

EFFECT OF A PEER-GROUP INTERVENTION FOR HIV PREVENTION ON RURAL ADOLESCENTS IN MALAWI



Youth: Authors



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Youth: Purpose



- To describe the impact of the *Mzake ndi Mzake* Peer Group Intervention on HIV-related knowledge, attitudes and behaviors among **adolescents** in rural Malawi

Youth: Method



- We offered a six-session peer group intervention to: 1500 adolescents aged 10-19 years from 16 villages in Ntcheu district
 - Adolescents from 16 villages in the control district participated in the evaluations at baseline and final

Youth: Intervention Format



- We developed the youth intervention in collaboration with the community
- Youth were divided into 3 age groups: 10-12, 13-15, and 16-19
- The community advised us to exclude content on condom use and sexuality for the 10-15 year olds

Youth: Intervention Format



- Health workers and respected community leaders co-facilitated the adolescent peer groups
- Girls and boys met separately
- Approximately 1500 youth participated in the *Mzake ndi Mzake* peer group intervention

Youth: Method – Evaluation



- For the evaluation, we compared independent random samples of youths in intervention and control communities at 2 points in time

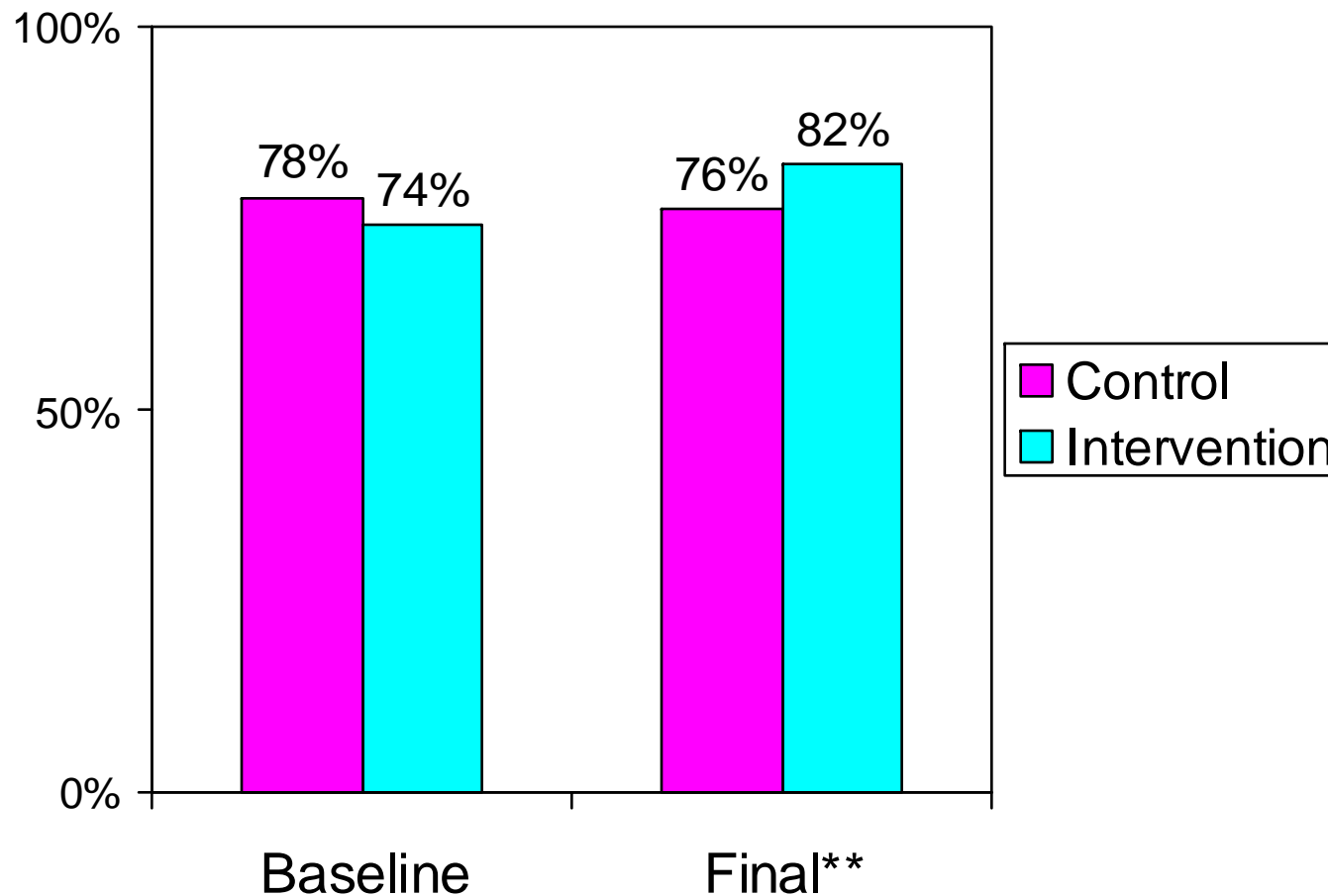
District	Baseline	Final: 2-8 months post-intervention
Control	211	406
Intervention	356	415
Total	567	821

