

**Exploring experiences of virginity testers in Mtubatuba
area, KwaZulu-Natal**

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DECLARATION

I declare that the research project on perspectives of virginity testers in Mtubatuba area, KwaZulu-Natal is my original work that I completed in partial fulfilment for the degree of Masters in Clinical Psychology with the University of Zululand (KwaDlangezwa Campus). All the work that has been taken from previous research and other sources has been correctly and completely referenced.

Miss Z.Z. Kunene

Date

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immuno-deficiency Syndrome
CGE	Commission on Gender Equality
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
HIV/AIDS	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus and Acquired Immuno-deficiency Syndrome
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
RDC	Reed Dance Ceremony
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
STI	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

ABSTRACT

Virginity testing stands at the forefront in South Africa's battle against the spread of HIV/AIDS. Most of rural communities uphold and insist that Black South African girls must remain virgins until marriage, with a belief that virginity is the greatest defense against the spread of HIV/AIDS. In South Africa, virginity testing is mainly practiced in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape (Scorgie, 2002). Although this custom contributes meaning and value to most traditional people, it has been heavily criticized and also challenged by the community.

The objectives of the study include the following: (a) to explore the experiences encountered by virginity testers, both positive and negative experiences, (b) to find out under which circumstances do virginity testers do their work.

A qualitative study was carried out in the rural areas of Mubatuba, KwaZulu-Natal. Eight female participants were used in the study, with the ages ranging between 40 and 64. Snowball sampling method was used to recruit participants. The bits and pieces of the collected data were coded into meaningful patterns and analyzed using content thematic analysis.

The study managed to shed light on the perspectives of virginity testers. While it is seen by virginity testers as an effective tool for prevention of pregnancy and HIV/AIDS infections in rural areas, rape has become a big problem. While promoting virginity testing one should also look and think about issues related to the safety and security of both young girls and virginity testers.

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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Virginity testing ranks at the forefront in South Africa's battle against the spread of HIV/AIDS. Most rural communities uphold and insist that Black South African girls remain virgins until marriage, with a belief that virginity is the greatest defense against the spread of HIV/AIDS. In South Africa, virginity testing is mainly practiced in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape (Scorgie, 2002). Although this custom contributes meaning and value to most traditional people, it has been heavily criticized and also challenged by the community. Virginity testers seem to encounter many challenges that are unknown to society, which is the reason why the current research is aiming to explore the experiences they encounter.

1.2 Background information

According to Wickstrom (2010), virginity testing is defined as: "a practice and process of inspecting the genitalia of unmarried girls and women to determine if they are sexually chaste (p. 1). George (2008) defines virginity testing as: "the practice of examining a girl or young woman to determine whether or not she has been sexually active; most testers look primarily for the presence or absence of the hymen" (p. 1449).

Virginity testing is a practice that typically involves a gynecological examination to establish whether or not the hymen in girls and/or unmarried young women is intact. Although virginity is not proven scientifically, there is a belief that proof of virginity

can be obtained through observing the female genitalia. This examination is usually public (de Vries, 2007 & Taylor, Dlamini, Sathiparsad, Jinabhai). Virginity testing has re-emerged as a traditional cultural practice in the last two decades, although its roots go back much further than that (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001).

Historically, virginity testing reflected societal emphasis on abstinence from sexual activity on the part of girls and young women (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001). Virginity testing was also used to determine a women's suitability for marriage. This, in turn, was seen as the most effective method of preventing the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and of preventing premarital sex and teenage pregnancies. Virginity testing is also an important element in detecting sexual abuse cases. Virginity testers assert that they are able to detect the sexual abuse of children, enabling them to intervene on behalf of the child (Taylor et al., 2007). Young women from KwaZulu-Natal who partake in virginity testing argue that virginity testing provides security; it protects them against abuse by men who want to do as they please with them (Taylor et al., 2007 & Mhlono, 2009).

Much like other cultural practices involving women, virginity testing is conducted in many different parts of the world, but the practice is not globally uniform and is derived from a variety of contexts both political and social. Virginity testing is not unique to South Africa; it has been conducted in many other countries in Africa including Egypt, Swaziland, Zimbabwe. In South Africa, virginity testing is mainly practiced in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape. Although the practice is believed

to have originated with, and remains most popular among Zulus in South Africa, communities outside of KwaZulu-Natal are increasingly using virginity testing.

It is significant to understand that the aim and process of virginity testing differs according to different countries. In South Africa, fostering sexual abstinence among young girls has been used as a measure to eradicate the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In Zimbabwe, much of the ceremony and techniques are similar to those in South Africa, however, the method of assessing virginity testing is different. According to Berthiaume (2004), in Zimbabwe, women in respected positions in the community use their hands, wooden tools and even eggs to determine if a girl is still a virgin. If an egg inserted into the vagina breaks, then that particular girl is considered sexually pure.

Virginity testing is also present in many Muslim countries, but in the majority of these areas, promoters of the practice do not consider it as a weapon against HIV/AIDS. In Turkey, for instance, the practice is conducted by registered doctors for a variety of purposes which includes the following: to ensure the honour and reputation of a family before a marriage, to determine the severity of punishment for female prisoners (usually arrested for political activism or behaving immodestly) and even for girls applying for government jobs or at specialized schools, such as nursing school (Lasco, 2002). Despite the fact that Turkey has placed a ban on virginity testing, it has been highlighted that factors such as familial pressure, doctors pleading ignorance, the claim that testing helps detect and prevent rape, and the fear of girls' virginity being questioned contribute to women being submissive to the practice (Lasco, 2002). Research indicates that most incidences of testing in Turkey

are involuntary on the woman's part, and much of testing is put into effect by the Turkish government (Lasco, 2002).

Nevertheless, in South Africa, the practice of virginity testing has been heavily criticized by many human rights and women's advocacy groups. The Commission on Gender Equality (CGE), for example, describe virginity testing as an act that is discriminatory, unlawful, lacks privacy, unfair and violates the dignity as well as rights of young girls (Mswela, 2009; Mubangizi, 2012; South African Human Rights Commission, 2003). In addition, it is reported that virginity testing often takes place in unhygienic conditions that are sometimes intimidating, and the tests are inaccurate (Mubangizi, 2012; SAHRC, 2003).

1.3 Statement of the problem

The frustration the researcher experienced during the research of this project made it clear that not much research has been done on virginity testers. There was little information that was relevant. The research on virginity testing that was encountered was often very specific. Previous studies explored a certain small aspect of society and their interaction with the concept. Other studies explored the perspectives of certain groups on virginity testing. Some of the studies focus on the ongoing debate about whether virginity testing should be banned or not. The researcher also found previous studies done on this topic to be very Western dominated, which creates a gap for some research on the South African tradition of virginity testing.

The researcher identified many gaps in the experiences of virginity testers, the people who are actually doing the testing. The experiences of virginity testers have

thus far been largely neglected. To date, little is known about the conditions virginity testers work under; what kind of criticisms they receive from the community; and how such criticisms are handled; and what kind of experiences they encounter with young people undergoing virginity testing. Yet, these experiences may have serious effects on the custom of virginity testing which the society is unaware of, and it may render the fight against HIV infection ineffective. In order to understand how virginity works within society, various partakers must be assessed. When the research presents itself as holistic, but without including, for example, African perspectives from the different people involved in that particular practice, then it becomes very problematic.

1.4 Objectives

The objectives of this study were:

- a) To explore the experiences encountered by virginity testers, both positive and negative experiences.
- b) To find out under which circumstances virginity testers do their work.
- c) To determine whether there is a difference between experiences encountered by virginity testers in townships and those in rural areas.
- d) To determine whether those experiences have a negative or positive effect on the effectiveness of virginity testing.

1.5 Significance of the study

This research made a worthwhile contribution in terms of educating the community about the problems experienced during virginity testing that may in future destabilize the practice. It gave virginity testers a chance to unpack their experiences that people are unaware of. This is necessary in order to create or increase awareness

among the community as a whole as to how their reactions and criticisms may affects the custom. It also determined under which circumstances virginity testers do their work.

1.6 Organisation of the dissertation

The first chapter provides a brief background of the study. It looks at the main motivation, aims and objectives of the study, statement of the problem, and also significance of the study. Chapter two looks at the existing literature on virginity testing. Chapter three outlines the research methodology. It looks at the sampling method, data collection method and techniques of data analysis. Chapter four presents the findings of the in-depth interviews which were conducted with virginity testers from Mtubatuba. Chapter five provides the summary of the main findings of the study. Chapter six presents a conclusion of the whole study, limitations of the current study and presents recommendations for future research on similar topics.

CHAPTER TWO:

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the existing literature on virginity testing. It provides a critical analysis of literature to present the reader with an in-depth understanding of arguments put forth by both proponents and opponents of virginity testing as a practice. The information provided is drawn from different disciplines ranging from human rights, gender, sociological and public health perspectives.

The first section provides a brief history of virginity testing. It looks at the meaning and origins thereof. The second section describes the process of virginity testing. The third section looks at the cultural beliefs surrounding virginity testing. Section four outlines the significance and benefits of virginity testing in the modern South Africa in the context of high levels of rape, violence and HIV/AIDS. The fourth looks at implications of virginity testing, followed by sociological perspectives. The final section considers the literature on virginity testing in relation to gender and the constitutional rights of children.

2.2 The origins and meaning of virginity testing

For the better understanding of virginity testing, it is important to trace its origins and the meaning that is attached to it. It is also interesting to assess the origins of this practice and see whether its original ideals are still maintained in this modern age. The advent of modern diseases, such as HIV and AIDS, may be making it even more essential than it was two or three decades ago.

For generations, certain ethnic groups in South Africa have engaged in the practice of virginity testing. This custom is commonly practiced by the Zulu and Xhosa people in the eastern provinces of KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape (Mubangizi, 2012). Previously, although there were specific people conducting the testing, mothers or grandmothers were also involved in the process. Testing was performed at home, with the child inspected in the presence of her mother. The mother was thus educated and equipped with virginity testing skills when inspections are done before the puberty stages (Scorgie, 2002). Advocates of this process argued that it was beneficial in terms of preparing the child and her mother for better communication during puberty.

Previously, virginity testing among Zulu-speaking people has not only been associated with abstinence; rather it was significant in order to prevent penetrative sex, defloration, and thus pregnancy. Abstinence means you cannot train your body or put potential partners to the test (Wickstrom, 2010, p. 540). Destroying someone's virginity was regarded as a bad sexual practice; however, it was also bad not to 'play at all'. In other words, women were not forbidden to have sexual intimacy but they were discouraged to have penetrative sex (Wickstrom, 2010). The community was concerned about protecting young girls' virginity.

The vaginal inspection was a precaution against childbearing out of wedlock. It was regarded as a disgrace for an unmarried girl or woman to have a child in her father's house, because a child should be born within the patrilineal (Wickstrom, 2010). Courtship was, and still is, socially desirable. Thus, virginity is not connected to

chastity; both virginity and sexual experience are of great importance (Wickstrom, 2010).

Virgins were more valuable than non-virgins. “In the olden days if you got pregnant while you were a teenager it was a shame and no one will want to marry you” (Mhlongo, 2009, p. 42). People had a belief that a virgin should bleed on her first day of marriage after her first sexual intercourse. Virginity testing was originally intended to confirm the chastity of young brides prior to marriage. A potential bride’s virginity was a factor in the negotiations between a bride’s parents and her future in-laws to determine what amount of wealth was to be transferred from the groom’s family to the bride’s family, a prenuptial transaction known as an *“ilobolo”*. As a rule, eleven head of cattle were given for the virgin; however, when a girl is no longer a virgin, ten cows were given (Scorgie, 2002, Wickstrom, 2010).

The hymen had to be kept intact, therefore girls were taught and encouraged to abstain or engage in ‘*Ukusoma*’, if they fail to abstain. *Ukusoma* refers to sex between the thighs without penetration. Thigh sex was a sort of contraceptive. Virginity without thigh sex means abstinence, which is difficult, especially if courtship and sexual experience are highly valued (Wickstrom, 2010). The older girls’ education and control were the means by which the sexual practice was kept up, at the same time preserving virginity. However, since abstinence is hard to maintain nowadays, even proponents of virginity testing have become very skeptical about it (Wickstrom, 2010).

In the Zulu culture, on the first day of sexual intercourse, the morning after a girl gets married; the older women would come and remove the bed sheets. This was done in order to confirm whether the girl was a virgin or not. The bed sheets must have blood stains to indicate virginity; if there are no blood stains it meant that the girl was no longer a virgin. If the girl was found to be a non-virgin her father had to pay a cow to the king, because his girl had brought shame to the community (Mhlongo, 2009).

In the study conducted by Wickstrom (2010), participants argued that the family and social relations are the basic elements of a person's personality, and thus it seems difficult to understand what the right thing is if you only control yourself. "Life is fundamentally seen as a state of continuous collective dependence" (Wickstrom, 2010, p. 539). Previously, virginity was directly linked to socialisation, as girls were socialised at a tender age to view their genitals as '*inkomo kamama*', meaning "*mama's cow*", which made them view their vaginas as valuable assets, not only to them but to their families as well as the society as a whole. However, as a result of migrant labour and forced migration which eroded family structures, virginity testing fell into disuse (Wickstrom, 2010).

2.3 The process of virginity testing

Virginity testing ceremonies are commonly held in community centres, whereby each girl is physically examined in a private area by a respected elderly women (abahloli) from the community to determine whether or not she has become sexually active (Scorgie, 2002). Thousands of girls and young unmarried women (from the age of six up to marriage status) line up at community festivals, churches, chiefs' *kraals* (or huts), football stadiums and schools in local townships for their virginity testing

(LeClerc-Madlala, 2001). However, virginity testers encourage and also believe that it is the mother's responsibility to begin testing her daughter as early as the age of two or three. During bath time, the mother could use that opportunity to check if her daughter is still clean down there. This could also benefit the society in terms of detecting cases of sexual abuse (LeClerc-Madlala, 2001).

Virginity is tested by examining the vagina, whereby a "girl lies down on her back, knees drawn up, heels together and separates her knees wide apart, to expose the vestibule to see whether the hymen is still intact" (Khuzwayo, 2000, p. 27). If the hymen is still showing, it means one is still a virgin. Virginity testers report that they are able to perform virginity testing even when the girl is menstruating. When a girl is about to have her menstrual period, the hymen is reported to become sharper than during other periods in the menstrual cycle (George, 2008).

