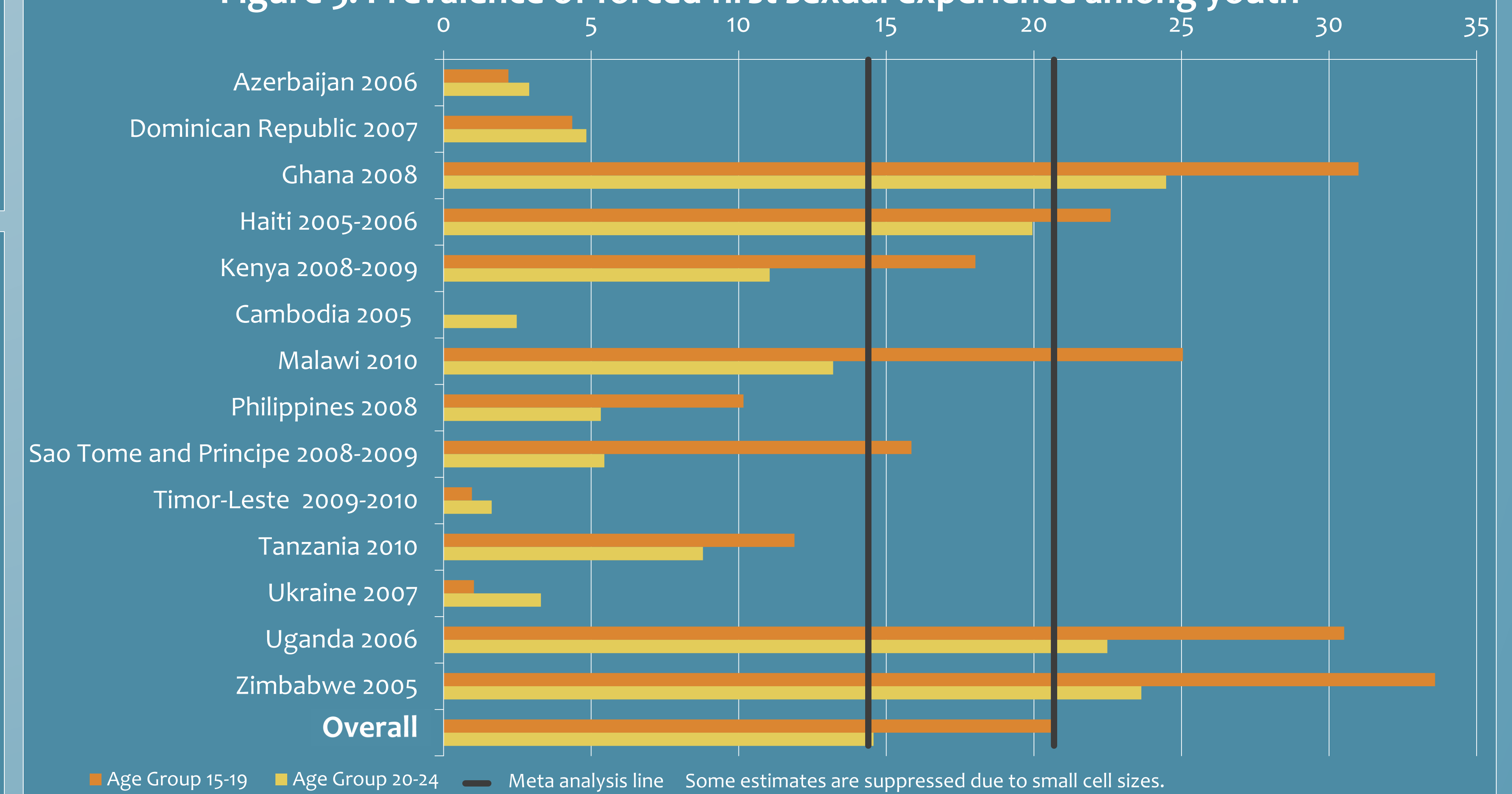


Figure 5. Prevalence of forced first sexual experience among youth



CONCLUSIONS

- Findings demonstrate a significant burden of gender-based violence among youth in most settings.
- Approximately 1 in 4 young married women reported past-year physical or sexual partner violence.
- In some settings youth conferred risk for abuse; in other settings youth were relatively protected as compared with their older counterparts.
- Oftentimes, where young age conferred relative protection against partner violence, the overall prevalence was high (e.g., Zambia).
- Approximately 1 in 5 sexually experienced adolescent women ages 15-19 reported that forced sexual debut.
- Current findings, coupled with prior evidence linking gender-based violence with many leading physical, mental, and sexual health concerns, illustrate the need for gender-based violence prevention and intervention efforts for adolescent women globally.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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²Department of Population, Family and Reproductive Health, The Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

³Department of Sociology, The Johns Hopkins Krieger School of Arts and Sciences.

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