

# Poverty and Sexual Risk-taking in Africa

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# Background

- Globally, HIV has mostly affected poor countries, especially in Africa
- At MACRO level, no clear relationship between poverty and HIV in Africa
  - (e.g. richer countries like South African and Botswana have higher prevalence rates than poorer ones)
- Community based HIV prevalence rates are higher for the rich compared to the poor people
- There are mixed results on the relationship between poverty and sexual risk taking



# Measures of Economic Well-being

- Slum Residence
  - Simultaneous lack of piped water into a household, flush toilet, and electricity
- General poverty
  - Poverty index derived through PCA



# Measures of Sexual Behavior

- Age at first sex
- Number of sexual partners
- Use of condoms



# Data

- **DHS Data**

- Pooled DHS data (1989, 1993 & 1998) for Nairobi City and Kenya to examine differences in sexual behavior between slum & non-slum women, and between rural and urban poor

- **PNG Data**

- From nationally representative surveys of adolescents aged 12-19 in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Malawi, and Uganda
- Collected information was on sexual experiences, socioeconomic and background characteristics

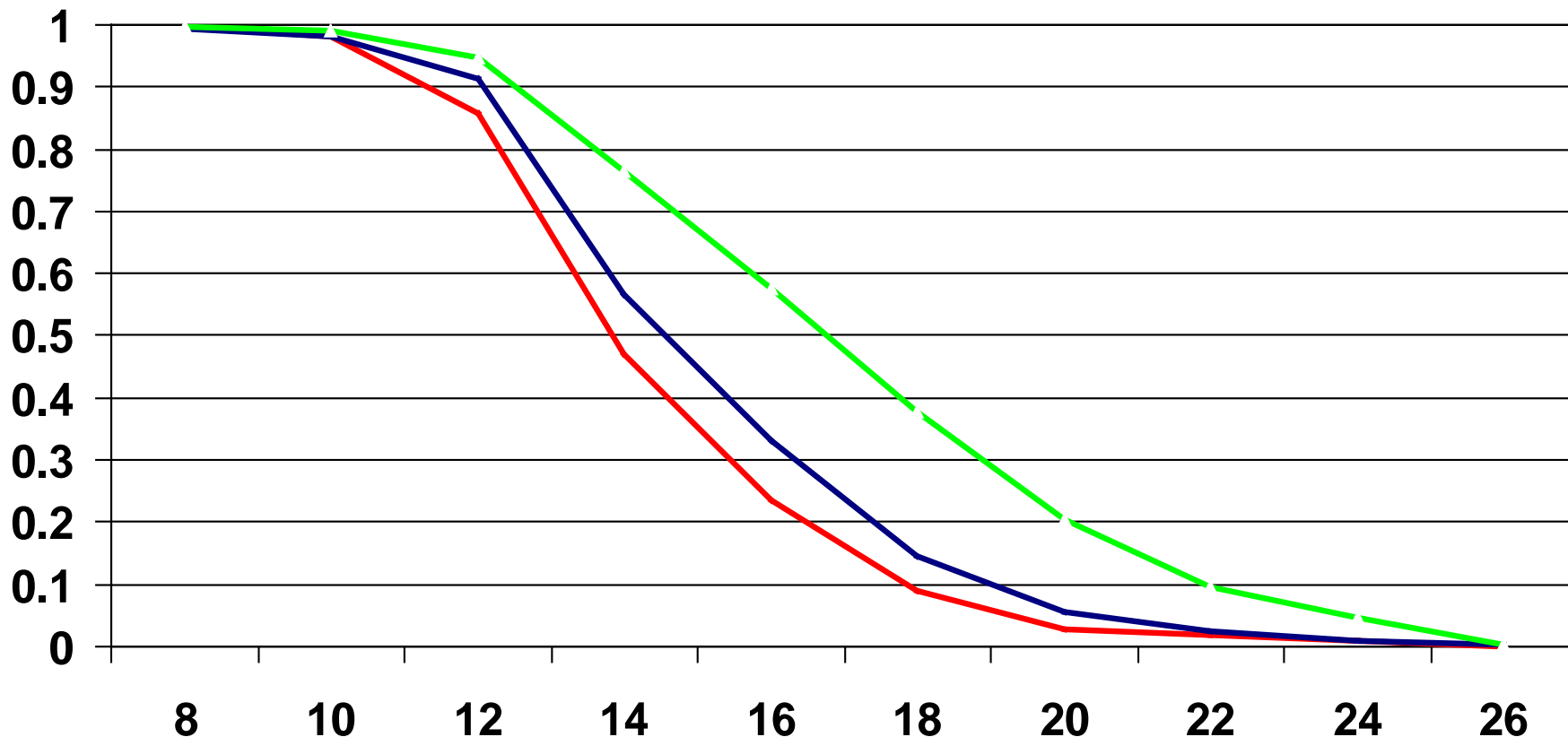


Are the urban poor more vulnerable to risky sexual behaviors than the urban non-poor in Nairobi City?

