

Determinants of Risky sexual behaviors among undergraduate students of Walter Sisulu University in the Eastern Cape, South Africa

by

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Disclosure

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Objective

To share findings on the determinants of risky sexual behaviours among university students.

There is no conflict of interest.

Presently not employed.

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Overview

- Background and context of research
- Research problem
- Research Aim and Objective
- Research Question
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- Theoretical and Conceptual Framework
- Research methodology and methods of data collection
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Background and Context of Research

- Students in higher education institutions engage in risky sexual behaviors and condom use is very low. A study by Mbelle, Setswe, Sifunda, Mabaso and Maduna (2014:13) conducted in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges in South Africa confirmed that 40.8% of students state that condom use is unnatural and it changes the climax.
- A study conducted in New Zealand confirms that the prevalence of risky sexual behaviors in student population raises concern because multiple sexual partners are common and condom use is uncommon, Psutka, Connor, Cousins & Kypri (2012).
- Risky sexual behaviors' put students at risk of contracting sexually transmitted Infections and pregnancy (Thomas, 2012; Magu, Wanzala, Mutugi & Ndohi, 2012) as it is at Walter Sisulu University.
- Adam & Mutungi (2007) agree with the above authors that in Kenya sexual activity on university campus is high and many students perceive themselves not at risk and condom use and HIV testing are very low.
- In addition, intergenerational sex has increased among females aged 15 – 19 years to 14,5% in 2008 (Shisana, et al., 2009) putting students at high risk because negotiating safe sex with older partners is difficult.

Research Problem

- Risky sexual behavior among undergraduate students of Walter Sisulu University is intensifying. These behaviors include early sexual intercourse, multiple and concurrent partners (MCP), unprotected sexual intercourse and intergenerational sex.
- These behaviors are intensified by peer pressure, economic problems, alcohol and drug abuse, lack of recreational facilities and lower rates of condom use (Dingeta et al., 2012).
- WSU Campus Health Annual Report of 2012 revealed that HIV prevalence among students was 6, 8%, pregnancy rate 9, 4%, STI's 11, 5% and the rate of contraceptive use was 33, 5%.
- Risky sexual behavior is a real life problem and needs to be attended to. This problem inspired the researcher to conduct this study.

Research Aim and Objective

- The aim of this study was to describe the determinants of risky sexual behaviors among Walter Sisulu University undergraduate students in order to strengthen existing intervention strategies.

Objective

- To determine reasons why students practice risky sexual behaviors.

Research Question

- What are the determinants of risky sexual behaviours among WSU undergraduate students?

Area and Population

- Walter Sisulu University (WSU) in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. WSU has four campuses' in Mthatha, Butterworth, East London and Queenstown. WSU has 24 000 students.
- WSU students from all four campuses were the target population.

Theoretical Framework

- Trans theoretical Model for behavior change.
- Used in developing interventions to promote healthy behavior change and describe how people modify problem behaviors or acquire positive behaviors. It has five stages:-
 - Precontemplation - no intention to change.
 - Contemplation - intending to change behavior
 - Preparation - small steps towards behavior change.
 - Action - recently changed their behaviors.
 - Maintenance - sustained their behavior change for a while (Proschaska & Diclemente, 1984 & 1986; Proschaska, et al., 1998; CDC, 2007 & Mpofu, 2012).

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Research Methodology

Study design: Mixed method design was used

Data Collection : For qualitative design, Semi-structured interview guide using focus groups was used.

- Audio tapes/voice recorder and note taking was done.

For quantitative design, Questionnaires were distributed to students and collected.

Data Analysis

- Data was analyzed using Computer aided qualitative data computer software (CAQDAS) called Nvivo 10. Themes and subthemes emerged.
- For quantitative data, SPSS data package was used. Categorical, numerical and inferential statistics were used to illustrate the findings.

Results

Introduction

- The coming slides comprises of findings of both quantitative and qualitative data analysis and interpretations. The findings from quantitative approach are presented in tables, graphs and frequencies while the data from qualitative approach are presented in Themes and subthemes.
- 1600 Questionnaires were distributed amongst the students in all four WSU campuses, where research was done but only 1024 questionnaires were returned.

Results cont.'

