

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: Perceptions of low-income, HIV positive women of Nakuru, Kenya, on HIV/AIDS prevention and condom use

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This is an in depth interview study that seeks to understand how low income, HIV positive women of Nakuru perceive and practice HIV/AIDS prevention.

The study focuses on the sample population in view of their cultural, geographical, economic and political status within the local and global contexts of HIV/AIDS control policy and population politics.

The study considers how gender, class, and race play out in the sample population's lives, and examines the group's responses to challenges and constraints faced within the limitations they encounter.

Through their narratives, HIV/AIDS prevention practices and in particular male condom use and negotiation, are examined in relation to a myriad of complex heterosexual marriage and relationship types.

The study, based on a semi-urban, slum, residential area of Nakuru, Kenya, exposes poverty, hunger, lack of support from government, kinship, and international organizations, inaccessibility to reproductive health services, and a gender powerless position, as being among the major factors constraining successful HIV/AIDS prevention practices.

The work identifies multiple culture-dependent strategies that HIV positive women of Nakuru adopt, as a form of personal and social agency in response to these challenges. Some of their initiatives include the formation of support group networks, self

employment ventures, seeking legal action, educating themselves and others, witnessing, and making decisions to adopt HIV prevention suitable methods.

A set of feminist approaches to the intersection of gender, race, sexuality, and globalization are applied. At the race level, Critical Race Feminism supports the inclusion of Other and is further complemented by African feminist thought that delves on the historical locations of Nakuru women. The positive contributions of Western Radical Feminist ideology support the women's stories of struggles in negotiating condom use, and the sexual encounter.

International and local policies regarding HIV prevention, therefore, need to acknowledge and include recipient communities' knowledges and contributions. Fair methods of resource distribution will ensure poverty reduction, without which justice, nor lasting solutions to the spread of HIV/AIDS can be achieved.