

# Improving Shock-Coping with Precautionary Savings: The Effects of Mobile Banking on Transactional Sex in Kenya\*

Kelly Jones

IFPRI †

Erick Gong

Middlebury College ‡

December 15, 2017

Please access the most recent version at [this link](#).

## Abstract

For the most vulnerable, even small negative shocks can have significant short- and long-term impacts. Few interventions that improve shock-coping are widely available in sub-Saharan Africa. We test whether individual precautionary savings can mitigate a shock-coping behavior with potentially negative spillovers: transactional sex. Sex for money is a common shock-coping behavior in sub-Saharan Africa and is believed to be a leading driver of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In a field experiment in Kenya, we randomly assigned half of 600+ participating, vulnerable women to a savings intervention that consists

---

\*The authors acknowledge the tireless work of Felipe Dizon on managing all aspects of this study in the field. In addition, we received invaluable support from Malin Olero of KidiLuanda Community Programme, Petronilla Odonde of Impact Research and Development Organization, and Alexander Muia, Elizabeth Kabeu, Sylvia Karanja, and Evans Muga of Safaricom. Special thanks also to Lawrence Juma, Jemima Okal, Matilda Chweya and Joyce Akinyi for excellent management of field work and IPA Kenya for administrative support. Thanks to Sarah Baird, Manisha Shah, and Karen Macours for helpful comments. Research funding was provided by the Hewlett Foundation, IFPRI, Middlebury College, an anonymous donor, and the UC Davis Blum Center. All activities involving human subjects were approved by IRBs at IFPRI, Middlebury College, UC Davis, and the Maseno University Ethics Review Committee in Kenya. All errors are our own.

†Research Fellow, International Food Policy Research Institute (K.Jones@cgiar.org)

‡Assistant Professor, Economics Department, Middlebury College (egong@middlebury.edu)

of opening a mobile banking savings account labeled for emergency expenses and individual goals. We find that the intervention led to an increase in total mobile savings, reductions in transactional sex as a risk-coping response to shocks, and a decrease in symptoms of sexually transmitted infections.

# 1 Introduction

Throughout the developing world, the poor often find it difficult to cope with the financial ups and downs presented by everyday life. These contexts often feature incomplete credit markets and low saturation of other financial services such as savings and insurance. As such, the experience of a negative shock can exert both short and long term consequences. Households may sell off productive assets or withdraw children from school.<sup>1</sup> Families may be forced to reduce food consumption and/or forego health care, as evidenced by changes in child nutrition and health.<sup>2</sup> These reactions can harm the longer term development of human capital, and ultimately economic growth (Maccini and Yang, 2009; Alderman, Hoddinott and Kinsey, 2006; Dercon, 2004).

Households' responses to negative shocks, and the resulting impacts on their welfare have been studied extensively. Many of these studies have examined major shocks that are devastating but relatively infrequent, such as droughts, floods, or other adverse weather events.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, many studies have relied on reports of shocks from recall periods ranging from one to five years, even up to sixteen years, ensuring that only the largest household shocks are reported.<sup>4</sup> It is not clear what implications such studies have for understanding how households cope with the higher-frequency, smaller shocks of everyday life.

---

<sup>1</sup>On selling assets, see Rosenzweig and Wolpin (1993); Udry (1995); Fafchamps, Udry and Czukas (1998); Kinsey, Burger and Gunning (1998). On school enrollment and attendance, see Jacoby and Skoufias (1997); Jensen (2000); Ferreira and Schady (2009).

<sup>2</sup>For impacts on child nutrition and health see Jensen (2000); Ferreira and Schady (2009); Rabassa, Skoufias and Jacoby (2014).

<sup>3</sup>For example, Udry (1995); Jacoby and Skoufias (1997, 1998); Fafchamps, Udry and Czukas (1998); Jensen (2000); Dercon (2004); Alderman, Hoddinott and Kinsey (2006); Ferreira and Schady (2009); Maccini and Yang (2009); Rabassa, Skoufias and Jacoby (2014); Gröger and Zylberberg (2016)

<sup>4</sup>For example, Kochar (1995); Carter and Maluccio (2003); Wagstaff and Lindelöw (2005); Heltberg and Lund (2009); Sun and Yao (2010); Khan, Bedi and Sparrow (2015); Dhanaraj (2016); Mitra et al. (2016)

Life's most frequent shocks are less studied because they are harder to measure. The simplest and most common survey method for measuring shocks is asking a household to recall major unexpected events over the past year or few years. Collecting an accurate accounting of smaller shocks, such as moderate illness, requires high-frequency data collection. In this study we make use of a unique data set that relies on daily diaries and weekly interviews focused specifically on the experience of shocks and household's reactions to them.<sup>5</sup> We examine how households cope with a common financial burden – the illness and treatment of a child in the absence of health insurance.

A variety of interventions have been tested for improving household's ability to cope with negative shocks. Certainly, insurance is the best suited intervention, though evidence on its feasibility in a poor-country context has been mixed.<sup>6</sup> In practice, crop, health and life insurance remain rare in poor countries. Increasingly common in these contexts, cash transfers may also hold promise for improving shock coping (see [de Janvry et al. 2006](#) for the effects of conditional transfers and [Goudge et al. 2009](#) for the effects of unconditional transfers). In this study we test the impacts of a novel intervention for improving shock-coping: increasing individual precautionary savings.<sup>7</sup>

We conduct a randomized field experiment among more than 600 vulnerable women in Kenya to assess the impacts of savings on shock coping. Our intervention relies on a common mobile money platform, M-PESA, and provides existing M-PESA users with a new, second M-PESA account that is earmarked for personal, private savings. Recipients were encouraged to use the labeled account to save for personal savings goals and to accrue a buffer stock for use in the event of an emergency. The funds in the labeled account could be withdrawn at any time without penalty, and thus the intervention is effectively a soft commitment device for increasing savings.

---

<sup>5</sup>Other studies relying on data of a similar nature include [Robinson and Yeh \(2012\)](#).

<sup>6</sup>See [Dekker and Wilms \(2010\)](#); [Hamid, Roberts and Mosley \(2011\)](#); [Giesbert, Steiner and Bendig \(2011\)](#); [Landmann and Frolich \(2015\)](#); [De Janvry, Ramirez Ritchie and Sadoulet \(2016\)](#); [Liu \(2016\)](#)

<sup>7</sup>The potential for savings to improve shock coping has been recognized theoretically for decades [Deaton \(1991\)](#). Savings may have a detrimental impact on shock coping by breaking down informal risk sharing arrangements [Ligon, Thomas and Worrall \(2000\)](#). Tests for the impact of savings on risk-sharing have mixed results ([Kast and Pomeranz, 2014](#); [Comola and Prina, 2015](#); [Flory, 2011](#); [Chandrasekhar, Kinnan and Larreguy, Forthcoming](#); [Dupas, Keats and Robinson, Forthcoming](#); [Dizon, Gong and Jones, 2017](#)).

The shock-coping behavior of focus in this study is transactional sex. This includes not only commercial sex workers but also more informal sex work, such as “bar girls,” and, most commonly, the receipt of obligatory money or gifts from boyfriends, which is very common in East and Southern Africa.<sup>8</sup> In a context of incomplete insurance, women may cope with shocks by adding a sexual partner or engaging in riskier sexual behavior in order to increase the value of the transfers they receive from partners.<sup>9</sup> This is a costly shock-coping mechanism as it may involve risky sexual acts, and it typically involves multiple concurrent partnerships, which are a leading cause of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.<sup>10</sup> Engaging in transactional sex also carries other risks, such as unwanted pregnancy, exposure to gender-based violence, and challenges to mental health. Our sample consists both of self-identified sex workers and other vulnerable women, including widows, divorced or separated women, and single mothers. We document that not only commercial sex workers, but also other women in our sample, increase their transactional sex behavior in the week following a negative shock.

We test the impact of our intervention on savings balances and on the sexual behavior response to shocks. The literature on increasing savings among the poor has repeatedly documented the difficulties of measuring savings, due to privacy and misreporting. We address this issue by relying on high-quality administrative data for both existing and new accounts to measure savings balances among all study participants. To examine changes in the sexual behavior response to shocks we collect high-frequency data on negative shocks and sexual behavior over a three-month time frame, pairing each respondent with a single enumerator to build rapport and increase accurate reporting. Using a combination of weekly surveys for the entire sample and daily diaries for the sex workers, we are able to track both the timing of negative shocks and transactional sex over our study period. Finally, we collect additional data 8 months after the intervention to test for medium-term

---

<sup>8</sup>Much evidence exists that material support is a significant motivation for women’s sexual activity in East and Southern Africa [Verheijen 2011; [Wojcicki 2002b,a](#); [Masanjala 2007](#); [Swidler and Watkins 2007](#); [Wamoyi et al. 2010](#)], and that women rely on these transactional relationships as a form of insurance [Verheijen 2011; [Robinson and Yeh, 2012](#)]. Various types of transactional sex are characterized by [Baird and Özler \(2016\)](#).

<sup>9</sup>It is often the case that sexual risk is increasing in the size of the transfer ([Rao et al., 2003](#); [Gertler, Shah and Bertozzi, 2005](#); [Luke, 2006](#)). See [LoPiccalo, Robinson and Yeh \(2012\)](#) for a review of the evidence documenting income shocks and transactional sex.

<sup>10</sup>See [Halperin and Epstein \(2004\)](#); [LeClerc-Madlala \(2009\)](#); [Mishra and Bignami-Van Assche \(2009\)](#)

impacts.

We have two main findings. The first is that the intervention led to an increase in total M-PESA savings across the existing and new accounts. It is important to note that M-PESA savings is highly liquid and the increase we document may serve as a buffer for negative shocks. Our second finding is that the intervention led to reductions in the use of transactional sex as a shock-coping behavior. When employing the weekly data and estimating within-woman, we find that sex workers increase their number of regular clients in the week following a negative shock, but that this response is entirely mitigated for those in the savings intervention. For the women who do not identify as sex workers, we find that the treatment reduces their sexual behavior generally. Specifically among those who do report engaging in transactional sex, we also find that treatment reduces their use of transactional sex as a response to shocks. When we estimate across all women who ever experienced a shock in our study period, we find that treatment reduced the probability of ever reporting symptoms of a sexually transmitted infection.

This work contributes to the substantial literature on the benefits of increasing savings for the poor.<sup>11</sup> Many of the previous studies focused on whether providing access to formal bank accounts increases savings and affects downstream outcomes such as income and investments.<sup>12</sup> An implicit motivation behind these studies is that individuals are constrained from saving more because of self-control and other-control problems.<sup>13</sup> Bank accounts can relax these constraints by serving as a commitment device for individual savings, as it may be costly to access funds held at banks due to travel and wait times, and a narrow window of operating hours. A chief concern however is that in exchange for this commitment, bank accounts may limit liquidity in times of negative shocks, thereby mitigating a key benefit of savings.<sup>14</sup> Our study examines the effects of mobile savings (M-PESA) which has greater liquidity than bank savings. We provide suggestive evidence

---

<sup>11</sup>See [Karlan, Ratan and Zinman \(2014\)](#), [Prina \(2015\)](#), and [Dupas et al. \(2017\)](#) for comprehensive reviews.

<sup>12</sup>Studies will commonly encourage the opening of formal bank savings accounts by varying opening account fees, minimum balances, or interest rates ([Dupas and Robinson, 2013](#); [Prina, 2015](#); [Schaner, Forthcoming](#); [Karlan et al., 2016](#)).

<sup>13</sup>([Ashraf, Karlan and Yin, 2006](#); [Dupas and Robinson, 2013](#); [Karlan and Linden, 2014](#); [Brune et al., 2016](#)) are studies that explicitly examine self-control and other control constraints.

<sup>14</sup>[Dupas et al. \(2017\)](#) document that a leading reason for low take-up rates in Uganda was liquidity concerns.

that a softer-commitment savings product can still increase savings.

Further, our findings are among the first to document how increasing savings affects households' resiliency to shocks. In a related paper, [Prina \(2015\)](#) finds that Nepali households with access to free bank accounts are less likely to experience income drops when hit with a health shock. However, this finding is not about shock-coping behaviors *per se*. The author attributes this result to the improved ability of households with savings to accrue a "health capital" stock ex-ante (e.g. by consuming more meat and fish), which reduces the impact of illness on their ability to continue earning. The most closely related paper is that of [Kast and Pomeranz \(2014\)](#), who examine the impact of free bank accounts on reported responses to shocks in Chile. They find that major income shocks such as job loss or business downturns result in consumption cutbacks, and that the cutbacks are 44% smaller for households that received the free accounts. In contrast to these works, rather than examining major shocks, as measured over a one or three month period, we undertake detailed measurement and analysis of coping mechanisms for smaller, more frequent shocks. Further, we go beyond income and consumption to examine other shock-coping behaviors that have significant implications for welfare and potential negative externalities. We believe our study offers new knowledge on the value that savings has as a precautionary measure.