While virginity testers or *abahloli* are mainly looking for the hymen, a layer of skin within the vagina, which is comparable to a "lacy wedding veil" (LeClerc-Madlala, 2001; Scorgie, 2002) and which is believed to be torn during a first sexual intercourse, this is not the only indication of virginity upon which they rely. External tests are also conducted to examine the colour and texture of the labia. A very light pink color and dryness are said to be the perfect signs of virginity (LeClerc-Madlala, 2001). Virginity testers also consider the following in a girl that has only engaged in abstinence from sex: (1) an innocent look in the eyes (many testers insist that a non-virgin girl's eyes will betray her as someone who knows men (LeClerc-Madlala, 2001), (2) firm and taut breasts and tight muscles behind the knees (George, 2008, p. 1456), and (3) tight and firm stomach (LeClerc-Madlala, 2001).

Another way of determining whether a girl is still a virgin is for her to lift her skirt (which is called “ukushikila”) to show her buttocks, lower abdomen and breasts to virginity testers. The testers would observe the status of the young girl’s body for firmness. In a virgin, the muscle tone of the vagina, buttocks and breasts are firm and the abdomen is flat and firm. Buttocks are held high; they do not shake much when being shaken (LeClerc-Madlala, 2001). However, LeClerc-Madlala felt that virginity testing is derived from indigenous rather than biomedical knowledge (2001). Virginity testers rely on folk constructs of the body and ethnomedical beliefs of health and illness in their chastity assessment (George, 2008).

Different virginity testers have developed their own trademarks to acknowledge those girls who are publicly declared virgins (George, 2008). Some give certificates, some a white dot on the virgin’s forehead, while others simply tell the girls’ mothers to bring notebooks to record the date and result of the testing (George, 2008; Scorgie, 2002). In cases where the testers suspect rape or sexual abuse they refer such cases to a social worker, a medical doctor, or perhaps to the police, for further investigation and examination. However, the study done by Wickstrom (2010) revealed that in most rural areas to make such referrals becomes a struggle because these services are too limited. The police are never seen, and medical services are far away and too expensive for many of the families to attend (Wickstrom, 2010).

On the other hand, those who are declared as non-virgins get excluded from the practice. They are not allowed to participate in any event related to the practice of virginity testing. As a result, the girl’s family or the person responsible for breaking a girl’s virginity is expected to pay for the damages in the form of a goat. The virginity

testers will gather all virgins from that centre, they will slaughter the goat and its bile gets poured in water. Girls will then take that water and go bath to remove shame. The older women will then eat the meat because girls are not allowed to eat it, since the goat is used to remove shame (George, 2008; Scorgie, 2002; Wickstrom, 2010).

Additionally, although there is no formal governmental or cultural organization managing or directing virginity testing, the practice enjoys and acknowledges the kind of support offered by the government. For example, the provincial health department of KwaZulu-Natal, while not officially advocating virginity testing, is reported to be actively involved in assuring that proper health measures are taken during genital inspection by providing rubber gloves for testers and facilitating workshops to educate testers about female reproductive anatomy (LeClerc-Madlala, 2001).

2.4 Cultural beliefs surrounding virginity testing

Culture has been defined in various ways. A modern definition of the concept however, is provided by the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary as “the integrated pattern of human knowledge, beliefs, and behaviour that depends upon man’s capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations” (n.d.).

Culture is regarded as “a coherent self-contained system of values and symbols that a specific cultural group reproduces over time, which provides individuals with the required sign posts and meanings for behaviour and social relationships in their everyday life” (Iyanuolu 2008, in Wadesango, et al., 2011, p. 121). There are different social groupings in the world and each has its own cultural practices and beliefs which are used as guiding principles in terms of lifestyle and expected

behaviour of people (Wadesango et al., 2011). Cultural characteristics are strongly held and valued by the community members belonging in that particular culture (Wadesango et al., 2011). As culture is socially constructed, it is transferred from generation to generation through the process of socialization (Wadesango et al., 2011).

Culture places a great value on keeping virginity since it forms an important part of a person's identity. This is in line with the traditional goal of virginity testing which was to bargain for a high bride price. Therefore, it motivated girls to keep their virginity before marriage so as to get a full bride price (Wadesango et al., 2011). "Virginity testing serves the purpose of addressing human distress and gathering the political body around what is perceived to be a collective moral effort" (Wickstrom, 2010, p. 533). African communities, especially those who practise the culture of virginity testing are very concerned about tracing their roots through the practice of virginity testing, which lie in African culture.

The idea behind virginity testing is not only partly about the status of individuals' hymens but it has a primarily social purpose. This is not only about the individual body of a girl, but about reinstating and reinforcing morality in society as a whole. Wickstrom (2010) argues that those societies who are involved in virginity testing are very concerned about the necessity to act together and to do so in the context of a collective ritual. Virginity testing as a public health strategy placed joint societal pressure on the individual as well as on the community as a whole, as opposed to the pressure brought about by individual self-control (Wickstrom, 2010).

Culture plays a significant role in uniting and building up a nation with common understanding and that nation earns respect through practicing its culture (SAHRC, 2003). Being part of a particular culture gives an individual a sense of belonging to a particular group, as well as an identity (Wadesango et al., 2011). For almost all cultural groupings, belonging is of such great importance that it influences how people view themselves. Every individual is part of a web of social relations (Wickstrom, 2010). The concept of “*umuntu, ngumuntu, ngabantu*”, which means a person, is a person through other persons, actually confirms this. The idea that underlies this expression is that being a person means to be interconnected with others, which encourage a collectivist orientation.

Social relations are as important a determinant of people’s well-being as are individuals’ behaviours and actions. Without its culture, a nation is lost, because that could mean it is not in touch with qualities that are inherent in the culture, such as respect and good behaviour (Wickstrom, 2010). Even if individual’s failures or immoral and inhumane behaviours are associated with causes of diseases, the ultimate cause is almost always thought to be a breakdown of social relationships (Wickstrom, 2010).

The concept of collective whole is still evident in traditional people from KwaZulu-Natal through the practice of virginity testing. This is where the current study is focusing. KwaZulu-Natal consists of both rural and urban areas. The Zulu people are known for their strong sense of identity and the cultivation and maintenance of their cultural practices such as virginity testing and polygamy. In Zulu culture, virgins are called the flowers of the nation, their bodies “always have had sexual meanings, and

for many married Zulu women, this entails covering it to protect oneself and one's relationship" (Wickstrom, 2010, p. 540). For the majority of girls involved in virginity testing, nakedness entails pride and prestige, a special time in life and role in society. Young girls show moral uprightness through exposing themselves, while a sexual experienced woman may bring misfortune if doing the same (Wickstrom, 2010). A married woman, on the other hand, is condemned if showing off her body to anyone other than her husband.

According to Wickstrom (2010), virginity testing plays a significant role in protection of the body which symbolizes social care. Virgins are often referred to as flowers of the nations. "The individual body is the most direct, the most proximate area where social truths and disputes take place, as well as the place for personal and social resistance, creativity and struggle" (Wickstrom, 2010, p. 545). The ritual such as virginity testing plays a huge role in uniting community members and creating self-understanding. Virginity testing is not only about every single girl's efforts to take care of herself, but about "the need for the collective body to be healed, an effort to recreate continuity and to mend the social fabric" (Wickstrom, 2010, p. 546).

Previously, virginity testing was linked with rituals such as Zulu RDC and Unomkhubulwane. These rituals were being done for numerous reasons including the following: the welfare of the society, for health, rain, and fertility among humans and animals (Wickstrom, 2010). The RDC, also known as "*Umkhosi Womhlanga*" is an annual Zulu tradition that is normally held in September at Enyokeni Palace, in KwaNongoma, Northern KZN. It is a cultural celebration aimed at promoting respect for young women who are virgins, and preserving the custom of keeping girls as

virgins until marriage. Virginitv testing was revived by the Zulu monarch in 1984 (Mtetwa, 2003). It is only girls who qualified as virgins who are able to carry reeds to present to the Zulu king during this ceremony.

During this ceremony, the young girls, who are led by their peer leader, show off their breasts, abdomen and buttocks and they sing and dance, each carrying a reed. It is believed that if a non-virgin carries the reed, it withers to confirm that the girl is no longer a virgin. Withering of the reed is considered as a “disgrace”, not only to oneself and the family but to your community as a whole. Withering of the reed will result in that particular girl being removed from the company of the majority of girls who are still virgins (Mtetwa, 2003).

Furthermore, Leclerc-Madlala (2001) argues that the value of virginitv testing in South Africa is not the same as it is in other countries such as Uganda, where they promote giving incentives in terms of material resources such as appliances. The Ugandan people have a belief that by adding incentives of valuable kitchen appliances they are actually introducing a “new spin” on an old tradition that once conveyed moral values to young people. Material rewards in the form of kitchen appliances are believed to link the conveyance of moral values to the promotion of material values. It also indirectly conveys a gender value, one that links women to the kitchen (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001).

In South Africa, virginitv testers and their supporters rely on the growing social prestige of virginitv to provide positive reinforcement for abstinence. Prestige is

symbolized through gold-edged certificates and signed testimonials granted to girls who have “passed” their virginity tests (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001).

2.5 Significance and benefits of virginity testing in the modern South Africa

Having mentioned that virginity testing died out in the 20th century during colonialism, it then resurfaced in the mid-1990s. There is no single motive for the revival of virginity testing, but its revival is based on a number of reasons, which includes the following: a return to the Zulu (African) culture and tradition, preservation of virginity before marriage, promotion of morality, prevention of further spread of HIV/AIDS, prevention of teenage pregnancy, and detection of cases of child sexual abuse and incest (Commission on Gender Equality, 2000).

The idea behind making virginity a matter of public concern is based on encouraging people to help girls delay penetrative sex and also encourage men to respect girls' sexual integrity (Wickstrom, 2010). Although some people view virginity testing as a discriminatory practice, for Wickstrom (2010, p. 536), “virginity testing is more of a preventive than a diagnostic event, an effort to celebrate, defend, and promote virginity, and thus, in the long run, to prevent young girls from contracting HIV”.

Virginity testing constitutes a mutual effort to behaviour change of men and women and thus protects the nation from dying too early as a result of HIV/AIDS (Wickstrom, 2010). They are organizing something that is both a kind of local public health initiative and a collective ritual. Wickstrom (2010) revealed that not everyone views virginity testing solely as a solution to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Some people see

virginity testing as the best possible way to enhance behaviour change, in the context of possessing limited means through which to influence their circumstances (Wickstrom, 2010).

A study conducted by Taylor et al. (2007) in KwaZulu-Natal among rural IsiZulu-speaking youth on attitudes towards virginity testing, revealed interesting findings. The study investigated the perceptions of both sexes since males are often dominant in decision making in Zulu culture. Learners who took part in this study perceived more advantages than disadvantages regarding the practice. The study revealed that a majority of both girls and boys considered virginity testing to be beneficial, therefore, they acknowledge and respect it as a traditional practice (Taylor et al., 2007). Many girls felt that virginity testing gives them a reason to be proud of themselves, and also enables parents to be proud of their daughters (Taylor et al., 2007). However, few boys and girls perceived the practice of virginity testing to be a disgrace to girls.

2.5.1 Prevention of sexual abuse and pregnancy

To curb teenage pregnancy was one of the reasons virginity testing was revived. Mdletshe (2012) reported that some girls feel pressurized to engage in penetrative sex before they are ready to do so. This is evident in the study done by Dlamini et al. (2007) whereby boys revealed that they have the power to convince girls to have sex with them even if a girl is not ready to engage in penetrative sex. They stated that they cannot delay having sex just because their girlfriends participate in virginity testing. This study highlighted that sometimes girls may feel pressure to give away their virginity not because they are ready to do so, but as a result of pressure.

Similarly, Mulumeoderhwa and Harris (2013) conducted a study among township high school males. The aim of this study was to understand the important beliefs and attitudes of these young urban men concerning girlfriends, violence and sex. One of the main themes discussed in this study was whether a girl has any right to refuse sex and, if she does refuse, whether it is justifiable for a man to use force to have sex. Most participants were in general agreement that a girl with whom they were in a relationship cannot say no, unless there is a good and valid reason for that.

It was also highlighted that some women who participate in virginity testing expect their men to wait for them. However, the majority of men in this study argued that waiting is a difficult option for them and that women do not have the right to refuse sex (Mulumeoderhwa & Harris, 2013). It was further stated that if a man cannot convince a woman to comply, then forced sex is generally considered appropriate. This is in line with a belief that “some women like forced sex” (Mulumeoderhwa & Harris, 2013, p. 226).

In addition, virginity testers believe that virginity testing plays a positive role in identifying cases and incidences of child sexual abuse in communities (Zungu, 2000). These testers say they have become experienced in diagnosing the symptoms of abuse, and actively refer cases to the appropriate authorities. In communities where child rape is prevalent, as in many in KwaZulu-Natal, and where deeply entrenched silences surround most matters related to sex, it is possible, though currently unproven, that virginity testers are playing some part in identifying and managing such problems (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001). Children as young as four years old, particularly among the Zulu nation, are being tested to protect them against sexual abuse.

Virginity testers largely believe that the actual genital inspection is a minor part of a greater educational effort that is subsumed in virginity testing (Scorgie, 2002). As part of the fight against unplanned pregnancies and/or risky behaviours among young girls, virginity testers offer lessons in traditional crafts such as beadwork, the playing of musical instruments or teaching of old song and dance routines. Others offer training in agriculture and the preparation of traditional foods and customary dishes. The promotion of virginity in this manner is part of a larger programme to revive vanishing cultural practices (notably gendered) while keeping girls busy and away from boys (Scorgie, 2002). Many girls who take part in these activities seem to welcome the opportunity to learn new skills, make new friends, and to be a part of a network of young women doing things together to avoid unwelcomed pregnancies and HIV infections (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001 & Scorgie, 2002).

