



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

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Outline

1. Methodology
2. Ignorance or ignoring
3. Ignoring or ignorance in opportunity
4. Ignoring or ignorance in risk
5. Theory
6. Concluding thoughts

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**