

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

Prevalence and meanings of exchange of money or gifts for sex in unmarried adolescent sexual relationships in sub-Saharan Africa

Moore Ann M, Biddlecom Ann E. and Zulu Eliya

Abstract

Using national survey data collected in 2004 in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Malawi, and Uganda with 12-19 year olds, we examine the prevalence of sex in exchange for money or gifts in the 12 months prior to the survey and its association with adolescents' social and economic vulnerability and condom use. Receiving something in exchange for sex is very common among sexually active, unmarried female adolescents and there are no significant differences by household economic status, orphan status, level of schooling completed or age difference between partners. Condom use at last sex in the 12 months prior to the survey is not associated with receiving gifts or money. Qualitative data based on focus group discussions and in-depth interviews collected in 2003 with adolescents suggest that receiving money or gifts for sex is not necessarily a coercive force, but rather can be a routine aspect of dating.

Keywords: transactional sex, adolescents, condom use