

The Nature and Causes of Parasuicide Cases Handled By Traditional Leaders in Hurungwe District in Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT The paper reports on an investigation carried out to ascertain the nature and causes of parasuicide cases handled by traditional leaders, as traditional African counsellors, in Hurungwe district in Zimbabwe. The study utilized a qualitative survey design. Phenomenological interviewing was used to collect the data on a purposefully selected sample of two chiefs and ten headmen and eleven family elders. The sample consisted of twenty-one male and two female traditional leaders. Content analysis, through emerging themes, was used in analyzing the data. The study revealed that traditional leaders offered counselling to victims of diverse suicidal attempts which included hanging and taking poison. Cases of parasuicide were reportedly caused by avenging spirits, marital, family and love disputes, financial problems and terminal illnesses. The study concludes that traditional leaders handled parasuicide cases of different types and causes. Recommendations were made that assistance be offered to traditional leaders to be better prepared to deal with the magnitude and complexity of parasuicide cases.