

## **An examination of knowledge, attitudes and practices related to HIV/AIDS prevention in Zimbabwean university students: Comparing intervention program participants and non-participants**

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### **Authors:**

Terry, Paul E.  
Mhloyi, Marvelous  
Masvaure, Tsitsi  
Adlis, Susan

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### **Description:**

**OBJECTIVES:** This study represents a comprehensive assessment of differences between participants in an HIV/AIDS prevention program (SHAPE: Sustainability, Hope, Action, Prevention, Education) and non-participants in knowledge, attitudes and practices with a focus on cultural, sociological and economic variables. **METHODS:** We developed an eight-page questionnaire that was administered to 933 randomly selected students at the University of Zimbabwe. Survey items addressed sexual decision-making, condom use, limiting sexual partners, cultural power dynamics and access to HIV testing. **RESULTS:** Results show participants are statistically more likely to report being sexually abstinent, and understand the prevention benefits of condom use. SHAPE members had fewer sexual partners in the previous year than non-SHAPE members (1.4 vs. 2.2). SHAPE members were significantly more likely (67%) than non-SHAPE respondents (48%) to indicate that they knew their HIV sero-status and to state that they knew their status because they had been tested (85% vs. 71%). **DISCUSSION:** Though we found differences between the groups suggesting that program participation increases awareness concerning gender equity, there continue to be many intractable cultural attitudes in this age group. Findings suggest that the attitudes and practices of young men and women are changing, but that progress in some areas does not assure progress in all areas.

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