**Sexual risk-taking in the slums of Nairobi, Kenya, 1993-98, *Population Studies*. 2002.  
(Zulu, E. M., F. Nii-Amoo Doodoo, & A. C. Ezeh)**



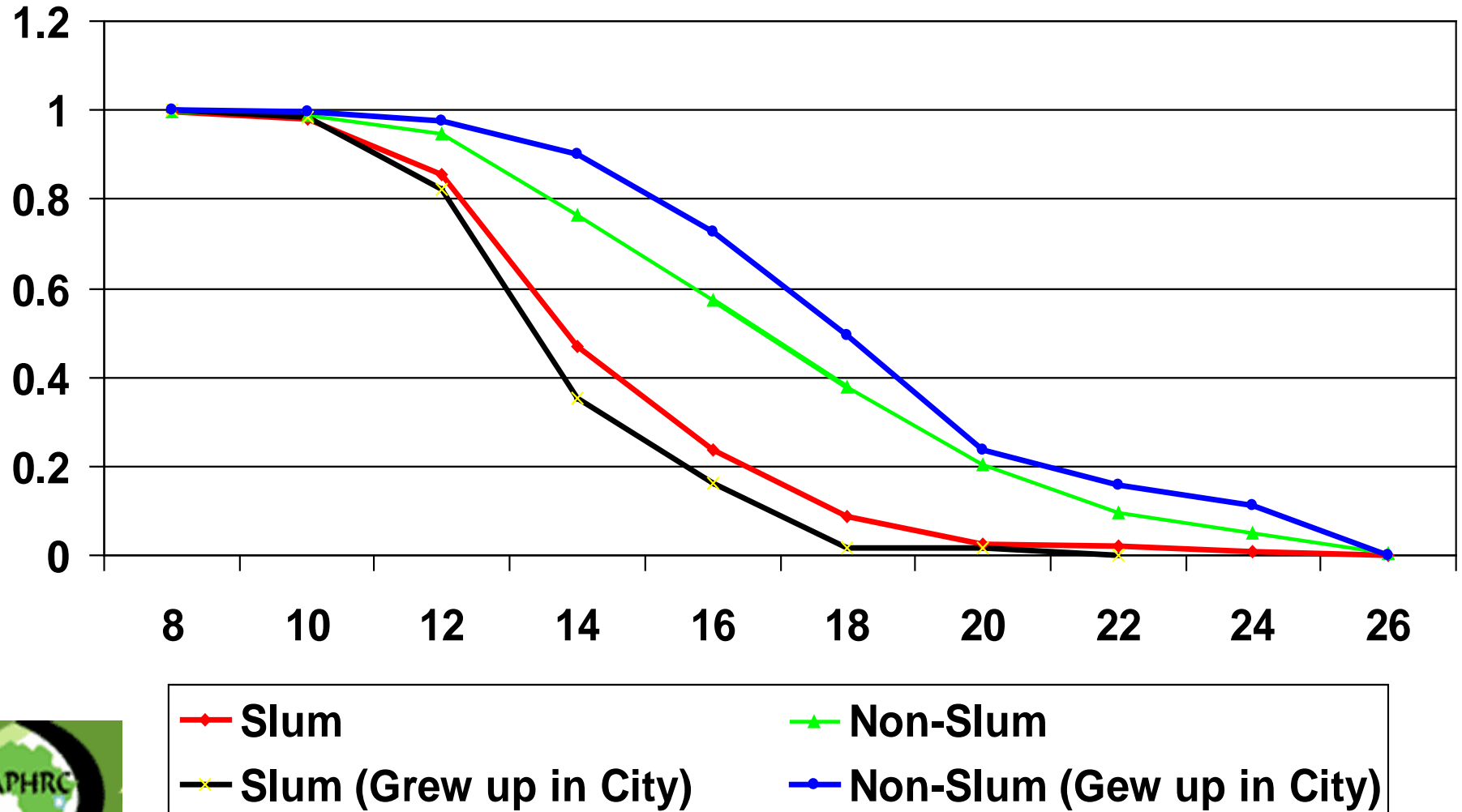
# Proportion of women who are still virgins by age and residence