Youth: Demographics



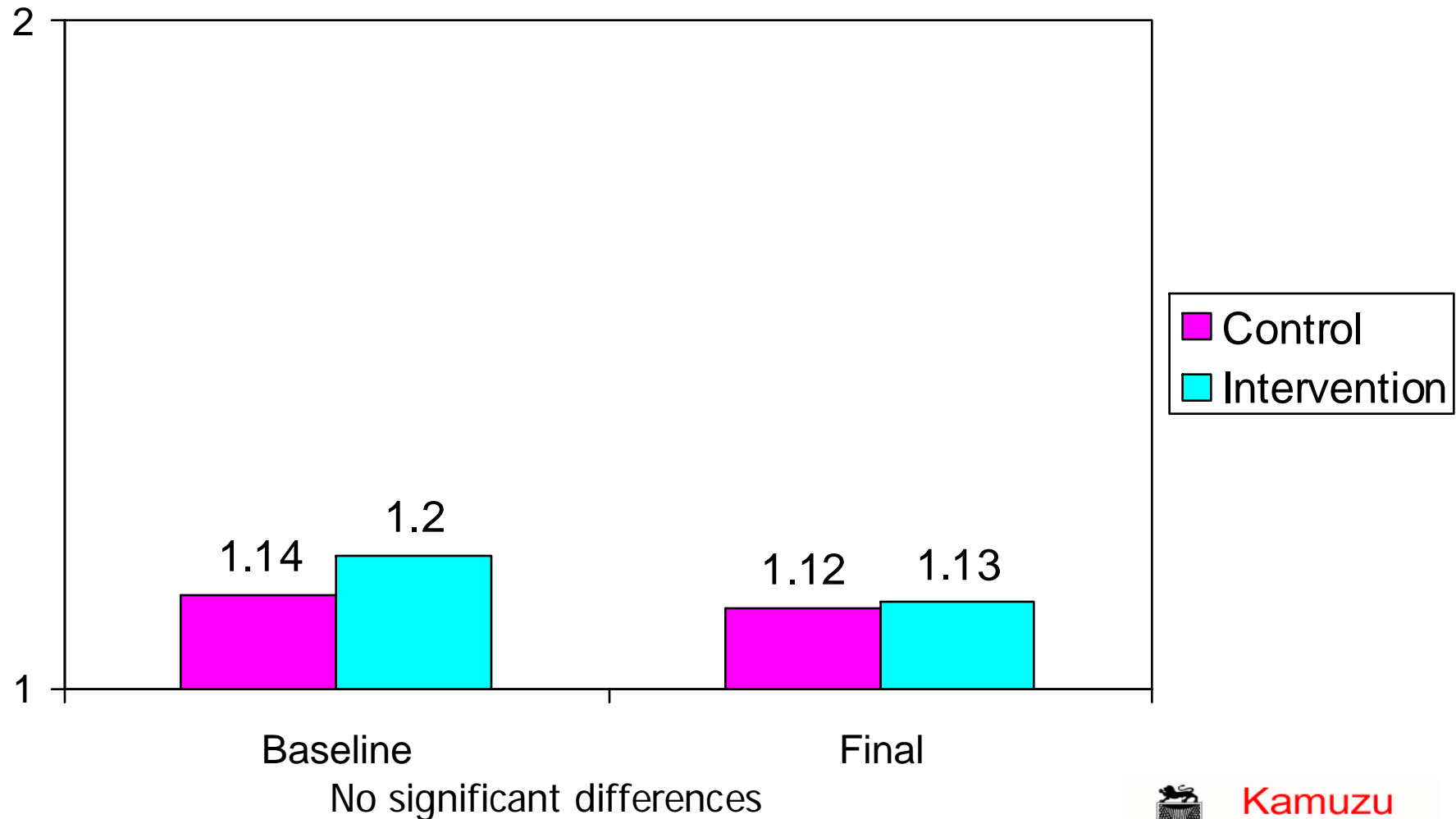
- Intervention and control youth were similar on gender and previous residency in town
- Intervention and control youth differed in:
 - education
 - age
 - ethnicity
 - religion
 - food security

Youth: AIDS Knowledge Score (6 items, % correct)



