

PROTECTION SCENARIO BRIEF – Couples Counseling through Faith Networks

Uganda | 2019

Following the successful pilot and evaluation of an intimate partner violence (IPV) prevention program in Uganda, the International Rescue Committee's (IRC) research and design teams sought a partner that was able to scale the faith-based program at the national level. To better understand the cost implications of scaling this program outside of the IRC, the Best Use of Resources (BUR) team developed a scenario model to help the team, and potential partners, to answer key questions.

Use-Case for the Uganda Model

The IRC, as a secular organization, was not best placed to expand the faith-based program. However, due to the positive impact study, the team desired to see the program scaled across the country through an existing faith-based network. To facilitate scaling Becoming One, the IRC wanted to prepare a "pitch deck" for potential implementing organizations, including cost estimates, to clarify scale ambitions for Becoming One and identify an organization interested in spearheading the expansion to reduce IPV incidence.

Existing Program Used for the Uganda Scenario Model

IRC Uganda implemented a couples counseling project – Becoming One – in partnership with World Vision as a small-scale pilot in 2018. An impact evaluation found the project was successful in reducing the incidence of intimate partner violence among couples.

Cost Question(s) from the Uganda Team

The Uganda team had three key cost questions they wanted to explore:

- What would the cost per couple be if Becoming One was implemented through an organization with an established faith network with national reach?
- What might a cost-share model for Becoming One look like (assuming a civil society organization, a donor, and perhaps the communities involved could share costs)?
- How do costs change based on how many couples each counselor (faith leaders) sees per round of programming?
- What are the key cost drivers of the program that should be considered for future implementing organizations to maximize scale and impact?

Key Findings

- To maximize cost-efficiency, faith leaders should implement at least three rounds of Becoming One. This approach ensures that training and overhead costs are spread across as many beneficiaries as possible
- If possible, faith leaders should implement Becoming One to 10 couples per round.
- To ensure that investments in curriculum development and training of faith leaders realize high returns by reaching many people, implementation for scale should reach at least 200 churches/faith leaders.

Introduction

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a large concern in rural Uganda, affecting an estimated 44 percent of married women.^{1,2} Efforts to reduce rates of IPV often seek to effect change through interventions led by external actors.³ However, there are concerns external actors may lack legitimacy with local communities, resulting in lower impact. Local authority figures offer a promising avenue to reduce IPV.

In 2018 the IRC partnered with World Vision to provide the Becoming One (BO) program, a domestic violence-focused protection project, to 867 couples. The Becoming One program focused on equipping existing, local authority figures (faith leaders) to counsel couples to help prevent IPV and reduce negative interactions, including violence. A randomized evaluation of the program led by the IRC showed that it was effective at reducing the probability that a man committed violence against his partner within one year after the completion of the counseling program—from 42 percent in the control group, to 38 percent incidence among couples who received the BO program.⁴

The Becoming One program provided 12 weekly sessions of counseling for couples over 18 who had been together for at least one year. The counseling curriculum focused on communication, financial transparency, and female sexual agency to decrease the potential for violence between couples. An existing World Vision network of volunteer faith leaders were trained via e-learning to administer the sessions; in the pilot, each faith leader provided counseling to six couples.

When Becoming One was proven to be effective at reducing IPV, Airbel, IRC Uganda, and World Vision aimed to expand the reach of the program. However, to expand to a national scale, they felt it was important to find a local, national faith-based organization to lead the project going forward. The program team discussed potential organizations including the national government and the Church of Uganda. A strong understanding of the cost model for Becoming One implemented at a national scale was deemed necessary in order to present this idea to civil society organizations and explore partnerships.

