

## **Neighbourhood Social Capital and HIV/AIDS: Assessing Neighbourliness and Social Attachment in Rural South African Villages**

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**KEYWORDS** Social Capital. HIV Avoidance. Neighbourhood Effects. Sexual Awareness

**ABSTRACT** Although neighbourhood social capital is considered useful and beneficial for individual health, supporting evidence in South Africa is very scant and thin. Against this backdrop, this study assessed the association between neighborhood social structure as a source or dimension of social capital and HIV/AIDS prevention. The purpose of the study was to assess the roles of a neighbourhood measure of social capital and its effects on HIV/AIDS avoidance. It draws mainly on qualitative ethnographic data gathered in the northern parts of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect information from villagers who were purposively sampled. In this study, the researchers aimed to establish the net effect of neighbourhood social capital on individual health particularly in the context of HIV/AIDS. Evidence gathered in this study tends to single out the rural neighbourhood as a rich source of HIV/AIDS knowledge and information that can benefit every citizen who is actively engaged or involved in it. The study also established that neighbourhood social capital in rural communities is responsible for the avoidance of HIV/AIDS infection and transmission. Community networks and associations have been identified useful in facilitating the sharing of critical information on HIV/AIDS. Associational membership and the asymmetric exchange of HIV/AIDS knowledge including instrumental resources has been found to be correlated to the adoption of protective behaviour and HIV/AIDS prevention.