**p<.01

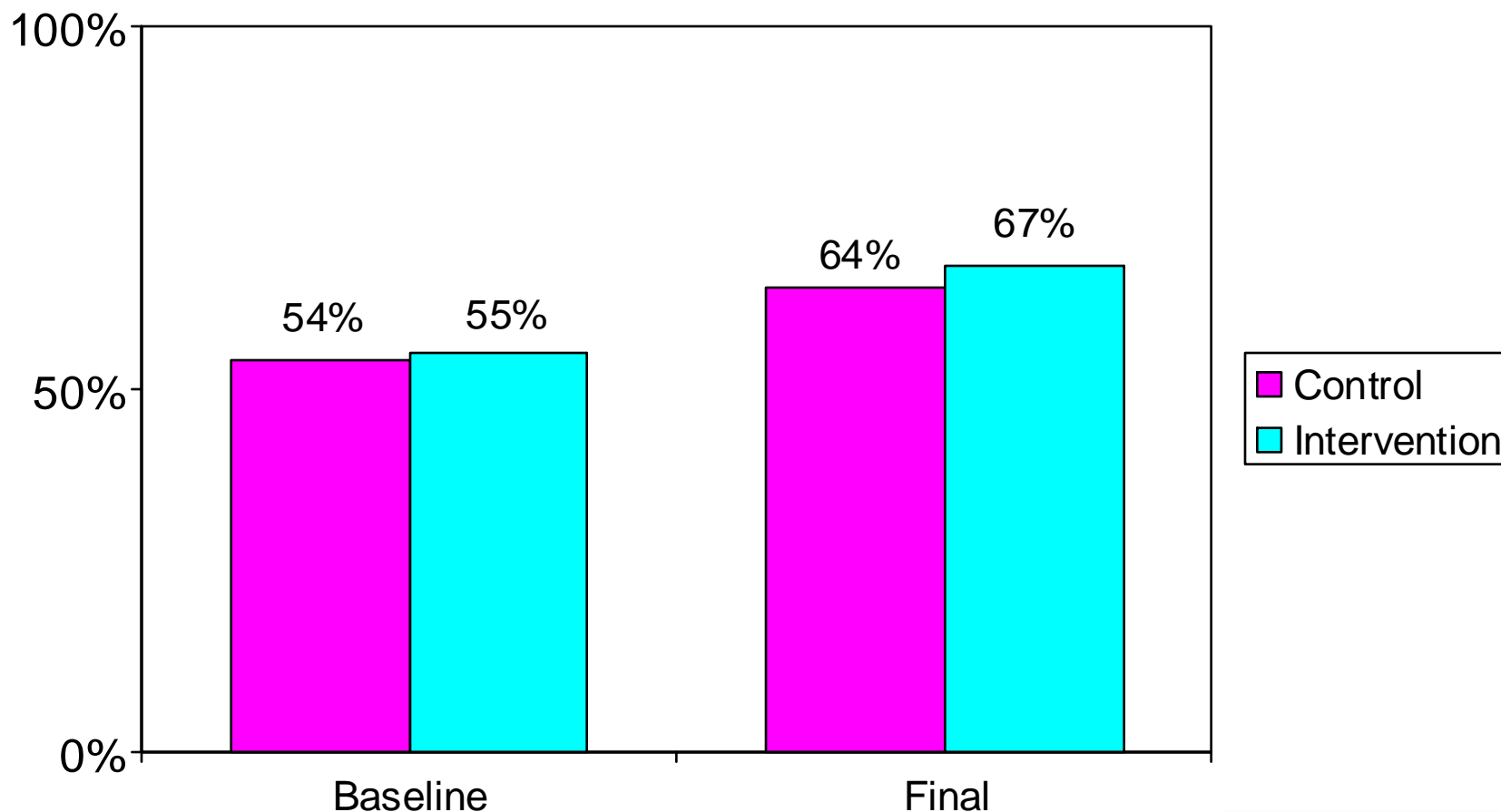
Youth: Blame Person with HIV (Single item, 1=no, 2=not sure, 3=yes)



Youth: Condom Attitudes (10 items, % answered positively)

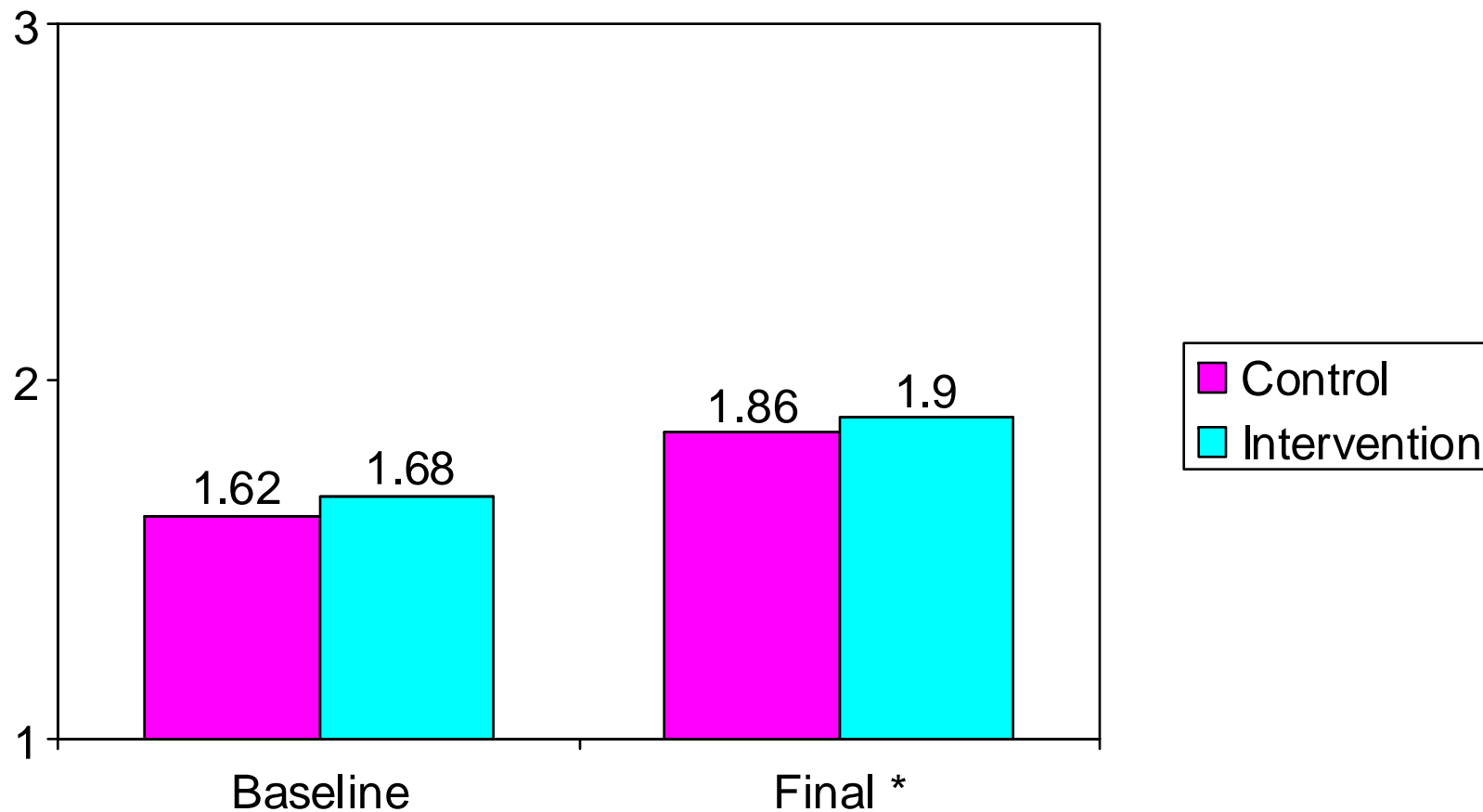


[Asked of youth only if >15 years or sexually active]



