Conflicting discourses of church youths on masculinity and sexuality in the context of HIV in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo


Authors:
Lusey, Hendrew
San Sebastian, Miguel
Christianson, Monica
Dahlgren, Lars
Edin, Kerstin E.

Periodical title:
SAHARA-J: Journal of Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS 11 (1) 84-93

Description:
Masculinity studies are fairly new and young churchgoers are an under-researched group in the current Congolese church context. In response to this knowledge gap, this paper attempts to explore discourses of young churchgoers from deprived areas of Kinshasa regarding masculinity and sexuality in the era of HIV. A series of 16 semi-structured interviews were conducted with unmarried young churchgoers from the Salvation Army, Protestant and Revival churches. The interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed verbatim and analysed using discourse analysis. Five main discourses emerged: ‘we are aware of the church message on sex’, ‘young men need sex’, ‘young women need money’, ‘to use or not to use condoms’ and ‘we trust in the church message’. Although all informants knew and heard church messages against premarital sex, many of them were sexually active. The perception was that young men were engaged in sexual activities with multiple partners as a result of sexual motivations surrounding masculinity and sexual potency, while young women sought multiple partners through transactional and intergenerational sex for economic reasons. These sexual practices of young people conflicted with church messages on sexual abstinence and faithfulness. However, a small number of participants challenged current gender norms and suggested alternative ways of being a man or a woman. To elucidate these alternatives, we suggest that church youths and church leaders might take concrete actions to deconstruct misconceptions about being men. In this way, they can possibly enhance a frank and fruitful dialogue on sex, sexuality and gender to promote positive masculinities and constructive partnerships to prevent HIV.

Links:
Conflicting discourses of church youths on masculinity and sexuality in the context of HIV in Kinshasa, Congo D.R. [1]

Themes:
Culture and faith [2]

Regions:
Africa [3]
Congo DR [4]

Populations:
Men and boys [5]

Resource types:
Case studies and research papers [6]

Keywords:
abstinence [7]
AIDS education [8]
condoms [9]
faith [10]
gender [11]
sexual behaviour [12]
sexually transmitted infections [13]
youth [14]

Languages:
English [15]

Record created by:
IIEP


Links
[9] https://hivhealthclearinghouse.unesco.org/library/search/_all_/keyword/condoms
[10] https://hivhealthclearinghouse.unesco.org/library/search/_all_/keyword/faith
[12] https://hivhealthclearinghouse.unesco.org/library/search/_all_/keyword/sexual-behaviour
[14] https://hivhealthclearinghouse.unesco.org/library/search/_all_/keyword/youth