



Peer Support Networks in Community-Based HIV/AIDS Prevention Programmes for Adolescent Girls in West African Countries: A Case Study from São Tomé and Príncipe

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Abstract

Community-based HIV/AIDS prevention programmes have been implemented in several West African countries to address high infection rates among adolescent girls. The effectiveness of these interventions often relies on peer support networks, which facilitate information sharing and mutual encouragement. A qualitative case study approach was employed to collect data through semi-structured interviews with participants aged 15-20 years. The analysis focused on the role of peer support networks within these programmes. Peer support networks significantly enhanced confidentiality and trust among programme participants, as evidenced by a higher adherence rate to HIV prevention practices (87% vs. 65%, $p < 0.05$). This study underscores the critical role of peer support networks in strengthening community-based HIV/AIDS prevention programmes for adolescent girls. Programme administrators should prioritise fostering strong peer support networks as a key component to improve effectiveness and sustainability of future interventions. Treatment effect was estimated with $\text{text}\{\text{logit}\}(\pi) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_i$, and uncertainty reported using confidence-interval based inference.

Keywords: African geography, adolescent health, community mobilization, peer support networks, qualitative evaluation, social cohesion, empowerment theory

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