This study also speaks to whether households can fully insure themselves against health shocks. Existing studies offer conflicting answers to this question ([Gertler and Gruber, 2002](#); [Genoni, 2012](#)). However, a common thread is that the most vulnerable households are least likely to exhibit full insurance ([Khan, Bedi and Sparrow, 2015](#); [Mitra et al., 2016](#)). These findings motivate the focus of this study on a sample of vulnerable women.

Finally, this work contributes to the literature documenting the use of transactional sex as a shock-coping mechanism in sub-Saharan Africa. In Kenya, which is the location of this study, about 20% of sexual partnerships are formed for the purpose of financial assistance ([Luke et al., 2011](#)). In Malawi, women have been documented to take on multiple sexual partnerships in response to income insecurity ([Swidler and Watkins, 2007](#)), while women in South Africa, Tanzania, and Western Kenya have been shown to respond to income shocks by increasing their level of risky unprotected sex ([Dinkelman, Lam and Leibbrandt, 2008](#); [Robinson and Yeh, 2012](#); [De Walque, Dow and Gong, 2014](#)). This literature also offers evi-

dence that the use of sex as shock coping is a harmful risk management strategy. Income shocks (in the form of droughts in rural areas) can explain 20% of the cross-country variation in HIV rates across Africa, a relationship for which transactional sex is the most plausible pathway (Burke, Gong and Jones, 2015).

These findings suggest that interventions targeting financial uncertainty may affect sexual behavior. Studies involving the provision of cash transfers have documented reductions in sexual activity (Kohler and Thornton, 2012) and sexually transmitted infections (HIV, HSV-2) (Baird et al., 2012). The implied mechanism is that the added liquidity of cash transfers allows women to cope with negative shocks without relying on transactional sex.

Our study advances these literatures by documenting how women can use increased savings as a safety net, allowing them to substitute away from transactional sex towards relying on their own savings to respond to negative shocks. Our findings suggest that women are better able to self-insure if given a way to accumulate precautionary savings.

In the next section of the paper, we discuss details of the sample, data collection, and the field experiment (Section 2). We then document how the intervention increased M-PESA savings (Section 3) and decreased transactional sex (Section 4). In Section 5, we examine medium-term sustainability. We discuss the implications of our findings in Section 5 and draw conclusions in Section 6.

## **2 Study Design**

### **2.1 Financial Services in Kenya and M-PESA**

M-PESA, operated by the leading mobile service provider in Kenya, Safaricom, is a highly successful private enterprise which provides clients with branchless banking accessed via mobile phone. Any individual with a national ID card and Safaricom SIM card can set up an M-PESA account, allowing her to make deposits, withdrawals and transfers using her mobile handset. M-PESA points for exchanging cash are ubiquitous; they are located at nearly every shop and one can be found open at nearly any time of day. The district in which this study is set has fewer than 3 formal financial institutions per 100,000 population (Kenyan average across all districts is 5.3). In contrast, the region has 38 mobile network vendors per 100,000



population.<sup>15</sup>

A key requirement in our study is that all study participants must have an existing M-PESA account. At the time of our experiment, over 70% of households in Kenya had adopted M-PESA due to its convenience and relatively low cost (Suri, Jack and Stoker, 2012). We found that this requirement only eliminated 12% of women who were otherwise eligible.

## 2.2 Sample

Our sample consists of 627 vulnerable women in both urban and rural areas in Kisumu County on the western edge of Kenya. The urban sample consisted of female sex workers (FSWs) and the rural sample consisted of widows, separated or divorced women, or never-married female heads-of-household.<sup>16</sup> As noted above, women in the rural sample are deemed to be at high risk for entering sex work.

The study involved two local partners that are geographically based. Our urban partner is an NGO that provides health and counseling services to FSWs in Kisumu. The NGO's operations include operating walk-in centers distributed throughout Kisumu where FSWs can access its services. Each center is staffed by peer educators who help coordinate services to FSWs. Our rural partner is a community based organization that targets vulnerable women (i.e. widows, divorced/separated women) and provides economic assistance programs. Both partners are well respected in their local communities.

Sampling activities were conducted during December 2013 and January 2014. In our urban sample, a sampling team attended scheduled meetings of peer educators, to census the FSWs who they support. Each FSW was visited individually for enrollment. For our rural sample, the sampling team visited each of the villages in the study, seeking eligible women by talking with local leaders and snowballing. The enrollment visits consisted of checking eligibility, taking verbal consent, collecting contact information, and registering existing M-PESA account details.

---

<sup>15</sup>Formal institutions are defined as Banks, Micro-finance institutions, Mortgage finance institutions, and PostaBanks; excludes cooperatives.

<sup>16</sup>Women in the rural sample are considered vulnerable because they lacked financial support from a male partner (i.e. husband or boyfriend).



## 2.3 Intervention

The unit of randomization is the individual. We first identified geographic clusters: 12 sub-locations or politically defined geographic units in the rural sub-sample, and 15 “hotspots” or specific areas within the urban sub-sample where the FSWs meet clients.<sup>17</sup> We stratified treatment randomization by sub-sample, geographic cluster, and age. Within each cluster, each individual was assigned into treatment or control.

The control group participated in group discussions on the importance of savings that lasted about one hour. Individuals in the Treatment 1 arm (T1) received the same group discussions as the control arm, plus a one-on-one activity eliciting savings goals, weekly SMS reminders on the savings goals, and a free M-PESA account with zero transaction costs that we define as the “Labeled M-PESA account.” Individuals in the Treatment 2 arm (T2) received everything in the T1 arm, plus a 5% monthly interest rate on their labeled savings account for the first 12 weeks of the study. We are unable to reject the null that T1 and T2 have the same effect on savings outcomes, and thus we pool the T1 and T2 arms in our analysis.

Women in the treatment arm chose savings goals and were told to use the labeled M-PESA account to save for their goals. We also asked each woman in the treatment arm to think about the unexpected expenses that they face and to set aside a specific amount each week for emergencies and deposit this into the labeled M-PESA account. Women were strongly encouraged to only withdraw money from their labeled M-PESA account in the event of an emergency or when they reached their savings goal. There were no other restrictions on the labeled M-PESA account, and we thus see this account as a soft commitment device for savings.

## 2.4 Data Collection

Figure 1 presents a timeline of the study. A baseline survey was conducted prior to the intervention in January of 2014 that collected information on demographics, income sources, savings, and sexual behavior history. Following the random assignment to treatment and setting up the labeled M-PESA accounts, weekly surveys

---

<sup>17</sup>There are 47 counties in Kenya. Kisumu county has 7 sub-counties, and our sample falls into the Nyando and Kisumu Central sub-counties.

were conducted for twelve consecutive weeks (March through May) where high-frequency data was collected on expenses, health, and sexual behavior. In the urban sample, women were trained to keep daily diaries where they recorded basic information on each commercial sex client, including price and condom use; these were collected and checked weekly. Top-up training was provided as needed. In both samples, women reported on sexual behavior during the past week in each weekly interview (for partners not already included in the diaries).

We returned in October to collect medium-term follow up data, including retrospective reports of shocks and shock coping over the previous 4 months. We also have M-PESA administrative data for all individuals in our study. The administrative data consists of balances on all of the existing M-PESA accounts for the control and treatment arms as well as balances on the labeled M-PESA account for those in the treatment group.

## **2.5 Summary statistics and balance**

Table 1 provides baseline summary statistics for the control group in the urban and rural samples (Columns 1 and 3). Treatment differences are reported in columns 2 & 4. Women in the rural sample tend to be younger (mean age 27) and have larger households (4.13 individuals) compared to the urban sample. A majority of the women in the rural sample are widowed (58%) compared to just 21% in the urban sample. While there are stark differences in primary income sources between the urban and rural samples (sex work dominating the urban sample, while shop keeping and agriculture are the main sources in the rural sample), food insecurity remains high in both groups. Baseline characteristics are generally balanced across treatment and control groups, with marital status in the urban sample the only unbalanced characteristic across the 15 tested, separately for rural and urban (and only at the 10% level of significance).

As we noted above, M-PESA savings is based on administrative data while all other forms of savings rely on self-reported responses, which we acknowledge are noisy measures. One concern about self-reported savings is that respondents may be reluctant to report their true savings because of concerns about theft. The rather low rates of self-reported savings at home (33% in the urban sample and 26% in the rural sample) suggest that this may be the case. We also note that

while there are no statistically significant treatment/control differences in any of the savings measures, the differences are large in magnitude. Both of these concerns will motivate our use of individual-level fixed effects to estimate changes in savings within-woman.

Finally, it comes as little surprise that the urban sample is much more sexually active. Everyone in the urban sample has been sexually active over the past year and on average sees 4.1 regular clients. While in the rural sample, 58% have been sexually active over the past year, and of those who are sexually active, the mean number of partners is close to 1.

Table 2 presents a summary of the experience of negative shocks and of sexual behaviors as reported during our observation period. The first column indicates the level of observation for the sample employed for each row, as our data include multiple weeks per individual, and potentially multiple sex acts per week. The negative shocks considered in this analysis are illnesses or injuries of any other person in the respondent's household in a given week. Given that 80% of the sample are heads of households, in the majority of cases these "other's illness" shocks are illnesses of the respondents own dependents. We exclude illnesses of the respondent herself because these may affect sexual behavior in non-financial ways, leading to reverse causality. In any given week, dependent illness is reported by 20% of the urban sample and 32% of the rural sample. There is no significant difference in the rate of dependent illness in the treatment group, suggesting that our intervention did not change the likelihood of our measure of negative shocks. Considering only weeks where illness occurred, the median amount spent on treatment is 350 KSh, or about one day's income in the urban sample, and 200 KSh, or about 2 days' income in the rural sample.

Turning to sexual behavior, there are several key differences between the rural and urban samples. In the control arm, only 39% of the rural sample report any sexual behavior during the 12-week period of observation, vs. 95% of the urban sample. When we examine the data at the week level, we observe sexual activity in 81% of urban woman-weeks, but only 10.5% of rural woman-weeks (control arm). It appears that women in the both the urban and rural treatment arms are less likely to have a week with any sexual activity, with a treatment difference of about 3 ppt, though this is significant only for the rural sample. Conditional on having sex, we do not observe significantly different levels of risk across treatment and control

groups.

## 2.6 Attrition

We note that attrition is fairly minimal due to the high frequency with which we contacted respondents. Of the 627 respondents 96% were interviewed on at least 10 of the 12 weeks of data collection (82% have all 12 weeks). Of the 28 respondents with fewer than 10 weeks of data, most (20) are in the urban sample. However, assignment to treatment is not a determinant of the number of weeks of data available for an individual, nor for whether she has above or below 10 weeks of data, or whether she has all 12 weeks of data, regardless of examination by full or rural/urban subsamples (see Appendix Table A.2).

However, data is less complete for the daily diaries kept by the urban sample. We have complete diary data for 83.5% of weeks when an urban woman was interviewed. Keeping the diary of client interactions was encouraged and respondents were trained and re-trained as needed, nonetheless, only 72% of the urban sample kept the diary for at least 10 of the 12 weeks. There are 10 women in the urban sample who refused the diary exercise completely, effectively reducing the urban sample for analysis to 301 women.<sup>18</sup> Fortunately, it does not seem that missing diary data is correlated with treatment assignment. As shown in Appendix Table A.2, neither the weeks of complete diary data, nor the share of interview weeks with diary data vary significantly by treatment. Missing diary data seems to be driven by enumerators: 4 out of 14 enumerators working with the urban sample account for 67% of missing diaries. Of the seven urban respondents who refused the diary exercise completely but completed the bulk of the interviews, five were handled by a single enumerator. We note that variation in enumerator survey success will be controlled by the individual fixed effects, as each respondent was assigned to a single enumerator for the course of the study. Another concern might be that shocks themselves lead to changes in attrition that may drive our results. We estimate 2 using missing diary data as the outcome and find that exposure to a shock does not predict missing data for a given week, neither for treatment nor control groups (see Appendix Table A.3).

