

Gender and sexuality of youths in Bafoussam and Mbalmayo, Cameroon

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Abstract

This paper outlines, while resorting to the gender perspective, the social factors that predispose youths to risky sexual practices using data from a survey of culture, gender, sexual behaviour and STD/AIDS carried out in Cameroon, at Bafoussam (Bamileke area) and Mbalmayo (Béti area). Analysis revealed that the ideology of masculinity and femininity prevail in the populations studied, but in the Bamileke group, where gender system is unfavourable to women, young people adhere less to these ideologies than their parents. Our data also revealed that the level of the knowledge of the modes of transmission of STD/AIDS and the degree of acceptability of condoms in this group are higher among boys than girls. The young Béti were more inclined to take risks in sexual activities than the Bamileke. It was equally found that boys were more inclined than girls to be unfaithful to their regular partners, while the boys were more inclined to use condoms than girls. Finally, our data revealed that age and other characteristics of the regular sexual partners of young people influence, among others, the probability of being engaged in risky sex especially among girls. Health education and information programmes can be improved amongst these youth populations by taking into account the totality of these elements. (*Afr J Reprod Health* 2004; 8[2]: 145-163)

Keywords: *Comportementssexuels, genre, jeunes, Afrique, Cameroun*

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