Quantitative Analysis

Table 1: Counts of respondents about general characteristics

Variable of interest N= 1024 (%)

Gender

Females	613 (59.86)
Males	411 (40.14)

Ethnicity

Black	1006 (98.24)
Colored	17 (1.76)
India	1
White	0

Marital status

Single	1013 (98.93)
Married	6 (1.07)
Other	5

Table 1: Counts of respondents about general characteristics

Variable of interest	n= 1024
Religion	
Christians	999 (97.56)
Muslim	20 (0.20)
Buddhist	3
Other	2
Campus of residence	
Mthatha	490 (50.18)
Ibika	229 (24)
Buffalo City	170 (17.4)
Queenstown	135 (13.82)

Results cont.'

Table 2: Frequencies of respondents according to age groups and level of study

Variable of interest n=1024 (%)

Age groups in years

18-21years	522 (50.96)
22-25 years	373 (36.43)
26-29 years	129 (12.60)

Level of study

1 st year	458 (44.73)
2 nd year	381 (37.21)
3 rd year	148 (14.45)
4 th year	31 (3.61)
5 th year	4
6 th year	2

Results cont.'

Table 3: Frequencies of respondents according to sexual practices

Variable of interest	n =1024 (%)
<hr/>	
Ever had any kind of sexual intercourse	
Yes	962 (93.95)
No	62 (6.05)
Use of condom last sexual intercourse	
Yes	617 (60.25)
No	407 (39.75)
Sexual intercourse with a stranger last 12 months	
Yes	393 (38.38)
No	631 (61.62)
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Results cont.'

Figure 1: Distribution of proportion of all students by age at first sexual intercourse reported by partners