Our follow-up rate at endline, 4.5 months after the end of the weekly obser-

---

<sup>18</sup>Three of these women completed two or fewer of the planned 12 interviews.

vation period, was 92.3% (579 women). Attrition from endline is not significantly correlated with treatment status in the full sample, nor in either sub-sample (also shown in Appendix Table A.2).

### 3 Effects on Savings

Before estimating the impact of the intervention on savings, we first describe the adoption of the labeled M-PESA account using the administrative data. Figure 2 presents adoption of the labeled M-PESA account (left panel) and corresponding account balances (right panel) over the 12 week period of the study. It appears that adoption was not instantaneous. Using either a single deposit or two deposits as a measure of usage, we find that cumulative adoption grew at a steady rate over time. By the end of the 12 week period, 57% of the those assigned to the treatment made at least one deposit into the labeled M-PESA account. A similar pattern is found with average balances in the labeled M-PESA account. Starting from a zero balance at the beginning, average balances grew to 271 KSh by week 4, and almost doubled to 493 by week 12.<sup>19</sup>

Do these balances represent an actual increase in savings? A natural response is that individuals in the treatment group simply moved savings from their existing M-PESA account to the labeled one. To account for this, we aggregate balances in both existing and labeled M-PESA accounts and estimate the following:

$$MPESA_{it} = \alpha_i + \eta_1 Post_t + \eta_2 (T_i \times Post_t) + \lambda_t + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

where  $MPESA_{it}$  is total M-PESA savings for individual  $i$  in week  $t$ ,  $\alpha_i$  is an individual fixed effect,  $T_i$  indicates whether individual  $i$  was assigned to treatment,  $Post_t$  is the period after the intervention, and  $\lambda_t$  are week fixed effects. The coefficient of interest is  $\eta_2$  (the effect of the intervention in the post period). Treatment stratification based on both geographic clusters and age is subsumed in the individual fixed effects. If treatment simply induced a substitution from the existing M-PESA account to the labeled account, we would expect estimates of  $\eta_2$  to be close to zero.

<sup>19</sup>These patterns are similar when we look at the rural or urban samples - see Appendix Figure A.1

As we noted earlier, adoption and balances grew over time, and we thus vary the post period in our analysis. When estimating equation 1, we begin by defining the post period as weeks 1-12 (with the baseline period being the "pre" period). We then systematically vary the beginning of the post period. For example, after our initial specification described above, we begin the post period at week 2; the post-period thus includes weeks 2-12 and week 1 is removed from the analysis. We proceed with this type of analysis until the post period consists of just week 12.

Figure 3 presents the effects of the intervention on total M-PESA savings.<sup>20</sup> The x-axis defines when the post period begins and the solid line shows the estimates of  $\eta_2$ . Both 90% and 95% confidence intervals are included in the figure. Similar to the patterns we saw with the labeled M-PESA account, we see that the treatment effect gradually increases over time. Estimates where the post period begins at week 5 or later are significant at the 10% level and become significant at the 5% level when the post period begins at week 8 or later. Estimates split by the urban and rural samples show a similar trajectory but are less precise given the smaller sample sizes (see Appendix Figure A.2).

What about the effects of the intervention on other types of savings? We do not find any significant evidence of crowd out with either home savings or bank savings (Appendix Figure A.4), and when we examine liquid savings (M-PESA savings + home savings) and total savings (liquid savings + bank savings), we find a similar upward trajectory of the treatment effect over time (Appendix Figure A.3). Overall, given some of our concerns that self-reported savings might be noisy measures, we have the most confidence in our estimates that rely on the administrative data (M-PESA balances), shown in Figure 3.

## 4 Effects on Transactional Sex

### 4.1 Week level

This study's central analysis is whether higher precautionary savings can change the use of sexual behaviors as a response to negative shocks. To improve identification of sex that may be in response to a shock, we need to ensure that the sex

<sup>20</sup>The results are presented in table form in Appendix Table A.1.

occurs after the shock. We take advantage of the high frequency of our data and focus on sexual behavior in the week following a shock. We estimate the following:

$$B_{it} = \alpha_i + \beta_1 Shock_{it} + \beta_2 T_i \times Shock_{it} + \lambda_t + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (2)$$

where  $B_{it}$  is the sexual behavior of woman  $i$  in week  $t$ ,  $\alpha_i$  is an individual fixed effect,  $Shock_{it}$  is an indicator that a dependent in individual's  $i$  household experienced any illness or injury in the week prior to  $t$ ,  $T_i$  is the treatment indicator, and  $\beta_2$  measures the differential in shock response between individuals assigned to the treatment rather than control arm. Given the use of woman-fixed effects, any estimate of impact derives from within-woman differences in the outcome across time. Given that the rural and urban samples are very different with regards to sexual behavior, we use different outcomes for each sample, and therefore estimate impacts for these subsamples separately. For example, while an indicator for any sexual activity over the past week is relevant for the rural sample, it contains very little information for the urban sample, where virtually everyone is sexually active. Standard errors are clustered at the individual level.

We begin with an analysis of the urban sample. The weekly outcomes we use are: total number of partners, number of regular clients and number of casual clients.<sup>21</sup> We also acknowledge that sexual risk includes not only the number of partners, but also the types of sexual behaviors. To assess this risk, we construct two measures of weekly risk, conditional on having any sexual activity in a given week. The first is a continuous risk index, generated by a principle components analysis of the numbers of regular and casual clients, the mean amount paid per act,<sup>22</sup> the number of risky acts (i.e. anal), and the number of unprotected acts; the second is a binary measure for whether a woman-week is riskier than the median.

Estimates of equation 2 for the urban sample are presented in Table 3.<sup>23</sup> Across the top row we note that the occurrence of a dependent health shock last week significantly increases a woman's number of sexual partners (col 1). However, this increase is driven by an increase in acts with regular clients and not an increase in

<sup>21</sup>Regular clients differ from casual clients in that they have a longer-term relationship with the respondent. Robinson and Yeh (2012) document that regular clients are viewed in the same way as boyfriends and that some women go on to marry their regular clients.

<sup>22</sup>Higher risk acts are typically better compensated (Gertler, Shah and Bertozzi, 2005).

<sup>23</sup>See table notes for explanations on variations in samples sizes.



casual clients (cols 2 and 3). This is consistent with findings by [Robinson and Yeh \(2012\)](#) that commercial sex workers rely on regular clients as a form of insurance. In the second row, we see the treatment impact on the use of sexual behavior as a coping strategy is decreased but the difference is not precisely estimated (col 1). However, the treatment does significantly reduce reliance on regular clients as a response to shocks (col 2). The mean number of regular client interactions in a week is 2.46; a shock increases this by 0.47, a response that is fully offset by a treatment effect of -0.50 (significant at the 5% level). While 0.5 clients per week represents about an 8% decrease on the mean number of total partners (6.48), we note that interactions with regular clients represent significant risk; one's own regular clients are estimated to be at "high risk of HIV" by 46% of sex workers.<sup>24</sup>

Taking into account other factors, such as condom usage and higher-risk acts, we also find that risk on the intensive margin is used as a coping strategy. Conditional on having any sexual activity, the occurrence of a health shock the previous week increases sexual risk taking by 0.14 SD and increases the chance of having higher than median risk by 7.8 percentage points (cols 4 and 5). This response is fully offset by assignment to the savings treatment, and these treatment effects are significant at the 10% and 5% levels, respectively. We note that the estimation of this type of intensive margin effect dictates the use of a subsample that may be, in part, determined by the treatment itself. However, it seems unlikely that those who reduce their sexual behavior as a result of the treatment (and as a result have fewer weeks included in this estimation) are having more risky sexual acts on average than those who do not. Barring this unlikely scenario, this estimate will not be upward biased by the sample selection.

We now turn to the rural sample. Outcomes in this analysis include a binary indicator of any sexual activity in the week following a shock, a binary indicator of any transactional sex in the week following a shock, and an analogous index for risk taken within sexual partnerships. We note that more than 2/3 of the rural sample never report any transactional sex during our 12-week observation period. This significantly reduces our power to detect changes in overall levels of transactional sex in this sample. We therefore also estimate impacts of the treatment on transactional sex among the subsample of rural women who ever report this behavior during observation. As above, we note that this subsample of observations

---

24

could be determined, in part, by exposure to treatment. However, we believe the direction of bias would suggest that our estimate is a lower bound.

Table 4 presents the results from estimating equation 2 for the rural sample.<sup>25</sup> Across the top row we see that a dependent health shock last week increases the probability of being sexually active, though not significantly (col 1), but that increases in transactional sex are statistically different from zero. In column 2, a dependent illness increases the probability of engaging in transactional sex by 3.3 percentage points, a very large increase given that it occurs in only 6.7% of women-weeks in the sample. We find that assignment to treatment reduces the effect of shocks on transactional sex by an estimated 2.8 percentage points, nearly significant at the 10% level ( $p\text{-value} = 0.114$ ). Given that only 26% of rural women ever report any transactional sex during the study period, we restrict the focus to these women in col 3.

Among women engaging in transactional sex, the experience of a shock increases the probability of paid sex by 12.4 percentage points, on a base of 24%. Assignment to treatment offsets the impact of a shock by 10.5 percentage points, significant at the 10% level (col 3). Finally, we construct a risk index for the rural sample, employing an indicator of whether the sex was paid, and whether a condom was used. We test whether shocks and treatment affect sexual risk taking, conditional on having any sexual act (col 4). In the rural sample, 65% of reported sex acts are paid and 34% are unprotected; the mean risk index in the control group is 3.2 with a standard deviation of 2.6. The occurrence of a shock increases the risk index by 0.54 standard deviations, an effect that is more than offset by treatment, and both effects are significant at the 1% level. This suggests that in addition to a reduction in sexually active weeks, treated women also reduce the risk taken in the weeks when they are sexually active.

## 4.2 Woman level

A central challenge in estimating impacts among the rural sample is the lower frequency of sexual activity. Only 0.73% of rural woman-weeks record more than one sex act, and only 0.46% record more than one transactional sex act. Thus, measures of both sex and transactional sex are essentially binary in nature. Yet even

---

<sup>25</sup>See table notes for explanations regarding variations in samples sizes.

these simple binary outcomes offer little variation in the sample. The share of observations at zero are 91% and 94%, for any sexual acts and any transactional sex acts, respectively. In order to address this skew, we additionally estimate impacts of shocks and the treatment at the woman level rather than the woman-by-week level. Based on the weekly data, we generate a woman-level indicator for the use of sex as a response to shocks. For each occurrence of a dependent illness, we record whether or not the respondent engages in transactional sex in the following week. The woman-level indicator,  $C_{ic}$  is a continuous measure of the share of observed shocks that are followed by transactional sex (“Rate of sex coping”). Since these indicators are employed for both rural and urban, we pool the samples and include an interaction to estimate separate effects. We estimate the impact of treatment assignment,  $T_{ic}$ , on these behaviors, employing

$$C_{ic} = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 T_{ic} + \beta_2 T_{ic} \times Urb_{ic} + \beta_3 X_{ic} + \lambda_c + \varepsilon_{ic} \quad (3)$$

where the treatment effect for the rural sample is given by  $\beta_2$  and for the urban sample it is  $\beta_2 + \beta_3$ ;  $X_{ic}$  is the stratifying variable of age and  $\lambda_c$  are geographic cluster-fixed effects. Results are presented in Table 5.<sup>26</sup>

For the rural sample, we find that treatment leads to significant reductions in the rate of transactional sex as shock coping (col 1, row 1). On average, rural women in the control group use sex to cope with 8.5% of shocks; for those assigned to treatment this is reduced by 4.9 pp. The estimated treatment impact in the urban sample is 3.0 pp, which is not significantly different from zero. However, we cannot reject that the treatment effect is the same across the two samples. Finally, we use data on whether the respondent reported any STI symptom at any point during the observation period. The prevalence of STIs is remarkably similar across the two populations, at around 9%. This likely reflects the higher condom usage among the sex workers, which offsets the risk of their higher levels of transactional sex. We find that those assigned to treatment are about 5 pp less likely to report STI symptoms in both the rural and urban samples (col 2). This effect is significant, both statistically and economically, indicating that the sexual behavior offset by the treatment is among the riskiest sex in which women are engaging.

---

<sup>26</sup>See table notes for explanations on variations in sample sizes.

## 5 Sustainability of Impacts

In this section we examine whether the changes in savings and shock coping observed among the treatment group over the 12-week observation period are sustained in the medium-term, relying on follow up data collected 4.5 months after the end of weekly observations.