Specific factors the team was concerned about when considering the cost of scale-up were:

- **The cost-effectiveness study run with the impact evaluation found that a key component of maximizing cost-effectiveness was to utilize the same faith leaders for at least three rounds of programming.** That is, each faith leader would complete three rounds of 12 weeks of counseling, each round with a different set of couples. This meant that to scale the program a balance would need to be found of 1) ensuring each faith leader is counseling enough couples per round, to

The Becoming One Intervention

Faith Leaders

- Volunteer faith leaders were trained to provide counseling in line with the curriculum and “biblical principles”
- Trainings included refreshments, per diems, transportation stipends, t-shirts
- Faith leaders were provided with mobile phones and sim cards to cover data costs of Becoming One videos and scheduling with couples
- Videos and printed booklets of curriculum materials

Couples

- 12 weekly counseling sessions for each couple with a local faith leader
- Couples are provided a IPV prevention curriculum that teaches communication skills, emotional regulation, shared control over finances, and sexual agency
- Videos and printed booklets of curriculum materials
- Graduation ceremony and certificate

increase scale, and thus maximize cost-efficiency, 2) faith leaders had the reach, and constituent demand, to implement multiple rounds of Becoming One and 3) each faith leader is not expected to counsel so many couples in one round, that they burn-out before they complete three rounds. To help set targets for scale, the program team wanted to understand how the number of couples per faith leader, and per round of implementation, would affect costs and cost-efficiency.

- **The cost of the program was likely to change as the program was transferred from international NGOs to local faith-based organizations.** The program team wanted the scenario model to include only the costs incurred by local CSOs during the pilot, to ensure it was as accurate for a government or faith-based organization as possible.
- **The IRC expected some donor funds may be available to support the scale-up of Becoming One, however, they did not expect it would be sufficient to cover all costs.** Both the national government and faith-based organizations (like church consortiums and individual churches) often run and fund their own counseling programs. The IRC assumed that, to run at scale, Becoming One would likely need to utilize a cost-sharing model but this left open the question of how much money or resources each partner would need to bring to implement Becoming One. Thus, one goal of the scenario model was to examine what different cost-share agreements might be possible, and how this would impact the cost for the scaling organization.

In November 2019 the Becoming One team partnered with the IRC's Best Use of Resources (BUR) team to undertake a scenario analysis to help them better understand the most cost-effective ways to scale the program.

Scenario Analysis

Recent, contextually-relevant cost data is a requirement for any IRC scenario model – because a cost-effectiveness study was recently run on Becoming One as part of the impact evaluation the BUR team had strong cost data to underly the analysis.⁵ The model included all of the individual “ingredients” necessary to implement Becoming One, based on data from the pilot, but explicitly linked the amount of each resource needed to the number of districts, faith leaders, or couples reached. Using this data, the BUR team built a scenario model that works similarly to a calculator. This allowed the Becoming One team to vary elements of the program and receive estimates of both the overall cost of the intervention, as well as the cost per faith leader and cost per couple counseled.

Scenario Model

The scenario model worked by first allowing the user to modify key elements of the program as seen in Table A below.

First, the user can determine the length of the program they want to cost, and how many rounds of counseling will be done within that time period. Next, they can consider how many churches and faith leaders they would include in the program, as well as how long the faith leader training will be. Then the number of couples per faith leader (per round), as well as if faith leaders would be paid, and if so, how much, could be set by the user. We assumed the dosage (number of visits by faith leader per couple) of the intervention would stay constant at 12 sessions because this is the protocol proven effective in the evaluation. Lastly, the user could provide inputs on resources necessary for

Parameter that Impacts Intervention Cost	Units	Label
<u>Length of Program</u>		
Months of Program (including start-up)	12	<i>months</i>
Weeks of Program (including start-up)	48	<i>weeks</i>
Rounds of Program within length of time	3	<i>rounds</i>
<u>Churches & Faith Leaders</u>		
Number of Churches	30	<i>churches</i>
Average Num Faith Leaders per Church	1	<i>person(s)</i>
Length of orientation for faith leaders	3	<i>days</i>
<u>Couples</u>		
Couples per Faith Leader	6	<i>couples</i>
Visits by faith leader per couple	12	<i>visits</i>
Pay for faith leader receives per couple visit	0	<i>USD per visit</i>
<u>Staffing</u>		
Average Monthly Salary (w benefits) of project staff	\$ 1,200	<i>monthly salary</i>
Number of churches a FL supervisor can support	100	<i>churches</i>
Frequency of visit to faith leader by supervisor	1	<i>visits</i>
Average time for supervisor to travel to church	2	<i>hours</i>

program management. The user can enter a monthly staff salary based on local salary estimates, how many faith leaders one management staff could support, how often staff would visit faith leaders, and the time to travel for supervision visits (based on how spread out geographically the faith leaders overseen by one staff might be). Note that the rounds of programing, as well as the couples per faith leader, are highlighted for special consideration by the user, as they were seen as the two most important elements of determining cost-effectiveness, based on the prior analysis.