— Slum — Intermediate — Non-Slum



# Proportion of women who are still virgins by age, residence, and where grew up





# Median Age at First Sex

ALL WOMEN		
Slum	Intermediate	Non-Slum
15.0	16.0	18.0

ONLY WOMEN WHO GREW UP IN THE CITY		
Slum	Intermediate	Non-Slum
15.0	16.0	20.0



# Net Logistic Regression Results (Odds Ratios) for likelihood of having 2 or more Sexual Partners in past 12/6 Months

	Slum	Intermediate	Non-Slum
All Women	2.776**	1.673	1.0
Married Women	3.738*	0.770	1.0
Young Women (15-24)	6.397**	2.639	1.0



In this relationship about poverty  
in general or urban poverty?

In other words, is there a  
difference between rural and  
urban poverty?

Urban-Rural Differences in the Socio-Economic  
Deprivation-Sexual Behaviour Link in Kenya. 2007. Social  
Science & Medicine (F.N. Doodoo, E. M. Zulu, A. C. Ezeh)



<b>Residence Category</b>	<b>Median Age at First sex</b>
Rural Poorest	16
Rural Intermediate	16
Rural Richest	17
Other Urban Poorest	15
Other Urban Intermediate	17
Other Urban Richest	19
Slum Poorest	15
Slum Intermediate	16
Slum Richest	19



# Odds Ratios of deprivation on multiple sexual partnerships

<b>Residence Category</b>	<b>All Women</b>	<b>Married Women</b>
Rural Poorest	1.00	1.00
Rural Richest	0.68***	0.66
Other Urban Poorest	1.27	1.25
Other Urban Richest	0.51**	0.23
Slum Poorest	2.51***	3.03 **
Slum Richest	0.59	1.41



# Possible Explanations

- Qualitative information give some insights on the slum contextual factors (but not on non-slum areas):
- Initiation of sex:
  - Early socialization of children into sex by parents through lack of sexual privacy
  - Economic hardship: sending daughters to “bring food” without giving them money
  - Open prostitution in some slums (children grow up thinking it’s an acceptable way of generating a living
  - Idleness resulting from unemployment and early drop-out from schools



# Possible Explanations (cont.)

- Multiple sexual partners
  - Economic deprivation (women use sex as a last resort to buy food, or pay rent)
  - Because most “clients” are poor, one may need to have a cadre of partners to ensure that you have someone to fall back on
  - Giving sexual favors to get informal sector business deals from men.
  - Relatively high alcohol abuse by men and women
  - Commercial sex



# How does this relationship play out for young people?

**Is Poverty a Driver for Risky Sexual Behavior? Evidence from National Surveys of Adolescents in four African Countries. 2007. African Journal of Reproductive Health (N. Madise, E. Zulu and J. Ciera)**





There is no significant difference among poverty groups in initiation of sex for boys, except in Malawi

	Burkina Faso	Ghana	Malawi	Uganda
Poorest	0.9	1.2	1.1	.3
Second	1.1	1.2	1.3**	1.1
Third	1.1	0.9	1.6***	1.2
Fourth	0.7	1.5	1.1	1.0
Richest	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0



Odds Ratios of first sex for 12-19 year old males

# Poor girls initiate sex significantly earlier than rich ones in some countries

	Burkina Faso	Ghana	Malawi	Uganda
Poorest	1.4	2.7***	1.9***	1.0
Second	2.0***	1.9***	2.6***	1.2
Third	1.3	1.4	1.6	1.1
Fourth	1.5	1.8***	2.0***	1.1
Richest	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0