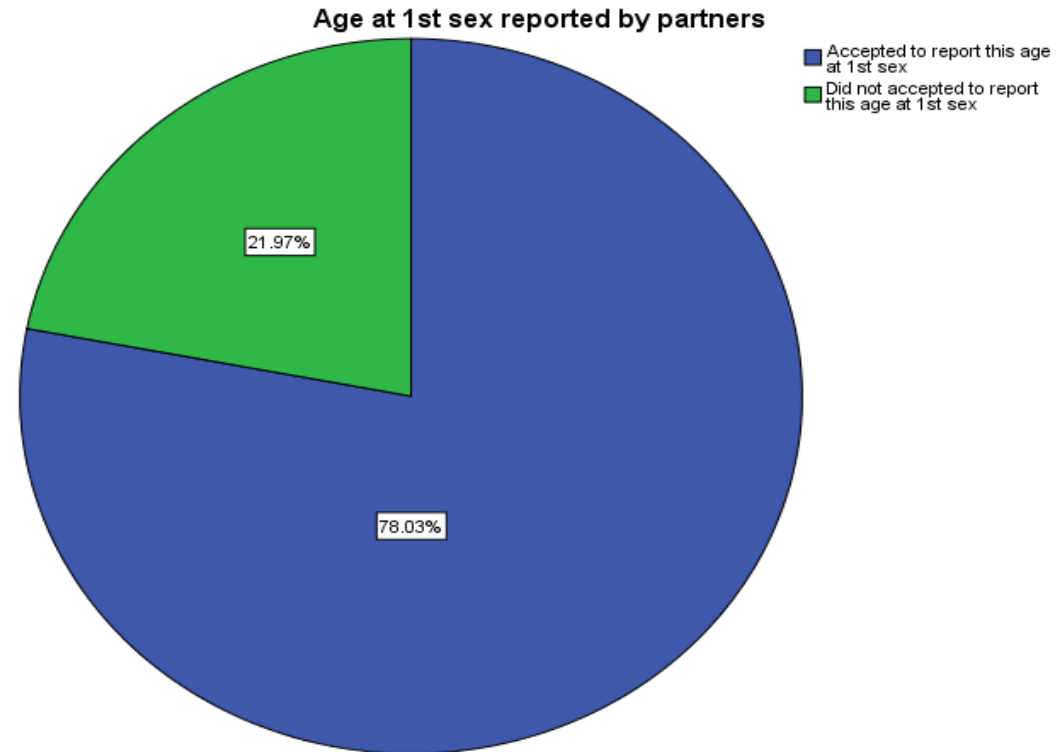


Figure 2: Proportions of high probability of HIV infection and STI

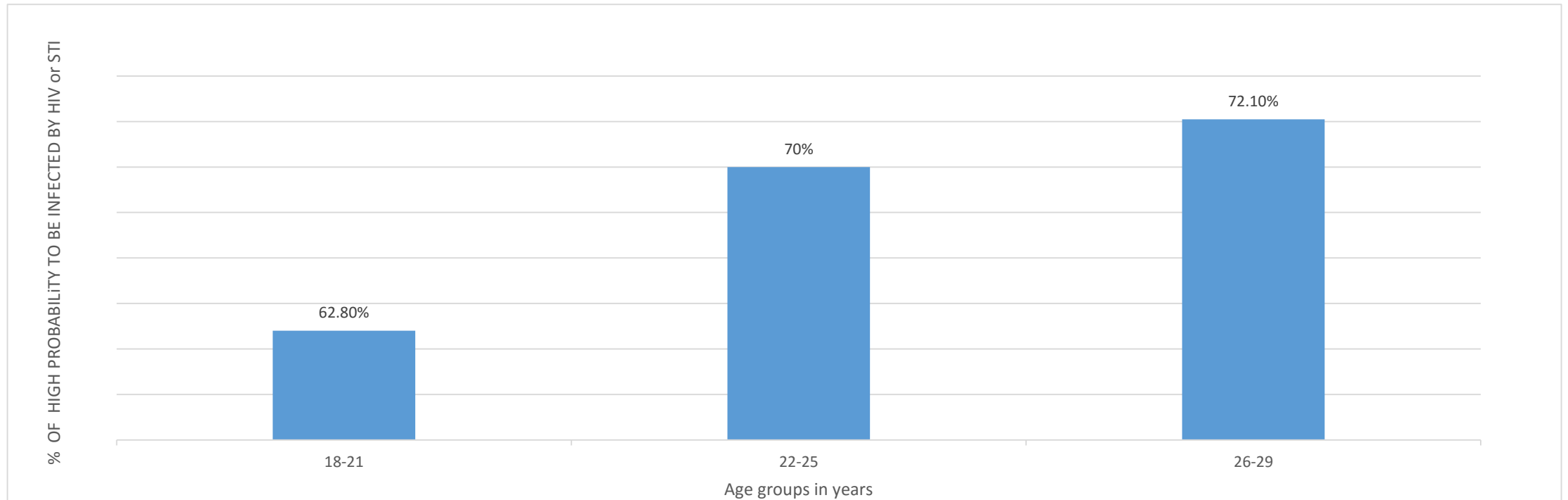
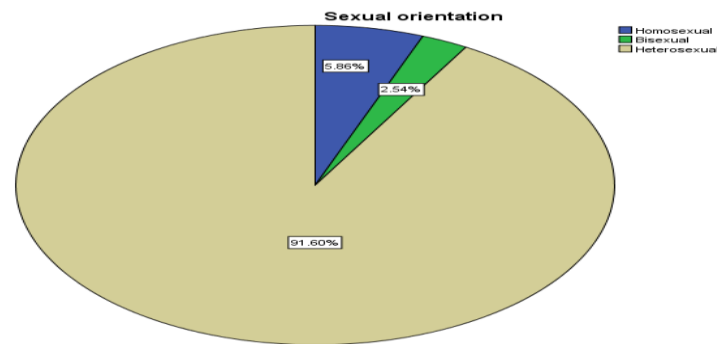


Figure 4.31: illustrate the proportion of high probability of HIV infection and STI increased significantly (P for trend =0.011) with increasing chronological ages (62.80%, 70% and 72.10%) of all students.

Results cont.'

