Becoming a Sexual Black Woman: A Grounded Theory Study

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Background

- 20 million Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) occur annually in the United States
- Black females:
    - Aged 15-24 comprise of half new STI cases
    - Contract gonorrhea 12X and chlamydia 5x more frequently than white females
    - Are 3x more likely to contract another STI

Gap in Knowledge

Studies have identified sociocultural conditions associated with STI risk, but we have limited understanding of these conditions and how they impact Black female sexual health
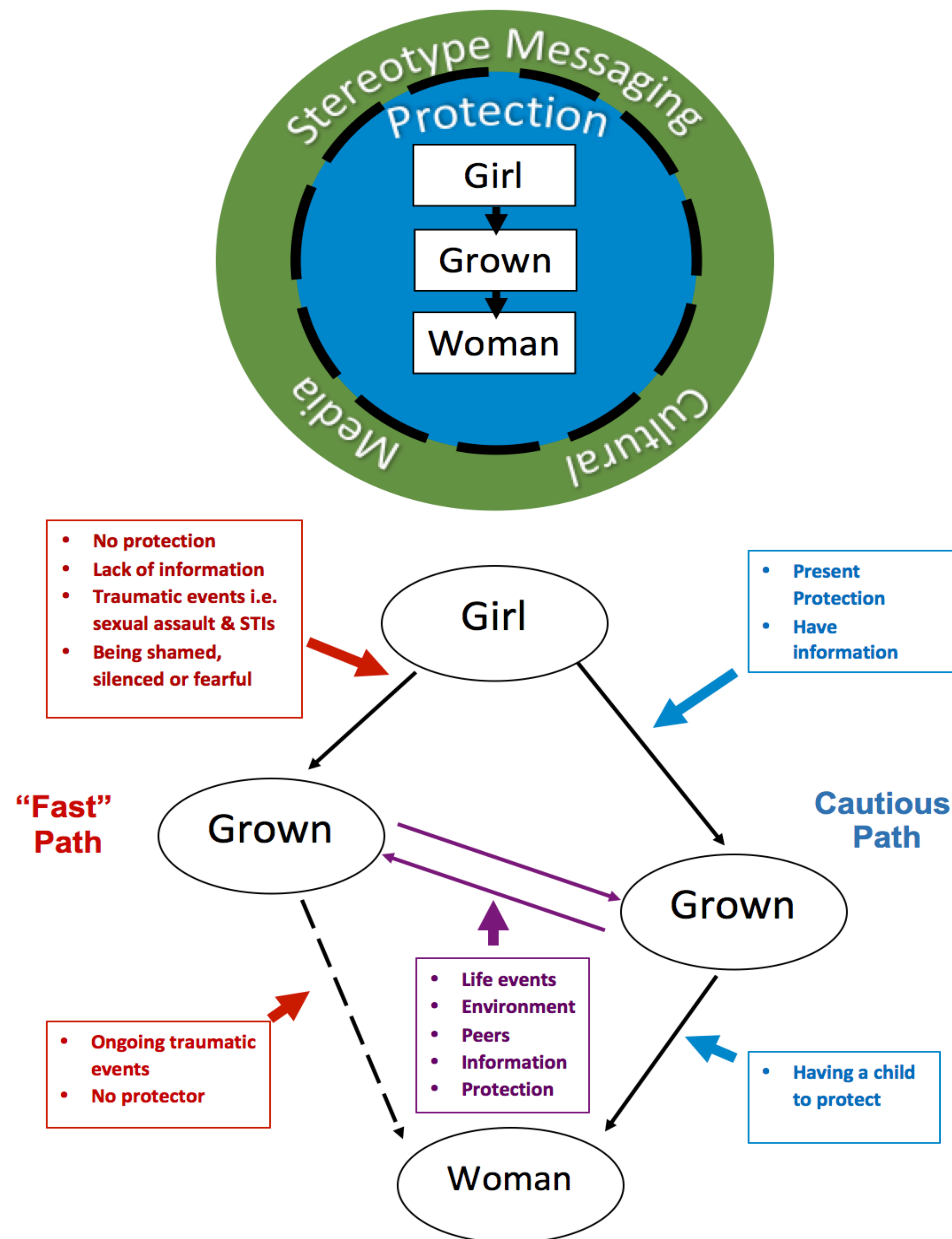
Purpose

To develop a conceptual model describing the sociocultural conditions that influence the process of becoming a sexual Black woman and STI risk

Methods

- Grounded Theory (axial, open, and selective coding, constant comparison, theoretical sampling)
- N=16 females with STIs
- 20 interviews

Results: Conceptual Model

Description of Results

- Three phases of sexual development: *Girl, Grown and Woman*
- Major categories of influence: *Stereotype Messaging and Protection*
- Stereotype messaging represented Black females as sexual objects
- Protection as means to halt progression from Girl to Grown phase
- Conditions that influenced sexual pathways: *Fast vs. Cautious*

Conclusions

- Sociocultural conditions influence sexuality of Black females
- Impact of stereotype messaging and protection
- Need public health campaign to counter stereotype messages
- Strategies that incorporate the strength of Black women as protectors
- Current Intervention focus on individual, we need to focus on larger social context

Acknowledgements