



“Perceptions, attitudes and risky behaviours associated with blood borne and sexually transmitted infections (BSTI) among male ex-offenders in South Africa”

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Social science that makes a difference



INTRODUCTION

- Sub-Saharan Africa remains the region most heavily affected by HIV. The region also accounted for 72% of the world's AIDS-related deaths in 2008 (UNAIDS, 2009; AIDS Epidemic Update, 2009).
- South Africa is home to the world's largest population of people living with HIV - 5.7 million. (UNAIDS, 2008).
- Over 40% of the prisoners are infected with HIV.
- There is however an alarming situation as there is a high number of comings and goings between the prison and the community.
- HIV prevention needs have been largely ignored among ex-offenders and little is known about their HIV risk behaviors or HIV prevention needs.
- Ex-offenders have substantially greater opportunities to engage in HIV risk behaviors.

GOAL

The goal of the study is to identify and understand the role of psychosocial and cultural factors related to maintaining or quitting risky behaviour for HIV/STI and to adopt preventive behaviour among at-risk groups in South Africa

OBJECTIVE

To explore the perceptions, attitudes and risky behaviours associated with blood borne and sexually transmitted infections (BSTI) among male ex-offenders in South Africa

METHODOLOGY

- The study utilized both qualitative and quantitative methods
- The qualitative study was used as a pilot and also to develop the quantitative questionnaire.
- The inclusion criteria for the male ex-offenders are having been previously convicted and incarcerated and 21-50 years old.
- Data Analysis included-Thematic content analysis for the qualitative study (Only the qualitative results will be presented).

THEMES

- Risk assessment of HIV/AIDS and HepatitisC
- Living with HIV and AIDS
- Unprotected sexual relations
- Condom use
- Risky personal situations
- Risky behaviours
- Prevention of blood borne and sexually transmitted infections
- Knowledge about blood borne and sexually transmitted infections

RESULTS

Risk assessment of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C

HIV/AIDS or Hepatitis C Risk assessment for someone living in your country:

- Most respondents said that they can assess someone's risk when they play around with girlfriends and boyfriends and some said that if they are not disciplined.
- Some of the participants said:
 - **“The way they handle themselves-sleeping around”**
 - **“If you do not stay with one partner and do not use condoms”**
 - **“Multiple partners or relationships and prostitution”**
- Few of the participants said that at times it is not possible to assess that someone living in their country is at risk of getting infected by HIV/AIDS or hepatitis C because they can never see what they are doing.

RESULTS (Cont)

Risk assessment of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C

Participant's own risk of contracting HIV/AIDS or Hepatitis C:

- Most participants said that they assessed their own risk of getting infected by HIV or to contract hepatitis C or B by taking any girl to sleep with, having strong feelings and unable to control them, alcohol use and seeing an attractive girl, taking any girl to sleep with, not using a condom and having sex with someone without testing and not testing yourself.
- **"If not disciplined. If you run around a lot, you may be at risk of forgetting how to use a condom"**
- **"If I don't take care of myself and not thinking about my future and having a long life and being a womaniser"**
- **"By having sex with someone without testing and for not testing yourself"**

RESULTS (Cont)

Living with HIV/AIDS

Participants' perceptions of people who live with HIV and AIDS:

- Most participants said that people who contracted HIV are people who are not in control of their sexual life.
- Some of the participants said:
 - **“They sleep around and have different partners”**
 - **“They also drink too much alcohol which contributes to being unable to control themselves”**
 - **“They are reckless, sleep around a lot with no precautions”**
- Few of the participants however, did not think that people who live with HIV and AIDS were not in control of their sexual life because:
 - **“Other people are born with HIV”**
 - **“Others are infected without knowing and others get raped by people who are HIV positive”**

RESULTS (Cont)

Living with HIV/AIDS

Consequences one has to live with, when one has HIV or AIDS:

- Almost all the participants said that the person becomes financially challenged as they have to spend money on treatment and consulting with doctors. Few of the participants said that they become very sick and die in the end.
- Some participants said:
 - **“People are scared of you and some are afraid to come close to you”**
 - **“Worrying about death”**
 - **“People with HIV/AIDS also become isolated and lonely as they get rejected by their families and community”**

RESULTS (Cont)

Living with HIV/AIDS

HIV positive people nowadays can have an ordinary life just as everyone else:

- Almost all participants said that people that are HIV positive nowadays can have an ordinary life just as everyone else if they have positive attitude and take their treatment regularly.
- Some said that:
 - **“They are no different to other people”**
 - **“They are human also”**

RESULTS (Cont)

Unprotected sexual relations

Perceptions about unprotected sexual relations (without using condom):

- Most participants said that people who do not use condoms do not care about themselves and are at risk of being infected with HIV and STIs.
- Some said that it is not safe and that:
 - **“These people are also seen as being ignorant”**
 - **“They are seen as enjoying themselves”**
 - **“It does not matter because it is their own business”**

RESULTS (Cont)