Figure 3: Distribution of proportions of all students by sexual orientation



This figure shows that, 9/10 (91.60%) respondents (n=938) were heterosexual, 6/100 (5.86%) respondents (n=60) were homosexual, and 3/100 (2.54%) respondents (n=26) were bisexual. Majority of students were heterosexual, few were homosexual and bisexual

Results cont'

Table 4 : Distribution of continuous variables related to sexual practices among all students

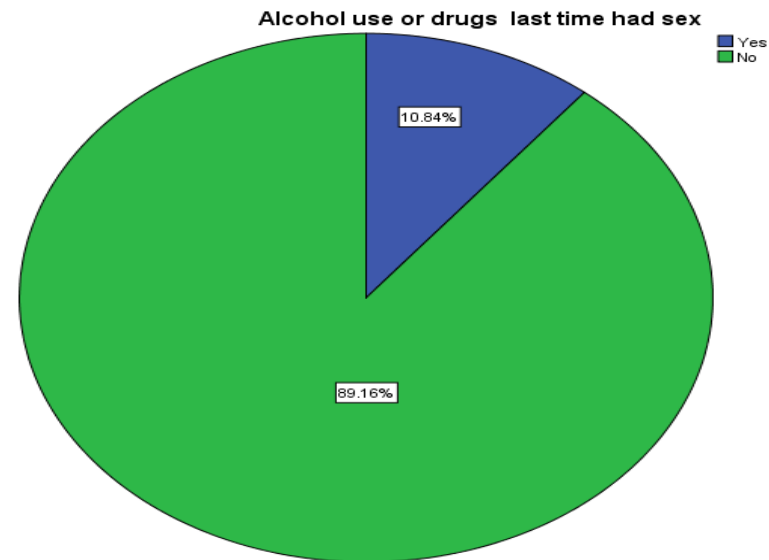
Variable of Interest	Mean	Mode	SD	Min- Max	Median [IQ]
Age at first sexual intercourse (years)	16.4	17	3.2	2 – 26	17 [15-18]
Number of partners in anal sex in life (n)	1.4	0	5.4	0 – 100	0 [0 – 1]
Number of partners in oral sex last 12 months (n)	0.3	0	2.2	0 – 60	0 [0 – 0]
Number of partners in anal sex last 12 months (n)	0.7	0	1.6	0 – 20	0 [0 -1]
Number of partners in oral sex in life (n)	0.3	0	2.1	0 – 60	0 [0 – 0]

Results cont.'

Variable of Interest	Mean	Mode	SD	Min- Max	Median [IQ]
Sexual partners had sex with last 12 months (n)	2.1	1	3.3	0 – 50	1 [1 – 2]
Sexual partners during life (n)	4.9	2	9	0 – 109	3 [1 – 5]
Sexual partners last 30 days (n)	1.6	1	3.7	0 – 70	1 [0 – 2]
Sexual partners without condom last 30 days (n)	1.2	0	3.7	0 – 70	0 [0 – 1]
Sexual partners 5 years or more older than you last 6 months (n)	1.1	0	2.2	0 – 25	0 [0 -1]
Sexual partners 5 or more years younger than you last 12 months (n)	0.9	0	1.9	0 – 20	0 [0 – 1]

Results cont.'

Figure 4 : distribution of proportions of all respondents by alcohol use or drugs last time had sexual intercourse



10.84% of respondents used alcohol or drugs during last sexual intercourse while 89.16% did not.

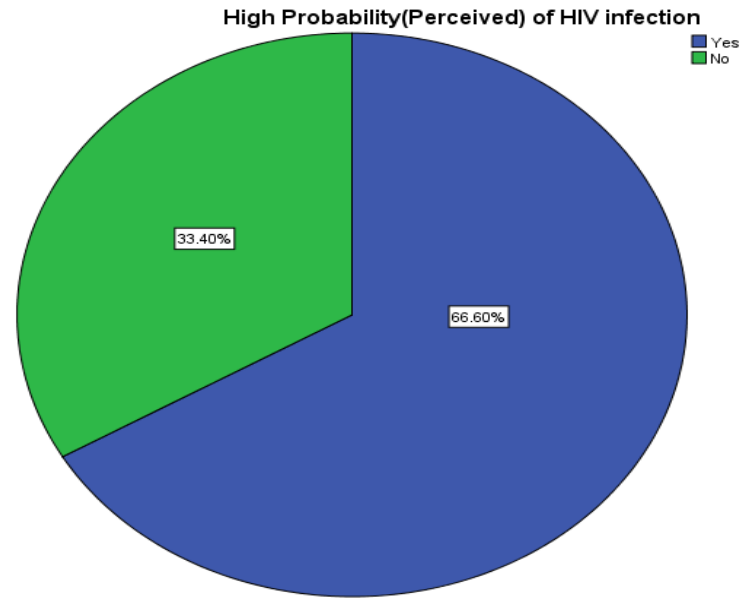
Results cont.'