No significant differences

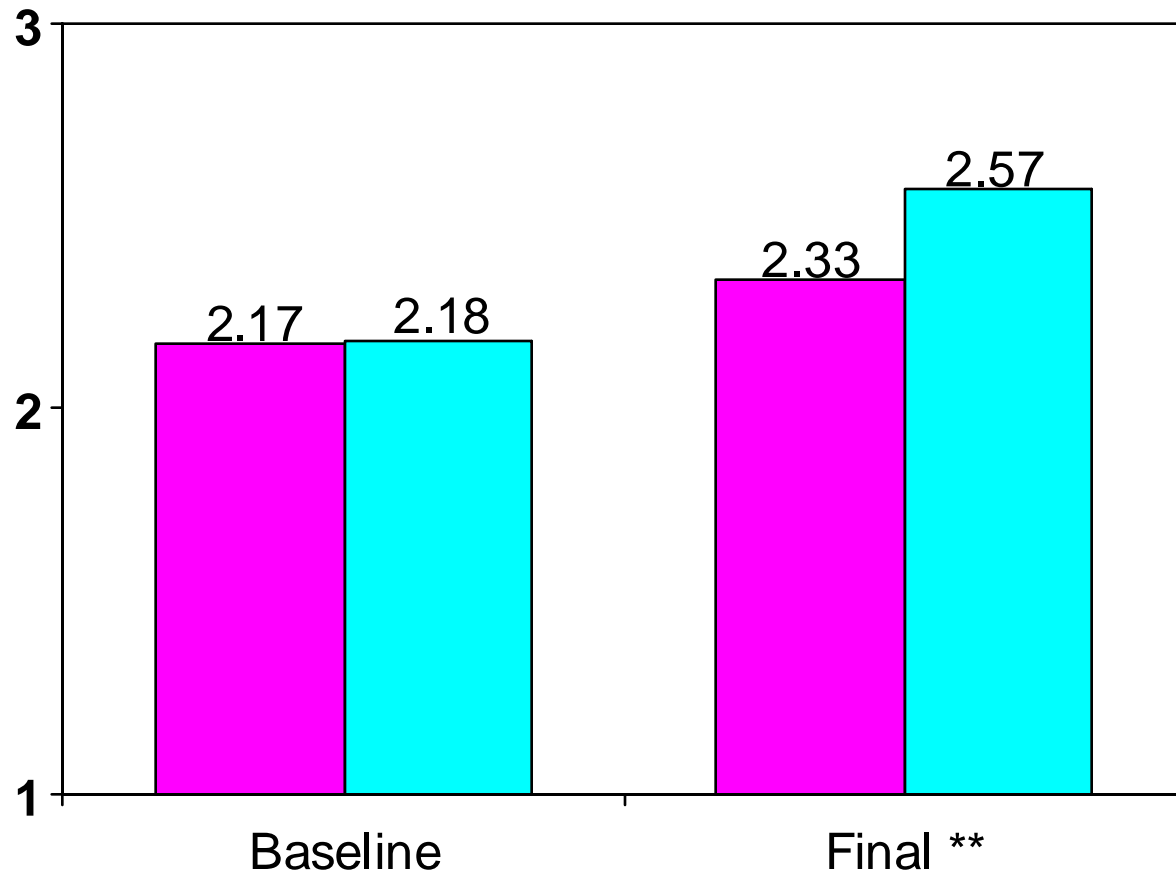
Youth: Attitude Toward HIV Testing (2 items, range 1-3, 3=most positive)