We estimate the following:

$$MPESA_{it} = \alpha_i + \theta_1(T_i \times Week12_t) + \theta_2(T_i \times Week35_t) + \lambda_t + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (4)$$

where  $t=0$  (baseline), 1 (week 12), or 2 (endline at week 35). The equation includes woman- and week-fixed effects ( $\alpha_i$  and  $\lambda_t$ ). The coefficient  $\theta_1$  will indicate whether savings changes from baseline to week 12 are different between treatment and control groups. Similarly,  $\theta_2$  will indicate whether savings changes from baseline to week 35 are different between treatment and control groups. Results are presented in Table 6. Similar to what we previously reported in Figure 3, we find an increase in savings at week 12 ranging from 680 KSh for the rural sample to 398 KSh for the urban sample. By week 35, we still observe positive treatment differences in savings, however, these treatment effects are less precise and the magnitude of the effect has diminished. Using either week 12 or week 35 estimates, we find that the point estimates suggest large percentage increases in savings when compared to control group means.

At week 35 we also asked respondents to report on whether their household had experienced any shocks of various types over the previous 4 months. The shocks about which we inquired included: illness, death, birth, job loss, theft, damage to property, legal issues, conflict, crop loss, or livestock illness or death. We asked whether the shock presented a financial burden, and what types of actions were taken in order to deal with the shock. Respondents reported the number of times each shock type was experienced, and the responses to each occurrence. Response types included: relying on savings (48%), taking loans (30%), reducing expenses (28%), receiving assistance (24%), engaging in transactional sex (4%), otherwise trying to increase earnings (11%), selling assets (3%), or praying (2%).

Before examining treatment impacts on shock response, we first examine whether exposure to treatment affects the probability of reporting a shock. We find that

treatment is uncorrelated with reporting all types of shocks (see Appendix Table A.4).

We test whether assignment to treatment changes the probability that a woman exposed to a shock reports transactional sex as a response in months 4-8 after the start of the intervention. We estimate

$$S_{ic} = \alpha + \rho_1 T_{ic} + \rho_2 T_{ic} \times RUR_c + X_{ic} + \lambda_c + \varepsilon_{ic} \quad (5)$$

for the sample of women who report at least one shock during the period, where  $T_{ic}$ ,  $X_{ic}$ ,  $\lambda_c$ , and  $\varepsilon_{ic}$  are as defined above. 48% of the sample reported at least one shock during this period. To maximize power, we pool the urban and rural samples and interact the treatment indicator with  $RUR_c$ , indicating the rural sample. The outcome  $S_{ic}$  indicates ever reporting transactional sex as a response to any shock during the period. For completeness we also show estimations employing the other most common shock coping behaviors: relying on savings, taking loans, reducing consumption, and receiving assistance.

The results are presented in Table 7. Among the urban sample exposed to shocks, assignment to treatment reduced the probability of relying on sex for shock coping by 11.4 pp, almost completely eliminating the 13.4% rate observed in the control group. In tandem, it increased the probability of relying on savings by 37.6 pp, more than doubling the 34.3% rate among the control group. It nearly halved the rate of reducing consumption in response to a shock, reducing it by 13.8 pp on a base of 34.3%. The coefficient on loan taking is also negative, though imprecisely estimated. We see no reduction in the reliance on gifts from friends and family. In contrast, we find no statistically significant results among the rural sample. In particular, no women in either the treatment or control group ever report relying on transactional sex for shock coping, so the estimated treatment effect is zero.

In order to better examine the sustainability of impacts of sexual behavior in the rural area, we additionally examine whether the women has reported any sexual activity at all during the 4 month recall period. As before, we expect treatment impacts to be limited to women that experience a shock during this period. We estimate the impact of treatment on sexual activity for the rural sample, interacting

treatment with an indicator of shock exposure. That is,

$$A_{ic} = \alpha + \zeta_1 T_{ic} + \zeta_2 T_{ic} \times NoShock_{ic} + X_{ic} + \lambda_c + \varepsilon_{ic} \quad (6)$$

where  $A_{ic}$  indicates any sexual activity in the period. As before,  $X_{ic}$  includes woman's age at baseline, however we also present specifications where this includes other woman-level controls including marital status, primary school completion, and baseline reporting of transactional sex. We present equation 6 for the full rural sample, and for the subsample for whom effects were identified in Table 4: women who ever report transactional sex during the observation period.

The results are presented in Table 8. As in Table 4, we do not find statistically significant impacts for the full rural sample (though the p-value for col 2 is 0.14). However, for the sample of women who ever report engaging in transactional sex, we find that when faced with a shock, assignment to treatment reduces the probability of sexual behavior over 4 months by approximately 30 pp (on a base of 61%).

## 6 Discussion

In this work we have explored the use of savings for improving the ability of vulnerable women to cope with shocks. We find that even small, frequent shocks, such as the illness of a child every 3-4 weeks induces potentially harmful shock-coping behaviors, such as increased sexual risk. Not only among urban commercial sex workers, but also among widows and other female heads of household in a rural area, a high proportion of sexual acts are transactional in nature. The occurrence of an unexpected financial shock significantly increases the number of regular clients seen by sex workers as well as the riskiness of sexual acts, and increases the probability that rural women engage in transactional sex.

Given the frequency of shocks and the potential long-term health costs of transactional sex as a risk-coping behavior, we sought to reduce this behavioral response by improving access to precautionary savings. We provided beneficiaries with a new, labeled mobile banking account for saving. The intervention appears to have increased total mobile savings by 200-400 KSh over the course of 12 weeks, increasing women's access to highly liquid funds that can be easily accessed in case of an emergency. During this time, the intervention reduced overall sexual

behavior in the rural sample. It also reduced the use of transactional sex as a shock coping behavior among urban sex workers, and among the 1/3 of the rural sample who were engaging at all in transactional sex. Among women who experienced shocks, those assigned to the intervention also exhibited fewer STI symptoms during this period.

Eight months afterward, we find that the savings intervention lead to positive, though imprecisely estimated, increases in M-PESA savings. At that time, we also find that sex workers exposed to the treatment are more likely to report relying on savings to cope with shocks and less likely to report relying on transactional sex. In addition, for the portion of the sample for whom earlier impacts were established, unmarried rural women exposed to treatment are also less likely to be sexually active 8 months later.

We discuss here several caveats to these findings. First, we note that while these savings amounts are comparable to the median cost of treating a dependent illness (200-350 KSh), in the 50% of cases above the median, the treatment cost would be greater than these amounts (means are 892 KSh and 410 KSh, for urban and rural respectively). This suggests that in some cases, this amount of savings may not fully cover a financial shock. Longer-term interventions that are able to raise personal savings more substantially may have the potential to exhibit greater impacts on sexual behavior than those reported here. Similarly, we note that this intervention was provided to women who were already users of this mobile money technology. In that sense it was more a nudge towards mental accounting than true provision of access to savings technology. We do not speculate on the potential magnitude of impacts if this intervention were provided to those with no previous account access, however one might imagine that impacts would also be greater in such a case.

Second, the shocks that we examine are the occurrence of a dependent illness in the previous week. We note that these shocks are very common, occurring every 3-4 weeks on average. However, they are far from the only shocks experienced by these households. We examine these shocks due to their idiosyncratic nature, affecting different households at different times, their frequency, allowing multiple observations per household during our 12-week observation period, and their cost, as discussed above. Ideally, we would also examine the impacts of other types of financial shocks in this work. There are several reasons why we do not do so.



We are not able to examine the impact of a respondent's own ill health shocks, as these may impact her sexual behavior in non-economic ways. Another common financial shock is death – not within one's household, as that is rather uncommon, but the financial cost of contributing to and participating in the funeral of a friend or family member. However, funeral participation in this context almost always requires individuals to travel away from their area of residence. This also affects sexual activity in non-economic ways, as one is far away from regular and/or potential clients or other partners. Additionally, we would ideally examine the impact of income shocks, as we know income to be highly variable in these vulnerable populations. However, given the difficulty in accurately measuring income in this context, and the difficulty in separating expected from unexpected dips in income, the reliable identification of income shocks is not feasible.

Further, we note that this experiment was designed to use high-frequency data over a short period of time to identify the impacts of small, frequent, idiosyncratic shocks. However, large, sustained, aggregate shocks can also induce the use of transactional sex as a shock-coping behavior. As documented in [Burke, Gong and Jones \(2015\)](#), aggregate income shocks, such as those induced by droughts in rural areas of Africa, significantly increase HIV prevalence, and transactional sex is one likely pathway of this effect. In this study, we focus on the impact of small, idiosyncratic shocks as a complement to the existing evidence on the impact of large, aggregate shocks.

Finally, we discuss the feasibility of this intervention for scaling up to prevent transactional sex as a shock coping mechanism. The cost per participant for the full intervention was about USD\$7.5 in the urban area and about USD\$3.8 in the rural area. However, most of this cost was in the training, including the preparation of trainers, their salaries, identification and hire of venues, time and/or airtime required to invite participants, and overhead of the managing organization. These costs could be reduced as much as \$1 per participant due to economies of scale when rolling out the intervention to a larger number of participants. Only USD\$1.5 of the total per-person total cost paid for the SIM card for the mobile money account, and the time of the M-PESA agent to be present at the training for account set up.

Estimations suggest that these costs prevented engagement with a regular client about once per every two shocks, or about one out of every 52 sexual

acts among the urban sample. Among rural women who engage in transactional sex, the treatment prevented one partnership for every ten shocks experienced, or about one out of every seven or eight partners.<sup>27</sup> Given the findings that these impacts are sustained up to 8 months after the intervention, the cost/benefit ratio is at most \$1.9 per partnership prevented in the urban area, or \$3.8 in the rural area.<sup>28</sup> If benefits continue beyond 8 months, these numbers would continue to fall.

It is difficult to compare the effectiveness of this intervention to others that might aim to reduce transactional sex or risky sex. The economic motivations for transactional sex make any attempts to “talk women out of it” likely to be ineffective. Other attempts to reduce the economic motivations might include efforts to reduce the market price by reducing demand, which is also likely to be ineffective, or direct cash transfers to women, which are far more expensive. The most comparable interventions might be those aimed at increasing women’s safety in transactional sex by promoting condom usage or providing training in negotiating safer sex. However, we find an existing high rate of condom usage among the urban sample (91%), offering little room for improvement. The greatest potential impact of these would involve outreach in the rural areas where condom usage is much lower (66%), though it is not within the scope of this work to estimate the cost per partnership protected from this type of outreach.<sup>29</sup> Further, increasing the safety of transactional sex through condom use does nothing to reduce the other harmful impacts on mental health and exposure to gender-based violence.

---

<sup>27</sup>The urban sample experiences dependent illness shocks about once per month. They have about 6.5 encounters per month, or 52 encounters over two months. The rural sample experiences dependent illness shocks about once every three weeks. The women who engage in transactional sex do so about once per month, or 7.5 times in 30 weeks.

<sup>28</sup>Partnerships prevented are 1 per 2 months in the urban sample and 1 per 7.5 months in the rural sample.

<sup>29</sup>Population Service International reports that the cost per condom sold in sub-Saharan Africa is less than US\$0.12 (Feldblum, Welsh and Steiner, 2003). However, this figure includes high demand populations, and high-population density areas. Achieving take-up in rural areas by a nearly invisible target population would be vastly more expensive.

## 7 Conclusions

From this work we draw several conclusions. First, while earlier works have examined the impacts of droughts, floods, and other major shocks, we find that the negative impacts of shock-coping are not restricted to dealing with these large, infrequent shocks. For the vulnerable women in our sample, even small shocks can lead to harmful shock-coping behaviors, such as transactional sex. Second, the use of transactional sex as a method of coping with financial shocks is not restricted to commercial sex workers but is observed among widows and single women in a rural population as well. This is consistent with findings from sociology and anthropology that document the typically transactional nature of many sexual relationships throughout East and Southern Africa. Though this study focused on a small sample in a specific context, the widespread nature of this dynamic suggests significant external validity of this trial. Third, using sex to cope with shocks implies large negative externalities, as transactional sex increases health risks for sexually active individuals in their communities: rural women in our sample who ever engage in paid sex have an STI symptom incidence of 15.6% over three months, versus 2.6% for those who never engage in paid sex. While we only measure self-reported symptoms of curable STIs, these findings likely have similar implications for HIV infections as well.

