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ASSESSMENT OF RISKY SEXUAL PRACTICES WITH RESPECT TO HIV AMONG SOUTH AFRICAN YOUNG ADULTS

-MMA-LERATO SEBOKA-

A research report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Clinical Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, May, 2009.

Masters in Clinical Psychology – Research Report Cover Page

DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

South Africa is one of the countries hardest hit by the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the world. With ever increasing prevalence rates of HIV infection, those who fall within the 14 - 29 years age group remain the population most at risk for HIV/AIDS. In spite of educational and awareness campaigns, the rates of new infections continues to rise among this age group, suggesting that these campaigns alone may not be as effective as was initially envisioned. Research exploring factors that may mediate or moderate the relation between HIV awareness and knowledge and behaviour has proliferated in recent years. The present study investigates whether the Health Belief Model constructs predict and perhaps moderate the relation between HIV knowledge / awareness and Risky sexual practices. The study further explores the role of Sexual orientation and attempts to reflect on the question of whether education and awareness programmes should be tailored for specific sub-populations. The sample consisted of 200 second year university students from the Humanities Faculty at the University of the Witwatersrand. Participants completed a survey of questions that consisted of Demographic information, Sexual Practices Questionnaire, HIV Knowledge Questionnaire, an AIDS Health Belief scale and Generalized Self efficacy Scale. Results yielded a significant relation between Perceived benefit (Health Belief Model construct) and HIV knowledge. No other significant differences were identified between the other variables.

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