

SA AIDS 2009
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IS AIDS A DEATH SENTENCE?

Preliminary outcomes
of a survey among Tshwane's MSM

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Social science that makes a difference

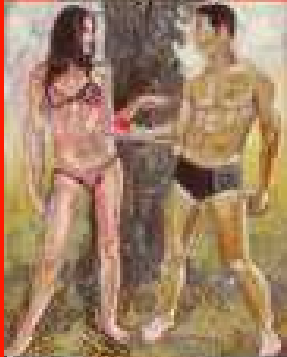


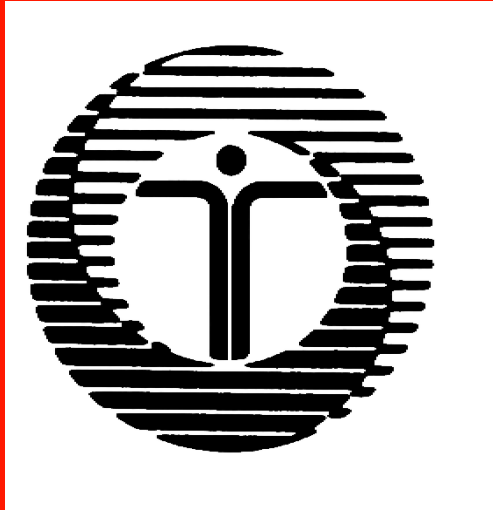
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AIDS a Death Sentence?

A third of the men who participated in our study said that, indeed, AIDS is a death sentence.

- Who are these men?
- Are these men HIV infected? Do they have AIDS?
- Is this a sign of ignorance?
- Are these men extra precautionous when they have sex?
- What does it mean that so many men think this way?





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Sample Characteristics:

Sample size: N = 300

Age:

Mean 26 yrs

Range 18 – 40 yrs

Race:

Black 67%

White 33%

Self-labeling:

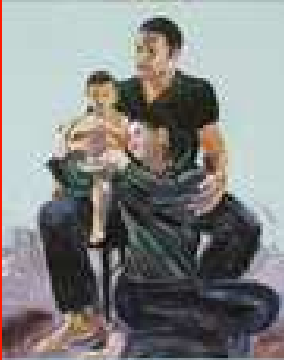
Gay 85%

Bisexual 10%

Other 5%

Lives in township: 53%

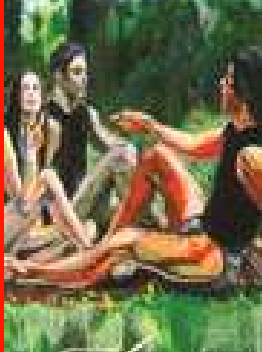
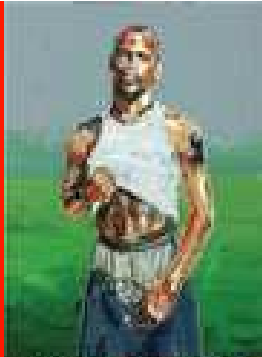
In intimate relationship: 56%



Testing and HIV Status

Men who think that AIDS is a death sentence:

- Are less often tested for HIV (58% versus (71%));
- But not more likely to be HIV-positive.

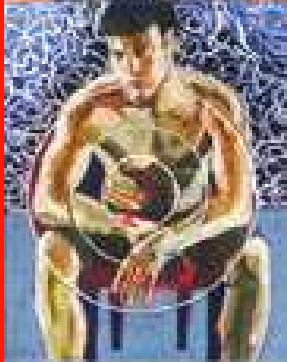


Which Men Think that AIDS is a Death Sentence?

Men who said that AIDS is it that sentence are hard to identify.

Holding this opinion is not related to:

- Age
- Race
- Level of education
- Employment status
- Income
- Being Christian
- Living in a township
- Gay versus bisexual self-labeling
- Being single or married





Attitude toward Being Gay

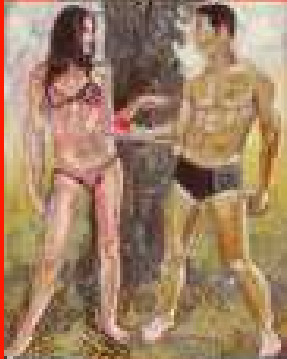
Men who think that AIDS is a death sentence feel less positive about being gay:

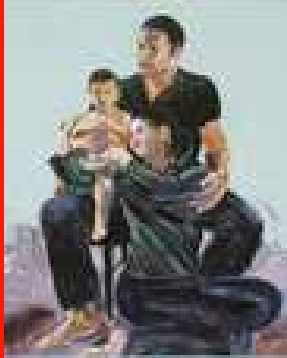
- I can't decide whether I am bisexual or homosexual (17% agree versus 9%)
- I have tried to undergo a religious cleansing (to be reborn) so I can be heterosexual (32% agree versus 18%)
- I am comfortable with my sexual attraction to other men (63% agree versus 77%)
- Being attracted to men is important to my sense of who I am (48% agree versus 66%)

