

Cultural Beliefs and Practices towards HIV/AIDS amongst High School Learners in Swaziland

K. N. Nxumalo^a, C. I. O. Okeke^b and K. J. Mammen^b

^aUniversity of Swaziland

^bUniversity of Fort Hare, East London Campus, South Africa

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ABSTRACT A quantitative descriptive research design was applied to establish the cultural beliefs and practices of high school learners in the Lubombo region in Swaziland, which impact upon the spread of HIV/AIDS. Respondents comprised 351 (169 males and 182 females) Form IV learners in 12 high schools spread across the Lubombo region of Swaziland. A five-point Likert scale questionnaire instrument was developed and used by the researchers in obtaining data for the study. The questionnaire was translated to both siSwati and English. Once ethical requirements were met by the researchers, the questionnaire was administered. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics. The results of the study showed that cultural beliefs and practices had a role in transmitting HIV/AIDS in Swaziland. There was also no statistical significant difference between boys and girls regarding cultural perceptions on HIV/AIDS. The results also showed that high school learners appeared to have adequate knowledge and information on HIV/AIDS. It is suggested that school curriculum policy formulation and programme implementation should target culture-specific practices.