Unprotected sexual relations

Luck or behaviour determines whether people will contract sexually transmitted diseases while having unprotected sexual relations (without condom):

- Most of the participants said that it is a matter of being protected by luck "amadlosi" and some felt it was a matter of having a strong immune system.
- Some of the participants said that it is not luck because:
 - **"If you have sex without a condom you run the risk of getting HIV and AIDS"**
 - **"It is not luck. It is because the partners behave well. No extra relationship"**
 - **"Doesn't depend on luck, unprotected sex put you at risk getting infected"**
- Some believed that it is because men are not circumcised:
- **"Men contract sexually transmitted diseases because they have not been circumcised". "If you are not circumcised, you gather dirt on your fore skin".**

RESULTS (Cont)

Condom use

Advantages of using condoms:

- Most participants said that condoms were useful in preventing pregnancy, protecting themselves from HIV and sexually transmitted diseases such as drop.
- Some said that:
 - **“You save your health from disease such as HIV, Cauliflower”**
 - **“It protect against diseases. Look after the family “**

RESULTS (Cont)

Condom use

Disadvantages of using condoms:

- Most said that condoms were dangerous because they burst when overheated. Condoms can also tear during use and become unsafe. Almost all participants mentioned that they will not have children if they are using condoms.
- Some of the participants said:
 - **“There is not enough satisfaction when condoms are used “I can't have meat in plastic”.**
 - **“One will get infected with different kinds of diseases”.**

RESULTS (Cont)

Condom use

Approval of condom use:

- Almost all the participants mentioned that there were people who approved and insisted that they use condoms.
- They said that their mothers, sisters, brothers, father, family, in-laws partners/wives, girlfriends, friends and the media approved and insisted that they use condoms.

RESULTS (Cont)

Condom use

Disapproval of condom use:

- Most of the participants agreed that there are people who disapprove of them using condoms.
- They said that their friends, family, girlfriends and wives disapprove of condom use.
- Some participants said that condoms cause rashes.
- Some said:
 - **“Condoms makes you take in your own sperms back if you use them”**

RESULTS (Cont)

Risky personal situations

Description of the participants' personal situation where they had decided not to protect themselves sexually (used a condom with their partner):

- Almost all the participants said that they did not use condoms with their partners when they thought that the partner was healthy and trusted the partner. Some said that when they had a long term relationship.
- Other participants said:
 - **“Sometimes it happens when you have foreplay and you do it and remember later that you are not using a condom or you use it and it burst”.**
 - **“When I wanted to have more children”**
 - **“Meeting someone beautiful and thinking they may not have HIV and then sleep with them”**

RESULTS (Cont)

Risky personal situations

Circumstances in which participants would decide not to use a condom:

- Most participants mentioned that they would not use condoms when they are married and trust that their partners are faithful.
- Some of the participants said:
 - **“When both partners are HIV negative”**
 - **“I do not use a condom because I have one partner”**
 - **“When I want another child”**

RESULTS (Cont)

Risky personal situations

Circumstances participants would decide to use a condom:

- Almost all participants said that they would use a condom when they know that the woman is reckless.
- Some said that:
 - “If I want to taste a girl”
 - “When meeting someone in a tavern and I am drunk”
 - “When I am fooling around especially when I have a family”

RESULTS (Cont)

Risky behaviours

Use of drugs and alcohol:

- Most of the participants drank alcohol almost daily and some of them had marijuana twice or thrice a week.

RESULTS (Cont)

Prevention of blood borne and sexually transmitted infections

Rules and Advices participants will follow relative to a healthy lifestyle in an attempt to avoid getting HIV, Hepatitis C:

- Almost all participants said that they will abstain and use gloves in accidents
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- Some of the participants said:
 - **“It is not safe to have sex without a condom with someone you don't know”.**
 - **“Sure. I will tell my girlfriend that we must have babies later and need to take care of each other”.**
 - **“I use condoms and I don't sleep around”**
 - **“I will discipline myself sexually and stay with one partner”**
 - **“Exercise, stay with one partner “**

RESULTS (Cont)

Knowledge about blood borne and sexually transmitted infections

Knowledge about HIV and AIDS and Hepatitis C:

- All the participants did not have any knowledge about Hepatitis. All participants had no knowledge of what Hepatitis B or C were.
- Most had very limited knowledge about HIV transmission and prevention. For example most participants said that ring worms, chicken pox and TB are sexually transmitted

DISCUSSION

- The study revealed that unprotected sex ,drug and alcohol use and limited exposure to effective HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B and C education and prevention interventions put ex- offenders at risk.
- Community organizations dealing with ex-offenders need to improve HIV training for officers working with ex-offenders so that they can impart knowledge on HIV and Hepatitis B or C transmission and prevention to ex- offenders and make HIV risk reduction programmes more available to ex- offenders.

CONCLUSION

- The results drawn from this study can make it possible to conceive and develop more efficient prevention and intervention programs for multicultural populations and at-risk subgroups including members of different subcultures (Ember & Ember, 2001; Wong, et al., 2006).

THANK YOU

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