

Factors Contributing to the Rising HIV/AIDS Infection Rate among Soshanguve School Girls in the FET Band

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KEYWORDS Factors. HIV/AIDS. Infection. Soshanguve School Girls. FET Band

ABSTRACT The findings of this research study reveal that Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infections are on the increase among young girls of the age cohort 15-24 who are found at secondary school level. It is also clear from this study that increasing number of young female learners attending secondary schools are living with HIV because they were either born with it or were infected by unscrupulous older men called sugar daddies who for various reasons target young girls. Clearly too, young girls in particular are at a higher risk of infections as compared to boys because girls are susceptible to infections due to a combination of factors that encourage them to be sexually active at an early age when they are still vulnerable to resist manipulation by older men. Importantly, this research study has also pointed out to the magnitude of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Disease Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) epidemic. This calls for more studies than ever before in order to fully understand how the disease spreads and how it can be arrested. To contribute to a better understanding of this problem the present investigation used the purposive sampling method to select 18 grade 12 learners from Further Education and Training (FET) schools which are commonly known as secondary schools. Schools falling under the Further Education and Training Band are actually constituting what is referred to as secondary education. The qualitative paradigm based on the interpretivist and constructivist approach was used to collect data through research instruments such as interviews, observations, note-taking and tape-recordings. The findings reveal that young girls are at a higher risk of being infected with the HIV virus precisely because older men who are infected by HIV/AIDS believe that sleeping with young virgin cures AIDS. Finally, practical ways to mitigate the rising infections among school girls are suggested based on the findings of this research and also on a plethora of literary sources.