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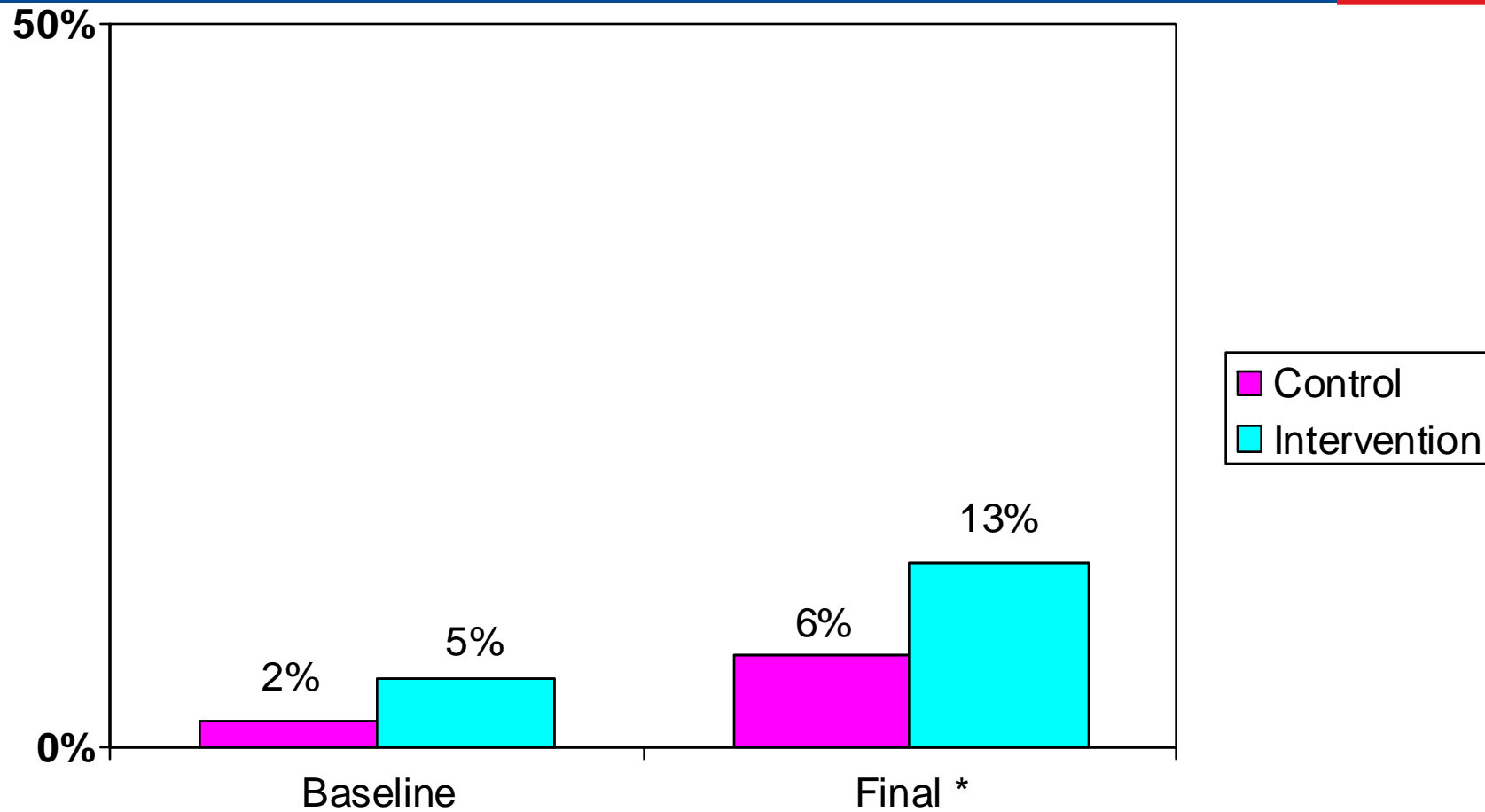
Youth: Self-Efficacy for Safer Sex

(6 items, range 1-3, 3= very confident)



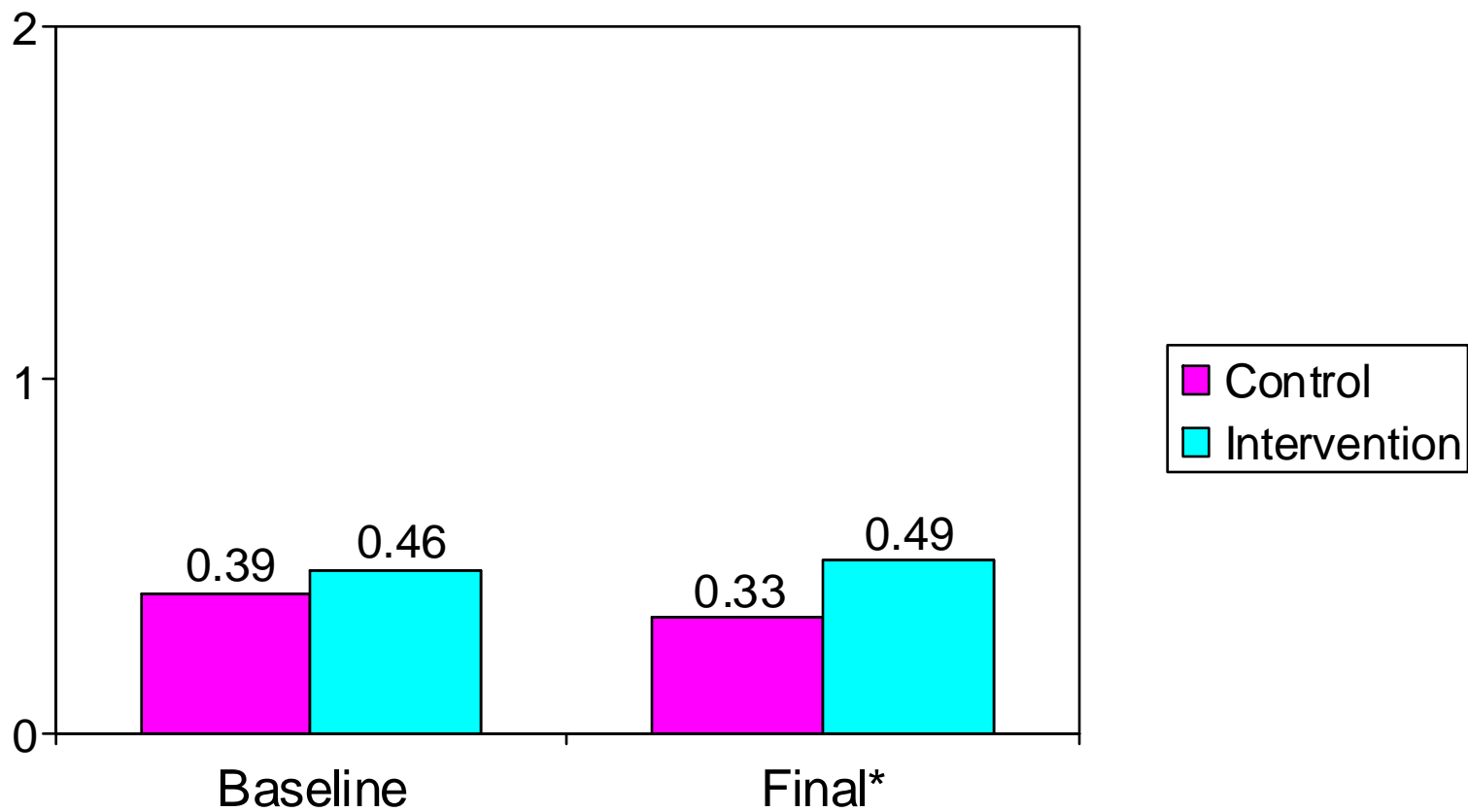
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Youth: HIV Test in Last Year (% reported having test)



