

**Inter-generational Communication of HIV: African Families in England****Martha Chinouya, Livingstone Musoro & Eileen O'Keefe****London Metropolitan University, Human Rights & Social Justice Research Institute, Ladbroke House, 62-66 Highbury Grove, London N5 2AD****Contact: m.chinouya@londonmet.ac.uk****ESRC grant number: RES-000-22-0871****Background**

African parents and their children feature prominently in heterosexually contracted HIV statistics in

England. Most children affected by HIV live in London with increasing numbers reported outside London.

Children whose parents are HIV positive could also be HIV positive, through vertical transmission and

hence need medical, social and emotional support. Their parents may die prematurely. Professionals

are keen to ensure that children's rights to information and decision-making are upheld through

disclosure. This ESRC-funded qualitative study with 60 HIV+ African parents/guardians seeks to explore the meanings they bring to the responsibility to disclose to their children.

**Objectives**

- To identify HIV positive parents' views about disclosure of their HIV status to children
- To investigate parental notions of parenthood and childhood in Africa and the diaspora
- To explore parents' understanding and perceptions of children's rights to information
- To examine parents' experiences of barriers to disclosure
- To consider parents views on support needed in their parental role re: children's rights to information

**Methods**

- Data sources: in-depth interviews coupled with observations and interview dairies.
  - Participants were recruited in support groups, clinics and from other HIV positive parents using the snowball technique. Interviews were transcribed verbatim.

**Sample Characteristics**

60 African parents/guardians most of them mothers and living in London (n=30) and the Home Counties (n=30)

- Diverse group, born in more than 7 African countries, whose lives were characterized by poverty and immigration concerns.

**Results 1: Variation in the meanings of childhood and parenthood**

- Children in England taught to be more individualistic than 'back home':

**Results 2: Do not know how to disclose**

- Parents expressed concern that they do not know how to disclose

**Results3: Conflicting messages from health and social care about disclosure**

- Pressure to address economic and legal issues related to citizenship but parents who had co-resident children felt conflicting pressure from health care workers to tell children about HIV

**Results 4: Health care workers do not understand our situation**

- Expressed doubts about the ability of health and social care professionals with whom

they were in contact to understand their situation

- Wanted education of teachers and health care workers about HIV
- Wanted post-disclosure psychological support for children

**Limitations of the study**

- Representativeness of this sample remains unknown
- Children's views missing in the discussion