

Prospects and challenges of using adolescent peer groups in discouraging risky sexual behaviours in Tanzania: a case study of selected secondary Schools in Monduli District - Arusha Region

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Master of Arts (Gender Studies)

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This study examined prospects and challenges of using peer groups in the process of discouraging risky sexual behavior among adolescents. The general objective of the study was to examine the prospects and challenges of using adolescents peer groups in discouraging youths to engage in risky sexual behaviours. More specifically the study focused on the knowledge and awareness on peer groups' roles in discouraging risky sexual behaviour among the youth, advantages and disadvantages of using peer groups in discouraging risky sexual behaviors challenges encountered by adolescent peer groups in discouraging risky sexual behaviour among youth as well as the prospects of using peer groups in discouraging risky sexual behaviour. This study is based on the exploratory approach to qualitative research. Data were collected from teachers, students and parents. A total of 98 respondents participated in the study. Content analysis was used to analyze study data. Overall, study findings showed that there are still challenges by adolescents peer group that are facing in discouraging risky sexual behaviors. First of all, some people are not aware of the important role adolescent peer groups play majority being parents. On one hand, it was revealed that poverty, cultural backgrounds, broken families, temptations, the influence of friends, and western culture were the most common reasons for adolescents to engage in risky sexual behaviour. However, lack of funds to support activities of the peer group in discouraging risky sexual behavior as well as lack of transparency on sex education, were seen as challenges for adolescents peer group in discouraging risky sexual behaviour. It was recommended that peer counseling programs should be promoted because friends are the most common source of sexual information among teenagers. Both 'well-behaved' and 'problematic' students should be recruited to these programs. Moreover, process and outcome evaluation should be formally conducted.