

Socio-cultural determinants of HIV/AIDS information impact: Experiences from Babati district in Tanzania

By

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Abstract

This paper examines the socio-cultural contexts that influence the impact of HIV/AIDS information on changes in sexual behaviors and attitudes in Babati district, Tanzania. The study integrated both qualitative and quantitative research designs. The sample of 131 respondents comprising of 50 male and 81 female was purposively selected from three villages in Dareda ward. Primary data was collected using face to face interviews, focus group discussion, dissemination workshop and in depth interviews with key informants. Data analysis involved the use of cross tabulation and qualitative descriptions. Results revealed that HIV/AIDS information provision though inadequate is flowing into the communities. The providers of HIV/AIDS information include the district council, village government, private and religious health institutions, civil society organizations, schools, faith based organizations and other community groups. The identified major sources of HIV/AIDS information are mass media such as radio, television and newspapers. Major factors that limit the positive impact of HIV/AIDS information include the weaknesses in the information infrastructure, information provision not structured to enhance local ownership of the process and service provision. Others are cultural norms on multiple sex partners, gender inequality and high rates of poverty made HIV/AIDS information less effective and led to individual decisions that tend to increase HIV/AIDS transmission rather than its reduction. The study recommends HIV/AIDS Information and Knowledge Management Strategy (IKM) for Babati district, in Tanzania.

Keywords:

Infection; Africa; Influence factor; sociocultural environment; behaviour change; Individual; Information dissemination; Knowledge management; AIDS; Sexually transmitted disease; Health education; Public health; Information policy; Tanzania