Our main conclusion is that the promotion of individual savings has the potential to improve the ability of the most vulnerable to cope with shocks. The intervention studied here had only modest impacts on savings over a fairly short observation period and was deemed to be fairly cost-effective. Nonetheless, we find that among women who report participating in transactional sex (both commercial sex workers and others), treated women reduced the use of transactional sex as a shock-coping mechanism. We also find suggestive evidence from the rural sample that a similar effect may have taken place among those who do not report participation in transactional sex, as treated women have lower sexual activity overall. These changes appear to add up to significantly lower sexual risk, as both populations experience a large reduction in STI prevalence in response to the savings intervention.

We find that the impacts of this intervention are modestly sustained over the medium-term (8 months). Additionally, recall data at that point offer supporting evidence for our hypothesized pathway. Urban women in the treatment group are sig-

nificantly more likely to report relying on savings in the event of a shock (and less likely to report relying on sex or reductions in consumption). This supports the theory that precautionary savings act as a personal safety-net, providing needed liquidity when faced with unexpected costs, and enabling households to avoid other, less desirable ways to meet these expenses.

Larger-scale interventions, sustained over longer periods of time could potentially increase the degree to which savings affect shock-coping behaviors. In particular, longer-term savings could allow households to build the type of buffer stock needed to cope with larger, infrequent shocks as well. Increasing the availability and accessibility of savings products for the poor, and encouraging saving behavior, may offer benefits not only in terms of investment, but also in terms of risk. Widespread roll-out of such programs may have the potential to reduce not only transactional sex, but other potentially detrimental shock-coping behaviors as well. We leave the study of larger programs and other shock coping behaviors as the subject of future work.

## References

- Alderman, H., J. Hoddinott, and B. Kinsey.** 2006. "Long term consequences of early childhood malnutrition." *Oxford Economic Papers*, 58(3): 450.
- Ashraf, Nava, Dean Karlan, and Wesley Yin.** 2006. "Tying Odysseus to the mast: Evidence from a commitment savings product in the Philippines." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 121(2): 635–672.
- Baird, Sarah, and Berk Özler.** 2016. "Transactional Sex in Malawi." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Prostitution*, ed. Scott Cunningham and Manisha Shah, Chapter 8. Oxford UP.
- Baird, S.J., R.S. Garfein, C.T. McIntosh, and B. Özler.** 2012. "Effect of a cash transfer programme for schooling on prevalence of HIV and herpes simplex type 2 in Malawi: a cluster randomised trial." *The Lancet*, 379(9823): 1320–29.
- Brune, Lasse, Xavier Giné, Jessica Goldberg, and Dean Yang.** 2016. "Facilitating savings for agriculture: Field experimental evidence from Malawi." *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 64(2): 187–220.

- Burke, Marshall, Erick Gong, and Kelly Jones.** 2015. "Income Shocks and HIV in Africa." *The Economic Journal*, 125(585): 1157–89.
- Carter, MR, and JA Maluccio.** 2003. "Social capital and coping with economic shocks: An analysis of stunting of South African children." *World Development*, 31(7): 1147–1163.
- Chandrasekhar, Arun, Cynthia Kinnan, and Horacio Larreguy.** Forthcoming. "Social Networks as Contract Enforcement: Evidence from a Lab Experiment in the Field." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*.
- Comola, Margherita, and Silvia Prina.** 2015. "Treatment Effect Accounting for Network Changes: Evidence from a Randomized Intervention." *Manuscript*.
- Deaton, Angus.** 1991. "Saving and Liquidity Constraints." *Econometrica*, 59(5): 1221–48.
- De Janvry, Alain F., Elizabeth Andrea Ramirez Ritchie, and Elisabeth Marie L. Sadoulet.** 2016. "Weather index insurance and shock coping : evidence from Mexico's CADENA Program." *Manuscript*.
- de Janvry, Alain, Frederico Finan, Elisabeth Sadoulet, and Renos Vakis.** 2006. "Can Conditional Cash Transfer Programs Serve as Safety Nets in Keeping Children at School and from Working When Exposed to Shocks?." *Journal of Development Economics*, 79(2): 349 – 373.
- Dekker, Marleen, and Annegien Wilms.** 2010. "Health Insurance and Other Risk-Coping Strategies in Uganda: The Case of Microcare Insurance Ltd." *World Development*, 38(3): 369 – 378.
- Dercon, Stefan.** 2004. "Growth and Shocks: Evidence from Rural Ethiopia." *Journal of Development Economics*, 74(2): 309–29.
- De Walque, Damien, William Dow, and Erick Gong.** 2014. "Coping with risk: the effects of shocks on reproductive health and transactional sex in rural Tanzania." *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper*, , (6751).
- Dhanaraj, Sowmya.** 2016. "Economic Vulnerability to Health Shocks and Coping Strategies: Evidence from Andhra Pradesh, India." *Health Policy and Planning*, 31(6): 749 – 758.

- Dinkelman, T., D. Lam, and M. Leibbrandt.** 2008. "Linking poverty and income shocks to risky sexual behaviour: evidence from a panel study of young adults in Cape Town." *South African Journal of Economics*, 76: S52–S74.
- Dizon, F., E. Gong, and K. Jones.** 2017. "The Effect of Promoting Savings on Informal Risk-Sharing: Experimental Evidence from Vulnerable Women in Kenya."
- Dupas, Pascaline, and Jonathan Robinson.** 2013. "Savings constraints and microenterprise development: Evidence from a field experiment in Kenya." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 5(1): 163–192.
- Dupas, Pascaline, Anthony Keats, and Jonathan Robinson.** Forthcoming. "The Effect of Savings Accounts on Interpersonal Financial Relationships: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Rural Kenya." *The Economic Journal*.
- Dupas, Pascaline, Dean Karlan, Jonathan Robinson, and Diego Ubfal.** 2017. "Banking the Unbanked? Evidence from Three Countries." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*.
- Fafchamps, Marcel, Christopher Udry, and Katherine Czukas.** 1998. "Drought and Saving in West Africa: are Livestock a Buffer Stock?" *Journal of Development Economics*, 55(2): 273–305.
- Feldblum, P J, M J Welsh, and M J Steiner.** 2003. "Don't overlook condoms for HIV prevention." *Sexually Transmitted Infections*, 79(4): 268–269.
- Ferreira, F.H.G., and N. Schady.** 2009. "Aggregate economic shocks, child schooling, and child health." *The World Bank Research Observer*, 24(2): 147–81.
- Flory, Jeffrey A.** 2011. "Microsavings and Informal Insurance in Villages: How Does Financial Deepening Affect Safety Nets of the Poor." Becker Friedman Institute for Research in Economics Working Paper No. 2011-008.
- Genoni, Maria Eugenia.** 2012. "Health Shocks and Consumption Smoothing: Evidence from Indonesia." *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 60(3): 475–506.
- Gertler, Paul, and Jonathan Gruber.** 2002. "Insuring Consumption against Illness." *The American Economic Review*, 92(1): 51–70.

- Gertler, P., M. Shah, and S.M. Bertozzi.** 2005. "Risky business: the market for unprotected commercial sex." *Journal of Political Economy*, 113(3): 518–550.
- Giesbert, Lena, Susan Steiner, and Mirko Bendig.** 2011. "Participation in Micro Life Insurance and the Use of Other Financial Services in Ghana." *The Journal of Risk and Insurance*, 78(1): 7–35.
- Goudge, Jane, Steven Russel, Lucy Gilson, Tebogo Gujmede, Steve Tollman, and Anne Mills.** 2009. "Illness-related impoverishment in rural South Africa: Why does social protection work for some households but not for others?" *Journal of International Development*, 21(2, SI): 231–251.
- Gröger, André, and Yanos Zylberberg.** 2016. "Internal Labor Migration as a Shock Coping Strategy: Evidence from a Typhoon." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 8(2): 123 – 153.
- Halperin, Daniel T, and Helen Epstein.** 2004. "Concurrent sexual partnerships help to explain Africa's high HIV prevalence: implications for prevention." *The Lancet*, 364(9428): 4–6.
- Hamid, Syed Abdul, Jennifer Roberts, and Paul Mosley.** 2011. "Can Micro Health Insurance Reduce Poverty? Evidence From Bangladesh." *The Journal of Risk and Insurance*, 78(1): 57–82.
- Heltberg, Rasmus, and Niels Lund.** 2009. "Shocks, Coping, and Outcomes for Pakistan's Poor: Health Risks Predominate." *Journal of Development Studies*, 45(6): 889 – 910.
- Jacoby, Hanan G, and Emmanuel Skoufias.** 1997. "Risk, financial markets, and human capital in a developing country." *The Review of Economic Studies*, 64(3): 311–335.
- Jacoby, Hanan G., and Emmanuel Skoufias.** 1998. "Testing Theories of Consumption Behavior Using Information on Aggregate Shocks: income Seasonality and Rainfall in Rural India." *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 80(1): 1–14.
- Jensen, Robert.** 2000. "Agricultural Volatility and Investments in Children." *The American Economic Review*, 90(2): 399–404.



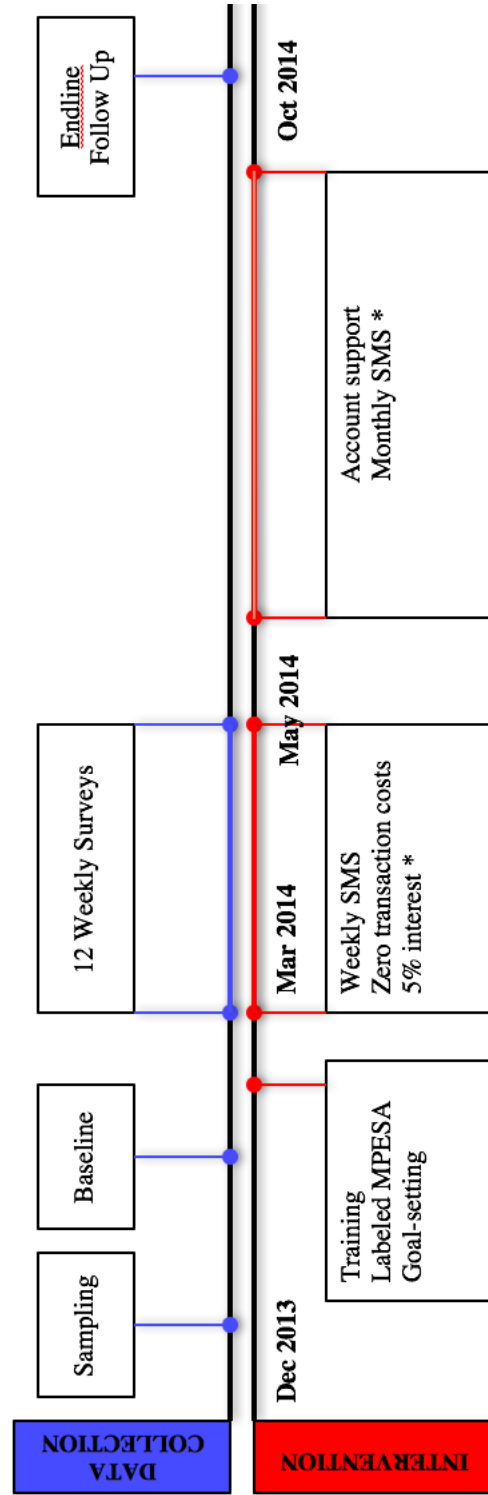
- Karlan, Dean, Aishwarya Lakshmi Ratan, and Jonathan Zinman.** 2014. "Savings by and for the Poor: A Research Review and Agenda." *Review of Income and Wealth*, 60(1): 36–78.
- Karlan, Dean, and Leigh L Linden.** 2014. "Loose knots: Strong versus weak commitments to save for education in Uganda." National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 19863.
- Karlan, Dean, Maggie McConnell, Sendhil Mullainathan, and Jonathan Zinman.** 2016. "Getting to the Top of Mind: How Reminders Increase Savings." *Management Science*, 62(12): 3393–3411.
- Kast, Felipe, and Dina Pomeranz.** 2014. "Saving More to Borrow Less: Experimental Evidence from Access to Formal Savings Accounts in Chile." National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 20239.
- Khan, Farid, Arjun S. Bedi, and Robert Sparrow.** 2015. "Sickness and Death: Economic Consequences and Coping Strategies of the Urban Poor in Bangladesh." *World Development*, 72: 255–266.
- Kinsey, Bill, Kees Burger, and Jan Willem Gunning.** 1998. "Coping with drought in Zimbabwe: Survey evidence on responses of rural households to risk." *World Development*, 26(1): 89–110.
- Kochar, Anjini.** 1995. "Explaining Household Vulnerability to Idiosyncratic Income Shocks." *The American Economic Review*, 85(2): 159–164.
- Kohler, H.P., and R. Thornton.** 2012. "Conditional Cash Transfers and HIV/AIDS Prevention: unconditionally promising?" *World Bank Economic Review*, 26(2): 165–90.
- Landmann, Andreas, and Markus Frolich.** 2015. "Can health-insurance help prevent child labor? An impact evaluation from Pakistan." *Journal of Health Economics*, 39: 51 – 59.
- LeClerc-Madlala, Suzanne.** 2009. "Cultural scripts for multiple and concurrent partnerships in southern Africa: why HIV prevention needs anthropology." *Sexual health*, 6(2): 103–110.

