

Multiple Sexual Partnerships and their Underlying Risk Influences at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

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ABSTRACT Multiple sexual partners are defined as having more than one sexual partner over a period of time. These can be either serialised partners; one after the other, or simultaneous or concurrent; different sexual partners that overlap in time. Multiple sexual partners have been identified as a likely driver of the spread of HIV in countries with a generalised epidemic because they connect people to a sexual network in which HIV is spread more quickly and the entire community can be affected. The goal of this study was to investigate the prevalence of multiple sexual partnerships and their underlying factors among students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. A study was conducted on 385 students using multistage sampling technique. The data were Analysed using univariate, bivariate and multivariate analysis with SPSS software package version 16.8. Findings show that 49.6% of the students were engaging in sex. About 44.2% sexually active respondents reported having multiple sexual partnerships. Male students were prone to multiple sexual partners compared to females (AOR=3.75; CI: 2.01-6.50). Students staying alone in rented apartments were two times more likely to have multiple sexual partners compared to those living with their parents (AOR=1.01;CI: 0.24-2.26). Findings also show that students who were under peer pressure were five times likely to have multiple sexual partners compared to those who did not have (AOR=4.99;CI: 2.65-8.80). Students who used alcohol were more likely to have multiple sex partners compared to those who never drank (AOR=2.19; CI: 1.01- 4.07). Findings suggest that the practice of engaging in multiple sexual partnerships is rampant on campuses and it is influenced by several underlying risk factors. Therefore, intervention programmes addressing multiple sexual partnerships and risk factors should be developed on campuses.