Mtewa (2003) therefore recommends that the law should encourage and exercise the practice of virginity testing to assist in curbing the spread of teenage pregnancy and HIV/AIDS. Uganda has been reported to offer bursaries to teenagers who are virgins and this strategy is reported as effective in lowering the rate of HIV/AIDS and teenage pregnancy. However, this prevention strategy has terms and conditions in place; the child loses the bursary once the virginity is lost. Mtewa (2003) reports that virginity testing showed positive results in lessening high rates of teenage pregnancy in other countries. One of the virginity testers from the organisation called Izintombi Zemvelo, reported that they have seen a significant drop in child pregnancy as a result of virginity testing (Mdletshe, 2012). This highlights the effectiveness of virginity testing against teenage pregnancy.

2.5.2 Virginity testing as an HIV/AIDS prevention strategy

The largest problem causing the most concern facing South Africa is the escalating HIV/AIDS epidemic. According to Human Science Research Council (2014), the number of South Africans infected with HIV has increased from 10.6 percent to 12.2 percent. The total number of infected South Africans is estimated to be about 6.4 million. It has increased by 1.2 million since 2008. Of even more concern is that the incidence rate among females aged 15 to 24 is four times higher than the incidence rate found in males in this group (HSRC, 2014). This reveals that gender inequality has a negative influence in the HIV epidemic in South Africa, with a majority number of women still depending on men, lacking education, and access to health services. This highlights the need to develop interventions to deal with the HIV/AIDS problem, and sexual abstinence for young people is one of the options available (HSRC, 2014).

During the last two decades in South Africa, HIV/AIDS has taken a terrible human toll, claiming million lives of people, leaving millions of orphans, causing pain, fear, and uncertainty and also threatening economic stability. Preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS in South Africa is priority for all. Accordingly, numerous prevention strategies are underway to reduce the spread of HIV transmissions. These prevention strategies are aimed at delaying sexual initiation. The South African government has developed a strategy to address the problem of HIV/AIDS. This model recommends abstinence, being faithful to one's partner and condom use (also known as ABC) as strategies to prevent the further spread of the disease (SAHRC, 2003). Nevertheless, virginity testing stands at the forefront in South Africa's battle against the spread of HIV/AIDS. Confidence that virginity testing may provide a

“culturally appropriate” solution to the HIV/AIDS epidemic is shared across various levels of society. Traditional communities believe and insist that South African children must remain virgins until marriage, with a belief that virginity is the greatest defense against the spread of HIV/AIDS (George, 2008).

However, South Africans continue to battle the HIV/AIDS epidemic today, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), being the area with the highest infection rate of HIV in the country which is estimated to be about 16.9 per cent (HSRC, 2014). Judging by accelerating rates of new HIV infections it is certain that these efforts have been successful in increasing knowledge and awareness about HIV/AIDS with very little or no change in people’s behavior, including sexual lifestyle (George, 2008). Despite government's awareness campaigns to reduce HIV, behavioural studies are required in order to evaluate the effectiveness of these preventive approaches and also to investigate how they can be improved and better targeted.

2.6 Implications of virginity testing in South Africa

Scorgie (2005) is arguing that virginity testing has failed in many levels to reduce HIV and the high levels of gender violence in the country. Current statistics show that South Africa has the sixth highest prevalence rate of HIV in the world, with the disproportionate share of those infected being young women and girls (HSRC, 2014). Higher levels of sexual frequency and highest HIV infections are found in rural and informal areas than formal housing areas and also among adolescents living in poorer socio economic circumstances (HSRC, 2014).

Despite honouring girls for keeping themselves virgins, public declaration of a girl's virginity puts them at risk for rape. South Africa is said to have one of the world's highest rates of rape in the world (Jewkes & Abrahams, 2000). It is estimated that today almost half of the country's women can expect to be raped in their lifetime (Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002). Embedded in the current nationwide rape crisis, are attitudes and commonly held beliefs that put girls and women known to be virgins at special risk for rape. Further complicating the virginity testing issue is recent data suggesting that men who are HIV-positive may be more likely to target virgins for sexual intercourse, based on the myth and a belief that having sexual intercourse with a virgin cures HIV/AIDS (Le Roux, 2006; LeClerc-Madlala, 2003).

Opponents of virginity testing further argue that the practice of virginity testing endangers the lives of girls certified as virgins in that many of these girls become easy targets for rapists, especially with rape incidents being so high in South Africa and coupled with the above mentioned myth and/or belief about HIV/AIDS (CGE, 2000 & SAHRC, 2003). Evidence exists from previous research that link sexual violence against young girls who are presumed to be virgins and a belief that sexual intercourse with a virgin can "cleanse" men with HIV or AIDS of the disease (CGE, 2003).

George (2008) reported that not only older men with HIV or AIDS target young girls for sex. However, even older men without HIV/AIDS also prey young girls to be their sexual partners to avoid contracting the HIV from older sexually active women who may be infected. "Independent of seeking a cure for HIV, some men have indicated a preference for sex with younger girls, reasoning that there is a lower chance that a

younger and less sexually experienced girl will be infected with HIV” (George, 2008, p. 1462). Gupta et al. (2000) felt that the traditional norm of virginity testing put young and unmarried girls at risk of getting infected with HIV. This is the case because these women are unable to ask for information about sex, fearing that they will be thought to be sexually active.

Moreover, opponents of virginity testing point out to ways in which virginity testing may create new health risks. The fear of failing a virginity test and being mocked by other peers as a “rotten potato” thus bringing shame to one’s family, while causing girls to engage in activities that put them at increased risk for all manner of sexual health problems (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001; Le Roux, 2006). Having said that testers look for something resembling a white veil located high in the vaginal passage (believed to signify an intact hymen), some girls have resorted to pushing toothpaste or a piece of white lace dipped in tomato sauce into their vaginas as means of faking virginity (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001; Le Roux, 2006). By trying to impersonate the white veil effect, girls hope to deceive the testers. Other girls have gone to an extent whereby they insert pieces of freshly cut meat into their vaginas in order to make their vaginas appear “tight” (Le Roux, 2006).

Opponents from the medical point of view fear that virginity testing may have an unintended effect such as the increased risk of HIV infection among adolescents. It may cause young people to engage in sexual behaviours riskier than intercourse. Adolescents who are sexually active may engage in anal or oral sex rather than vaginal sex to avoid detection of their sexual activities. This may put them at double risk of being infected with HIV (Hlongwa, 2004; Ramjee & Daniels, 2013).

Many doctors argue that the method that is used to indicate virginity is not reliable (Mhlongo, 2009). Using hymen as an indicator is not a good indicator of virginity and is not appropriate because the hymen can easily break through sports and physical activities or even as a result of tampon use. Other people are born without a hymen; in that case a girl cannot fail a virginity test on the basis that her hymen is not showing (Mhlongo, 2009). Interestingly, Mhlongo's (2009) study also revealed that some girls do indeed lose their virginity during the virginity testing process, when the testers insert their fingers in the vagina.

As reported by Hlongwa (2004), ongoing research and work on community responses to HIV/AIDS reveals that many young people have a belief that virgins seem to be arrogant, self-assured and confident. This is commonly evident through the walk, dressing style, reaction toward boys, and by the company the girl keeps. While these traits are sometimes viewed as desirable by the community, they can be risky for some girls declared as virgins. This is likely to put these young girls at risk of getting sexually abused (Hlongwa, 2004).

Not only males are against virginity testing, but girls who are not participating in virginity testing are also reported to become jealous and therefore tease those who are involved in the practice. As a result, girls tend to fear engaging in the practice of virginity testing because they feel that it is risky and they do not want to attract the envy of other girls (Taylor et al., 2007). They felt that as girls who had gone for testing, other girls would see them as "too proud" and "be jealous", and therefore might then be inclined to encourage their brothers, friends, or neighbours to rape them. Surprisingly, it was revealed that some girls actively took part in planning and

arranging rapes by luring victims to their homes or to a distant venue. Being “too proud” as a certified virgin was said to not only draw the unwelcomed attention of other girls, but it was also claimed that boys themselves would be inclined to rape such a girl just so as to “teach her a lesson” (Hlongwa, 2004, p. 6). Gang rape was often reported whereby boys are determined to teach that particular girl a lesson and moreover show her what men are all about (Hlongwa, 2004).

Given such an environment challenged with gender-based violence, the public declaration of a girl’s virginity puts young women directly at risk for both rape and HIV. However, recognizing this unforeseen consequence, some virginity testers in KwaZulu-Natal no longer hand out paper certificates to virgins. Girls who are declared virgins are either marked with a white dot on their forehead or ochre clay on their cheeks that can be rubbed off after the event. In some instances the girls are told to provide a small notebook where their virgin status can be discreetly recorded after each testing (Wickstrom, 2010).

2.7 Implications of Gender Equality, culture and human rights

In different cultures, there is evidence of persistent social norms that often clash with gender equality. Balancing these values remains a persistent challenge in post-Apartheid South Africa. This is due to the country’s highest rates of poverty, inadequate public health infrastructure and an increasing HIV/AIDS epidemic (George, 2008). The debate over the practice of virginity testing and the law exposes both theoretical and practical imbalance between human rights universalism and cultural relativism (George, 2008). The re-emergence of this cultural practice has led

to concerns being raised about the potential invasion and violation of guaranteed constitutional rights of the young girls who are involved in virginity testing.

The SAHRC (2003) argues that even though culture is beneficial to its members, some cultural practices are believed to be harmful and directly offend the dignity and autonomy of individuals when practiced against modern acceptable standards of behaviour as stipulated by the constitution of law. Virginity testing is counted among cultural practices that are harmful to the physical integrity of the individual and especially women and girl children. Traditional practices such as virginity testing are believed to cause gruesome physical pain while others view them as humiliating and degrading (Iyanuolu, 2008). The CGE and the SAHRC has recommended the abolishment of virginity testing since it is viewed as discriminating against girls, considering that it is mainly focused on teenage girls (Le Roux, 2006, p. 2). The CGE and SAHRC are mainly concerned about the rights of young girls that are being violated through the practice of virginity testing (Le Roux, 2006).

From the opponents' point of view, the practice of virginity testing contradicts South Africa's efforts to promote gender equity (Taylor et al., 2007; Wickstrom, 2010). It is argued that virginity practice caused social pressure among young girls to participate in virginity testing, although such testing has been opposed as ineffective, unhygienic and violating human rights (Taylor et al., 2007). According to Wickstrom (2010), having been aware of the consequences of the AIDS epidemic, parents motivate their daughters to be careful, and not to not allow boys to force them into sexual relationships.

Mulumeoderhwa and Harris (2013) felt that the practice of virginity testing placed the entire responsibility for safe sex, abstinence, the spread of sexually-transmitted diseases and any consequences that may arise on the shoulders of women, who are often victims of gender inequality in so many other aspects of life. Women all over the world are often the targets of campaigns aimed at helping young people make good choices in relation to lifestyle (Le Roux, 2006; UNICEF, 2003). However, this does not mean that boys are not born virgins, but it simply reflects attitudes of society towards women (Le Roux, 2006).

Harmful traditional and cultural practices like virginity testing maintain the subordination of women in society and thereby enable gender based violence. The practice of virginity testing stems from deeply ingrained discriminatory views and beliefs with regards to the role and position of women in society as it positions women as inferior and belonging to men (UNICEF, 2003; Wadesango et al., 2011). For example, the emerging belief that sexual intercourse with a young virgin girl can cure HIV/AIDS has led to an increase in sexual violence against girls, resulting in huge psychological scars on the victims (UNICEF, 2003). Gupta et al. (2003) views virginity testing as a gendered response to experiences of HIV/AIDS. While virginity testing is being viewed as a preventive strategy, it is harmful and not gender sensitive, as it violate the rights of a girl child. Gupta et al. (2000) further cautions that interventions that seek to respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic should be harmless and gender sensitive.

Although the practice of virginity testing is believed to be an indirect way of reducing the spread of sexually-transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, girls tested as virgins are vulnerable to sexual abuse by men in the community (Leclerc-Madlala,

2003; Le Roux, 2006). Virginity testing does not only put girls' health at risk, but it also affects them psychologically and exposes some of them to sexual abuse (Leclerc-Madlala, 2003). Some men believe that having sex with a virgin will cure them of AIDS. Declaring these young women not to be virgins directly informs the public of what has happened to them. This consequently raises serious concerns about secondary traumatization and stigmatization of these young girls. This gives further rise to serious concerns regarding vulnerability of these young girls' dignity (Leclerc-Madlala, 2003). In addition, Wadesango et al. (2011) state that inserting ones' finger in the vagina of a girl or women is also considered as a form of penetration and it amounts to sexual abuse.

Furthermore, in a study done by Le Roux (2006), it was observed that girls who fear that they would be discriminated for the fact that they are not virgins tend to resort to dangerous methods. The fear of shaming one's family and failing the test had caused young girls to do things that put their health at risk. Consequently, this can have a negative impact on health promotion the community is aiming to improve. Again the form of stigma directed to these girls does not only apply to a girl who has failed a virginity test, but also for her whole family, as well as her peers, who sometimes have to be cleansed by slaughtering a beast. Women who are not virgins anymore are ostracised by the community, and are often referred to as "izeqamgwaqo", or prostitutes. As a result, this can have a negative influence for these ostracized girls, and it may eventually force them into prostitution (Le Roux, 2006).

Failing virginity tests leads to stigmatization and mocking by other girls as well as the community. This is undignified as the girls are humiliated in the process. The pressure by the community to take part in this ritual also infringes the participant's right to bodily integrity (Le Roux, 2006). Having mentioned above that sometimes the hymen does not remain intact due to a number of factors for example, being ruptured during exercises and other physical activities. There are also instances where girls are born without a hymen; however, this is not taken into consideration when girls are being tested (Le Roux, 2006; Mhlongo, 2009).

The age at which virginity testing is performed is also one of the arguments against this practice. Girls as young as seven years old are being tested for virginity. While virginity testing is supposed to be voluntary it is uncertain if girls from seven years take part willingly in virginity testing (Vincent, 2006). Taking into consideration the child's age and maturity, a person at that age may not have a capacity to understand what virginity testing is all about; therefore a possibility of the child granting informed consent is greatly reduced under these circumstances (Vincent, 2006). Due to age, the child may not have a choice but may be under parental and societal pressure to undergo the test (Vincent, 2006).

Section 12 (4) of the Children's Act of 2005 prohibits virginity testing of children under the age of 16. However, Section 12 (5) allows virginity testing provided the following conditions are met:

- (a) if the child has given consent to the testing in the prescribed manner;
- (b) after proper counselling of the child; and
- (c) in the manner prescribed.

