

Determinants of Women Involvement in Small-Scale Mining and Risks to HIV/AIDS Infection in Tanzania

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Abstract:

Small-scale mining is increasingly becoming a major occupation of rural people in Tanzania. However, sexual behaviour and risks to HIV/AIDS of small-scale miners is poorly studied. Evidence from Mwanza and Shinyanga Regions indicates that migrants dominate the populations in small-scale mining areas. These areas also have poor infrastructural development. Existing literature is concentrated on sexual behaviour of male miners while neglecting characteristics and risks of women miners who are more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. Though most small-scale mining areas are in rural areas, the concentration of people in mining areas necessitate urban-like lifestyle, hence, high risks to HIV infection. This paper intends to analyse the characteristics of various categories of women in the small-mining areas (i.e. women miners, service providers, and local villagers), and establish the sexual behaviour and importance of sexual partnership to women's survival and livelihood. The paper intends to establish determinants of women involvement in mining activities, and assesses the risks of women miners to HIV/AIDS infection, and environmental implications to the livelihood of local communities. This type of analysis will increase understanding of risks to HIV/AIDS in small-scale mining areas that are attracting many people of different backgrounds. Understanding women behaviour and risks will help to identifying policy interventions that would limit new infections. It is hypothesized that women of different categories are influenced by different factors to migrate to small-scale mining areas, and women miners are at higher risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. The methodology used included interviews to focus groups, key informants, relevant institutions, individuals, physical village surveys, direct observations, and document reviews.