

Primary School-Going Children's Understanding of HIV/AIDS: A Narrative Analysis

Sibusiso Ntshangase*, Zamangwane Khanyile and Heidi van Rooyen

University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa

KEYWORDS Trauma. Narrative. Qualitative Study. Knowledge. Symptoms

ABSTRACT The aims of the study were to investigate how primary school-going children understand the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the effect of HIV/AIDS on them. Children's narratives were obtained via four focus groups with a total of 36 children of primary school-going age (average age 7). The results of the study indicated that children's knowledge and awareness was generally adequate for their developmental age as described by Piaget's cognitive developmental theory. However, children from the urban area seemed to have a broader and more accurate knowledge of HIV/AIDS than their rural counterparts. Children from the rural areas also seemed to hold more myths about HIV/AIDS than those from the urban areas. Since parents were an important source of HIV/AIDS information as far as children were concerned, it was recommended that more HIV/AIDS educational programmes should target parents. Also, those involved in the design and implementation of HIV/AIDS educational programmes must ensure that they incorporate accurate and positive African traditional beliefs system.