Gender differences in HIV related psychological variables in a Tanzanian intervention using sport

Author(s)

Marit Sørensen, Cyprian N. Maro & Glyn C. Roberts

Abstract

Despite the encouraging reduction in new HIV infections in most parts of the world, Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 72% of all new infections worldwide in 2011 [UNAIDS (2012).*World AIDS day report*. Geneva: Author]. Young women are more likely to be infected than young men. However, the possibilities for doing research on development of strategies and interventions for HIV prevention are not well supported in most Sub-Saharan universities. It is therefore important that we in the developed world support our colleagues in finding ways to develop research environments: In this case, on preventive strategies for HIV in the local culture in Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. Sport is gaining recognition as an effective means to increase HIV/AIDS awareness and reduce vulnerability. We used an HIV/AIDS education intervention through soccer, using peer coaches, to investigate the efficacy of the intervention and in particular to examine gender differences in changes in HIV-related psychological variables of at-risk youth subgroups participating in the intervention. Participants were at-risk children within a community sport programme. Children attending local schools, and a group of street children from the same communities acted as control groups. The intervention lasted eight weeks. The intervention was successful in that both boys and girls improved their scores on the behavioural intention variables. However, gender differences at pre-test were maintained post-test in that girls continued to score lower than boys. The sport intervention was successful, but girls scored reliably lower on most of the variables under study, especially the variables involving the use of a condom.

Keywords

HIV prevention intervention,
soccer,
peer coaches