

**THE PERCEIVED IMPACT OF SOCIO-CULTURAL MESSAGES AND
PRACTICES AROUND PUBERTY, IN CONSTRUCTIONS OF MASCULINITY
AND SEXUALITY IN YOUNG XHOSA MALE ADULTS: IMPLICATIONS FOR
HIV/AIDS INFECTION**

By

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Statement of Authorship

Except where reference is made in the text, this dissertation contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the dissertation.

This dissertation has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

All research procedures reported in the dissertation were approved by a relevant Ethics Committee.

Signed Date

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Abstract

This research explored the perceived impact of socio-cultural messages and practices around puberty, on constructions of masculinity and sexuality among Xhosa male university students aged between 18 and 24 years. This research explored how Xhosa men construct their masculinities and sexuality through identifying the key experiences and messages about manhood that they receive in puberty and by analyzing how their pubertal experiences and socio-cultural messages before and after circumcision influence the way they construct their masculinities. An understanding of how masculinities are constructed may be used to inform interventions around HIV prevention and help to understand what factors predisposes these males to high HIV related risk behaviours. This study used a qualitative research design. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews, and analyzed with reference to Parker's approach to discourse analysis (Parker, 1992). The results show that socio-cultural inform how manhood is negotiated. The possibility of using traditional practices in fighting against HIV/AIDS is explored.

“Xhosa see the initiation- rite as a symbolic death, through pain and isolation from the community or society. This death brings forth new life and rebirth as a new being: a man who has outgrown everything related to his childhood. The new person is incorporated into society as a new responsible member contributing to its values and existence. After this process a person is expected to think and behave in a changed and constructive manner showing a transition from when he was a boy and all acts of antisocial acts were tolerated from him.”(Mayatula & Mavundla, 1997:p18).

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