The data from Table A automatically updates information in Table B (below), which has the list of all program ingredients and costs expected for the scaling partner. Unit costs in Table B are based on the costs incurred in the original Becoming One program. When updated information was available for potential scaling partners (e.g. specific salary costs, or travel time in areas in which they operate), the model can be flexibly updated as needed.

TABLE B. Becoming One Ingredients			
Ingredients	Unit Cost	Units Needed	Total Cost
<u>Project Management & Delivery- implementing org - church of uganda</u>			
Faith Leader Salesman & Trainer- full time role because of sr	\$ 1,200	12	\$ 14,400
Mobile Money for project staff	\$ 5	12	\$ 60
Driver	\$ 50	48	\$ 2,400
<u>Faith Leader Training</u>			
Refreshments for Training	\$ 6	90	\$ 540
Transport for Salesman/Trainer for Faith Leader Training	\$ 50	90	\$ 4,500
Loding/per diem for Salesman/Trainer	\$ 30	0	\$ -
Materials for Faith Leader Training	\$ 50	30	\$ 1,500
T-shirts	\$ 5	30	\$ 163
Mobile phone for FLs	\$ 94	30	\$ 2,807
Sim card for Faith Leader	\$ 16	30	\$ 488
<u>Materials - some costs taken out from original</u>			
Couples Kits	\$ 5	540	\$ 2,700
Faith Leader Kits	\$ 15	30	\$ 450
IPV Bracelets	\$ 2	540	\$ 875
Warehouse Space for kits	\$ 200	12	\$ 2,400
<u>Project Delivery</u>			
Stipends for faith leaders to meet with couples	\$ -	90	\$ -
Graduation Cermony & Certificate	\$ 100	0	\$ -

Importantly, for this scenario model three key ingredients that had been necessary for the piloting of Becoming One were left out of Table B. Because the intention was to switch from INGO implementation to a national actor, the national shared costs (of offices, management staff, etc.) that are required for an INGO were excluded. Likewise, the indirect cost recovery usually taken by INGOs to cover global shared costs was not included. Lastly, while the INGO program requires a specific monitoring structure and budget, it was assumed that a national organization taking on the counseling project would not use the same structure, thus the monitoring elements of Becoming One were also omitted.

The data in Table B, therefore, represents the budget required for an existing national actor to add Becoming One into their network, if implemented according to the specifications in Table A. The model does *not* capture the incremental use of resources like payroll, financial management, etc. which the implementer would need to implement this program. The two tables combined, produce an estimate of the total cost of the program, as well as the cost per church and the cost per couple. These estimates are automatically provided in Table C (at right).

TABLE C. Summary - Projections		
Total Cost	\$	33,284
Cost per Church	\$	1,109
Cost per Couple	\$	61.64

Using these tables, the program team can run many different scenarios and begin to understand both the overall cost of implementing Becoming One on a national scale, as well as how cost-efficiency (cost per couple) changed based on the program design parameters.

Once the program team had the cost estimates of Becoming One taken to scale with a given program design, they could consider different cost-sharing models to determine how much it would cost per

organization. They did this by varying which partner would pay for which activities as seen in the scenarios table below. The results of these cost-sharing models were used in the pitch decks to potential donors and scaling partners.