Odds Ratios of first sex for 12-19 year old males

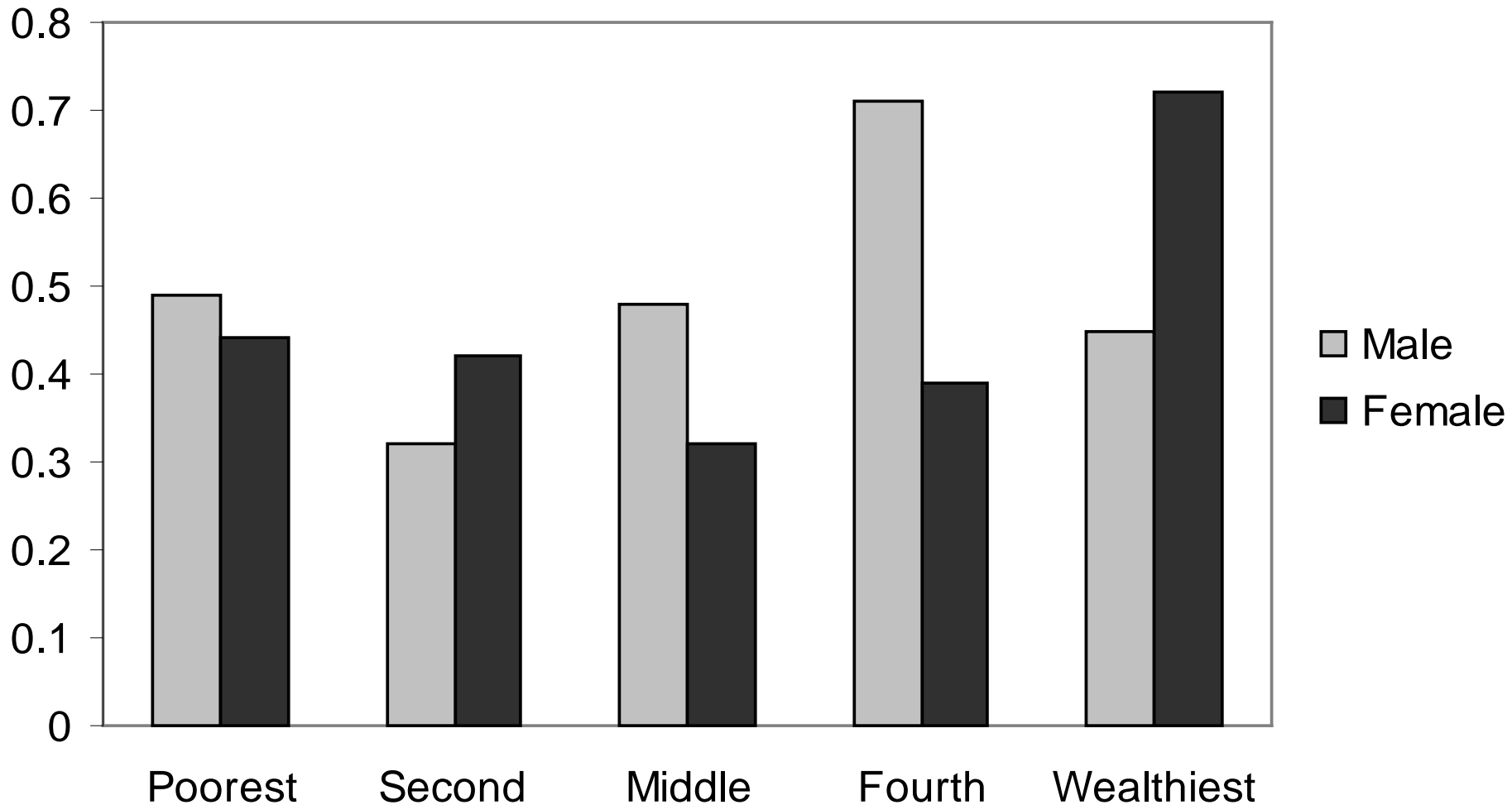
# Adolescents in schools were more likely to have had sex than not in school

	Burkina Faso	Ghana	Malawi	Uganda
Out of school	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Male In school	1.7***	2.0***	2.4***	3.3***
Female In school	0.9	1.8***	1.7***	1.8***