Table 5: History of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) among all respondents

Variable of interest	n = 164 (%)
Ever told had Genital sore or ulcer	29 (2.83)
Ever told had Genital Warts	27 (2.64)
Ever told had Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)	17 (1.66)
Ever told had gonorrhoea or Male discharge syndrome	64 (6.25)
Ever told had Chlamydia Trachomatis or Vaginal discharge syndrome	27 (2.64)

Results cont.'

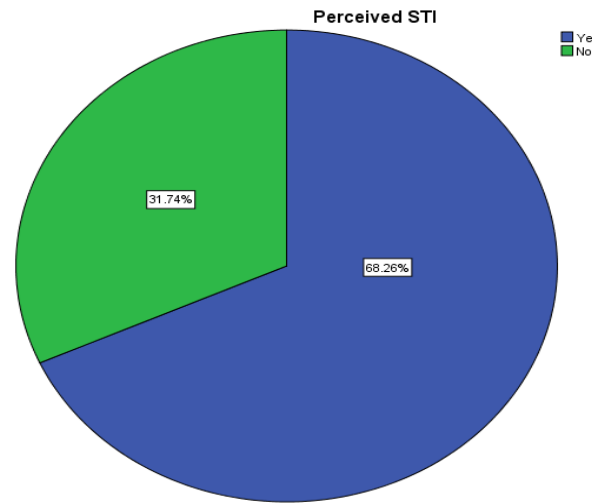
Figure 5: perceived high probability of HIV infection by respondents



Verbal autopsy from respondents showed that 66.60% had perceived high probability of HIV infection meanwhile 33.40% reported no probability of HIV infection

Results cont.'

Figure 6: perceived high probability of STI by respondents



68.26% of respondents have answered yes to perceived STI whereas 31.74% responded no to perceived STI. Meaning that more than 68% of students answered yes to perceived STI which shows that they see themselves as vulnerable to STI.

Results cont.'

Table 6: Significant association of gender and some types of sexual practices in all students

Variable of interest	Males n (%) OR (95% CI)	Females n (%) OR (95% CI)	P - value
Use of condom last sexual intercourse	265/411(64.5) 1.4 (1.04-1.7)	352/613(57.4) 1	0.024
Sex with stranger last 12 months	247/411(60.1) 4.8(3.7-6.3)	146/613(23.8) 1	<0.0001
Last time sex was it with your partner	227/411(55.2) 1	471/613(76.8) 2.7(2.1-3.5)	<0.0001
Alcohol use or drug use last time had sex	70/411(17) 2.9(1.9-4.3)	41/613(6.7) 1	<0.0001
Age at first sex reported by partners	293/411(71.3) 0.5(0.4-0.7)	506/613(82.5) 1	<0.0001

Male gender was significantly ($p=0.024$) associated with use of condom last sexual intercourse(64.5%), sex with stranger last 12 months, and alcohol use or drug use last time had sex, while female gender was significantly ($p<0.0001$) associated with last time sex with individual partner and age at first sex reported by partners.

Results cont.'

Table 7: Significant associations between selected risky sexual behaviours and age groups of all students.

Sexual behaviours of interest	Age groups of students (years)			P-value for trend or Pearson chi- square
	18-21 n(%)	22-25 n(%)	26-29 n(%)	
Ever had any kind of sex (yes)	479/522(91.9)	359/373(96.2)	124/129(96.1)	0.008
Last time sex with your partner (yes)	349/522(66.9)	248/373(66.5)	101/129(78.3)	0.056
Used condom/dental dam during oral sex (never)	165/522(31.6)	157/373(42.1)	61/129(47.3)	<0.0001
Used condom during anal sex (never)	95/522(18.2)	78/373(20.9)	35/129(27.1)	0.017
Alcohol use or drugs last time had sex (yes)	43/522(8.2)	52/373(13.9)	16/129(12.4)	0.025
Age at first sex reported by partners (yes)	396/522(75.9)	296/373(79.4)	107/129(82.9)	0.057

Results cont.'