TABLE B. Becoming One Ingredients				Scenarios		
Ingredients	Unit Cost	Units Needed	Total Cost	A	B	C
Project Management & Delivery- implementing org - church of uganda						
Faith Leader Salesman & Trainer- full time role because of sc	\$ 1,200	12	\$ 14,400	D	D	D
Mobile Money for project staff	\$ 5	12	\$ 60	D	D	D
Driver	\$ 50	48	\$ 2,400	D	D	D
Faith Leader Training						
Refreshments for Training	\$ 6	90	\$ 540	M	D	D
Transport for Salesman/Trainer for Faith Leader Training	\$ 50	90	\$ 4,500	M	D	D
Loding/per diem for Salesman/Trainer	\$ 30	0	\$ -	M	D	D
Materials for Faith Leader Training	\$ 50	30	\$ 1,500	M	D	D
T-shirts	\$ 5	30	\$ 163	M	D	D
Mobile phone for FLs	\$ 94	30	\$ 2,807	M	D	D
Sim card for Faith Leader	\$ 16	30	\$ 488	M	D	D
Materials - some costs taken out from original						
Couples Kits	\$ 5	540	\$ 2,700	M	C	D
Faith Leader Kits	\$ 15	30	\$ 450	M	D	D
IPV Bracelets	\$ 2	540	\$ 875	M	D	D
Warehouse Space for kits	\$ 200	12	\$ 2,400	D	D	D
Project Delivery						
Stipends for faith leaders to meet with couples	\$ -	90	\$ -	D	D	D
Graduation Cermony & Certificate	\$ 100	0	\$ -	D	D	D
				M \$ 14,024	\$ -	\$ -
				C \$ -	\$ 2,700	\$ -
				D \$ 19,260	\$ 30,584	\$ 33,284

Key:
M: Ministry/Lead Organization
C: Church or Couples
D: Donor

Results

The analysis showed that the cost per couple is expected to range from \$23 to \$47 and that the number of couples per faith leader and the number of faith leaders/churches both play important roles in cost-effectiveness.

While the flexible, calculator-like tables above allowed the program team to adjust various elements of the program and cost-sharing options to understand what the most feasible model may be to present to potential national organizations for uptake – it did not answer the question of “*at what scale would the program be the most cost-effective?*”. Answering this question requires combining data on the cost per faith leader or per couple with evidence and intuition about how the program’s effectiveness might change, for instance, if one faith leader counseled so many couples that the quality of services fell.

To better understand scale, the BUR team completed one final analysis for the scenario model. This analysis (in the table on the following page) examined the cost per couple dependent on:

- 1. The number of couples per faith leader in each round.** Six, eight, and ten couples per faith leader were explored as options for scale implementation. Six couples per faith leader was implemented in the evaluated program, however, faith leaders expressed high demand for the program and that up to ten couples per round would be feasible.
- 2. The total number of churches included, assuming one faith leader per church.** While the highest scale (1,000 churches) was the target of the advocacy work for scaling, BUR also modeled low scale (50 churches) and medium scale (400 churches) to show scaling partners the influence of rolling out Becoming One to as many couples as possible on cost.
- 3. Which cost-sharing scenario was selected.** Each couple per faith leader and scale combination was included in the models. The cost-sharing scenarios were A, B, or C from the table above.

Cost by Scale and Scenario - 6 Couples Per Faith Leader									
Scale	Low - 50 Churches			Medium - 400 Churches			High - 1,000 Churches		
Unit Cost at Scale	Cost per Couple \$ 47.37			Cost per Couple \$ 34.67			Cost per Couple \$ 34.27		
Scenario	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
Ministry	\$ 26	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 26	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 26	\$ -	\$ -
Couple/Church	\$ -	\$ 5	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5	\$ -
Donor	\$ 21	\$ 42	\$ 47	\$ 9	\$ 30	\$ 35	\$ 8	\$ 29	\$ 34

Cost by Scale and Scenario - 8 Couples Per Faith Leader									
Scale	Low - 50 Churches			Medium - 400 Churches			High - 1,000 Churches		
Unit Cost at Scale	Cost per Couple \$ 37.18			Cost per Couple \$ 27.66			Cost per Couple \$ 27.36		
Scenario	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
Ministry	\$ 21	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 21	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 21	\$ -	\$ -
Couple/Church	\$ -	\$ 5	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5	\$ -
Donor	\$ 16	\$ 32	\$ 37	\$ 7	\$ 23	\$ 28	\$ 6	\$ 22	\$ 27

Cost by Scale and Scenario - 10 Couples Per Faith Leader									
Scale	Low - 50 Churches			Medium - 400 Churches			High - 1,000 Churches		
Unit Cost at Scale	Cost per Couple \$ 31.07			Cost per Couple \$ 23.45			Cost per Couple \$ 23.21		
Scenario	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
Ministry	\$ 18	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 18	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 18	\$ -	\$ -
Couple/Church	\$ -	\$ 5	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5	\$ -
Donor	\$ 13	\$ 26	\$ 31	\$ 5	\$ 18	\$ 23	\$ 5	\$ 18	\$ 23

Assuming Becoming One would reach a scale larger than the pilot (over 140 faith leaders), the most important factor in cost-efficiency was the number of couples each faith leader could reach per round of implementation.

