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Is the high HIV prevalence in Gert Sibande, South Africa driven by a high MSP Prevalence?

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South Africa (SA) is one of the worst affected countries in the world by the HIV epidemic. According to the annual antenatal-care survey, Gert-Sibande-District (GSD) currently has the highest district HIV prevalence in SA, thought to be mainly due to high levels of multiple sexual partnerships (12-month-MSP). This study assessed the prevalence and associated factors of MSP and concurrent sexual partnerships (CSP) among adults (16-55 years) of GSD. A self-weighted cross-sectional probabilistic multi-stage survey carried out in GSD in 2010 to understand the drivers of HIV epidemic in the district used piloted structured questionnaire to obtain information from 750 adults. Using Chi-squared tests and binary logistic regression analyses stratified by gender, relationships between potential explanatory factors and MSP/CSP was examined. The 592 sexually-active adults (women, 66.2%) were included in this analysis. Unemployment rates were high in both men (45.0%) and women (65.8%). High levels of 12-month MSP (22.0%) and CSP (8.3%) were found, higher among men, MSP (44.0% versus 10.7%) and CSP (19.5% versus 2.6%) than women. Among men, positive correlates of MSP were socio-economic status, early sexual-debut and young age. Alcohol consumption in men and women, particularly risky drinking, transactional sex and casual partners in women, significantly increased the likelihood of MSP. The findings of this study showed a high prevalence of MSP and CSP that may explain the high HIV prevalence in GSD. There is an evidence of a relationship between socioeconomic factors and MSP. Greater efforts to address socio-economic disadvantages must be built into HIV prevention interventions.

Biography

Olukemi Babalola has recently completed a 2nd Masters from University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. She also holds a MPH and an MBChB. She is currently re-inventing her career in an internship with Population Council South Africa. Her research interest lies in utilizing community-based approaches for vulnerable adolescents' health and well-being.

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