- Ligon, Ethan, Jonathan P. Thomas, and Tim Worrall.** 2000. "Mutual Insurance, Individual Savings, and Limited Commitment." *Review of Economic Dynamics*, 3(2): 216–246.
- Liu, Kai.** 2016. "Insuring against health shocks: Health insurance and household choices." *Journal of Health Economics*, 46: 16 – 32.
- LoPiccalo, Katherine, Jonathan Robinson, and Ethan Yeh.** 2012. "Income, income shocks, and transactional sex." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Prostitution*. , ed. Scott Cunningham and Manisha Shah, Chapter 9. Oxford University Press.
- Luke, N.** 2006. "Exchange and condom use in informal sexual relationships in urban Kenya." *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 54(2): 319–48.
- Luke, N., R.E. Goldberg, B.U. Mberu, and E.M. Zulu.** 2011. "Social Exchange and Sexual Behavior in Young Women's Premarital Relationships in Kenya." *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 73(5): 1048–1064.
- Maccini, S., and D. Yang.** 2009. "Under the weather: Health, schooling, and economic consequences of early-life rainfall." *American Economic Review*, 99(3): 1006–26.
- Masanjala, Winford.** 2007. "The poverty-HIV/AIDS nexus in Africa: a livelihood approach." *Social Science & Medicine*, 64(5): 1032–1041.
- Mishra, Vinod, and Simona Bignami-Van Assche.** 2009. "Concurrent sexual partnerships and HIV infection: Evidence from national population-based surveys." DHS Working Paper 2009-62, Calverton, Maryland:Macro International.
- Mitra, Sophie, Michael Palmer, Daniel Mont, and Nora Groce.** 2016. "Can households cope with health shocks in Vietnam?" *Health economics*, 25(7): 888–907.
- Prina, Silvia.** 2015. "Banking the poor via savings accounts: Evidence from a field experiment." *Journal of Development Economics*, 115: 16–31.
- Rabassa, Mariano, Emmanuel Skoufias, and Hanan Jacoby.** 2014. "Weather and child health in rural Nigeria." *Journal of African Economies*, 23(4): 464–492.

- Rao, V., I. Gupta, M. Lokshin, and S. Jana.** 2003. "Sex workers and the cost of safe sex: the compensating differential for condom use among Calcutta prostitutes." *Journal of Development Economics*, 71(2): 585–603.
- Robinson, Jonathan, and Ethan Yeh.** 2012. "Risk-Coping through Sexual Networks Evidence from Client Transfers in Kenya." *Journal of Human Resources*, 47(1): 107–145.
- Rosenzweig, M.R., and K.I. Wolpin.** 1993. "Credit market constraints, consumption smoothing, and the accumulation of durable production assets in low-income countries: investments in bullocks in India." *Journal of Political Economy*, 101(2): 223–44.
- Schaner, Simone.** Forthcoming. "The Persistent Power of Behavioral Change: Long-Run Impacts of Temporary Savings Subsidies for the Poor." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*.
- Sun, Ang, and Yang Yao.** 2010. "Health shocks and children's school attainments in rural China." *Economics of Education Review*, 29(3): 375–382.
- Suri, Tavneet, William Jack, and Thomas M Stoker.** 2012. "Documenting the birth of a financial economy." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 109(26): 10257–10262.
- Swidler, A., and S.C. Watkins.** 2007. "Ties of dependence: AIDS and transactional sex in rural Malawi." *Studies in Family Planning*, 38(3): 147–62.
- Udry, Christopher.** 1995. "Risk and Saving in Northern Nigeria." *The American Economic Review*, 85(5): 1287–1300.
- Wagstaff, Adam, and Magnus Lindelöw.** 2005. "Health shocks in China: Are the poor and uninsured less protected?" World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3740, Washington, DC.
- Wamoyi, Joyce, Daniel Wight, Mary Plummer, Gerry Mshana, and David Ross.** 2010. "Transactional sex amongst young people in rural northern Tanzania: an ethnography of young women's motivations and negotiation." *Reproductive Health*, 7(1): 1–18.

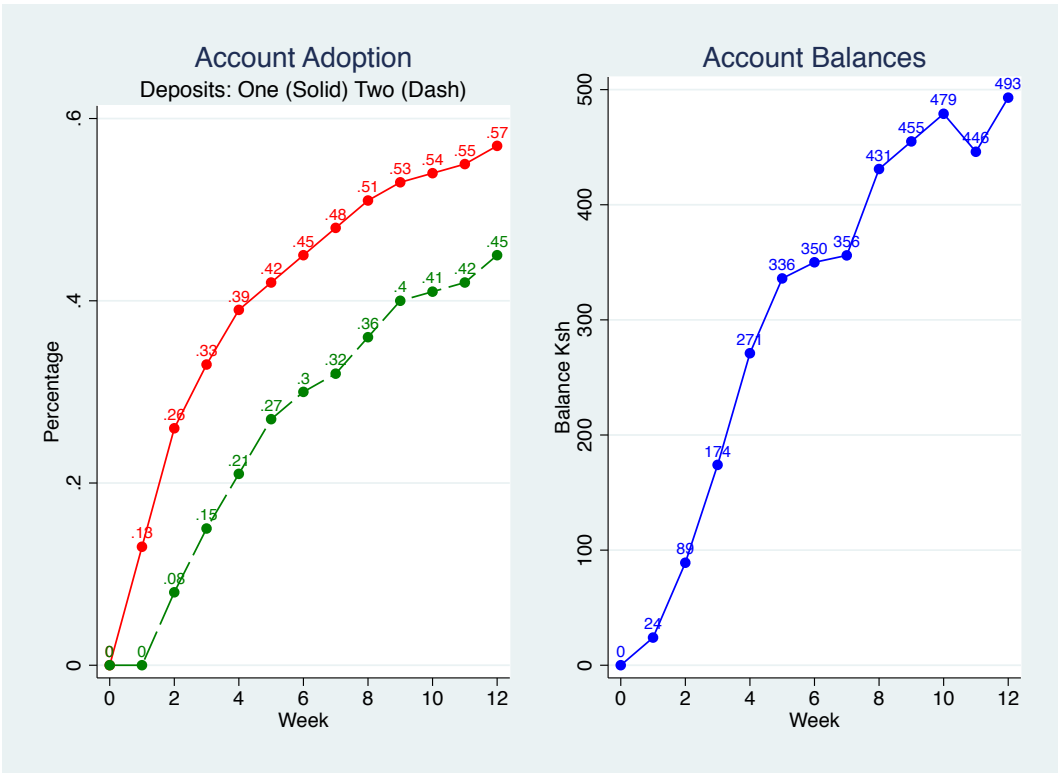
- Wojcicki, J.M.** 2002a. "" She Drank His Money": Survival Sex and the Problem of Violence in Taverns in Gauteng Province, South Africa." *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 16(3): 267–293.
- Wojcicki, J.M.** 2002b. "Commercial sex work or ukuphanda? Sex-for-money exchange in Soweto and Hammanskraal area, South Africa." *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, 26(3): 339–370.

Figure 1: Study Timeline



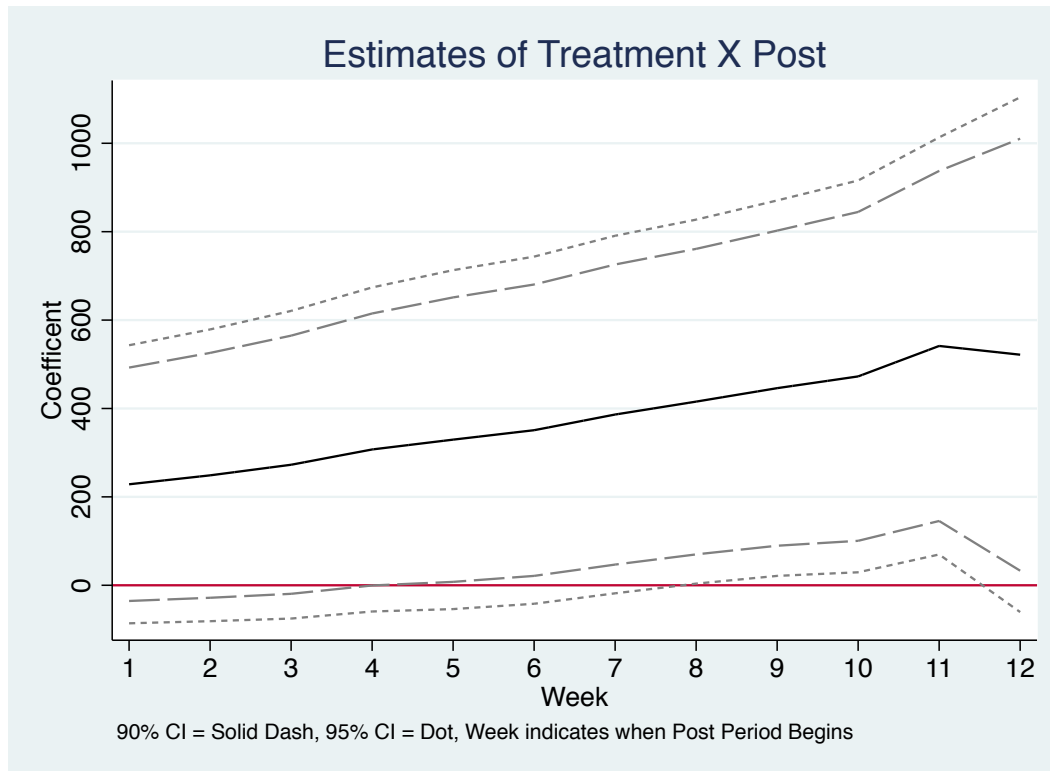
\* Note: intervention arms provided to only a subsample of treatment group

Figure 2: Labeled M-PESA Account Adoption and Balances



Left figure shows how the percentage of the treatment group who had ever made at least one (or two) deposits changes over time through the twelve weeks of observation. The right figure shows how the mean balance of all the new accounts changes over time.

Figure 3: Effect of Intervention on M-PESA Savings



The solid line shows 12 estimates of  $\eta_2$  from equation 1, indicating the treatment effect on the difference in savings balances between baseline and the post period. For each,  $Post$  is defined as the period beginning from the week shown on the horizontal axis. The dashed line indicates the 90% confidence interval; the dotted line indicates the 95% confidence interval.



Table 1: Baseline Sample Characteristics & Balance

	<b>Urban</b>		<b>Rural</b>	
	Control Mean	Treatment Difference	Control Mean	Treatment Difference
<b>Demographics</b>				
Age	30.41	-0.70 0.75	27.00	0.50 0.45
HH Size	2.91	-0.25 0.22	4.13	0.10 0.23
Single	0.38	0.01 0.05	0.17	-0.04 0.04
Widowed	0.21	-0.07* 0.04	0.58	-0.03 0.06
Divorced or Separated	0.33	0.09* 0.05	0.25	0.07 0.05
Completed Primary Sch	0.48	-0.03 0.06	0.32	-0.03 0.05
Food Insecure	0.78	0.00 0.05	0.90	0.01 0.03
<b>Primary Income Source</b>				
Sex Work	0.85	0.03 0.04	0.00	0.00 0.00
Shop Keeping	0.37	-0.04 0.05	0.49	-0.04 0.06
Agriculture	0.00	0.01 0.01	0.39	-0.05 0.05
<b>Savings Usage</b>				
Home Savings	0.33	-0.04 0.05	0.26	0.02 0.05
Bank Account	0.27	-0.04 0.05	0.08	-0.02 0.03
ROSCA	0.74	-0.01 0.05	0.58	0.06 0.06

[Table continued on next page]

	<b>Urban</b>		<b>Rural</b>	
	Control Mean	Treatment Difference	Control Mean	Treatment Difference
<b>Savings Balances</b>				
Existing M-PESA	1,136	-319 620	531	-164 278
Home Savings	660	-125 226	136	266 180
Bank Account	2,638	244 1,629	280	-33 232
<b>Sexual Behavior</b>				
Years in Sex Work	4.79	0.35 0.48		
Number of Regular Clients	4.11	-0.22 0.30		
Sexually Active Past Year			0.58	-0.06 0.06
Partners in Past Year			1.17	-0.00 0.14
Observations	160	142	155	155

Note: Control group means are presented in columns 1 and 3, and treatment differences (controlling for age and geographic cluster) are reported in columns 2 and 4. Standard errors for the treatment differences are reported in the row below. Statistically significant at 10% (\*), 5% (\*\*), and 1% (\*\*\*).