Gay Community Involvement

Men who think that AIDS is a death sentence identify less with the gay community:

- It is very important to me that at least some of my friends are bisexual or gay (37% agree versus 54%)
- I am proud to be a part of the LGBT community (66% agree versus 80%)
- Being gay makes me feel part of a community (32% agree versus 60%)

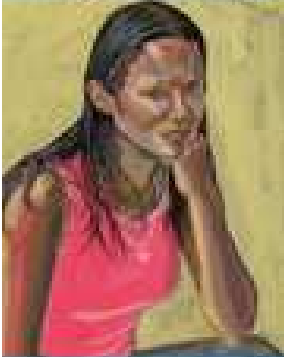
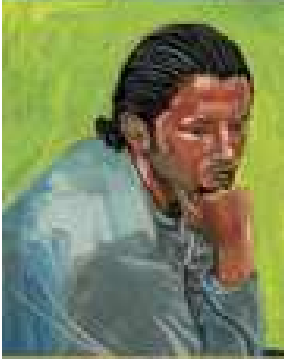




Last Anal Sexual Encounter

Men who think that aids is a death sentence:

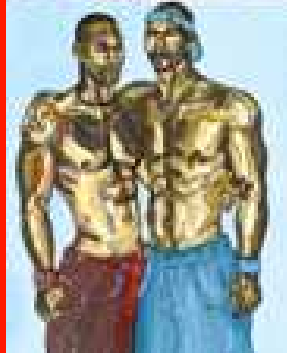
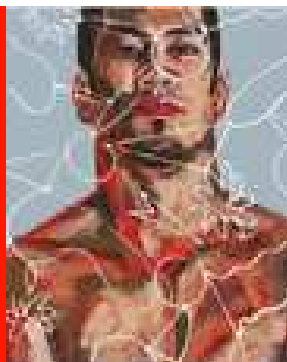
- Less often had sex with a condom at that occasion (59% versus 72%)
- More often received something in exchange for having sex (24% versus 5%)



Men Who Think that AIDS Is a Death Sentence Are Less Knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS (% wrong answers)

	NO	YES
Using condoms when you have sex can reduce the chance of getting HIV (T)	6	16
Once you trust your partner, you don't need to use condoms with them (F)	20	35
It is safe to have sex without a condom if it's with your steady partner (F)	28	43
Oil-based lubricants should not be used with condoms (T)	51	61
"Pulling-out" before ejaculation prevents the spread of HIV (F)	21	43
As long as both partners wash themselves after sex, it is not necessary to use condoms (F)	8	24
Having a shower after sex prevents the spread and infection of HIV, therefore it is not necessary to use condoms (F)	6	24
It is easy to get HIV by sharing a meal with someone who is HIV infected (F)	6	18
There is a cure for AIDS (F)	11	13
You can tell by looking at someone if they have HIV (F)	11	23

Men Who Think that AIDS Is a Death Sentence Are Less Motivated to Practice Safer Sex



ATTITUDES (e.g., Always using condoms during insertive anal sex with a steady partner would be awful; high is positive)

NO
4.24

YES
3.61

SELF-EFFICACY (e.g., How difficult or easy would it be for you to not have any receptive anal sex without a condom?; high is easy)

3.56

3.18

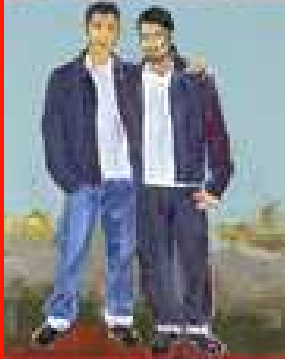
SOCIAL NORM (e.g., Most people who are important to me think I should use condoms during insertive anal sex with a sexual partner other than my steady partner; high is stronger)

4.09

3.47

Summary

- A substantial group of MSM in Tshwane considers AIDS to be a death sentence
- Sociodemographically, these men are hard to localize
- These MSM feel more negative about being gay and seem to function in the margin of the gay community
- HIV-knowledge is generally limited, but specifically so in this group
- The motivation to practice safer sex in this group is reduced



What does it mean?

- Considering AIDS a death sentence does the opposite of promoting precaution among MSM
- Negative opinion about AIDS might reflect fatalistic attitudes that also decrease motivation to practice safer sex
- Although information itself is not sufficient, it is important to make sure that misperceptions about HIV disappear
- Promotion of positive attitudes toward same-sex sexuality among MSM themselves will contribute to
- Strengthening inclusive gay communities are likely to promote safer sex motivations
- AIDS does no longer have to be a death sentence



Acknowledgements:



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AIDS RESEARCH

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and



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Transforming the understanding and treatment of mental illness through research

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