The above analysis did not fully answer the question: “is it more cost-effective to have a larger number of churches participate, or a larger number of couples seen per faith leader/church?”

Cost curves based on this analysis helped to prioritize

recommendations for scale. First,

looking at how cost-per-couple reduces as the number of churches increases from zero to 1,000 assuming six couples per faith leader, we see that cost per couple begins to level off at 200 churches, only minorly decreasing once 1,000 churches are reached (red line, chart at right). This means that given the modeled program implementation framework, the expected cost per couple will be \$34 - \$35 regardless of how much larger the program becomes (as long as at least 200 churches participate) if each faith leader counsels six couples per 12-week round of implementation.

Next, using the same analysis but assuming eight couples per faith leader (green line), costs again begin to level off at 200 churches, minorly decreasing once 1,000 churches are reached. Thus, the expected cost per couple is \$27 - \$28 as long as at least 200 churches participate, and each faith leader counsels eight couples per round.

Lastly, assuming ten couples per faith leader (blue line), costs still begin to level off at 200 churches, only minorly decreasing once 400 churches are reached. This means the expected cost per couple will be \$23 - \$24 no matter how large the project becomes (as long as at least 200 churches participate) if each faith leader counsels ten couples per round.

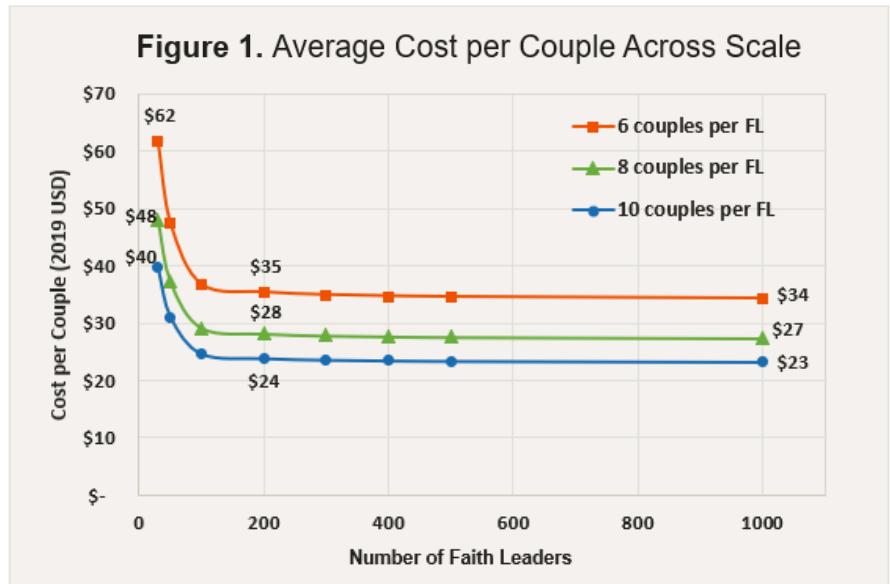
Conclusions and Use

It is important to remember that this scenario model was built for a specific use case based on contextual monitoring and cost data, so not all findings will be transferable to different contexts or activities.

Nonetheless, a few broader lessons are likely to hold in many other settings.

Cost-Efficiency Implications

First, the model shows us that there are multiple complementary approaches to “reaching scale”—in this case, both increasing the number of churches in the program, and the number of couples seen by each faith leader. This lesson is expected to apply in different contexts and different programs. For example, increasing the number of households a hygiene promotor reaches or the number of patients a doctor sees, will be more cost-effective than maintaining the same promotor/doctor to household/patient ratio and increasing the number of promotors/doctors.