Section 12 (6) stipulates that disclosure of the results of virginity testing may not be released without the consent of the affected child, while section 12 (7) prohibits marking of the body of the child who has undergone such testing (Wadesango et al., 2011).

The constitution is therefore faced with conflict between recognizing and giving effect to cultural practices versus ensuring that the Children's Bill is not in conflict with the Constitution as the supreme law of the land (SAHRC, 2003). The SAHRC believes that virginity testing is doing the opposite of what it intends to do.

“The practice which intends to promote good morals and decrease sexual activity prior to marriage, thereby being an HIV/AIDS prevention mechanism, propagates sexism in that it places a high premium on the sexuality of girl-children in the form of their virginity and says nothing about the sexuality of the boy-children” (SAHRC, 2003, p. 6).

The communities are left with a challenge to promote social values that are not diverting from constitutional values (SAHRC, 2003). During the public hearing of the Children's Bill in 2005, proponents of virginity testing declared that they would not comply with the legislation and they would continue with the practice as it forms part of their tradition (Le Roux, 2006).

George (2008) argues that the arguments put forward by the opponents of virginity testing fail to appreciate the opportunities that culture may present for change. These arguments are ignoring the fact that the practice of virginity testing has changed over time, and most recently it is used as a response to new social challenges. However, “the common disappointing feature that both sides of the debate share is the

tendency to view virginity testing itself as the problem and thus to frame the possible solutions as either abolition or accommodation of the practice” (George, 2008, p.1450).

Even if South African legislature were to abolish virginity testing, George (2004) reports that the HIV/AIDS epidemic and its disproportionate impact on women would likely remain unchanged. As a result, George (2008) felt that the debate about virginity testing must then shift from focusing on abolition and rather focus on changing the more pervasive cultural norms that fuel gender inequality and increase HIV/AIDS infection rates among young women. This will be useful in terms of adapting the practice in constructive ways (George, 2008).

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the existing literature on virginity testing. It has covered different findings and arguments from previous studies. Virginity testing is regarded as a cultural practice that is often associated with moral values such as self-control, respect, dignity, honour and pride. Virginity testing stands at the forefront in South Africa’s battle against the spread of HIV/AIDS. Most of rural communities encourage Black South African girls to remain virgins until marriage, with a belief that virginity is the greatest defense against the spread of sexual transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies. However, some studies reveal that virginity testing renders children more vulnerable to sexual abuse and rape. Although this custom contributes meaning and value to most traditional people, it has been heavily criticized and also challenged by the law. The practice of testing seems to place the entire responsibility for safe sex, abstinence, the spread of sexually-transmitted diseases and any

consequences that may arise on the shoulders of women, who are often victims of gender inequality in many other aspects. While virginity testing is being viewed as a preventive strategy, it is harmful and gender insensitive, as it violates the rights of a girl child. Chapter three will discuss the methodology carried out in the present study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the data collection approach that has been used in this study. It presents a summary of the characteristics of the participants, a description of the study site, as well as the approach used for data collection. Ethical considerations are also included in this chapter.

3.2 Research design

The study employed a qualitative method. A qualitative method was chosen because it is exploratory and it goes deeper into issues of interest. Descriptive research was used in this study as it described the experiences of virginity testers.

3.3 Description and selection of participants

Data was gathered by interviewing women who are currently conducting virginity testing. The sample for the present study included these testers from different virginity testing centers in Mtubatuba, KwaZulu-Natal. Initially the researcher had planned to interview five participants from rural areas and five from township areas. This population was chosen because the researcher wanted to find out about the experiences they encounter as virginity testers, and whether those experiences differ according to rural and township settings. However, during data collection it came out that virginity testers alternate, the ones from township areas also conduct virginity testing in rural areas, and vice versa. Besides that, those who are based in township areas were not available to participate in the study.

Eight participants were used in the study, all recruited in five different villages of Mtubatuba which includes the following: Somkhele, KwaQubuka, Madwaleni, Esiyembeni, Nkolokotho, KwaShikishela and Mfekayi. Initially the researcher had proposed to have ten participants; however, due to the fact that there was no new information received from the participants, only eight interviews were conducted. The sample included females because it is only women who do virginity testing for girls. The ages of participants ranged between 50 and 64.

Participants differed in terms of religion. Six were from Nazareth Baptist Church and the other two reported to be part of Zion Church. Seven participants reported to have lower levels of education, while one participant had progressed to tertiary level. Only one participant out of eight has a job, the rest reported to be unemployed. Out of eight participants interviewed, six reported to have volunteered to do the job of virginity testing, while the other two participants were elected by the community. Snowball sampling method was used to recruit participants. The researcher identified one virginity tester and then asked that respondent to nominate others who could be asked to give information on the topic. Those virginity testers also nominated other virginity testers to take part in the study.

Ethical considerations were at all times used to guide the conduct of the study. Ethical clearance was sought from the University of Zululand Research Ethics Committee. The researcher obtained permission from the Mpukunyoni Tribal Authority to use Mtubatuba as the study site. Permission to tape record and signatures of informed consent were obtained from each participant before participating in the study. Participation was entirely voluntary; there were no

incentives to lure them to participate and no coercion. The researcher assured participants that the information they have given will remain confidential between them and the researcher. The researcher explained to the participants that if for any reason they feel uncomfortable during their participation in the study, they were allowed to withdraw. However, none of them withdrew, and all stayed for the entire duration of the interview. Anonymity and privacy were strictly observed as no names were used to identify respondents; instead, numbers were used as a form of identification. Actual names of respondents were also not used in the dissertation to ensure anonymity of the respondents.

3.4 Description of procedures

The data was collected using face-to-face individual interviews. The interviews were conducted in the venue preferred by the interviewee, where the participant felt comfortable to share the information. The majority of participants preferred to have interviews conducted in their homes because it was more convenient for them. Interviews were conducted privately, with only the interviewer and the interviewee present, with minimal distraction.

Before commencement of data collection, the researcher outlined the purpose of the study. A handout describing the nature and purpose of the study was given to each participant to read. Thereafter, a detailed informed consent sheet was issued to each one. The researcher read out and thoroughly explained the informed consent sheet to those who are illiterate. The researcher informed them that the interviews would be tape recorded and described the purpose for tape recording. Participants who

voluntarily agreed to participate in the study and who were comfortable with the use of a tape recorder signed the informed consent declaration.

The researcher started off the interview by recording the biographical details, which included the following: age, gender, religion, level of education, occupation, place where they live, name of the virginity testing centre and how they got to be appointed as virginity testers.

There were no questions prepared beforehand; rather open-ended question format was used. The researcher asked participants to explore their experiences as virginity testers, including both positive and negative experiences. The follow-up questions were asked in order to gain a deeper understanding on the information provided by the participant. At times, the follow-up questions were determined by the answer given in the previous question. The interviews were conducted and also recorded in IsiZulu because virginity testers were generally elderly Zulu women from rural areas, thus most of them were not fluent in English.

3.5 Data analysis

Qualitative data was produced and then transcribed into written form. The bits and pieces of the collected data were coded into meaningful patterns. The data was analyzed using content thematic analysis. The researcher transcribed data by playing the recorded discussions repeatedly. The discussions were mainly in IsiZulu. The discussions were then translated directly from IsiZulu to English. There was no attempt to quantify the narratives, but the comparability of themes across all eight interviews was sought. The researcher listed common ideas and then drew key

themes that emerged from the transcriptions. Direct quotations from participants' interviews were used in the presentation of findings. This was done to ensure that the findings are the result of participants' experiences and not the preferences of the researcher.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has detailed the research design, description and selection of participants, description of procedures and data analysis. Chapter four will discuss the findings and interpretation of data.

CHAPTER FOUR:

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is a presentation of the findings from a study conducted in rural areas of Mtubatuba, KwaZulu-Natal to explore experiences of virginity testers. The findings presented have emerged from the data obtained through in-depth interviews with virginity testers. This chapter focuses on the description of participants and overarching themes that the researcher came up with during data analysis. The themes to be discussed in this chapter are based on recurrent ideas which emerged in the interviews.

4.2 Description of the sample

The study sought to understand the experiences of virginity testers. The participants in the study were elderly women from rural areas of Mtubatuba, with ages ranging between 50 and 64 years. Key variables used to understand the demographic details of the participants were, age, level of education, religion and employment status. Out of eight virginity testers interviewed, six of them reported to be part of Nazareth Baptist Church and the other two reported to be part of Zion Church. Seven participants reported to have lower level of education, while one participant had progressed to tertiary level. Only one participant out of eight has a job, the rest reported to be unemployed. Out of eight participants interviewed, six reported to have volunteered to do the job of virginity testing, while two participants were elected by the community. This is what one of the participants had to say:

“You cannot just choose because you might choose someone who’s not willing. You need to love this and have the passion to do it. Because if you choose someone who’s not willing. She might end up asking for payment and things like that” (P#2).

Although participants are based in different centres, they indicated that they often alternate between centres, yet there is no difference observed by participants between different centres as similar procedures are followed.

4.3 Themes

Analysis of the qualitative data collected from eight interviews revealed both negative and positive themes based on experiences of virginity testers. These themes and its subthemes are discussed below.

4.3.1 Sexual abuse among girls

As indicated earlier in Chapter two of this document, sexual abuse is prevalent in South Africa and perpetrators often target virgins. Participants in the current study reported to have identified many sexual abuse cases through virginity testing. The findings indicate that virginity testers have become experienced in diagnosing the symptoms of abuse, and actively refer cases to the appropriate authorities.

“In most cases boys assault our children for no reasons, but because they are fighting with the tradition. They are fighting with it, they do not like it. They want to taste and then leave. They are in fact destroying our girls. They know that once they have damaged it, they have killed their pride. That is what is destroying our nation” (P#5).

“Sometimes children come with their parents when they start suspecting sexual abuse and they will ask me to examine the child. It is sad indeed because these children got abused by people they trust and treat as a family member, people who are supposed to protect them. We come across issues that sometimes raise our sugar levels. Managing these children causes a lot of problems for us” (P#1).

From the interviews it emerged that in most cases children are abused by people they know, such as family members or neighbours. However, they remain silent due to threats. As a result, the sexual abuse may become continuous. Children will struggle to even open up to virginity testers about who has sexually assaulted them, fearing that the perpetrator might find out. Virginity testers will need to probe the child until she opens up, which is not an easy task for them. Most sexual abuse cases are reported to be discovered during virginity testing, but other cases are referred by parents when they suspect sexual abuse.

Findings further revealed that some of these children, especially the younger ones are often sexually abused by those uncles who transport them to school. They will take the child as if they are taking her to school then go and rape her. This citation below confirms some of those cases:

“We once had a seven-year old child who was sexually abused. When we tested her, we discovered that she was damaged, yet she has not informed her granny that she had been raped. When we discovered that she was damaged, we asked her what happened, but the child did not want to open up. She denied it completely, and we said we are not going to release you until you tell us who did this. In most cases these children do not report to their parents. We then asked her granny to excuse us because she was amongst us in the room. While her granny was outside, the child told us she was raped by uncle who transports her to school. We further probed her and he reported that: “Uncle went passed me at my stop, and went dropped off other children at school. When he came back, he took me to the bushes and raped me. I did not tell my granny because he said if I tell anyone he will chop off my head” (P#6).

Although virginity testers do not take the responsibility to lay charges against the perpetrator, but they often recommend that further steps be taken against the perpetrator. Nevertheless, it depends whether the family of the abused child really

want to press charges against the perpetrator. However, participants reported that usually families do not report such cases to the police, especially if the perpetrator is known to the family. In some cases, perpetrators become argumentative and claim that the child was not a virgin when he had forced sex with her, not even considering that it was not consensual.

“..... They wanted to make it a family thing and discuss the matter within the family. However, the boy was disrespectful, claiming that the child was not a virgin when they met, sexually. The elders wanted him to pay for the damages since they are related, however, the boy kept claiming that he will not pay or cleanse the other virgins because when he slept with the child she was no longer a virgin. All that comes back to who.... It comes back to us, because whoever says that means that virginity testers are not doing their job properly. We are criticized in different ways my child” (P#1).

As a result of increasing incidents of sexual abuse cases, majority of participants revealed that they have stopped honouring girls for being virgins. Previously, girls used to be honoured by placing white dots or stickers on their foreheads or by issuing certificates, however, that has come to an end due to fear for girls' safety. They believe that this was putting girls at risk of being raped, because people often target virgins. The following citations confirm this matter:

“In fact we do not do anything because we are concerned about the safety of our girls. People are so cruel outside. And when these girls return to their homes after the testing, they walk on their own. So we fear that people might target and assault them. We even told them not to wear traditional attires when they come for testing but to wear their normal clothes so that people will not be able to identify them” (P#4).

“ We were told not to even ululate, because one we do not ululate for; it would be obvious that she is damaged. If the girl is still beautiful, we can acknowledge that without screaming but by saying: “my child you still look beautiful” (mtanami waze wamuhle), you are behaving well, thank you for that” (P#5).

Another reason for not honouring girls was that some virginity testers are said to sneak certificates and give them to people who do not qualify to get them. Although the majority of participants denied the issue of sneaking certificates, one participant has agreed that there are virginity testers who sneak certificates and give it to people who are not eligible to get them.

“With the certificates, our seniors ended up saying not everyone must have them, only our leader can issue them because if everyone has access to certificates, some certificates end up being released incorrectly. They will end up giving to a child who is not a virgin and not eligible to get a certificate” (P#5).

“Although we get painted with the same brush, but there are virginity testers who sneak certificates. Yes, there are, truth must be told. Some virginity testers are not honest. A person who sees that a child is not good and yet says she is good. Clearly that woman has been bribed” (P#5).

Participants were asked to clarify whether those girls who have lost virginity through rape or sexual abuse continue testing. The majority of participants (seven out of eight) reported that they continue with those children who have been abused, considering the fact that it was never their choice or intention to lose virginity but they were forced to. As a result they carry on testing them but they keep a very close eye on them and they even start with them every time they come for testing.

“We do not exclude them, however we keep them and monitor whether they have not engaged in sexual intercourse after the incidence of rape. If we find out that she has been sexually active then we exclude her. We keep them because rape is not something that you do voluntarily. They lost their virginity not of their own will” (P#3).

