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1

Socio-cultural correlates and risky sexual behaviour influencing prevalence of HIV/AIDS and STIs in Uganda: A gender perspective

Socio-culture correlates and risky sexual behaviour influencing prevalence of HIV/AIDS and STIs in Uganda: A gender perspective

SOCIOLOGY | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Socio-cultural correlates and risky sexual behaviour influencing prevalence of HIV/AIDS and STIs in Uganda: A gender perspective

Shraboni Patra

Cogent Social Sciences (2016), 2: 1166472
Socio-cultural correlates and risky sexual behaviour influencing prevalence of HIV/AIDS and STIs in Uganda: A gender perspective

Shraboni Patra*

Abstract: The present study focuses on the behavioural factors especially risky sexual behaviours along with the other socio-economic correlates of the high prevalence of STIs and HIV infection in Uganda. The Uganda AIDS Indicator Survey (2011) data is used. The total sample is 16,607 of which 7,122 are men and 9,485 are women. HIV prevalence is high among men (33.4%) and women (50.2%) with any sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or STI symptoms. Women are significantly more vulnerable to any STIs and HIV/AIDS than men. The prevalence of HIV and STIs is much higher among widowed, divorced and separated. Drinking alcohol and not using a condom during sex, having two or more sexual partners are the contributing factors to high HIV and STIs prevalence. Awareness of preventive methods and transmission of STIs, and changes in sexual behaviour are required. The difference in the prevalence of STIs and HIV among men and women can be minimised by increasing employment opportunity for women, by securing women’s sexual right through legal protection and by targeting men’s perception towards women’s sexuality.

Subjects: Behavioral Sciences; Health and Social Care; Medicine, Nursing & Allied Health; Social Sciences

Keywords: socio-cultural correlates; risky sexual behaviour; HIV/AIDS; STIs; Uganda; UAIS, 2011

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Shraboni Patra is a research scholar (PhD) at the International Institute for Population Sciences, India. She has expertise in the public health research particularly in the research on women’s reproductive health, child health, gender studies, AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, etc. She has worked as a research officer in a UNICEF funded project on mother and child nutrition (CNSM 2012) in Maharashtra, India. She has published many research articles in the reputed international journals. She has also presented her research papers at many international conferences and seminars.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT
The present paper shows that women are more vulnerable to the risk of HIV infection and sexually transmitted diseases as compared to men in Uganda. Women from the backward sections of the society are more susceptible to the danger of getting HIV and other STIs. High-risk sexual behaviour like drinking alcohol and not using condoms during sex, having two or more sexual partners are the contributing factors to high HIV and STIs prevalence. Hence, the study concludes that women’s sexual rights and financial independence need to be prioritised in the Ugandan society to minimise women’s vulnerability to STIs and HIV. Women’s vulnerability to the risk of HIV and STIs, irrespective of their socio-cultural status, can be minimised by reducing violence against women through legal protection and by targeting men’s perception towards women’s sexuality.
intercourse were likely to engage in unprotected sex (Asiimwe-Okiror et al., 1997; Fritz, Woelk, Bassett, McFarland, et al., 2002; Simbayi et al., 2004). From the findings of the present study, it is also clear that use of condoms during sex is also a vital determinant to the risk of getting infected by HIV and STIs. Despite having knowledge of the risk of HIV transmission during unprotected sex, sometimes the use of condoms is compromised by women when their anticipated monetary gain is higher than their usual earning (Ntozi et al., 2013). Hence, in African society women’s economic empowerment is not always able to improve their negotiation on safer sex (Tenkorang, 2012).

5. Conclusions and recommendations

Stigma associated with STIs and lack of awareness is the main hindrance to reduce the STI prevalence in Uganda. Prevalence of any STIs is much higher than the prevalence of HIV. Moreover, it is evident that preventive methods, understanding of the spread of STIs and changes in the sexual behaviour are also obligatory. Hence, treatment for any STIs is an urgent requirement along with the HIV prevention programmes. Woman’s sexual rights need to be prioritised in the Ugandan society to minimise women’s vulnerability to STIs and HIV. Difference in the prevalence of STIs and HIV
between men and women can be minimised by increasing employment opportunity for women, reducing violence against woman through legal protection and by targeting men’s perception towards women’s sexuality. Therefore, effective strategy and programmes are required at the national level.

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References


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