Cost-Effectiveness Implications

While lessons about cost-efficiency are clear, the most cost-efficient program does not necessarily mean the most cost-effective—any attempt to lower costs must be balanced with attention to how program effectiveness might shift given proposed changes. In particular, the ‘dosage’ of the program that each client (be it couples in counseling, households receiving hygiene promotion, or patients) must be sufficient to achieve the result. As caseloads per individual provider increase, this may become less likely.

In addition, the Becoming One model uses unpaid, volunteer faith leaders to implement. If these leaders were paid (as hygiene promoters and doctors typically are) – the finding would be even stronger, that more clients per provider, is more cost-efficient than strictly increasing the number of providers. However, the burden of additional clients per round of implementation may become unsustainable for a single provider, causing them to quit the project. For instance, this dynamic of over-burdening low-paid providers likely accounts for high attrition among community health workers in low and middle-income countries.⁶ When the workload is unsustainably high, the costs of recruiting and training new providers become significant, and may, in many cases, overcome the cost savings achieved in having a single provider assist more clients.

In the case of Becoming One, the team knew they needed to retain their “providers” (i.e., faith leaders) for at least three rounds. With this in mind, they consulted faith leaders to better understand how many couples they felt comfortable seeing per round. Faith leaders themselves set the number at ten couples per round. The model of first understanding 1) cost-effectiveness, 2) the targets for the number of faith leaders, and 3) the number of couples per faith leader from a cost perspective, then including the providers (faith leaders) in the discussion to understand what was most probable to be feasible in the long-term is a very strong approach to understanding cost at scale.

Applying the Results

After reviewing these results and consulting with faith leaders the Becoming One team reached out to several nationwide organizations in Uganda to share the program, the expected impacts, and the expected costs. The Church of Uganda agreed to take on the program at scale under a model that included some donor funding and each church paying for the cost of the couple materials (\$5 per couple). This was a mixture of cost-sharing scenarios A and B.

Looking Forward

The IRC is still working with a donor and the Church of Uganda to implement and scale Becoming One at a national level in Uganda. In comparison to existing faith-based programs, Becoming One has been proven cost-effective at preventing IPV outcomes. BUR is currently scoped to continue work with the Church of Uganda to study cost through their implementation framework to maximize cost-efficiency.

Methodology Note – Scenario Modeling

The Best Use of Resources (BUR) team at the International Rescue Committee works with field teams and technical units on several types of cost analyses. One of these analysis types is scenario modeling. The value of a costing scenario analysis is that it helps program design teams and advocacy teams to answer ‘what if’ questions about modifications to a specific program prior to making decisions. For example, a technical team may have a limited budget and want to know how many of each of their ten ideal activities they can implement with the funding available. Or an advocacy colleague may be working with a national government to promote the uptake of an IRC education program at scale and need to have projections of what such programming might cost.

Four key pieces of information are required for the BUR team to complete a scenario analysis: 1) there must be an existing program in the context for which the scenario is being developed to use as a basis for cost data- thus scenario analysis cannot model a completely new program or a program in a completely new context; 2) there must be a clear use-case- meaning there must be a clear understanding of who will use the scenario analysis and why it is needed; 3) There must be a clear cost question of interest, as the more variables within a scenario model, the less accurate it will be – it is necessary to be explicit about what variables are used in the model to answer what specific question(s).

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² DHS. 2011. “Demographic and Health Survey.” World Bank. <http://data.worldbank.org/>

³ Heise, Lori. 2011. What Works to Prevent Partner Violence? An Evidence Overview. STRIVE - DFID.

⁴ Boyer, Christopher, et al. “Religious Leaders Can Motivate Men to Cede Power and Reduce Intimate Partner Violence: Experimental Evidence from Uganda.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, vol. 119, no. 31, 29 July 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2200262>

⁵ Hoyer, Kayla. 2022. “Protection Cost Effectiveness Brief – Becoming One.” The International Rescue Committee.

⁶ Dugani S, Afari H, Hirschhorn LR, Ratcliffe H, Veillard J, Martin G, Lagomarsino G, Basu L, Bitton A. Prevalence and factors associated with burnout among frontline primary health care providers in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review. *Gates Open Res.* 2018 Jun 11;2:4. doi: 10.12688/gatesopenres.12779.3. PMID: 29984356; PMCID: PMC6030396.

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