Table 8: Variations of mean ages at first sexual intercourse across chronological ages of students

Chronological ages Groups (Years)	Age at first sexual intercourse Mean \pm SD in Years
18 -21	16 \pm 3.1
22 – 25	16.6 \pm 3.2
26 – 29	17.1 \pm 3.5
ANOVA, P – value	<0.001

This table shows that there was a significant ($P<0.05$) positive linear correlation between chronological ages and age at first sexual intercourse among all students

Results – Qualitative design

- Four focus groups were conducted.
- Each focus group consisted of six to eight participants.
- The researcher conducted the focus group interviews.

- Interviews were semi structured, in –depth and face-to-face.
- Voice recorder was used to capture all what was discussed.
- Major Theme and subthemes emerged from data analysis.

Theme - Determinants of risky sexual behaviours among WSU undergraduate students

Subthemes

- Inadequate knowledge of students about risky sexual behaviours.

In response participants said:

“----- ignorance to knowledge because here at varsity we have a clinic and we are allowed to go anytime and ask anything we want to know, there are also peer educators sometimes they hold events that are educational like awareness campaigns.”

“One other thing is, to get used to each other in a relationship as if when you are used to each other, you know each other’s HIV status as if they cannot reinfect each other.”

Results cont.'

- Myths about condoms and their use.

These excerpts were responses from participants:

“There is a myth among our peers that says a condom is irritating from both guys and girls, and they do not feel the joy and happiness when they are using a condom so they end up not using it at all.”

“Not to use a condom is a surety that you really love and trust this person, then when you say a condom must be used then it shows you do not trust each other, or think there is a disease that a partner has.”

“-----females are afraid to negotiate condom use, they fear that they will lose their boyfriends.”

“Many girls believe in flesh to flesh, guys cannot say no because of their pride as men.”

Results cont.'

- Students participate in sexual intercourse with older partners.

These are the responses from participants:

“Mostly it is older guys who are in a relationship with young girls, yes guys do have older ladies as well who provide them..... and they end up having difficulties in negotiating condom use. They are even unable to say they are not ready to have children and the issues of Sexually Transmitted Infections and all that.”

“having sexual intercourse with an older person is a risk because that old person has experienced life more than you and he/she knows all the tricks and you do not even know his/her previous sexual relationships.”

“An older person will use you for sexual intercourse and after that he/she will go back to his/her peers and leave you with a broken heart.”

Results cont.'

- Students engage in multiple sexual relationships for different reasons.

Participants responded and said:

“We have a tendency to say the one partner that I have is stressing me, I cannot have him alone, I need another partner that I will use to distress who will not ask me so many things.”

“----- we have got friends who engage with more than one boyfriends and you find that she is having unprotected sex with all these partners.”

“----- in those five partners that I have probably I love only one and that one is the one that I have from home, then there are others who provide cash, or transport to go out and have booze with my friends.

Results cont.'

- Females compete in their sexual relationships with each other.

These are citation from participants:

“Another thing is competition, students like to compete, want to be seen with different cars and with certain types of people, something like that.”

“Other students even say I will compete until I am number one, another one will say I want to hurt the other girlfriend, we are in a competition.”

Results cont.'

- Some students practice prostitution because of personal financial needs.

Responses are as follows:

“----- prostitution is easy because you work during the night and during the day you attend classes like everybody else. You sleep with someone now then he gives you your money and you part ways, no strings attached.”

“Another lady I know, she studied with the money for prostitution until she finished her studies. Her plan was to quit prostitution immediately she got a job and let go of all this thing.”

“Even males they also do prostitution especially gay males.”

Results cont.'

- Perception of insufficient money and poverty among students.

Participants have this to say:

“Maybe you are given only R200.00 at home, there is no money for clothes, and then a person may end up dating on older working guy, other students they target Nigerian guys with shops around town because they want to gain something.”

“- - - poverty is a main challenge, because other students they end up in uLine for benefits, they will get money, they will send this money back home because they are poor at home. - - - - they do it because they do not have a choice/option they are forced by circumstances.”

Results cont.'

- Students practice risky sexual behaviours for fun.