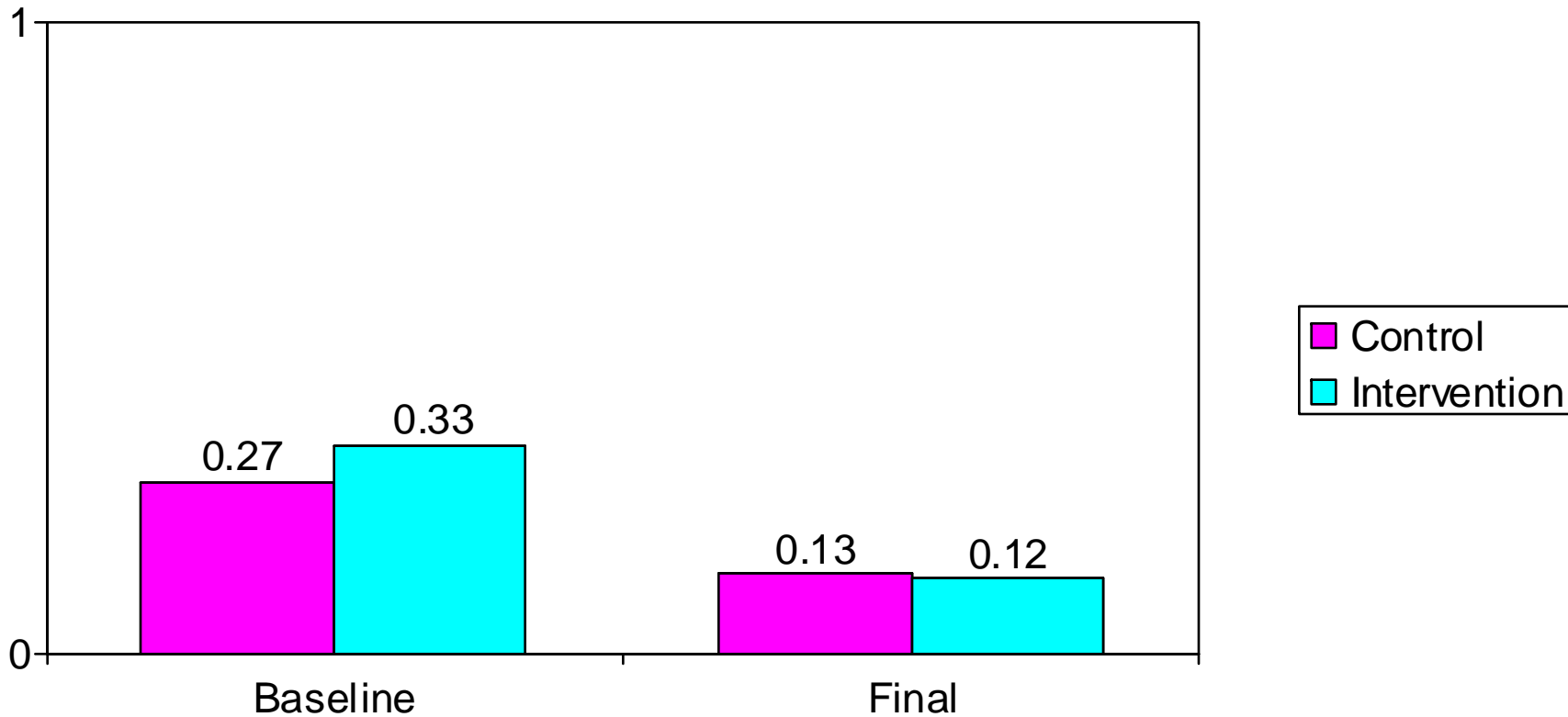
*p < .05

Youth: Discussed Safer Sex with Partner (2 items, # discussed)