The interviews further revealed that those girls who got sexually abused before reaching their menstrual stage, their hymens become repaired as time goes by, meaning they go back to normal and look like other virgins.

“If she’s 5 or 6, she’s not too tight because she’s not old, but as she grows up, her vagina becomes tight” (P#2).

“If the child got raped before she starts her periods, the eye gets repaired. It becomes normal, because she has not had her periods as yet. The one who faces a challenge is the one who gets raped after she has already reached menstruation stage (ukuthomba). Her hymen does not get repaired” (P#8).

However, those who have already reached menstrual stage, the eye vaginal cannot be repaired, yet the testers are able to see if one has been constantly sexually active. In case they discover that one has been sexually active after the incidence of sexual abuse, they exclude that particular girl from virginity testing.

Nonetheless, some participants mentioned that children who were sexually abused are not allowed to take the reed to the King when they attend the RDC, because virgins believe that it’s only pure virgins who qualify to take the reed to the King.

“What we normally do as virginity testers, we ask her not to take the reed to the King because other virgins know how the child got damaged and they fight with us if we allow those ones to take the reed to the king. They say, we cannot lift the reed with someone who’s no longer a virgin. They fight for that” (P#6).

“They condemn it, saying they will not carry the reed with someone who is not a virgin because that means boys will insult them because the person who has damaged that girl will find out that she has carried reed to the King. Then people will start saying they are all the same. So virgins fight for their right” (P#6).

On the other hand, one participant reported that in her centre she does not continue testing any girl who has lost virginity, whether she lost virginity through sexual abuse or voluntarily. This is due to the fact that most girls might end up faking being assaulted or raped and demand to be brought back to testing. This raises serious issues of trust between testers and girls being tested.

“...that’s where it becomes a problem because one can sleep consensually and then come and say she got raped. Children of nowadays are so corrupt. You’ll see because they go to their boyfriends, yet they know of the danger and then come back and say: “so and so has assaulted me”. Aw how did she assault you? Eh... I was visiting him and he ended up “overpowering” then I lost my virginity. My question would be: why did you go visit him knowing very well that he might sleep with you and you’ll lose your virginity? How? We do discuss such things with them, but they do not listen (P#1).

4.3.2 Community members often criticize virginity testing

It is known that not everyone likes or supports the practice of virginity testing. Findings indicated that virginity testers are often insulted by girls’ families or community members for the job they are doing. People often say that virginity testers are doing nothing because there is no such thing called a virgin. Other people start insulting them once their children have been kicked out of the practice as a result of lost virginity.

“They say that: What are you testing? What’s that? There are no virgins here. But we do not care about that. Others will say: “this is my girlfriend and I’ve slept with her”. As a virginity tester, I do not take such comments seriously because you can see that others are full of envy (P#2).

“The youth, young boys are the ones who does not like virginity testing the most. They say that we delaying them from having penetrative sexual intercourse with their girlfriends” (P#3).

“The community says malicious comments when girls who are known to come for virginity testing get pregnant. They ask: how they got pregnant while undergoing virginity testing? By that they mean we are not doing what we are claiming to be doing” (P#4).

“Even people do not have children undergoing virginity testing, criticize and insult us. We are facing a lot of challenges. People often say there is nothing like a virgin. A person cannot be 18 or 20 without knowing a man. You see something like that? We often get such kind of insults. But since our purpose is to save the nation, we often pretend as if it’s not painful, even though it is” (p#6).

The interviews also revealed that there are areas where the practice of virginity testing is not welcomed at all. One virginity tester reported that she had to stop testing from the area where she comes from because she feared for her life, due to threats that were coming from the community. She is now testing in another area.

“In this community they do not support virginity testing. Most people believe that virginity testers do not know what they are doing. They just do not believe in virginity testing. Even the community leader “induna” is against virginity testing. Things are bad I am telling you. I do not even test girls here anymore. I often take girls to another centre in one of our neighboring areas, but I only take those whom their families are happy for them to be tested. I feared for my life, as a result I decided to go test in another area” (P#3).

4.3.2.1 Failure to handle results

Surprisingly, interviews revealed some very interesting cases whereby people would bring their children for virginity testing but once they get to hear the result, things get sour. They fail to handle the results and start blaming the testers for something that has nothing to do with them.

“We are faced with a lot of challenges. When people bring their children here, they expect us to test them and we do exactly that, but as soon as we discover that their children are not virgins anymore, parents will not accept that. Instead, they will start blaming and insulting us.

They call us names. But we just ignore them and continue with what we do because we know we are working for the nation” (P#5).

One participant has reported that she was once accused and the case was opened against her for declaring someone’s child a non-virgin. Parents claimed that she insulted their child by declaring her a non-virgin.

“.....I saw the police car coming here, few hours after I had just tested someone’s child. After they have been here, they went straight to the police station and told the police that I have insulted their child by saying she is no longer a virgin, whereas the child is still a virgin, according to them. This is what they told the police: “that woman said our daughter has slept with someone, whereas she has not. Please warn that woman for us, not to insult our children” (P#7).

“.....I helped one of the neighbors and tested her child, and then I told her that her child is damaged. She asked her who did it then she told us. I’ve never seen such an angry woman before, she was so angry with her daughter. She then started beating her in my house. Then I realized that I’ll be held responsible or go to jail should this woman injure or kill her daughter in my house. The way she was beating her you would swear she wanted to kill her in my house” (P#7).

One of the participants reported a case whereby a parent threatened to harm her after discovering that his child was no longer a virgin.

“Children got called by the King; they were tested there by virginity testers from different places. This child was found to be a non-virgin and she got kicked out of the practice, together with others who were also not virgins. Her mother accepted the result and reported that she had already suspected that her child was sexually active. But when they got to deliver the news to her father, he could not accept it. He came to me fuming and threatened to sue us. I said you can sue me if you want but all other testers are with me. I said we can go to that woman who tested your daughter, if you want to. He said that cannot happen, then he took his children to another neighboring testing centre” (P#8).

“Surprisingly when she got there, she was declared a virgin but when she saw me Emhlangeni, she ran away with the reed and got into the crowd. She would have come to me, walked with pride and showed it off that I am nothing. Why was she running away from me? She not a virgin, she might have inserted those substances they use to deceive testers” (P#8).

“And the other parent, when she heard about her daughter’s virginity being broken, she was so angry with us and she even stopped coming to church as a result of that” (P#8).

4.3.2.2 Testers accused of accepting bribes

From the interviews it emerged that virginity testers get insulted by community members who claim that they get bribes from the girls they are testing. The community often believes that girls pay virginity testers in order for them to be declared virgins whilst they are not. They give them money at an estimated amount of about R100. Girls are believed to hide this money in their underwear when they go in for testing and when the virginity tester sees the money she knows what to do. However, virginity testers refuted these claims, further arguing that a girl does not even come in with her underwear on. So their question is: where would they hide the money? None of the participants reported having experienced that. Participants reported that they are not happy about this matter and it devalues the practice of virginity testing.

“I’ve never came across that. I do not know about it at all, but I have heard people accusing us. I’ve been doing this for eight years but I’ve never came across it. Even other testers I work with they’ve never had such experience” (P#2).

“They say, as the girl lies down, she hides R50 in her under wear. Hey, hey bakithi!!! And you’ll just wonder where the child gets that money from. And where is the child going to start approaching and inform me that she has brought money to bribe me! I will never, never allow that” (P#1).

Accepting bribes from girls was described by participants as a form of crime, and charges can be laid against anyone who commits such crime.

“We do not do it and if you can do it as a virginity tester, you may get arrested for that. Even the King “isilo” can charge you for that and you’ll have to pay a fine. What we are doing, we are not just doing it for ourselves but we are governed by the Zulu King (P#6).

As mentioned above that, virginity testers alternate between different centres, participants felt that girls would not have nerves to bribe someone they are not familiar with. Most of the time the testing is happening, they invite virginity testers from other centres, therefore there is always one or more virginity testers present; no girl would be brave enough to pay a bribe in such setting.

“Even if she had planned to give us R50, but when she gets there, she will find out that I am not the one testing but another virginity tester is. So how can a child bribe someone she does not know?” (P#2).

“So I do not see how they can get a chance to bribe testers. Not only one person does the testing, we are always two or more” (P#3).

Surprisingly, the findings revealed that, although the community claims that virginity testers receive bribes from girls, however, the community members also attempt to bribe virginity testers to fake their findings. One participant reported that a man attempted to bribe her to fake a virginity test because he feared that his wife will find out that he had been sexually abusing his step-daughter.

“Some other man came to me after he has been sexually abusing his step daughter. This is how it happened: When the wife started suspecting, he discussed with her husband that she wanted to take her daughter for virginity testing. Before the wife could bring her daughter to me, the husband went ahead and came to me with R1000 and requested that I take the money, and when his wife brings the child, I must declare her as a virgin. I refused and told him I do not take bribes. Few days later, the wife came; and when I examined the child I

discovered that she was no longer a virgin. When we questioned her, she said it was her father who has been sleeping with her” (P#8).

4.3.2.3 Refusal to cleanse virgins

From the interviews conducted, it was apparent that when the girl’s virginity has been broken, either the girl’s family or the person who is reported to have broken the girl’s virginity is supposed to pay a fine in the form of a goat. That goat is used for cleansing other virgins after they have been shamed by the act of lost virginity. Although others still respect the custom and follow the appropriate procedures when they have caused damage, however, the majority of people become argumentative and violent towards testers and they refuse to follow the appropriate route. Other virginity testers reported that they have stopped requesting for that fine due to threats they were receiving. If there is no one willing to cleanse virgins, virginity testers put money (coins) in a bath tub filled with water, then ask girls to cleanse with that water.

“The boy would say: “mama I did not rape her, she had consented to this, we both agreed to it. You are the one who is going to be in trouble here. My girlfriend like this and you are now coming in-between us and telling me to pay a fine” What would come next? A gun! They will kill me” (P#7).

4.3.3 Lack of commitment from parents

From the interviews conducted, it came out that as much as parents like their children to be tested for virginity, they displayed lack of commitment. They have left the entire burden on the testers’ shoulders. According to participants, parents are supposed to be present every time the testing is being conducted; however, they do not come. The presence of parents was recommended so that a parent can see

what is being tested and also if one's child has lost virginity, the parent can be called in to come and see that damage.

"In fact the parents must be present every time, just in case there's something unusual, so we can ask her to come see her child, so that it is not only us who get to see it" (P#2).

"They do not come. That's when the insults start popping in: "You hate my child". "She hates my child". "My child is still good and has been testing without any problems". We get those kinds of comments. These children my child, they hide in the bushes, whereas they claim to be coming here" (#P5).

"Parents do not want to work with us. They always distance themselves and leave the entire burden to us. Even if we call for meetings where we want to discuss with them issues that affect the testing process with but they do not come to those meetings. They just send their children here and expect us to do everything. Sometimes I end up doing things for children and I'll use money that is budgeted for my house expenses" (P#7).

"Sometimes we end up paying for children to go to eMhlangeni because nobody is available to pay for them. With others, their parents pay but others cannot afford. Others do not even have parents to pay for them. So as a virginity tester they expect me to take that responsibility. Even those R3s we often collect for gloves get released after a lot of struggle" (P#7).

4.3.4 Lack of commitment among girls being tested

The majority of participants observed lack of commitment from the girls they are testing. The following things have been described as indications for lack of commitment: arriving late for testing, coming to the venue but avoiding to be tested and also dropping out. Findings made it clear that girls have a right to drop out at any stage, should they wish to do so. The highest rates of drop-outs were reported among older girls. There are not a lot of older girls involved in the practice; most of the girls involved are below age 18.

“They drop out a lot. I have so many young ones. I think the older one is 27 years old. The ones at ages between 19 and 25 have dropped out” (P#8).

None of the participants reported making follow-ups on those girls who drop out, because it would appear as if they are pushing them to come for testing.

“You know it is not easy for us to follow them. And we never asked them to come for virginity testing at first. They came because they wanted to or maybe because their families wanted them to come. So if they withdraw, we do not interfere. It will feel as if we are pushing or forcing them to come if we follow up on them” (P#4).

Participants reported that other girls just drop out without even being tested negative for virginity. They would come to a virginity tester and report to have lost their virginity whereas they have not had sexual intercourse. They do this with an intention to get the tester’s reaction. They are in fact planning to have sex. It is the tester’s responsibility to confirm whether what the girl is saying is authentic by making her lie down and examining her.

“I sometimes come across such things. A person will say “I have slept; I’m no longer a virgin”. Maybe she does not want to be a virgin anymore. When I say come I’ll check you, she would be like “No you want to be disgusted, and I’ll say no I just want to check that disgust you are talking about”. I want to check whether you are still a virgin or maybe you’ve slept for real. I want to confirm what you are telling me” (P#1).

Findings further revealed that most girls give up their virginity to people who do not deserve it. They just let go of something they have preserved for so long without even thoroughly evaluating whom they are giving it to. Although virginity testing is believed to prevent HIV infections, in some instances it does the opposite because

girls will lose their virginity while exposing themselves to diseases and unplanned pregnancies, something they were trying to prevent for years.

“..... You lose your virginity and you wake up with the disease, you wake up with the child who’s infected. Such things happen to children. I’ve seen this many times. One child I was testing, the very first time she had sex, and she slept with a person without a condom and without knowing his HIV status. Then she woke up with the virus and the infected child, yet the boy could not even pay for the damages to her parents. You see all that? There is a lot of danger, just that children do not want to listen. Even if we try to show them the right direction, most of them do not listen” (P#1).

In other instances, some girls leave their homes as if they are coming for testing, but when they get to the venue, they do not go in for testing. Instead they will mix with those who have tested already. Since virginity testers are inside the house and busy testing, they will not get to know who has not tested. They only know those who have been tested because they keep the records. Findings further reveal that those girls who are being pushed by their family members to come for testing are the ones who often dodge the test. The blame often gets shifted to virginity testers once parents discover that their children are no longer virgins. They will fight with the testers saying that they did not do their job properly.

“Parents do not know that some of these girls pretend as if they come for testing, especially those who does not like to be tested and are being forced by their family members. Some arrive in the venue but they do not enter the hall where the testing takes place. Then people from the community will think they coming for virginity testing whereas they actually do not come inside the hall to get tested” (P#4).

