1. Issues

South Africa has many people living with HIV/AIDS who are in the workforce. The majority of this population are women. Many of them are affected by HIV/AIDS, which reduces their ability to work. Women face many challenges in the workforce, including discrimination and violence.

2. Description

The Couples’ Health CoOp is a 5-year study in Cape Town—funded by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA). It is an HIV prevention trial designed to address the problem of concurrent multiple sex partners. The study was tested in three specific communities: Mitchell’s Plain, Khayelitsha, and Athlone. The study was conducted in local community centers so that participants could attend the workshops and work on positive behaviors.

The study aimed to develop and test interventions for couples to address substance use, sex risk behaviors, and gender-based violence. The study included both men and women, and couples who were married or in a relationship. The study was conducted in three specific communities: Mitchell’s Plain, Khayelitsha, and Athlone.

3. Lessons Learned

Focus Groups

The focus groups centered on learning more about the drinking establishments—called “shebeens”—and women’s experiences in South Africa. The following was learned from the focus groups:

- Participants admitted to using condors with partners, and they said they did not always use them correctly.
- Many reported using condomless sex with partners in the presence of others and believed it was “safe sex.”
- Alcohol use as a factor in relationships, as drug users are more likely to address substance use, sex risk behaviors, and gender-based violence in their relationships.
- Participants said that condomless sex in their relationships was common because they were not using them correctly.
- Participants reported being in relationships and surrounding areas of condom use and risk reduction behaviors.
- Participants also admitted to using condors with partners, and they said they did not always use them correctly.
- Many reported using condomless sex with partners in the presence of others and believed it was “safe sex.”
- Alcohol use as a factor in relationships, as drug users are more likely to address substance use, sex risk behaviors, and gender-based violence in their relationships.
- Participants said that condomless sex in their relationships was common because they were not using them correctly.
- Participants reported being in relationships and surrounding areas of condom use and risk reduction behaviors.

4. Next Steps

The study is currently being tested in the Couples’ Health CoOp site, which began recruitment in May 2010 and will reach up to 648 couples in the three identified Cape Town neighborhoods. The study will include both men and women, and couples who are married or in a relationship. The study is being conducted in local community centers so that participants can attend the workshops and work on positive behaviors.

The study is currently being tested in the Couples’ Health Coop site, which began recruitment in May 2010 and will reach up to 648 couples in the three identified Cape Town neighborhoods. The study will include both men and women, and couples who are married or in a relationship. The study is being conducted in local community centers so that participants can attend the workshops and work on positive behaviors.

References