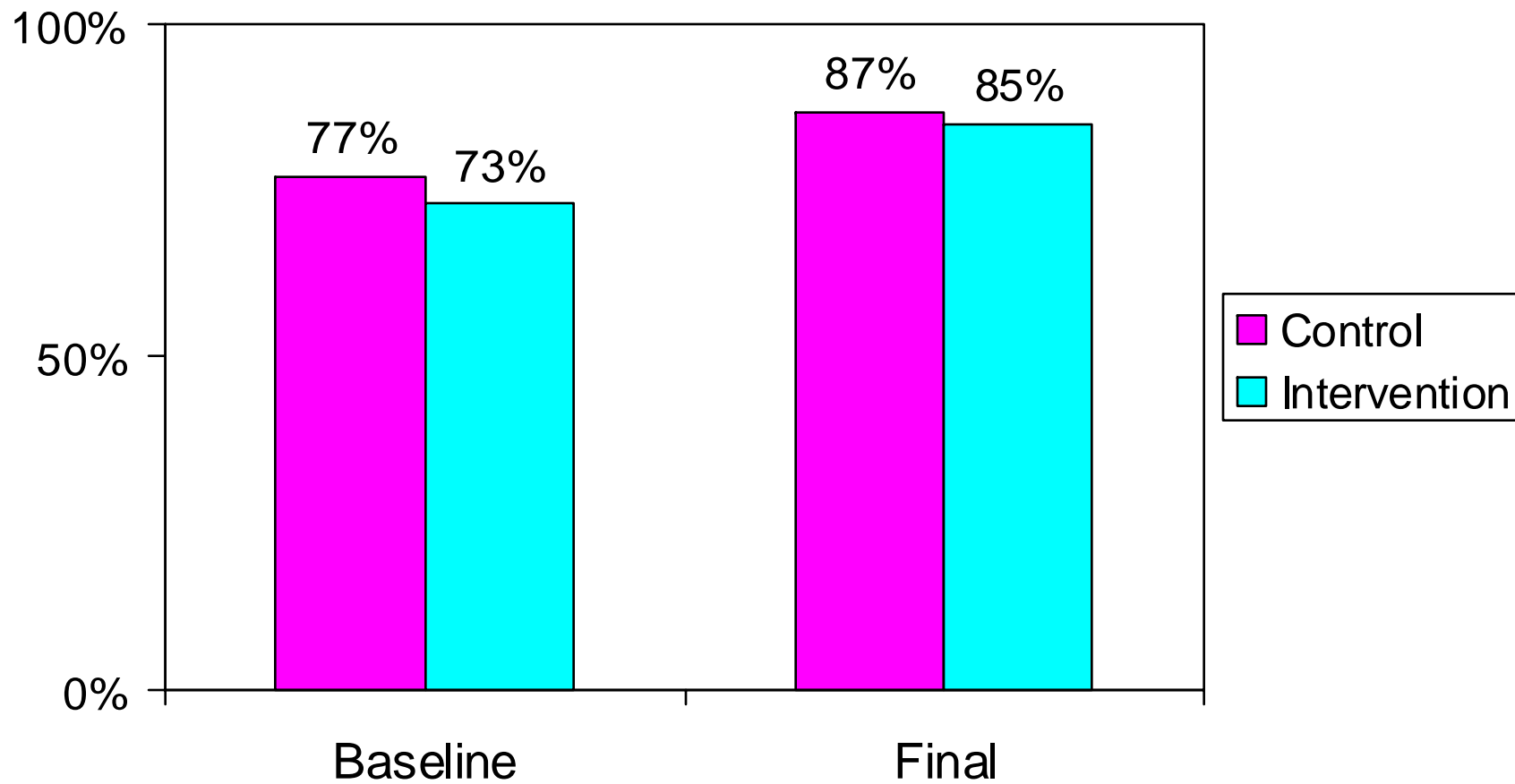
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Youth: Risky Sex Index (5 items, # reported for last 2 mo.)



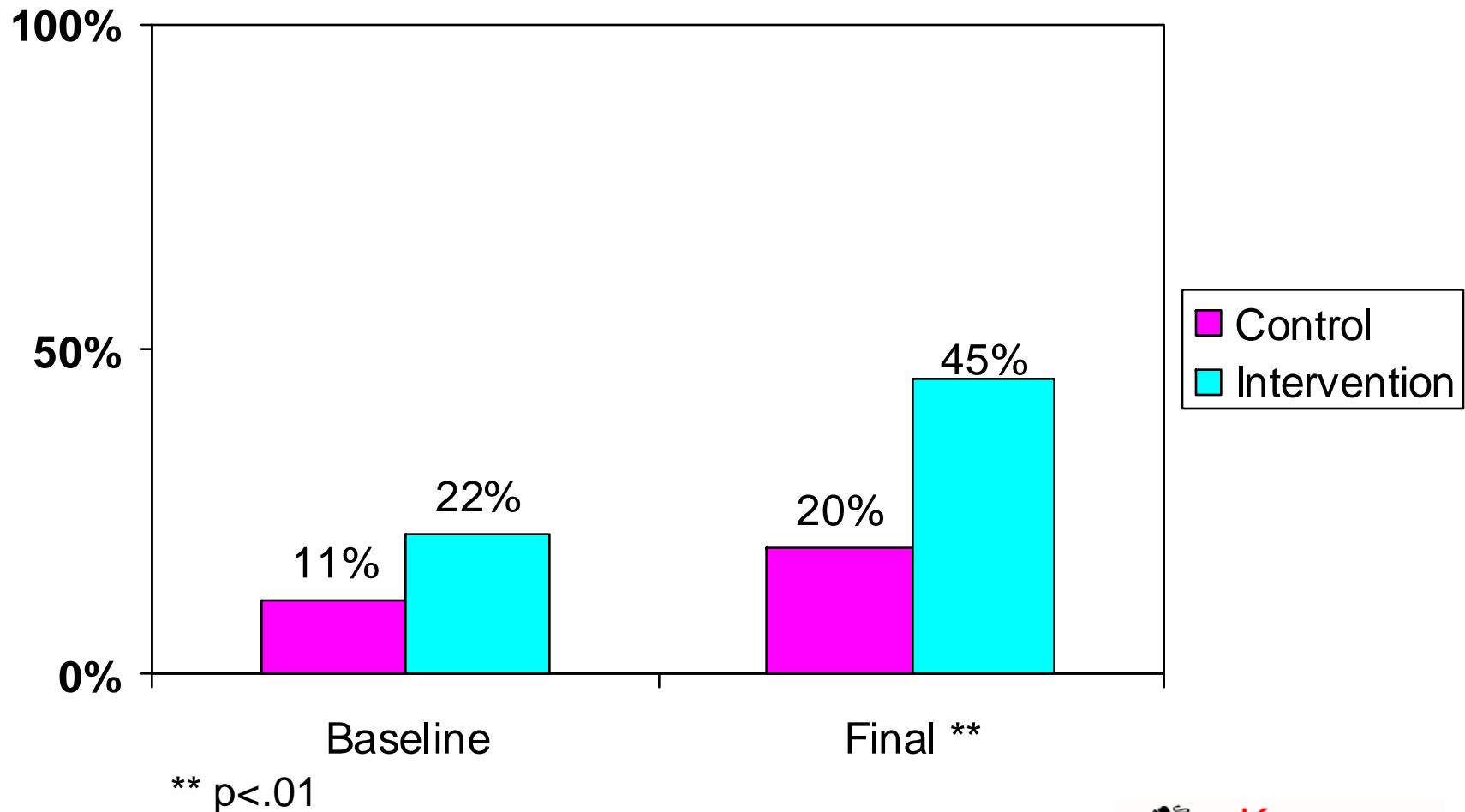
No significant differences

Youth: Abstaining In Last 2 Months (% reporting no sexual relations)