“Since they go in one by one, they will all stand in the queue and then end up mixing with those ones who have been to us already. As a result, she will not get tested, but she did come here, you see that? And I am unable to monitor the queue because I am busy testing inside the hall. But when her parents discover that she has lost virginity, I am the one who would be held responsible for that. It’s unfair to us” (P#5).

“....some girls leave their houses as if they are going for virginity testing but they will never get tested. So when they get pregnant they will go around and tell people that they have been tested as virgins, while they were pregnant. So those kinds of lies devalue our job and make community lose hope on us. Sometimes when the girl is pregnant the family will confront us and fight with us that for the past months we’ve been testing the girl without discovering that she has slept with someone and she is pregnant” (P#4).

In order to protect themselves and their job, virginity testers started using registers where they record details for each and every girl who gets tested on the day. As the child walks inside the hall for testing they will record her details and also indicate her virginity status next to her name. If she is still a virgin, they put a tick; non-virginity is indicated by the star. Whenever parents come with complaints and looking for clarifications, they take out the register and show the parent what is appearing on the register.

“We keep a register to avoid arguments. Each and every girl who comes inside the hall, her name and contact details gets registered. Those who did not enter the hall their names will not appear on the register. So the register help us to keep records and be able to present it to parents when they come to complain once they finally discovered that their children are no longer virgins” (P#4).

4.3.5 Girls engage in risky behaviours to maintain or fake virginity

Although virginity testing is meant to prevent girls from getting diseases such as HIV and also prevent unplanned pregnancies, the findings revealed that at times girls engage in risky behaviours that put their health at risk, while trying to maintain their virginity. Some of these behaviours increase the likelihood of becoming infected with HIV.

4.3.5.1 Opting for anal or dry sex to avoid penetrative sex

Findings showed that since girls know that penetrative sex can lead to loss of virginity, they therefore opt for anal sex; with a belief that virginity testers cannot detect that they are sexually active. Yet, this kind of behaviour is believed to increase chances of HIV infections and other sexually transmitted diseases.

“....It is wise to examine both sides because children are dishonest. You can examine her and see the hymen still intact, only to find out that she is doing anal sex. Yes we are able to identify cases like that. That part gets scratched and it becomes red. You can see if she is doing something” (P#1).

“Others will have dry sex, but we will tell you that we can see that you have been doing because we can see that as well. Then we advise you to stop it because as the guy is coming indirectly but he’ll eventually break the eye, and you’ll lose virginity. It’s risky” (P#6).

4.3.5.2 Girls insert certain substances to fake virginity

The interviews revealed that girls try to deceive virginity testers by inserting certain substances into their vaginas, with an intention to appear as virgins whilst they are not. The kinds of things they insert include pieces of meat and certain substances that tighten the vagina. Despite inserting all those things mentioned above, virginity testers believe that they cannot deceive them. It is easy to see when the eye has been broken. Most participants, (six out of eight) reported having had cases where children used certain substances to tighten the vagina.

“If the eye is not showing, even if she can do something, we can still see if the eye has been broken. Others girls are very smart, those people who introduce them to shady behaviours also inform them about things they can use to tighten the vagina, so it appears as if the person is still a virgin” (P#6).

“But those things they use are time limited. Let us say maybe it will be active for 30 minutes, after 30 minutes it expires and will start to loosen up. By the time she lies down, it opens to show that whatever she had used to tighten up has expired, and we will see that there is something she had used” (P#6).

“Sometimes they use a certain substance like a stone which they crush and insert down there. If someone has used that, you cannot see anything, the opening become sealed. But us, we are able to see if they have used it. It tightens the vaginal opening. When I am testing a girl, there must be an opening, so I can see the eye. This one without an opening, to even pass urine is suspicious! I had come across such things. We question them if they deny having been sexually active then we often tell them to go test somewhere else because we cannot accept someone without an opening” (P#8).

Of all participants, two virginity testers have admitted having experienced girls inserting meat pieces. They reported that girls insert a whitish thing like fat, which they believe to resemble the vaginal eye. When the virginity tester discovers this piece of meat, the child would lie and say she has piles, also known as “umhlume”.

“When I got closer, I realized that it was some fat (itebhe) then I got a small stick and tried to take it out. And we asked her: “my child what happened? She said I have “umhlume”. So “umhlume” makes you insert fat in your vagina? She could not answer” (P#3).

“They insert things like meat pieces, chicken fat and other stuff. They are all over the place. They do like to remain virgins but at the same time they like boys” (P#4).

4.3.6 Girls denying non-virginity

As a rule, when a girl has lost virginity, as soon as they discover it, they do not release the girl, rather she get questioned about what has happened, trying to find out who has broken her virginity. Thereafter, virginity testers will phone the parent and request her to come with her daughter or ask the child to come with her parent. If the parent comes, the tester will take two or three girls of similar age and the one

who has lost virginity. They will let all of them lie down and show the parent what they expect to find from a virgin. They will go from child to child and then ask the parent if her daughter has got what other girls have. In other words they want to find out from the parent if her daughter looks similar to others. The parent will have to tell them if there is a difference or not. Findings revealed that in most cases parents do not come. Sometimes they do not come because the children had lied to them. The citation below proves this.

“One child came here and discovered that she was no longer a virgin. We asked one of the testers to call the child’s mother to come with her daughter. Surprisingly, the child went ahead and she took sweet-aid and put it on a pad then went to show her mother and said: “Look ma, I am on periods and they said I cannot be tested”. When this woman arrived, the parent was the one who told her what happened because her daughter had already spoken lies to her. You see all those kind of lies we face every day!” (P#8).

Not only parents fight with virginity testers, but children also fight and threaten them quite often, should a virginity tester reveal that they are no longer virgins. Some children are reported to be dishonest and stubborn, they do not find it difficult to lie and constantly deny being sexually active. They do that in order to protect themselves from their parents. Other than that, parents are welcome to do further investigation like sending the child to the doctor who can confirm her virginity status, should they wish to do so.

“In most cases we do not get the truth, they lie most of the time. Some would even deny that they have slept with someone and keep claiming that they are still virgins” (P#4)

“If you say: I’m going to go ahead and inform your parents about your current virginity status, maybe she would respond by saying, “mama so and so is insulting me; she says I’ve slept whereas I have not”. There are children who are stubborn, they are stubborn at home and they even take it out of their home setting” (P#8).

Other girls can be disrespectful in such a way that even if they have been kicked out of the practice but they still come forcefully, yet they know that they are no longer virgins. They start threatening to harm virginity testers for not allowing them back. Such cases often occur when children are about to attend the RDC. The citations below confirm this.

“One girl lost virginity and she was asked to bring her mother, whom she did not bring and then she got a red card. She went back home and paid money to go to eMhlangeni. She attended Umhlanga and when she came back they discovered that she was pregnant. Then they came back to fight and accused me. I then told them that I had requested that child to come with her parent, which she never did. It’s even recorded down in the book, we had put the star next to her name to indicate that we have discovered that she’s no longer a virgin”
(P#8).

“When we were about to go to the RDC, some girl came here, whom I have kicked out of the practice long time ago. She said: “I am going to Emhlangeni, and I said: you not going. She said: “me. I will go”. She took out money and threw it on the floor. I said “even if you can throw that money there but you are not going”. She said, “gogo I am going to eMhlangeni. I got this money from my parents, if you refuse to take it and pay for me and I end up not going to KwaNongoma, I swear, you’ll pay for it. You must remember that we both from here, you’ll go there but you would definitely come back here. If I end up not going, you’ll see what is going to happen to you” (P#7).

“...Now I am going to die and leave behind my children. She said we are coming back, she then took her money and left and said she will deal with me as soon as I come back from Nongoma. What you would have done if it was you my child? By the time you allow her to go, all those who were kicked out would come back and demand that I take them back because I have allowed this girl to attend Umkhosi Womhlanga” (P#7).

4.3.7 Lack of resources

Lack of resources was one of the major concerns reported by participants. They reported that they do not have enough resources required for the practice of virginity testing which includes transport and other necessary material such as gloves, mats, pillows and soap. Almost all virginity testers interviewed complained about lack of resources, especially with gloves. They reported that they are not provided with the necessary resources, even the government does not provide them.

4.3.7.1 Not provided with material resources

Virginity testers felt that having gloves is a very important part of virginity testing. It plays a huge role in protecting both girls and virginity testers. Not having gloves makes the testing process very difficult. Participants reported that since they are not often provided with gloves, therefore, they have to make girls pay R2 or R3 each so that they can afford to buy gloves. Although it was also reported that sometimes they get gloves from a certain organization, it is only if they go and request for them.

“As virginity testers we face a lot of challenges my child. Firstly we have problems with the fact that we do not get paid for what we are doing. To make things worse they do not even give us necessary resources. We have to take from our own pockets and pay for things that the community or government is supposed to pay for” (P#7).

“We have tried so many times asking them for gloves, even the municipality. But they have never given us. They once promised us but till today we have not received them. We normally buy them from the pharmacy in Mtuba town. With R10 you get 3 boxes” (P#7).

“I think you can help me with that. We do not have gloves, they do not give us. They do not provide us with testing materials. We often go ask around. Maybe if you mention this here, it is something you can help me with. This is my first complain, because you cannot test someone’s child with bare hands. We do not want to get infected” (P#5).

“Yes, even the child gets protected. Because it may happen that me, as a tester I may be infected, but testing children. Maybe I am injured and I have a wound then I’ll have to test someone’s child with that wound and infect her. It actually protects both of us. But nobody give us resources. You see that?” (P#5).

“Yes each child. If 10 of them are paying these three rand, it’s not enough. If they are 50, paying these three rand.....eh, there are cushions that they use during virginity testing, they lie on top of, it has pillow cases and we wash them. Even the dresses we wear “amaphinifa” we wash them because blood get spilled over our dresses and it becomes red if you test someone who’s on her periods. We buy washing powder with those three rand. Those three rand are not sufficient (P#7).

Participants also reported that children from other municipalities get t-shirts and “amabhayi” as a form of acknowledgement every time they go to Umkhosi Womhlanga. However, for them this is a dream that never gets fulfilled. Their municipality always promises them but never fulfills their promises.

“I do not know what kind of municipality is this one. We people from uMkhanyakude would be quiet and watch children from other municipalities celebrating and enjoying. They give them t-shirts and “amabhayi”. Our children do not get it” (P#5).

4.3.7.2 Struggling with transport

Another main concern raised by participants was the issue of transport. Having mentioned above that there is an annual RDC that is held in Nyokeni, KwaNongoma, virginity testers reported that they struggle with transport. The conditions force them to request each child to pay R200 for transport in order to attend RDC. Although the Mtubatuba Municipality provides transport at times, but it does not accommodate all children and it is not reliable. There are so many issues that were brought to attention with regards to transport. There are times when virginity testers would wait for the bus to come fetch the children but it never comes.

“Transport does not satisfy us at all. Last year they did not even provide with transport. There was a time where children waited for the transport till 1:00 am. How can you wait with people’s children till 1:00 am waiting for transport “esigangeni” when you’ve been told to be ready by 3:00 pm? That woman ended up taking money out of her own pocket and hired a car to take children to eMhlangeni. She went to report the matter to the municipality and nobody attended that matter, nor was she refunded her money. I do not want to lie, that transport gives us problems; it gives us a lot of problems” (P#5).

These buses also limit them in terms of how many children they can take from each centre. In most cases they ask for seven or eight children to use the bus, and the rest will have to pay for taxis. Other virginity testers reported that the bus does not even come to their centres anymore; they are totally dependent on hiring taxis. They request each child to pay R200 for transport. That means only those who can afford to pay that amount are able to attend the RDC and those who cannot afford this fee will remain behind.

“Yes, they pay R200. Maybe if we are lucky to get transport from municipality, they only request to take seven children from each centre. Since I have 84 children I will only send seven children. Then who’s supposed to be left behind? That’s why I hire taxis, because this seven per centre rule is not working for me” (P#8).

Those who went to the RDC, when they come, they drop them afar, I would have to hire the car at night to go fetch these children and deliver them at their homes. Otherwise, they will get raped. I saw that I was risking with other people’s children and parents will fight with me should something happen to their children” (P#8).

One of the issues raised about transport provided by the municipality was that when the bus comes back from the RDC, it does not deliver children to their houses; rather it drops them off by the bus stop, regardless of the time. It was reported that girls will

have to walk a very long distance on their own, and that was putting their lives at risk.

“It is that bus that keeps us complaining. It makes us complain a lot. When I first went to the RDC, those children I went with never attended it ever again. Never!! Their parents, even me, if I was a parent to those children, I would not have allowed my child to ever go there. When we came back from the R, the bus dropped us by the bus stop at around 11:00 pm. Those children have to walk a very long distance. When are they going to get home? Are not they going to get assaulted?” (P#5).

Virginity testers felt that they were putting children's lives in danger, considering the fact that some people target virgins for their own personal gains. Therefore, the children were vulnerable to get raped when they come back from the RDC. As a result, the testers decided to depend on taxis on which they have control, to ensure that each child gets delivered at her house. It is the tester's responsibility to ensure that all children arrive home safely. If anything harmful happens to any of the girls, the tester(s) would be held responsible for that.

“To carry on going with people's children I ask them to pay money, so that we can hire a car that's going to take us here and drop us at eMhlangeni and also bring us back here. This is how I am continuing, I stopped using that transport because we were suffering and people's children were suffering too. And I was going to be held responsible should something happen to those children” (P#5).

There are two cases reported where children had gone missing after the RDC:

“We had one that had gone missing two years back. They looked for her everywhere but they could not find her. They looked for her for about three days. Then her boyfriend brought her back after three days” (P#2).

“One of them got delivered at home but she did not sleep at home. Her boyfriend had waited for her closed by the gate. She took her and broke her virginity on that very same night. They have not slept before that. I got calls, her parents asking for her, I told them I dropped

her just by the gate at home and I saw her going straight towards the gate. They searched for her until they went to her friends who then said she's with so and so. When they went there, they found her. They asked: what's happening and she said we are dating. She got pregnant; they did not even pay for damages (amahlawulo) for that child. The child is about five years now" (P#8).

Despite being concerned about not being provided with transport for children, participants further reported that they also struggle with transport if they have to attend meetings or workshops. Nobody pays for their travelling costs, they have to take money out of their pockets.

