



# Ignorance and inequality: do impoverished young people 'not know', or do they ignore?

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# Outline

1. Methodology
2. Ignorance or ignoring
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5. Theory
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# Methodology

1. Secondary data from loveLife
2. Qualitative interviews with youth aged 18-26
3. The study looked at:
  1. Understanding value young people associate with loveLife
  2. Factors impacting on life choices
  3. Tolerance of risk
4. Among our participants, the use of the word ignorance had a double meaning

# Ignorance or ignoring

*It's not [peer] pressure...if you chose to sit down [and study] nobody will force you [to go out drinking], that's why I say its **ignorance**. **You are ignoring** the fact that you know the outcome, you just want to do it right now, that's all that matters.*

Nomalizo, F, 20, Langa, WC, loveLife pilot focus group

1. The term *ignorance* has been used to describe risk takers who **act without sufficient knowledge** of the possible **consequences** of their behaviours
2. Discussion indicated some youth **refused to take notice of / acknowledge / disregarded intentionally** consequences of their behavior

# Ignoring or ignorance in opportunity

1. They are very **ignorant**...you are talking to another young person [asking] 'what are you doing the whole day when you are sitting at home?', 'I'm not doing anything.' 'Okay, **lets go to loveLife**'... 'No, I'm **not going** to loveLife'... You do tell them, 'okay, if you being sexually active, **why don't you use a condom?**' 'Ah, condom, **I don't want any condom.**' That, they very **ignorant** in terms of that. Damane, M, 22, Orange Farm, GTN
2. People are **ignorant**...people **know** where to find information, but they **don't want** information, if they want it then they should go there... people are just so **pessimistic**. Aphelele, F, 24, Thembisa, GTN

# Ignorance or ignoring in risk

1. People are **ignorant**, **they know** about HIV/AIDS but they **don't act on it**. Brother age 27 of Aphelele, F, 24, Thembisa, GTN
2. To them HIV does not exist. They **know** but they have multiple partners and they **still practice unsafe sex**, so I think they are being **ignorant** because they know that its there...they don't care, to them its like, **everyone is gonna die**. Bongekile, F, 22, Orange Farm, GTN
3. They **know** about HIV/AIDS... we **know the information** we get the information, **we just don't use it**. So we **ignore**. Anathi, M, 23, Katlehong, GTN

# Theory

## Future orientation theory

1. *A young person who believes that he or she may be dead by age 30 is unlikely to protect his or her long-term health and well-being*
2. The degree to which individuals possess positive attitudes toward their futures:
  1. Believing that good outcomes are possible in **work, family, and social life**
  2. Perceiving high degree of **control** over future outcomes
  3. Individuals who are **pessimistic** about their future are **more likely to take risks** with their health and safety

Robins, R, & Bryan, A. (2004). Relationships between future orientation, impulsive sensation seeking, and risk behaviors among adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 19*(4), 428-445.

# Concluding thoughts

1. Why ? -  **baffling to youth as well as academics**
2. Pessimisms and **denial vulnerability** mirrors link between negative **future orientation** and propensity to **take negative risks**
3. Denial of vulnerability: rarely a conscious act of defiance **RATHER** an inability to take on board another layer of danger
4. No **tangible evidence** that future prospects are good = **diminished incentives** to protect one's health
5. Desire to act more responsibly **hindered by conditions** eroding the potential to live up to ideals or values of the community - **setting the stage for further risk-taking**