THE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN OF THEIR HIV/AIDS STATUS DISCLOSURE TO SEXUAL PARTNERS:

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF MAGUNJE TOWNSHIP, ZIMBABWE
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AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF MAGUNJE TOWNSHIP, ZIMBABWE

A THESIS IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER IN SOCIAL SCIENCE (SOCIAL WORK)

UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

BY MAUREEN CRESENCIA KAMBARAMI

DECEMBER 2009
DECLARATION

I declare that this is my own work and that this thesis has never been submitted at any other university before.

Signed…….mckambarami………

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Date…..06/12/09……………….
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- All the women who shared their stories with me, four of them have since died but their stories remain a great lesson to us all.

Please note: all the names which appear in this project are pseudonyms, participants’ actual names were not asked for.
ABSTRACT

The African continent has been hit the hardest by the HIV/AIDS epidemic which has seen more women becoming infected than men (Hunter, 2003; UNAIDS, 2004). This has been attributed to the permissible nature of the African culture which is lenient on male promiscuity (Foreman, 1999; Colvin 2000; Leclerc-Madlala 2001; Dube 2003). African women are not only vulnerable to infection but are also vulnerable to negative disclosure experiences when they disclose their status to sexual partners. This double impact of culture has not been addressed by past researches (UNAIDS 2004). The present research thus attempts to fill that gap. It explores the interplay between culture and HIV transmission as well as the interplay between culture and disclosure experiences. The study's setting is Magunje Township, a rural village in Mashonaland Central province in Zimbabwe. Taking into consideration the limitations of the present analysis, data gathered indicates that African women are vulnerable to both HIV infection and negative disclosure experiences. Their vulnerability also hampers prevention and treatment efforts as it makes them decide to keep their status a secret from sexual partners for fear of losing the financial income tied to sexual partners. The present researcher concludes with some suggestions for policy makers and programme implementers, highlighting the importance of focusing on HIV/AIDS status disclosure as a prevention and treatment method in the absence of a cure for HIV.
DEDICATION

For my mother, Cecilia Kambarami, and my daughter, Tadiwanashe whose presence and unwavering support gave me the strength to carry out this project successfully.

TO GOD BE ALL THE GLORY
Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Background and introduction to the study

1.1 Background ........................................................................................................1
1.2 Research problem ...............................................................................................2
1.3 Rationale of the study .........................................................................................3
1.4 Research questions .............................................................................................4
1.5 Objectives of the study .......................................................................................5
1.6 Field work site ....................................................................................................5
1.7 Theoretical framework .......................................................................................7
1.8 Anticipated value of the study ...........................................................................14
1.9 Limitations of the study .....................................................................................15
1.10 Research methodology .......................................................................................15
1.11 Ethical considerations .......................................................................................19
1.12 Definition of key concepts ...............................................................................19
1.13 Chapter outline .................................................................................................21

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction .......................................................................................................22
2.2 Epidemiology of HIV infection in women .........................................................23
2.3 Factors contributing to women’s vulnerability to HIV .....................................25
2.4 International HIV policy framework .................................................................27
2.5 African HIV and AIDS policy framework .........................................................29
2.6 HIV/AIDS status disclosure .............................................................................33
2.7 Experiences of African women on HIV/AIDS status disclosure .....................37
2.8 Analysis of studies on Women’s disclosure experiences ..................................39
2.9 Disclosure theories of HIV/AIDS status disclosure ........................................47
2.10 Developmental approach to women empowerment .........................................54
2.11 Empowerment model ......................................................................................55
# Chapter 3: Research methodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Research approach</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Research design</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Research population</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Sampling strategy</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Data collection</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Data analysis</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>Validity and Reliability</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>Ethical considerations</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>Limitations of the study</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Chapter 4: Presentation of findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Profile of respondents</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Disclosure experiences</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.1</td>
<td>Stigma and HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.2</td>
<td>Secrecy and HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.3</td>
<td>Feelings of despondence following an HIV diagnosis</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.4</td>
<td>The role of faith in accepting HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.5</td>
<td>Children and longevity</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.6</td>
<td>Gender and HIV/AIDS transmission</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.7</td>
<td>Gender and HIV/AIDS status disclosure</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.8</td>
<td>Culture and HIV/AIDS disclosure</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.9</td>
<td>Contradictions between one’s beliefs and actions</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.10</td>
<td>Financial dependence and non disclosure</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.11</td>
<td>The vicious cycle of non disclosure</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.12</td>
<td>Disclosure as a complex process</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Interventional networks</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5 Empowerment needs of women living with HIV/AIDS...........................102

Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations
5.1 Introduction............................................................................................107
5.2 Discussion of major findings......................................................................107
5.3 Conclusions from the study.......................................................................119
5.4 Recommendations....................................................................................119

References..................................................................................................132
Appendix A: Cover letter to participants......................................................143
Appendix B: Interview schedule.................................................................145
Appendix C: Transcriptions.........................................................................148

List of Tables
Table 3.1: Field recording form.................................................................77
Table 3.2: Key to transcriptions.................................................................78
Table 3.3 Criteria for judging qualitative research.....................................81
Table 4.1: Profile of respondents...............................................................89