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The correlation between self esteem and risky sexual behaviors in young African American women

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Abstract

In the US, African Americans (AA) face the most rigorous burden of HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) infection. In actual fact, HIV has reached epidemic proportions in African American women (AAW). Therefore, reducing risky sexual behaviors in AA women is a vital component of preventative initiatives for this vulnerable population. Despite the many studies conducted on HIV in the AA community, factors that influence sexual risk taking, such as self-esteem, have yet to be understood. Thus, the purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between self esteem and sexual risk taking behaviors in young AAW. The participants were a convenience sample of 33 AAW from three Metropolitan regions within Michigan. Data collection materials specific to this study are a sociodemographic questionnaire, an interview questionnaire, and a semi-structured qualitative interview guide. The sociodemographic questionnaire was obtained by self-report and information collected included age, race, education level, marital status, income level, religious affiliation and participation, sexual activity, current relationship duration, and confidence that the current relationship is monogamous. Participants also completed an interview questionnaire that consisted of eight, five point likert scales that measured three broad categories: a) condom use intentions, b) interpersonal factors and c) relationship characteristics and dynamics. The Modified AIDS Risk Reduction Model provided the framework for the semi-structured interview questions used for the focus group session. Following attainment of a written consent, participants completed the questionnaires before the focus group session. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods used in the study allowed the researchers to gain a better understanding of how self esteem influences risky sexual behaviors in AAW. The results offer important insight into how AAW define self esteem and the relationship self esteem has on risky sexual behaviors. Moreover, findings from the study can be used to develop strategies that facilitate self-efficacy and sexual assertiveness programs for this vulnerable population.

Biography

Laura I. Pittiglio is an asst. Prof. at Oakland University. She had done her Ph.D. from Wayne State University, 2007, MSN, Wayne State University, 1987, and BSN, Wayne State University, 1981. She is expertise in Adult Medical-Surgical Nursing. Her research work focuses on “Coping with HIV/AIDS: Perspectives of African American mothers, the effects of simulation on learning outcomes”.