Table 2: Dependent Illness and Sexual Behavior during observation period

Sample	Indicator	Urban		Rural	
		Control Mean	Treatment Difference N	Control Mean	Treatment Difference N
Weeks	<b>Dependent Illness</b> % with Dependent Illness	0.203	-0.013 [0.013] 3,513	0.318	0.008 [0.015] 3,697
Weeks with illness	Cost of Dependent Illness (KSh)	724	335 [410] 619	377	68 [48] 1,058
Women	<b>Sexual Behavior</b> % having any acts	0.95	0.017 [0.023] 301	0.382	-0.056 [0.054] 316
Weeks	% having any acts	0.81	-0.036 [0.031] 2,933	0.105	-0.031* [0.019] 3,697
Sexual acts	% remunerated	0.97	.006 [0.020] 17,392	0.65	-0.018 [0.074] 372
Sexual acts	% unprotected	0.081	-0.001 [0.020] 17,386	0.34	-0.129 [0.088] 371
Sexual acts (urban only)	% higher risk (anal)	0.097	-0.025 [0.027] 16,797		

Note: Control group means are presented in columns 1 and 4, and treatment differences are reported in columns 2 and 5. Treatment differences are estimated controlling for age and cluster fixed effects. Standard errors for the weeks and sexual acts sample are clustered at the individual level and reported in brackets. Statistically significant at 10% (\*), 5% (\*\*), and 1% (\*\*\*).

Table 3: Effects on Sexual Behavior As Shock-Coping: Urban Sample

	Number of Partners (1)	Regular Clients (2)	Casual Clients (3)	Risk Index (4)	Y/N above median risk (5)
Dependent Illness	0.810*** [0.226]	0.492*** [0.146]	0.265 [0.190]	0.185** [0.0798]	0.0770*** [0.0271]
Treat X Dependent Illness	-0.457 [0.362]	-0.503** [0.216]	0.0549 [0.276]	-0.164* [0.0974]	-0.101** [0.0422]
Observations	2634	2634	2634	2054	2054
Individuals	294	294	294	278	278
R-squared	0.005	0.005	0.002	0.007	0.004
Mean Control	6.49	2.48	3.88	-0.038	0.459

Note: Estimation of equation 2 for the urban sample at the woman-week level, employing woman-fixed effects. Column headers indicate the dependent variable, which is a count for columns 1-3, continuous in column 4, and binary in column 5. The sample in columns 4 and 5 are conditional on any sexual activity in the week. The risk index is created using principal components analysis of number of regular and casual clients, mean amount paid per act, number of acts that were unprotected and number of acts that were anal. The sample is reduced as the shock indicator from last week is not available in the first week of the data. The sample available for the risk index is further reduced by missing data on amount paid by client for some weeks. Standard errors are reported in brackets and are clustered at the individual level. Statistically significant at ) 10% (\*), 5% (\*\*), and 1% (\*\*\*).

Table 4: Effects on Sexual Behavior as Shock-Coping: Rural Sample

	Any sexual activity (1)	Transactional sex (2)	(3)	Risk Index (4)
Dependent Illness	0.0166 [0.0143]	0.0330** [0.0129]	0.124*** [0.0458]	1.378*** [0.455]
Treat X Dependent Illness	-0.0000313 [0.0217]	-0.0275 [0.0173]	-0.105* [0.0627]	-1.820*** [0.665]
Sample	All	All	Woman ever reports TS	Weeks with any sex
Observations	3358	3358	899	290
Individuals	312	312	83	109
R-squared	0.002	0.003	0.011	0.049
Mean control	0.102	0.067	0.235	3.199

Note: Estimation of equation 2 for the rural sample at the woman-week level, including woman-fixed effects. Column headers indicate the dependent variable. The sample is reduced as the shock indicator from last week is not available in the first week of the data. Column 3 includes only women who ever report engaging in transactional sex; column 4 includes only woman-weeks with any sexual activity. Risk Index is created with principal components analysis of whether the sex is paid and whether a condom was used. Standard errors are reported in brackets and are clustered at the individual level. Statistically significant at 10% (\*), 5% (\*\*), and 1% (\*\*\*). Note that the coefficient on Treat x Dependent Illness is marginally significant in column 2 (p-value 0.114).

Table 5: Woman-level Estimates: Effects on the use of transactional sex for shock coping and STIs

	Rate of sex coping (1)	Any STI symptom (2)
Treatment	-0.0487*** [0.0170]	-0.0533** [0.0208]
Treatment x Urban	0.0186 [0.0484]	-0.00445 [0.0373]
Urban	0.485*** [0.0266]	0.119*** [0.0181]
Observations	530	522
R-squared	0.502	0.095
Mean in rural control	0.0854	0.0890
Mean in urban control	0.5818	0.0909
Treat + Treat x Urban	-0.0300 [0.0452]	-0.0578* [0.0316]

Note: Estimation of equation 3 at the woman level, controlling for age and cluster-fixed effects. Samples are conditioned on experiencing a dependent illness at some point in the study. Dependent variables are: cols 1- the proportion of shocks that were followed by transactional sex in the next week; col 2 - whether any STI symptom was reported at any point during the observation (queried weekly during weeks 6-12). Sample sizes in all columns are reduced by restriction to women ever reporting any shock during the observation period. Sample size in col 2 is further reduced by missing data on STIs. Standard errors are reported in brackets, clustered at the geographic cluster level. Statistically significant at 10% (\*), 5% (\*\*), and 1% (\*\*\*).

Table 6: Medium-term Impacts: Savings

	All (1)	Rural (2)	Urban (3)
Treat X			
Week 12	521* (296)	680** (311)	398 (510)
Week 35	371 (302)	294 (324)	491 (508)
Number of observations	1,716	876	840
Number of women	612	310	302
Control Mean			
Week 12	1,210	422	2,004
Week 35	919	306	1,497

The table above presents estimates from a modified version of equation 1 where both week 12 and week 35 are included. The estimates above indicate the treatment effect on the difference in savings balances between baseline and the post period. Total observations of 612 women are greater than the number of women surveyed at endline because this analysis relies solely on administrative data. Standard errors are reported in ( ) and are clustered at the individual level. Statistically significant at ) 10% (\*), 5% (\*\*), and 1% (\*\*\*).

Table 7: Medium-term Impacts: Reported responses to shocks over previous 4 months

	Sex (1)	Rely on Savings (2)	Reduce Consumption (3)	Loan (4)	Gift (5)
Treatment	-0.114** [0.0545]	0.376*** [0.116]	-0.138** [0.0635]	-0.0536 [0.115]	0.0391 [0.0713]
Treatment x Rural	0.113** [0.0545]	-0.471*** [0.139]	0.0699 [0.0949]	0.0531 [0.123]	-0.0772 [0.0996]
Observations	279	279	279	279	279
R-squared	0.044	0.075	0.015	0.007	0.014
Mean in urban control	0.134	0.343	0.343	0.358	0.209
Treat + TreatxRural	-0.001 [0.002]	-0.095 [0.075]	-0.068 [0.071]	-0.001 [0.0455]	-0.038 [0.070]

Note: Estimation of equation (5) at the woman level, controlling for age and cluster-fixed effects. Samples are conditioned on experiencing a shock during the 4 months prior to data collection, which was 4-5 months after the weekly observation period. Dissaving is indicated by either reporting relying on savings or reporting that the shock was not a financial burden. Standard errors are reported in brackets, clustered at the geographic cluster level. Statistically significant at 10% (\*), 5% (\*\*), and 1% (\*\*\*).



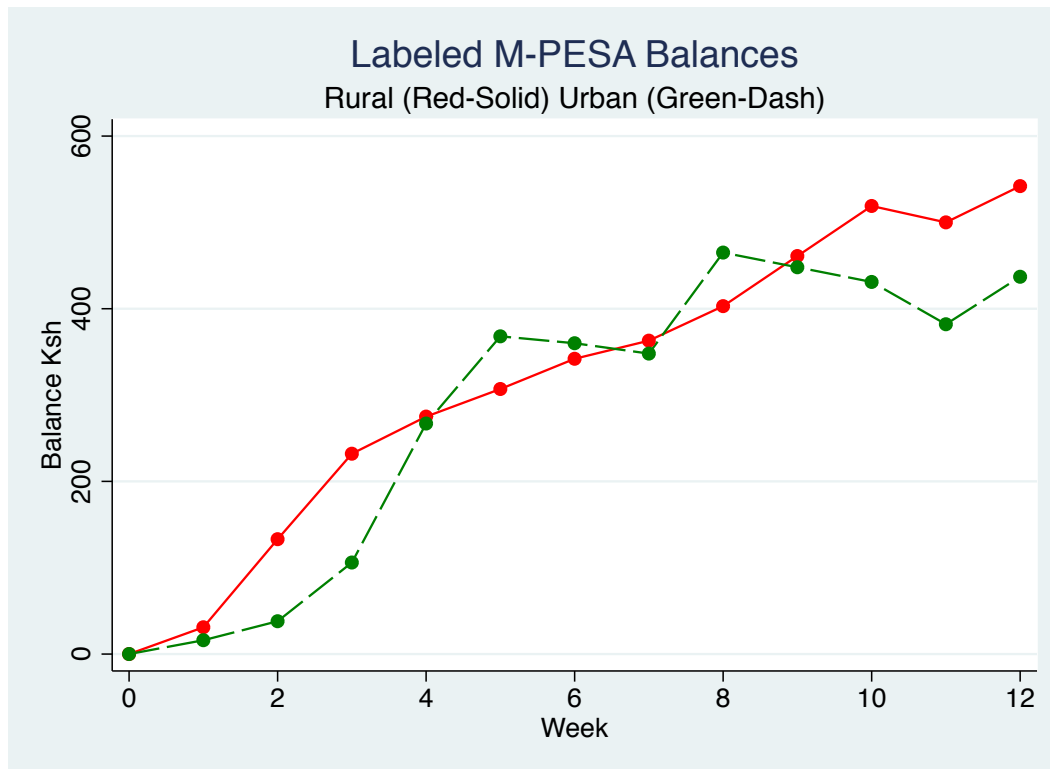
Table 8: Medium-term Impacts: Sexual activity in Rural Sample

	Any sexual activity in previous 4 months			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Treatment	-0.0857 [0.0658]	-0.1000 [0.0628]	-0.304* [0.150]	-0.315** [0.131]
Treatment x No Shock	0.106 [0.108]	0.134 [0.0944]	0.232 [0.257]	0.201 [0.299]
Sample	All	All	Ever reports	Ever reports
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	291	289	78	78
R-squared	0.016	0.086	0.053	0.124
Mean in control	0.336	0.336	0.610	0.610

Note: Estimation of equation (6) at the woman level, controlling for age and cluster-fixed effects. Sample in cols 3 and 4 is the same as employed in col 3 of Table 4. Standard errors are reported in brackets, clustered at the geographic cluster level. Statistically significant at 10% (\*), 5% (\*\*), and 1% (\*\*\*).