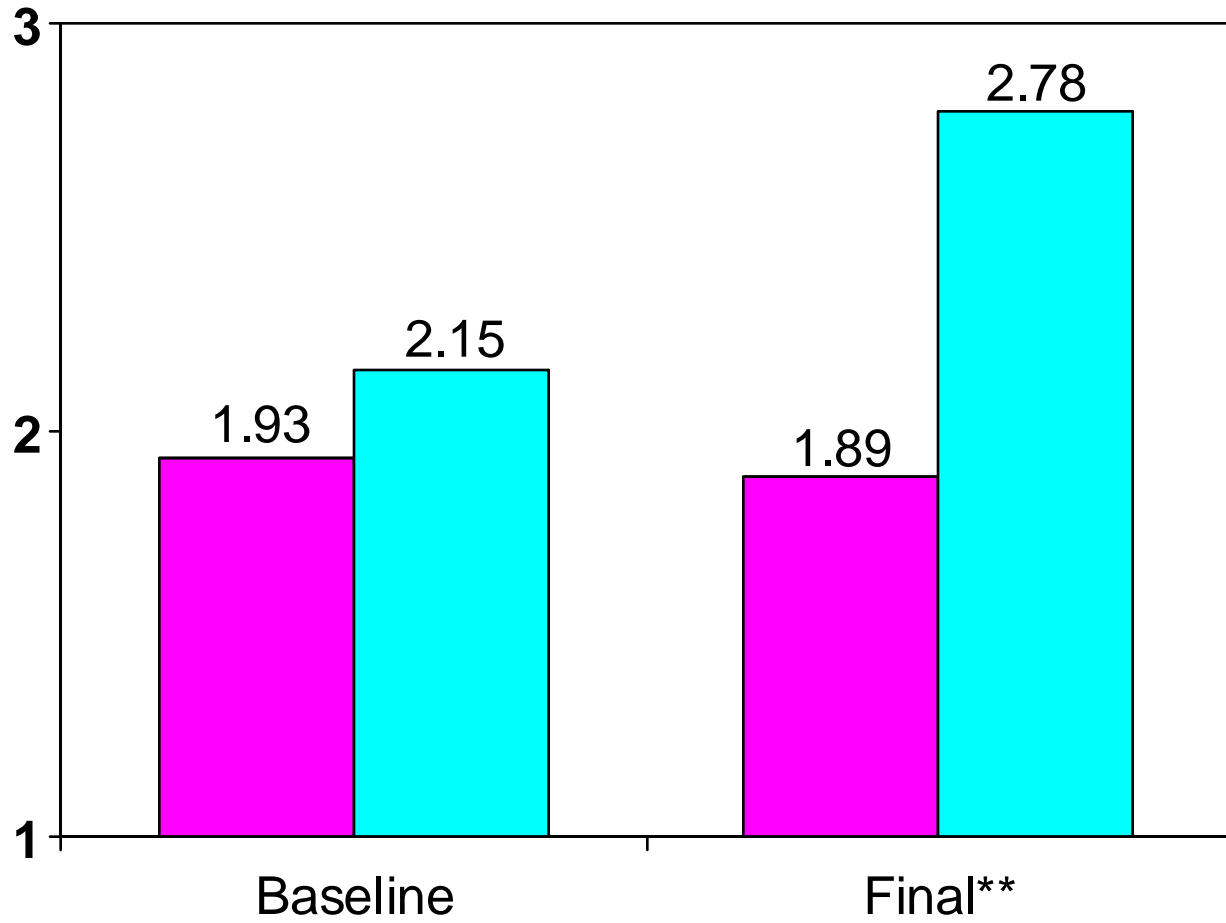


No significant differences

Youth: Condom Use Last 2 Months - Sexually Active Only (% reporting always use)



Youth: Community HIV Prevention Activities (6 activities, # done in last 2 mo.)



Control
Intervention

**p<.01

Youth: Summary



- Greater **knowledge** about HIV and AIDS prevention
- More positive **attitudes** regarding HIV testing
- More **self efficacy** for practicing safer sex

Youth: Summary



- **Behavior** changes
 - More HIV tests
 - More discussions of safer sex with sexual partners
 - Some differences in sexual behaviors
 - More condom use among sexually active
 - No difference in abstaining or total risky sex behaviors
 - More involvement in community HIV prevention activities

Youth: Discussion



- Peer group education can effectively be used for HIV prevention among adolescents in rural areas
- Health workers and community members can work together effectively to offer HIV prevention intervention to rural adolescents
- Adolescents showed high enthusiasm for learning effective ways of preventing HIV infection

Youth: Discussion



- Adults should be encouraged to recognize the need to fully inform younger adolescents about issues of sexuality
- Communities should be consulted to ensure that HIV prevention approaches for youth are culturally acceptable

Acknowledgements



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