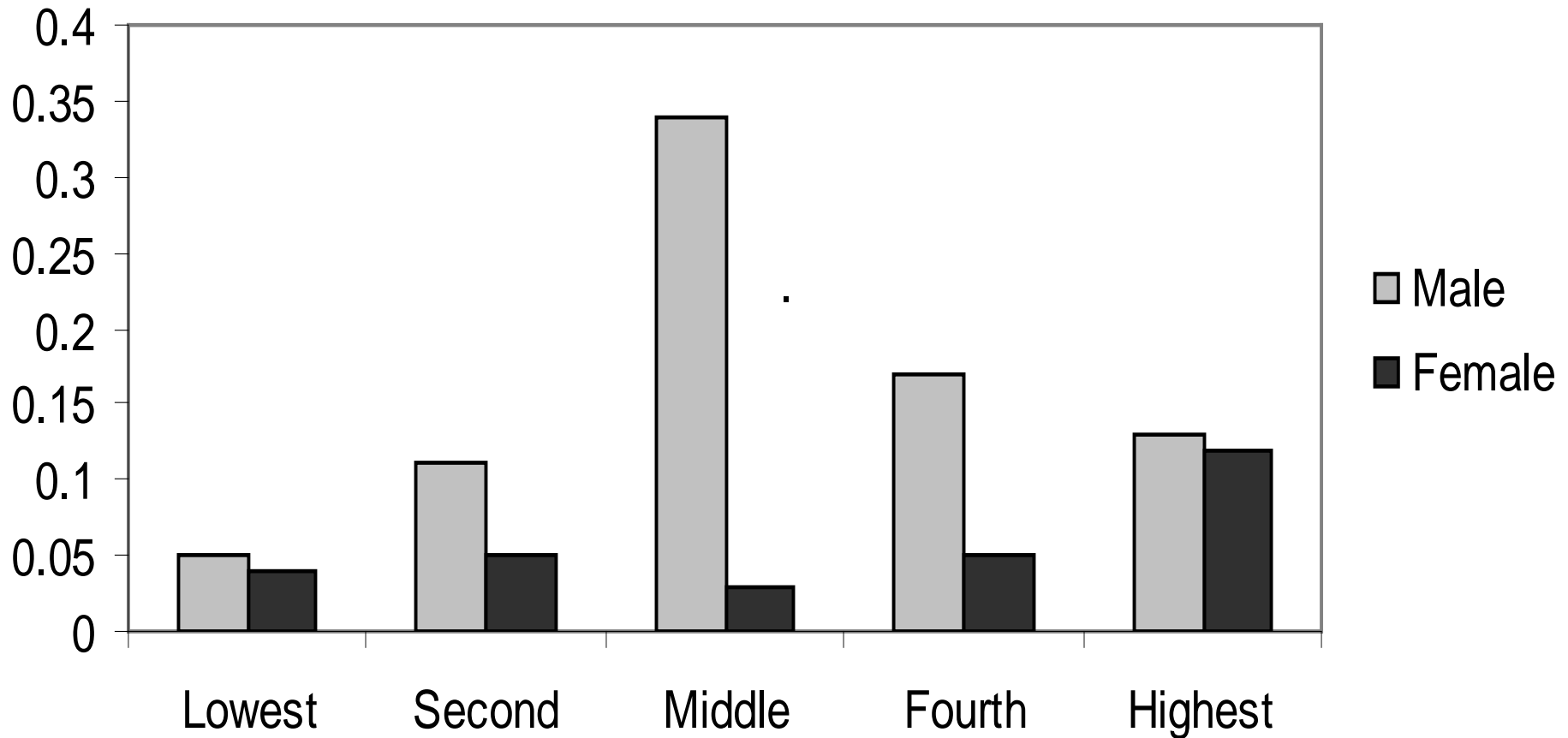
Adjusted odd ratios of first sex for 12-19 year old males and females



