

Abstract

Title: Sexism, Intimate Partner Violence and Risk Behaviours among Men in a South African Township

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Background: South Africa is known to have particularly high levels of gender-based violence against women due to a variety of socio-cultural and economic reasons. This study aimed to examine the association between hostile sexist attitudes, high risk sexual behaviours, alcohol abuse and gender-based violence among men.

Objectives: Researching hostile sexism, as a determinant of high risk behaviours, including gender-based violence has not received much attention. This study aims to examine the association between hostile sexist attitudes, high risk sexual behaviours, alcohol abuse and intimate partner violence among men in a South African township. We hypothesized that men who score high on the hostile sexism scale are more likely to assault their sex partners and engage in risky sexual and risky drinking behaviours as compared to men who score low on the hostile sexism scale.

Methods: This study was a retrospective cross-sectional survey. A total of 829 men, aged 18 years and older, were recruited in informal drinking establishments known as shebeens in a Cape Town township and asked to complete an anonymous behavioural survey. Linear regression analysis was used to assess associations between hostile sexism and the variables of interest.

Key results: Higher hostile sexism was associated with having a history of STI and recent intimate partner violence (prior 30 days) while a lower hostile sexism score was associated with communication with a male friend about violence against women, higher negative attitudes towards risky sexual behaviour, and higher rates of condom use. Furthermore being married was also associated with lower hostile sexism scores.

Conclusion: Higher hostile sexism is associated with gender-based violence and therefore addressing these beliefs can help strengthen STI/HIV interventions among men in South Africa.

Implication for policy, activism, and/or service delivery: According to the South African National Strategic Plan (NSP) for HIV and AIDS, STIs and TB (2012-2016) the implementation of interventions to address harmful gender norms and gender-based violence is at the core of HIV interventions. These study findings therefore, serves as evidence based outcomes that could inform future studies aiming to speak to the objectives of the NSP.

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