"Beside transport for Umkhosi Womhlanga, even if we go to meetings, you use your own money. It's R100 my child to go there. Even if I am not financially well at that time, but I always have to budget for that R100. I need to also have an extra R20 so that when the meeting is finished, because maybe it takes 3 hours, I can be able to grab something to eat, before my sugar levels will drop. I must be able to buy something to eat and then come back home" (P#7).

4.3.7.3 Inappropriate testing venues

Virginity testers also raised the issue of not having proper testing venues. Most of them use community schools to conduct testing, whereas some use community halls. The conditions they work under are not favourable at all. One virginity tester mentioned that she got kicked out of the school one day when she was conducting the testing. As a result, she started testing at home, yet the law does not allow them to use their homes as testing centres. She eventually moved to a community hall.

"This one day, the Apostle Church women kicked me out while I was busy conducting virginity testing. They said they locking the school gate. I said this is the community school. They yes it's for the community but we are paying to use this place and you do not pay. If

you refuse to leave then you'll only be able to get out of the gate Monday with these children of yours. I then said let's go my children and we came here" (P#7).

"I once asked our ward councilor to build us a house we can use for testing because testing in your own house is not allowed. I told him it does not have to be in my yard, but he can put it outside my yard. He responded by saying, "I do not want to talk about that because you are part of IFP. I said, how can you say I am part of IFP? He then said: I saw the beads you make, they represent IFP" (P#7).

4.3.8 Positive Experiences

Although participants focused much on the negative experiences, they also had positive experiences to report on. Similarity was observed across interviews in terms of their positive experiences. Participants commonly felt that virginity testing plays a vital role in the fight against new HIV infections among young girls. It also prevents unplanned pregnancies. It prevents girls from engaging in risky sexual behaviours.

"I can say what is good about virginity testing is that it prevents girls from engaging in bad behaviours. It also delays them from falling pregnant and getting HIV/AIDS. You know children of nowadays do all those things. Most of them have babies very early. It's very exciting to see girls keeping their virginity till marriage. I do have girls who have kept their virginity and are about to get married now" (P#3).

Participants were asked to clarify whether being involved in virginity testing means you cannot have a boyfriend. All participants reported that a girl who takes part in virginity testing can have a boyfriend or partner, as long as she keeps herself a virgin. However, they do not encourage young girls to get involved in relationships because that might put them at risk of losing their virginity. According to the participants, not every boy who claims to love a girl really means that; other boys come with their bad intentions, which is most likely to be breaking a girl's virginity.

“You can have a boyfriend and be a virgin. What is important is to remain a virgin even if you have someone. That means you do not engage in sexual activities. Especially penetrative sex, but others opt for dry sex “ukusoma” But we encourage young girls not to involve themselves in relationship because they are too young” (P#3).

“One of the reasons is that it keeps the girls away from misbehaving. It teaches them to love and respect their bodies. It prevents them from getting diseases like HIV or getting pregnant at a younger age” (P#6).

“Children are very proud of this practice. Even their education does not influence them. We have children who are at university coming for virginity testing. Others have completed, and they are working as teachers and nurses but they still come for testing and they are proud of it. Even teachers and nurses send their children to come for testing, they are proud of it” (P#6).

“I think it is people who’ll make it become or look ugly. Virginity testing is beautiful; it’s good and healthy. When we test children, we sing, pray and advise them about different aspects of life. We tell them a virgin must have a difference as she walks on the street, a virgin does not eat bubblegum, and a virgin should always be home before sunset” (P#7).

“What I like about virginity testing is that a child “iyaqoqeka” and become humane” (P#8).

“Children who are part of virginity testing are protected from this disease (HIV). We like it when they get married. In my centre, I’ve got eight children, the one who’s getting married is the 8th one, and the 9th one is getting married in May. But that one dropped out, but what is great is that she is getting married to that person who broke her virginity” (P#8).

Participants were asked to give their opinion in terms of how they see virginity testing currently as compared to how it was before, when they started. Respondents hold a different view; the majority felt that conditions have become worse, whereas a few believed that it has changed for the better. Five out of eight participants felt that children are very passionate about the custom of virginity testing. They come willingly without being forced by their family members.

I think when we started it was not the same. Now, children are so passionate. You find out that the child is at age 21 but she still display that pride. Back then there were a lot of young

children, we did not have older ones. Nowadays, they are very proud and excited about this. They come and you do not have to push them. Back then, they used to come and they will stand by the door and you'll have to constantly ask them to get inside. Nowadays they are free (P#2).

A lack of commitment and corruption among girls has been reported by virginity testers. Many drop-outs have also been highlighted by virginity testers.

When participants were asked to comment about how they deal with different challenges they come across, similarity was observed across their responses. All participants reported that being a virginity tester is something that has to come from within you. Being passionate about their work helps them to be patient and deal with criticism and all kind of experiences positively. Virginity testers came into this work knowing very well what they were putting themselves into. As a result, they are able to bury the unpleasant experiences because they know they are saving the nation in this respect through virginity testing.

"We accept it like that, whether she likes what we doing or not, but our role is to save the nation. We know that once the child reach the age of 18, 19 and above, most of them are able to stand for themselves" (P#6).

"Ah.....there's nothing we can do. As much as it affects us but it does not get stick to us everywhere we go. We just ignore it. But at the same time we are concerned about protecting ourselves" (P#3).

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented the key findings of the study conducted with virginity testers from rural areas of Mtubatuba, KwaZulu-Natal. There was a lot of commonality observed from the experiences reported by participants. The findings revealed that virgins hold much higher status in society than those girls who are no longer virgins.

Six participants felt that virginity testing is an effective tool in the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS as well as unwanted pregnancies. Findings also revealed that girls who undertake virginity testing are at high risk of sexual abuse. It was indicated that virginity testers are facing many challenges which come from both girls being tested as well as from the community. Participants reported that not everyone supports virginity; all participants reported instances where they were confronted and threatened by community members as a result of hatred towards the practice. Concerns about lack of resources were found to be a common challenge across different interviews.

Findings indicate that there have been some changes in the way virginity testing takes place due to concerns about the girls' safety. Participants would like to see intervention from the government in ensuring that secure places are established to promote privacy as virginity testers have reported that virginity testing is conducted in public places. As much as virginity is meant to protect girls from engaging in risky behaviours, the study showed that girls are indirectly placing their health at risk due to risky behaviours they engage in order to maintain or fake virginity.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECCOMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research findings based on data collected. The discussion topics in this chapter come from the arguments from the literature as well as data collected during the study.

5.2 Discussion

Relatively little is known about experiences of virginity testers. Most studies tended to focus on the experiences or perceptions of girls who are involved in virginity testing as well as perceptions of the society, to determine the relevance of the custom. There are also studies that have focused on virginity testing as a strategy to safeguard against HIV/AIDS infections and early pregnancy. This study sought to fill the gap that exists in the research by focusing on the experiences of virginity testers.

Having indicated in the literature that virginity is determined by the presence of the hymen, whereby a “girl lies down on her back, knees drawn up, heels together and separates her knees wide a part, to expose the vestibule to see whether the hymen is still intact” (Khuzwayo, 2000, p. 27), participants’ understanding of virginity is consistent with the views in literature. Respondents further reported that they are able to perform virginity testing even when the girl is having her menstrual periods. The hymen is reported to become sharper during this period other than other periods in the menstrual cycle. This is consistent with what George (2008) has reported in literature.

Scorgie (2002) and George (2008) indicated that different virginity testers use different trademarks to acknowledge those girls who are publicly declared virgins. Some give certificates and others put a white dot on the virgin's forehead as a mark for virginity. However, the current findings revealed that, as a result of increasing incidents of sexual abuse cases, majority of participants have stopped honouring girls for being virgins. They believe that this was putting girls' safety at risk of being raped, because people often target virgins for a variety of reasons. Jewkes and Abrahams (2000) also highlighted that public declaration of a girl's virginity puts them at risk for rape, which is consistent with the current findings.

From the interviews it emerged that in most cases children get abused by people they know, such as family members or neighbours. However, they remain silent due to threats from perpetrators. As a result, the sexual abuse may become continuous. Children struggle to even open up to virginity testers about disclosing perpetrators, fearing that the perpetrator might find out and harm them. Virginity testers will have to prod the child until she opens up, which is not an easy task according to the reports. Most sexual abuse cases are discovered by virginity testers during testing days, but other cases get referred by parents when they suspect sexual abuse.

In addition, results show that other girls feel pressurized to engage in penetrative sex before they are ready to do so. This is evident in the study done by Dlamini et al. (2007) whereby boys revealed that they have the power to convince girls to have sex with them even if a girl is not ready to engage in penetrative sex. They stated that they cannot delay having sex just because their girlfriends participate in virginity

testing. This study highlighted that sometimes girls may feel pressure to give away their virginity not because they are ready to do so, but because they cannot resist pressure.

Participants were asked to comment about what happened to children who lose their virginity through rape. The majority of virginity testers in the present study revealed that children who were sexually abused continue testing for virginity, but only if they are willing to continue. This is due to the fact that it was never their choice or intention to lose virginity but they were forced to. Virginity testers reported that they are able to trace if a person has been constantly sexually active after the incidence of rape. Nonetheless, children who were sexually abused are not allowed to take the reed to the King during the RDC, because virgins believe that it is only pure virgins who qualify to take the reed to the King. Similar to this finding, it has been reported on the literature that the reed withers if it is carried by a person who is no longer a virgin, which confirmed that the girl is no longer a virgin (Mtetwa, 2003).

On the other hand, one participant reported that in her centre she does not continue testing any girl who has lost virginity, whether it was through sexual abuse or voluntarily. This is due to the fact that most girls might end up faking being assaulted or raped and demand to be brought back to testing. This raises serious issues of trust between virginity testers and girls being tested.

Previous studies have reported that when a girl's virginity has been broken, either the girl's family or the person who is reported to have broken the girl's virginity is expected to pay a fine in the form of a goat. That goat is used for cleansing the other virgins after they have been shamed by the act of losing virginity (Scorgie, 2002; George, 2008; Wickstrom, 2010). Participants from the current study agreed with the above findings; however, participants reported that conditions are becoming unpleasant because people are not following the appropriate procedures. In most cases, the majority of people refuse to pay for damages; rather, they become argumentative and violent towards virginity testers. Other virginity testers reported that they have completely stopped requesting people to pay for damages due to threats they were receiving. If the people involved are not willing to cleanse virgins, virginity testers put money (coins) in a bath tub filled with water, then ask girls to cleanse with that water.

Having mentioned that not everyone likes or supports the practice of virginity testing, current findings clearly showed that virginity testers are often insulted by girls' families or community members for the job they are doing. People, especially those against the practice often say that virginity testers are doing nothing because there is no such thing as a virgin. It also came out from the interviews that there are areas where the practice of virginity testing is not welcomed at all. One virginity tester reported that she had to stop testing from the area where she comes from because she feared for her life, due to threats coming from the community. Findings further revealed that at times people fail to handle the results and start blaming the testers for something that has nothing to do with them. One participant has reported that she

was once accused and a case was opened against her for declaring that someone's child has lost virginity.

Literature has indicated that girls who are declared as non-virgins get excluded from the practice and they are also told not to associate themselves with any event that is linked to virginity testing (George, 2008; Scorgie, 2002; Wickstrom, 2010). Surprisingly, the current findings revealed that girls become very stubborn with virginity testers and refuse to follow the appropriate, expected procedures. They keep demanding to be tested, regardless of the being told that they are no longer virgins. Others go as far as confronting and threatening to harm the testers for refusing to allow them back to the practice. This was described by testers as disrespectful behaviour which they always condemn in young girls.

Results further reveal that community members often claim that virginity testers accept bribes from the girls they are testing. Community members often believe that girls pay virginity testers in order for them to be declared virgins whilst they are not virgins. Girls are believed to hide this money in the underwear when they go in for testing and when the virginity tester sees the money she knows what to do. However, virginity testers refuted these claims, further arguing that a girl does not even come in for testing with her underwear on. None of the participants reported having experienced that. Participants raised their concerns about such claims, arguing that it jeopardizes and devalues the practice of virginity testing. Surprisingly, the findings also show that, although virginity testers are accused of accepting bribes from girls, there are cases reported whereby community members attempt to bribe virginity testers to fake their findings.

Lack of commitment to the practice was observed from both parents and girls being tested. It was reported that as much as parents like their children to be tested for virginity, they seem to be distancing themselves. They have left the entire burden on the testers' shoulders. According to participants, parents are expected to be present each time the testing is being conducted; however, they do not come. The presence of parents was recommended so that a parent can see what is being tested and even if one's child has lost virginity, the parent can be called in to see that damage.

It is not only parents who are distancing themselves, but some girls are also reported to show lack of commitment. The following behaviours have been described as indications for lack of commitment: coming late for testing, coming to the venue but avoiding to be tested, and also dropping out. In other instances, girls are reported to leave their homes as if they are coming for testing, but when they get to the venue, they never go inside. At home parents will think they have been tested, whilst they have not. Since virginity testers are inside the house and busy testing, they will not know who has not tested. They only know those who have been tested because they keep records.

Participants reported that those girls who are being pushed by their family members to come for testing are the ones who often dodge the test. As a result parents will blame virginity testers should they discover that their child is no longer a virgin. They will fight with the testers saying that they did not do their job properly.

In order to protect themselves and their job, virginity testers started using registers whereby they record details for each and every girl who gets tested on the day. In cases where parents come with complaints and looking for clarifications, virginity testers take out the register and show it to parents for clarification.

Findings also indicated high rates of drop-outs among older girls. Participants reported having few older girls; most of the girls involved in the practice are below age 18. Other girls are reported to just drop out without even being tested negative for virginity. Some girls would come to a virginity tester and report to have lost their virginity whereas they have not had sexual intercourse. Virginity testers believe that girls who are planning to become sexually active often deceive them with the intention of getting the tester's reaction. For that reason, it is a virginity tester's responsibility to ensure that what the girl is reporting is actually genuine.

Participants pointed out that although they have monthly meetings with girls whereby they discuss ways that girls can use to preserve their virginity status, girls are found to often do the opposite. Virginity testers largely felt that most girls give up their virginity to people who do not even deserve it. They just let go of something they have preserved for so long without even thoroughly evaluating whom they are giving it to. This is very disappointing for virginity testers, yet they believe it is beyond their control.