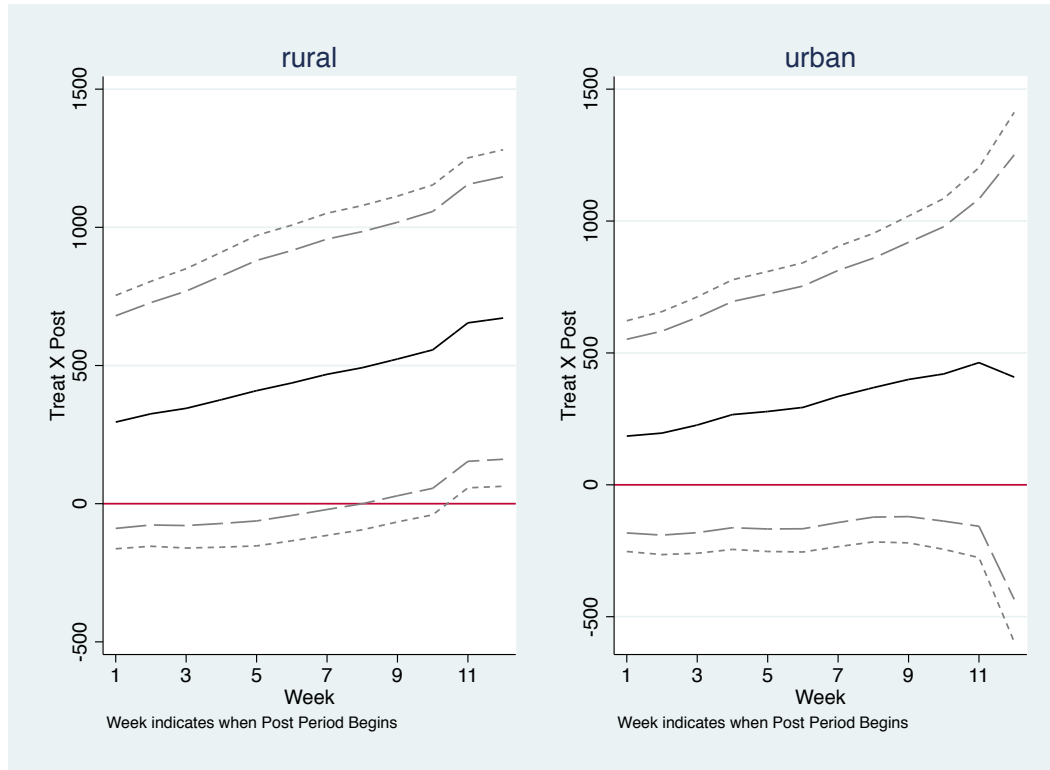
## A Appendix

Figure A.1: Labeled M-PESA Account Balances



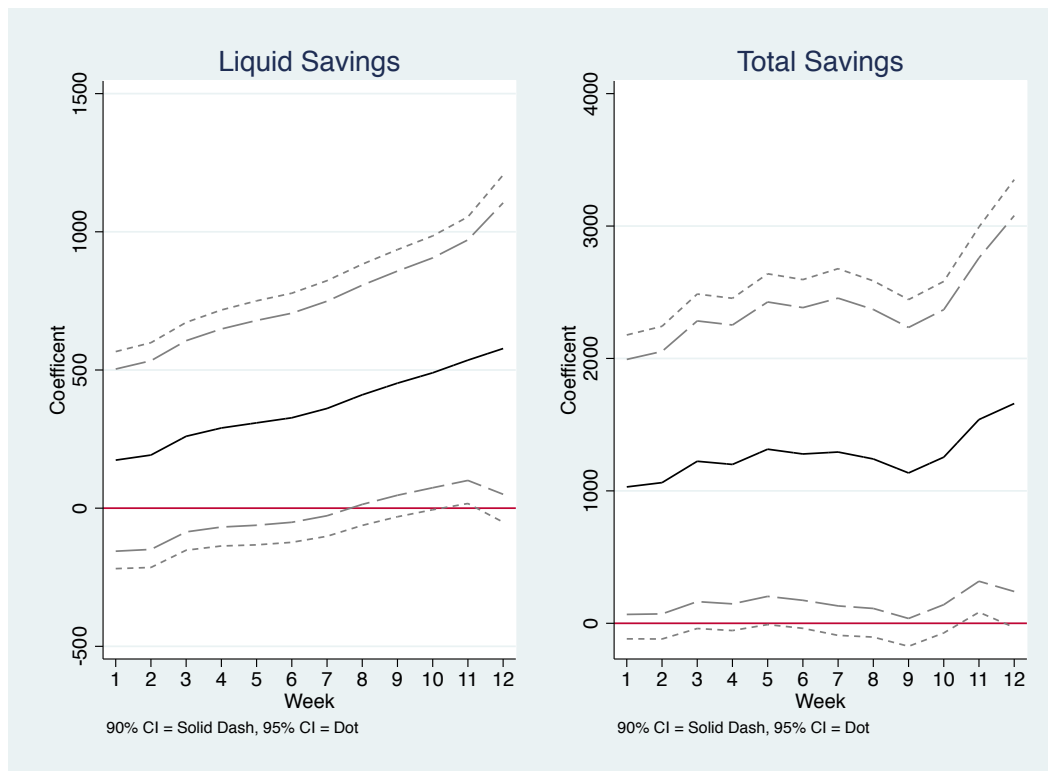
Note: Mean balances in new savings accounts by week, separately for rural and urban samples.

Figure A.2: Effect of Intervention on M-PESA Savings by Rural and Urban Samples



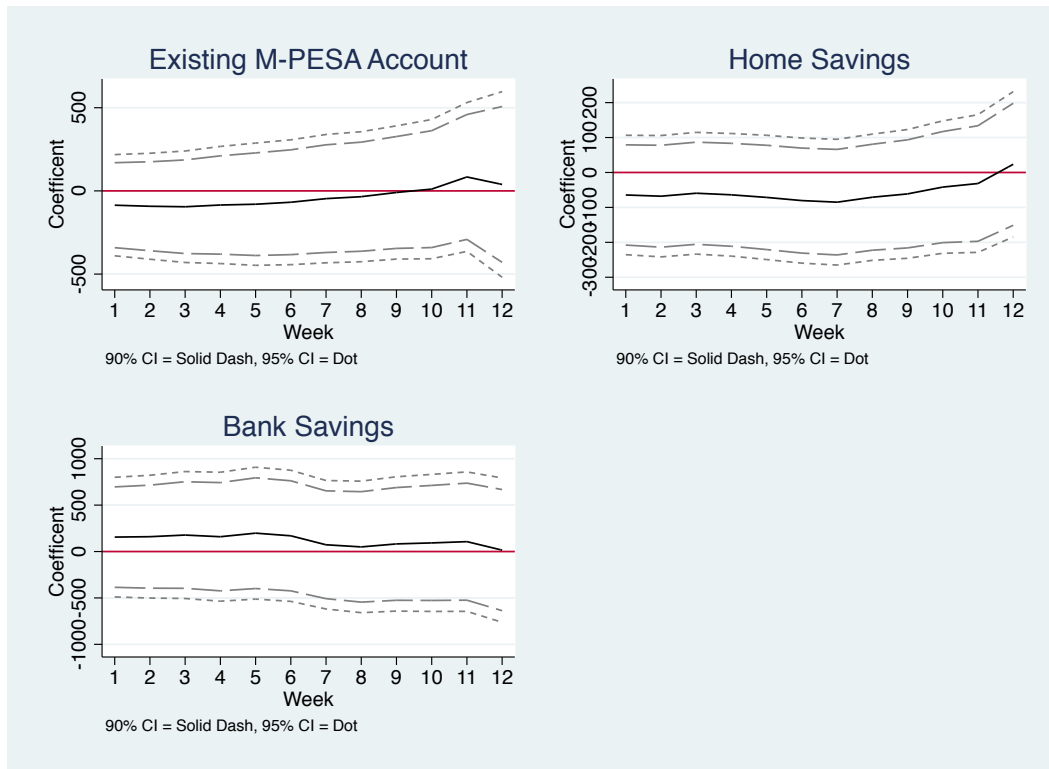
Note: Analogs to Figure 3 shown separately for rural and urban samples. The solid line shows 12 estimates of  $\eta_2$  from equation 1, indicating the treatment effect on the difference in savings balances between baseline and the post period. For each, *Post* is defined as the period beginning from the week shown on the horizontal axis. The dashed line indicates the 90% confidence interval; the dotted line indicates the 95% confidence interval.

Figure A.3: Treatment Effects on Liquid and Total Savings



Note: Analogs to Figure 3 where M-PESA savings is replaced with total liquid savings and total savings. Liquid savings includes home savings and M-PESA savings. Total savings includes liquid savings, plus bank savings.

Figure A.4: Other Savings Accounts



Note: Analogs to Figure 3 where M-PESA savings is replaced with balance in existing M-PESA account only, home savings only, and banks savings only, to demonstrate there was no significant decline in any of these other accounts.

Table A.1: Treatment Effects on M-PESA Savings

Treat X	Full Sample		Rural		Urban	
	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE
wk1	229	(160)	295	(234)	185	(223)
wk2	249	(168)	325	(245)	196	(235)
wk3	273	(178)	345	(258)	227	(248)
wk4	307	(187)	376	(272)	266	(261)
wk5	330*	(196)	409	(287)	278	(271)
wk6	351*	(200)	437	(291)	293	(280)
wk7	386*	(206)	468	(297)	335	(290)
wk8	416**	(210)	492	(299)	368	(298)
wk9	446**	(217)	523*	(301)	399	(316)
wk10	473**	(226)	557*	(304)	420	(339)
wk11	541**	(241)	654**	(305)	463	(377)
wk12	522*	(297)	672**	(311)	408	(512)

The table above presents 12 estimates of  $\eta_2$  from equation 1, indicating the treatment effect on the difference in savings balances between baseline and the post period. For each, *Post* is defined as the period beginning from the week shown on the in each row.

Table A.2: Analysis of Attrition

Administrative data (M-PESA)	Sample	Control	Treatment	Difference	p-value
Has baseline M-PESA data	Pooled	0.975	0.977	-0.0017	0.887
Has baseline M-PESA data	Urban	0.964	0.979	-0.015	0.419
Has baseline M-PESA data	Rural	0.987	0.975	0.0124	0.42
Weekly interview data	Sample	Control	Treatment	Difference	p-value
Weeks of interview data	Pooled	11.51	11.48	0.03	0.818
Weeks of interview data	Urban	11.31	11.26	0.05	0.815
Weeks of interview data	Rural	11.72	11.68	0.04	0.789
Has 10+ weeks interview data	Pooled	0.966	0.944	0.022	0.186
Has 10+ weeks interview data	Urban	0.952	0.917	0.035	0.216
Has 10+ weeks interview data	Rural	0.98	0.969	0.012	0.487
Sexual behavior (interview+diary)	Sample	Control	Treatment	Difference	p-value
Weeks of complete sex data	Pooled	10.6	10.55	0.048	0.837
Weeks of complete sex data	Urban	9.54	9.31	0.226	0.580
Weeks of complete sex data	Rural	11.72	11.68	0.04	0.789
%Interview weeks with sex data	Pooled	.920	0.919	0.002	0.784
%Interview weeks with sex data	Urban	.842	0.826	0.016	0.195
%Interview weeks with sex data	Rural	1	1	0	0
Woman has 10+ weeks sex data	Pooled	0.845	0.809	0.036	0.234
Woman has 10+ weeks sex data	Urban	0.717	0.634	0.0823	0.122
Woman has 10+ weeks sex data	Rural	0.98	0.969	0.012	0.487
Endline data	Sample	Control	Treatment	Difference	p-value
Has endline data	Pooled	0.922	0.924	-0.0017	0.935
Has endline data	Urban	0.922	0.924	-0.002	0.936
Has endline data	Rural	0.924	0.925	-0.0009	0.974

Table A.3: No link between shocks and missing diary data

	Missing diary data	
	(1)	(2)
Dependent Illness	0.0015 [.0106]	-0.013 [.0200]
Treatment X Dependent Illness		0.032 [.033]
Observations	3513	3513
R2	0.0000	0.0002

Note: Estimates control for age, cluster fixed effects and woman fixed effects. Standard errors in brackets, clustered at the geographic cluster level.

Table A.4: No link between treatment and experience of shocks

	Dependent Variable	Treatment Coefficient	SE	Observations	R-squared
(1)	Any shock	-0.0250	[0.0358]	579	0.001
(2)	Illness	0.0190	[0.0371]	579	0.001
(3)	Death	-0.0153	[0.0106]	579	0.007
(4)	Birth	-0.00254	[0.0115]	579	0.000
(5)	Job Loss	-0.00266	[0.0209]	579	0.005
(6)	Theft	0.00877	[0.0168]	579	0.002
(7)	Damage to property	-0.00535	[0.00819]	579	0.003
(8)	Legal trouble	-0.00125	[0.00731]	579	0.000
(9)	Conflict	-0.0197	[0.0119]	579	0.011
(10)	Crop Loss	-0.0121	[0.0159]	579	0.002
(11)	Livestock illness/death	-0.00137	[0.00908]	579	0.003

Note: Estimates control for age and cluster fixed effects. Standard errors in brackets, clustered at the geographic cluster level.