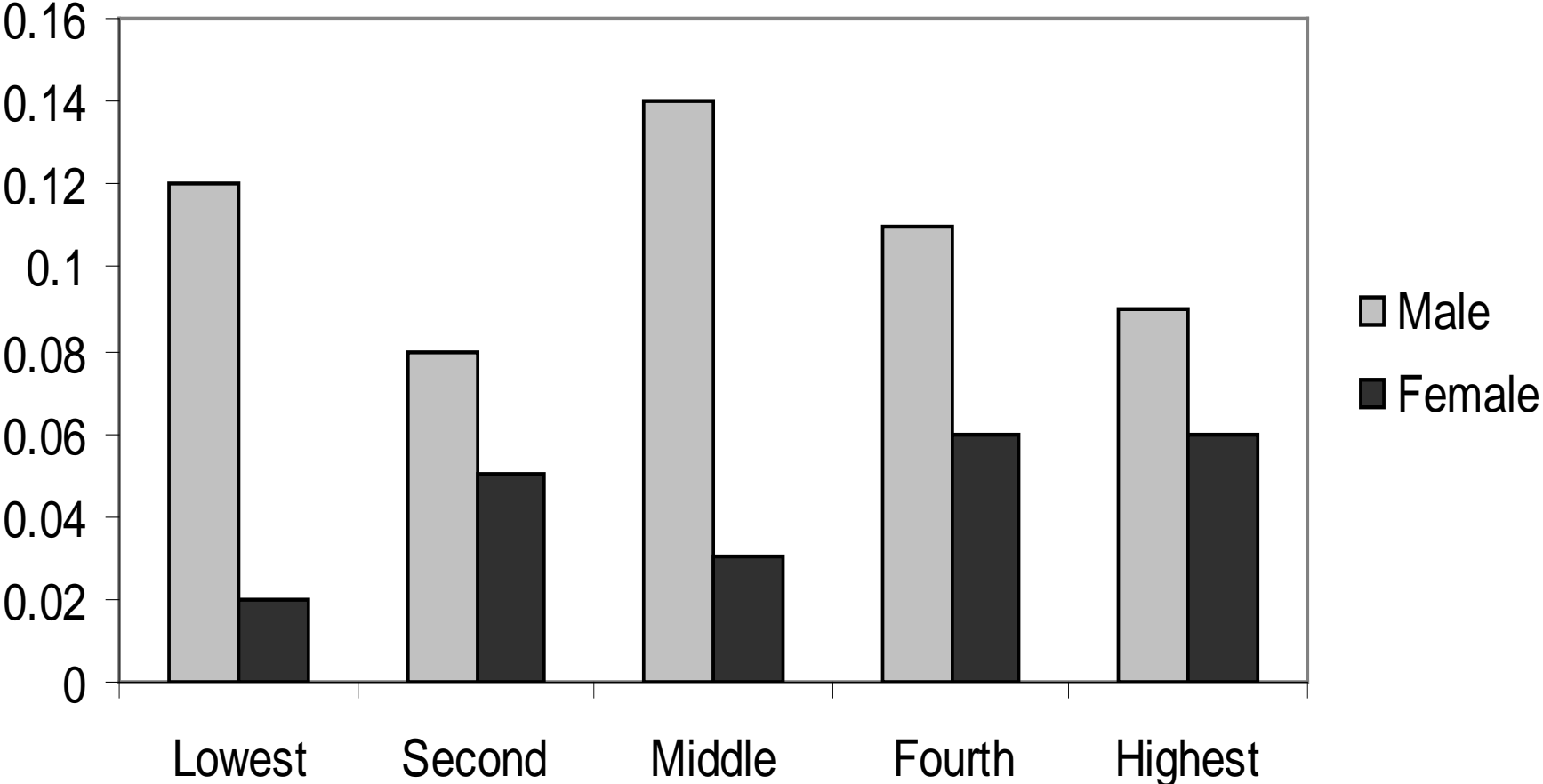
**Figure 1: Adjusted probability of using condoms with last sexual partner by wealth status and sex among Ghanaian adolescents**



# Figure 2: Estimated probability of multiple sexual partners by wealth status among Ghanaian adolescents



**Figure 3: Estimated probability of multiple sexual partners by walth status among Uganda adolescents**



# Conclusions: Slum Residents

- Poverty associated with risky sexual outcomes in both rural and urban Kenya
- Urban poor are more likely to have early sexual debut and multiple sexual partners than other groups, including the rural poor
- Married women in urban informal settlements are 3 times more likely to have multiple partners than their rural counterparts
- Poverty associated with earlier sexual debut among girls and none-use of condoms



# Conclusions: Adolescents

- Poverty associated with early initiation of sex for females but not necessarily for males
- Poverty is associated with lower condom use for females
- Poverty is associated with greater indulgence in multiple sexual partnerships for girls
- Being in school is associated with earlier initiation of sex





# Implications

- Poverty is a key determinant of sexual behavior and risk to HIV/AIDS
  - the poor initiate sex earlier and are less likely to use protection
  - Urban poverty significantly increases sexual risk taking for women
  - There is need to intensify preventive efforts among vulnerable groups
- How come the rich are more likely to be infected when they are less likely to indulge in risky behaviors and more likely to use condoms? Is it a reporting issue?
- Measures of sexual behavior and poverty used in this and other studies have limitations that need to be looked at to have a correct assessment of the effect of poverty on sexual behavior