Participants cited the following:

“Other students are engaging in risky sexual behaviours just for fun”

“Others are going to uLine for the sake of fun ---“

“----others think this an opportunity for them to have fun”

Discussion

- Results indicate that these students are still in the Precontemplation stage of the Transtheoretical Model for Behaviour Change.
- Are not aware that they engage in risky sexual behaviours.
- The researcher learnt that students at tertiary institutions are not practising safe sexual intercourse which therefore contributes to their risky sexual behaviours.
- Such behaviours according to the researcher can expose these respondents to a number of sexually transmitted infections including HIV and unplanned pregnancies.

Discussion

- Other notable outcome was that 38.38% (n=393) of respondents had sexual intercourse with a stranger in the last 12 months.
- Focus group interviews confirmed the above mentioned findings that students are fetched by different cars from the campuses on weekends by people they do not even know, they call this uLine (freak).
- The researcher noted with great concern that university students have a lot of energy that can be channeled in a positive way rather than having sexual intercourse as recreational activity.
- This poses a challenge for young people at universities because they need guidance and direction for their purpose of existence in life.

Discussion

- Qualitative approach revealed that MCP is practiced by participants because one partner can be stressing then a person need to have another one for distressing, the one who will not ask so many things.
- Secondly these partners are providing cash, transport and liquor for the concerned partner and his/her friends.
- From the recent study conducted by Shisana, at al. (2014), Eastern Cape is the hardest hit by MCP, this is a concern because WSU is in this province therefore it is not exempted from this practice.

Discussion

- 24.71% (n=253) responded and agreed that it is difficult negotiating safe sex with someone older .
- Focus groups affirmed these findings and revealed that people older than them will use them for sexual intercourse and after that they will return to their usual partners and leave the young ones with broken hearts.
- The researcher noted that difficulty in negotiating safe sex with older person is not easy especially for first years and it is better in other years due to some degree of maturity.
- The concern is the risk that is involved in sexual relationships with older people.

Discussion

- The rate of non-use of condoms at last sexual intercourse in comparison with ethnicity of respondents is of great concern.
- This study revealed that there is unequal variations in the rates of non-use of condoms that showed significance ($p = 0.004$) among all ethnicity.
- Another revelation from this study is that there are three different ethnic groups with different variations of non-condom use with Indians having highest percentage followed by coloured's and lastly blacks.

Discussion

- The variations of non-use of condoms last sexual intercourse in comparison to different sexual orientation of respondents revealed significance ($P=0.032$).
- The researcher noted that homosexual students are not using condoms than heterosexual and bisexual students.
- This means that homosexual students are more at risk because they practice risky sexual behaviours than heterosexuals and bisexuals.

Recommendations

- WSU undergraduate students should acknowledge that risky sexual behaviours among them should be eliminated and that change should start with them.
- WSU Campus health Services should collaborate with students in all their awareness campaigns to overcome and improve ignorance and inadequate knowledge and understanding of risky sexual behaviours.
- WSU Campus Health services should collaborate with academic faculties to make sexual reproductive health/life skills to be part of the curriculum for all level one and foundation students.

Recommendations

- Campus Health services should collaborate with the Centre for HIV and AIDS in empowering young men and women on campus about healthy lifestyle.
- Undergraduate students should understand that freedom and lack of parental control that they enjoy on campus should be accompanied with responsibility for their own sexual health.
- Correct and Consistent Condom Use should be encouraged to all students irrespective of their HIV status to overcome non-use of condoms among them.

Recommendations

- WSU management should tighten security especially at the main gates to restrict movement of cars that come to fetch students on campus.
- Platforms for students to debate/talkshows and have support groups should be created in order to improve some of the challenges students face.
- Reduction of multiple sexual partners should be emphasized among students to improve self –worth and self-esteem.

Recommendations

- Creation of conducive environment for establishing male and female forums on all campuses to capacitate them on social life/campus life and issues affecting them.
- WSU management should devise strategies of raising funds for the needy students in order to minimize transactional sex and sexual intercourse with older partners.
- Sexual Reproductive Health Prevention programmes should cater for all sexual orientations on campus including Men who have Sex with Men (MSM's).

Summary

- In summary this study contributed towards improvement of existing sexual and reproductive health of all students at WSU.
- The findings from this study will also contribute in improving the risky sexual behaviours identified by students.
- Possible prevention strategies have been suggested such as education and prevention, awareness campaigns, reduction of multiple sexual partners and sexual intercourse with older partners and encouraging correct and consistent condom use among all students.

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