

Sexual Behaviour and Psychological Well-Being of a Group of African Adolescent Males in Alice, Eastern Cape

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Abstract : From a cultural perspective, expression of hegemonic masculinity in South Africa continues to escalate among adolescent males who grow up in communities lacking in role models and recreational facilities. However, when the schools are constructive, and peer influence is positive, adolescent male can potentially express character strengths and lead a meaningful life. Drawing from Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model and Keyes and Ryff's six dimensions of psychological well-being and mental health, such youth may exemplify positive self-esteem, problem- focused coping strategies, condom self-efficacy, good leadership skills, enhanced motivation and a positive emotional state, which buffer against risky sexual behaviors. This paper was aimed at investigating the relationships between adolescent males' sexual behavior and psychological well-being. This study employed a quantitative research to collect data from 54 Xhosa-speaking adolescent males from one school high school in Fort Beaufort, Eastern Cape, South Africa. These learners were from grade nine, ten and eleven with their ages ranging from 14 to 20. Prior the research commenced, the school principal and caregivers of the learners who participated in the study, gave their informed consent. Self- administered closed-ended questionnaire with Section A (that is, biographical information) and Section B with each question rated on the 5-point Likert scale was used. The advantages of questionnaires include a high response rate as they require less time and offer anonymity because participants' names are not identified. The SPSS version 18 was used for statistical data analysis. The mean age was 16.83 with a standard deviation of 1.611. 44.4% of the participants were from grade 9, 33.3% from grade 10 and 22.2% from grade 11. The Chronbach alpha of 0.79 was yielded, with respect to self- esteem of adolescent males. In this study, 76.9% reported to attend church services whilst 23% indicated not to attend church services. A further 96.2% of adolescent males indicated to have good relations with guardians while only 3.8% had poorer relations. A large proportion of adolescent males (72.9%) indicated to high-quality friendship as opposed to 27.1% who reported being receiving negative guidance from peers. Other findings revealed that 81.1% of the participants' parents do not drink alcohol, and they cope at school as 79.6% reported protective factors as attributable towards non-engagement to risky sexual practices. As a result, 81.4% of participants reported not to participate in criminal activities although 85% of the participants indicated that in their school there are drugs. It could be speculated from this study that adolescent males whose caregivers are authoritative, find purpose in life and are most likely to be socially and academically competent. This paper leads to further research interest into mental health, coping strategies and sexual decision-making skills of the youth in South Africa.

Keywords : church, mental health, school, sexual behaviour

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