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Ethical perspectives of employees: a case study of employees of the University of The Witwatersrand

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Abstract

This research aims to explore the perceptions of women in Pietermaritzburg about pregnancy and abortions. Data from a project on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights by the AIDS Foundation of South Africa (AFSA) was used for this research. Qualitative methods of data collection and data analysis were used to understand how these perceptions are constructed by cultural and religious influences which inform their sense of identity and belief systems regarding pregnancy and abortions under various circumstances. The data was collected through a series of Focus Group Discussions and member-checking processes. It was later analysed using thematic content analysis. The findings are analysed from the African psychology, African feminisms and Social constructionism perspectives. The results show that the education around sex, pregnancy and reproductive choices is still stagnant in these communities, which may contribute to the stigmatisation of unpopular reproductive choices such as abortions. The stigma is further fuelled by structural, cultural and systemic resistances, which make abortion services inaccessible to black women living under economically vulnerable circumstances.