

https://dspace.org/

Religiousness-spirituality and its relationship to the sexual risk-taking behaviour of university students

Carver, Ronel

2015-08-19
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/18283

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

Abstract

This study investigates the relationships between religious-spiritual beliefs, values and practices, gender and sexual risk-taking in the young adult university population. Previous research in the field has mainly been conducted in high income countries using limited measures of religiousness as related to health outcomes, which may possibly have low ecological validity for the South African population. This quantitative study utilised a multidimensional measure of religiousness-spirituality to investigate its relationship to sexual risk-taking in the context of concern about South Africa's high rates of unplanned pregnancies, STIs and HIV/AIDS.

Male and female undergraduate students (aged 17-21) completed the Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness-Spirituality (BMMRS) and the Adult Sexual Risk Behaviour Questionnaire (ASRBQ) and the data was explored statistically for relationships. A personal and meaningful connection to one's perceived Creator, strong faith and commitment to carrying over one's religious-spiritual beliefs and values in other areas of one's life, practicing forgiveness of self and others, private religious-spiritual practices, and using one's personal relationship with God as a source of support during difficult times were found to be significantly correlated to lowered sexual risk-taking, although weakly (rho = <0.3, 0.05). Significant differences between men and women were found for Religious-Spiritual History and sexual risk-taking (sexual behaviours and intercourse). These results bear testimony to the richer data that can be gathered using multidimensional measures of religiousness-spirituality, and the significance of psychosocial factors in the enactment of sexual risk-taking behaviours. Recommendations are made regarding the development and implementation of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) prevention and intervention programmes used within the university context, and for young people in South Africa more generally.