



Self-esteem, Sexual-risk Behaviour and loveLife Exposure among South African Young Women

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ABSTRACT Various risk behaviours have been identified to explain the increased risk of HIV infection among young women including factors such as poverty, gender-based violence as well as low levels of self-esteem. This study investigated young women's self-esteem, sexual-risk behaviour and exposure to loveLife, a youth HIV prevention programme. A population-based household survey of youth aged between 18-24 years in four South African provinces was conducted, using multi-stage stratified cluster sampling. The sample included 1417 women. Self-esteem was assessed with the 10-item Rosenberg self-esteem scale. Not having sex with someone older, partner reduction, self-efficacy, relationship control and having a sense of future predicted self-esteem. Higher levels of self-esteem were positively associated with exposure to loveLife. Overall, being in control of the relationship and having a sense of future are important factors in understanding sexual-risk behaviour in young women. loveLife programmes present great potential to enhance self-esteem for young women.