Having mentioned that virginity testing is meant to prevent girls from getting diseases such as HIV and also to prevent unplanned pregnancies, the findings revealed that at times virginity testers believe that girls engage in risky behaviours that put their health at risk, while trying to maintain their virginity status. Some of these behaviours increase the likelihood of getting infected with HIV. Findings showed that since girls know that penetrative sex can lead to loss of virginity, therefore they opt for anal sex; with a belief that virginity testers cannot detect that they are sexually active. Yet, this kind of behaviour is believed to increase chances of HIV infections and other sexually transmitted diseases. These findings are in line with findings from previous studies (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001; Le Roux, 2006). The literature has highlighted that as much as virginity testing is aiming to fight the spread of HIV/AIDS and unwanted pregnancies, but it may create new health risks. The fear of failing a virginity test and being mocked by other peers causes girls to engage in activities that put them at increased risk for all manner of sexual health problems (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001; Le Roux, 2006).

Le Roux (2006) found out that other girls have gone to an extent whereby they insert pieces of freshly cut meat into their vaginas in order to make their vaginas appear “tight”. This is also comparable to current findings where some of the participants admitted having seen girls trying to deceive them by inserting meat pieces. In most cases where girls get caught, they try to mislead testers by saying they have piles. Results further reveals that these girls do not only insert meat pieces, but they also use very dangerous substances such as alum, so to make their vaginal openings look tighter.

According to the testers, these kinds of activities may have very serious health implications, which girls are not aware of. Findings further revealed that these kinds of risky activities have actually caused the society to doubt the practice of virginity testing. It is indirectly endangering and devaluing the effect of virginity testing. Despite that, virginity testers were very confident to report that regardless of what girls may insert to fake virginity, they cannot be misled by such lies and dishonesty. They felt that it is very easy to see when the eye has been broken, regardless of what one has used.

As indicated in the literature, sexual abuse is prevalent in South Africa and perpetrators often target virgins and/or young girls. Virginity testing is believed to curb cases of sexual abuse (Mdletshe, 2012). In communities where child rape is prevalent, as in many in KwaZulu-Natal, and where deeply entrenched silences surround most matters related to sex, virginity testers are playing a vital role in identifying and managing such problems (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001). Virginity testers in the current study admitted to have reported having identified many sexual abuse cases through virginity testing and actively referring those cases to the appropriate authorities.

LeClerc-Madlala (2001) argues that although there is no formal governmental or cultural organisation managing virginity testing, the practice enjoys and acknowledges the kind of support offered by the government. For example, the provincial health department of KwaZulu-Natal is reported to be actively involved in assuring that proper health measures are taken during virginity testing by providing

rubber gloves for testers and facilitating workshops to educate testers about female reproductive anatomy (LeClerc-Madlala, 2001). However, the findings from the current study revealed the opposite. Lack of material resources was one of the major concerns reported by participants in the present study. Virginity testers largely reported that they do not have sufficient resources required to carry out the practice of virginity testing which includes transport and materials used for testing, such as gloves, mats, pillows and soap. Although the municipality always makes promises to provide them with basic necessities, those promises are never fulfilled, which contributes or worsens their working conditions. However, they still believe and hope that the government will intervene in ensuring that their basic needs are met in order for the practice to run smoothly.

Similarity was observed across interviews in terms of positive experiences. Participants commonly felt that virginity testing plays a vital role in the fight against new HIV infections among young girls. It also prevents unplanned pregnancies. Virginity testers felt that virginity testing delays penetrative sex, thereby delaying unwanted pregnancies. Basically it prevents girls from engaging in risky sexual behaviours. Virginity testers pointed out that virginity testing is important for self-respect and dignity for girls. If a girl is no longer a virgin she holds no value; boys do not show her the same respect as they do for virgins, which further disqualifies her as a prospective marriage partner. Similarly, Mhlongo, (2009), reported that virgins are more valuable than non-virgins. According to Mhlongo (2009), it is regarded as a shame for a girl to fall pregnant while she is a teenager and that minimizes chances of that person getting married because no one will want to marry her. Girls who are

no longer virgins are also not allowed to attend traditional ceremonies that are meant for virgins, they are treated the same as older women who are sexually active.

Virginity testers largely believe that the actual virginity testing is a minor part of a greater educational effort that is considered in virginity testing (Scorgie, 2002). As part of the fight against unplanned pregnancies and/or risky behaviours among young girls, virginity testers in the current study highlighted that they do not only focus on examining girls for virginity but they also offer lessons in traditional crafts as well as traditional music. This helps to keep girls busy and away from bad behaviours. This is also similar to Scorgie's (2002) findings that argue that the promotion of virginity in this manner is part of a larger programme to revive vanishing cultural practices (notably gendered) while keeping girls busy and away from boys. Through these meetings, girls who take part in these activities get an opportunity to learn new skills, make new friends, and to be a part of a network of young women doing things together, which helps to avoid unwelcomed pregnancies and HIV infections (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001; Scorgie, 2002).

5.3 Conclusion

The study managed to shed light on the perspectives of virginity testers. From the study, one is able to understand the kind of experiences virginity testers come across in the process of virginity testing. While virginity testing is seen by testers as an effective tool for prevention of pregnancy and HIV/AIDS infections in rural areas, rape has become a big problem. While promoting virginity testing, the society should also consider issues related to the safety and security of the young girls. Although virginity testing is aimed at trying to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS infections, but it is

indirectly putting girls at risk of getting HIV through sexual abuse. Findings revealed that girls are likely to engage in behaviours that could put them at double risk of health problems. A decline in teenage pregnancy has been reported, which basically highlights the effectiveness of virginity testing in that specific area. Previous studies have shown that virginity testing is gender insensitive, it seem to place the entire sexual responsibility on the shoulders of women, while treating men as free agents. Prevention programmes should also play a big role and young boys should also be encouraged to abstain from sex. Not only girls' safety is of concern but virginity testers are also not safe as a result of threats they receive from opponents of virginity testing.

5.5 Recommendations

A common complaint was raised about lack of financial support from the government. Therefore, it is recommended that government and sponsors support virginity testing financially, so that secure places for conducting virginity testing will be built and their basic needs be met. It is further recommended that educational programmes should be made available in schools and media to teach about the importance of virginity testing. It should also emphasize consistent condom use for those who are already sexually active or those who have lost virginity.

There is a need for facilities that offer counselling for those who have lost their virginity, especially for sexually abused cases.

A common complaint was raised by respondents with regards to their safety as virginity testers. Future research should focus on how to ensure safety for virginity testers.

Having mentioned that respondents reported lack of involvement from parents, there should be more parental involvement in the sexual behaviour of adolescents in terms of improved communication between the parent and the child which will help the child make informed decisions about sexual matters.

Respondents felt that it is important for young girls to be protected from rape. Future research should focus on security and privacy, focusing on factors that contribute to the rape of virgins after virginity testing ceremonies and try and come up with solutions of how to deal with the rape perpetrators.

Research should also be undertaken on boys' virginity testing considering the fact that the focus has been mainly directed on girls. Focusing only on girls' virginity testing and neglecting boys does not solve all problems South Africa is facing including rape, HIV/AIDS and teenage pregnancies. Sexual transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS and teenage pregnancies are mostly acquired through the sexual meeting of a male and a female. Most instances of rape come from the male side and boys also take the initiative as far as love life is concerned. That is why it is necessary that boys should also be tested.

Given the fact that there is high support for virginity testing and that young girls reported to undergo the test voluntarily, human rights activists should reconsider the banning of the custom and work together with supporters of virginity testing in trying to come up with a solution of how best to conduct the test without infringing the rights of children.

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KwaDlangezwa

3886

30 August 2013

Contact: 078 659 99193

Email: zkunenez@gmail.com

APPENDICES



Dear Community Leader,

Re: Exploring experiences of virginity testers in Mtubatuba area, KwaZulu-Natal

I am Zama Kunene, a Psychology Master's student at the University of Zululand. As part of the course requirement I have to conduct a study titled exploring the experiences of virginity testers in Mtubatuba area, KwaZulu-Natal. I would like to ask for your permission to conduct the study in your area. The details about the study are provided below.

Virginity testing is a very old traditional practice that has been running over the years in different cultures. Virginity testing emphasizes total abstinence from sexual intercourse. Many people believe that through emphasizing virginity testing, the country can win the fight against spread of HIV. Apart from the custom being criticized by the law, but there seems to be critics or challenges directed towards virginity testers that however remain unreported. Such critics or challenges have a potential to indirectly destroy the custom if they are left unreported and unattended. The current research is aiming to investigate the experiences encountered by virginity testers, and how they affect them. It will further determine whether there is a difference between challenges encountered in township versus rural areas. It is also part of the study to determine whether the experiences encountered affect the effectiveness of virginity testing.

Participation in the study is completely voluntary; a person is allowed to withdraw from the study at any time if she desire to do so without giving any reasons. To ensure confidentiality, no identification of names is required. In case where one may experience emotional distress as a result of participating in the present study, arrangements will be made for that particular person to get psychological assistance.

Yours Faithfully

Zama Kunene (Miss).



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30 August 2013

Contact: 078 659 99193

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Sawubona Mholi womphakathi,

Ukuhlolwa kwesipiliyoni sabahloli bezintombi endaweni yaseMtubatuba, KwaZulu-Natal

Igama lami nginguZama Kunene, ngingumfundi eNyuvesi yakwaZulu ngenza izifundo zobuchwepheshe benqondo. Njengengxenywe yezidingo zokufunda kwami ngenza ucwaningo olusihloko sithi: Ukuhlolwa kwesipiliyoni sabahloli bezintombi endaweni yaseMtubatuba, KwaZulu-Natal. Ngicela imvume yakho ukuthi ngenze lolu cwaningo endaweni yakho. Imininingwane mayelana nocwaningo inikeziwe ngezansi.

Ukuhlolwa kwezintombi isiko elidala elilokhu laqalwa ukwenziwa eminyakeni eminingi eyedlule lenziwa emasikwen amaningi. Isiko lokuhlolwa kwezintombi ligcizelela ukuzithiba ocansini. Abantu abaningi bakholelwa ekutheni ngokugcizelela isiko lokuhlolwa kwezintombi, isizwe singakakwazi ukunqoba ukulwa nokusabalala kwesandulela nculazi. Ngaphandle kokugxekwa kwalelisiko ngabezomthetho, kubukeka sengathi lelisiko linezinselelo elibhekene nazo kodwa ezigcina zingaziwa emphakathini. Izinselelo ezifana nalezo zingaba nomthelela ekubulaleni lelisiko uma zigcina ngokungabikwa nangokungabhekwa. Lolucwaningo luhlela ukuphenya mayelana nezinselelo abahloli bezintombi abahlangabezana nazo, nokuthi azinawo yini umthelela omubi ekuhlolwen kwezintombi. Ucwaningo luzoqhubeka lubheke ukuthi ngabe ukhona yini umehluko phakathi kwezinselelo abahloli ahlangabezana nazo ezindaweni zasemakhaya nakulezo ezisemadolobheni. Kuyingxenywe yalolucwaningo futhi ukubheka ukuba ngabe lezinselelo abahloli bezintombi ababhekana nazo aziliphazamisi yini isiko lokuhlolwa kwezintombi. Ukuba ingxenywe yalolu cwaningo akuphoqelekile, uvumelekile ukuhoxa noma ingasiphi isikhathi uma uzizwa ungasathandi ukuqhubeka ngaphandle kokuthi uze unikeze isizathu. Uma kwenzeka ubhekana nengcindezi ngenxa yokuba ingxenywe yalolucwaningo, kuzokwenziwa izinhlelo zokuthi uthole usizo lwezenqondo.

Yimina Ozithobayo

Zama Kunene (Nksz)



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30 August 2013

Contact: 078 659 99193

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Dear Participant,

Re: Exploring experiences of virginity testers in Mtubatuba area, KwaZulu-Natal

I am Zama Kunene, a Psychology Master's student at the University of Zululand. As part of the course requirement I have to conduct a study titled: exploring the experiences of virginity testers in Mtubatuba area, KwaZulu-Natal.

Virginity testing is a very old traditional practice that has been running over the years in different cultures. Virginity testing emphasizes total abstinence from sexual intercourse. Many people believe that through emphasizing virginity testing, the country can win the fight against spread of HIV. Apart from the custom being criticized by the law, but there seems to be critics or challenges directed to virginity testers that remain unreported. Such critics or challenges have a potential to indirectly destroy the custom if they are left unreported and unattended. The current research is aiming to investigate the experiences encountered by virginity testers, and how they affect them. It will further determine whether there is a difference between challenges encountered in township versus rural areas. It is also part of the study to determine whether the experiences encountered affect the effectiveness of virginity testing.

Participation in the study is completely voluntary; you are allowed to withdraw from the study at any time if you desire to do so without giving any reasons. To ensure confidentiality, no identification of names is required. In case where you may experience emotional distress as a result of participating in the present study you are more than welcome to contact the researcher to refer for psychological assistance.

Yours Faithfully

Zama Kunene (Miss).



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30 August 2013

Contact: 078 659 99193

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Sawubona Mbambiqhaza,

Ukuhlolwa kwesipiliyoni sabahloli bezintombi endaweni yaseMtubatuba, KwaZulu-Natal

Igama lami nginguZama Kunene, ngiyisitshudeni saseNyuvesi yakwaZulu ngenza izifundo zobuchwepheshe benqondo. Njengengxenywe yezidingo zokufunda kwami ngenza ucwaningo olusihloko sithi: Ukuhlolwa kwesipiliyoni sabahloli bezintombi endaweni yaseMtubatuba, KwaZulu-Natal.

Ukuhlolwa kwezintombi isiko elidala elilokhu laqalwa ukwenziwa eminyakeni eminingi eyedlule lenziwa emasikwen amaningi. Isiko lokuhlolwa kwezintombi ligcizelela ukuzithiba ocansini. Abantu abaningi bakholelwa ekutheni ngokugcizelela isiko lokuhlolwa kwezintombi, isizwe singakakwazi ukunqoba ukulwa nokusabalala kwesandulela nculazi. Ngaphandle kokugxekwa kwalelisiko ngabezomthetho, kubukeka sengathi lelisiko linezinselelo elibhekene nazo kodwa ezigcina zingaziwa emphakathini. Izinselelo ezifana nalezo zingaba nomthelela ekubulaleni lelisiko uma zigcina ngokungabikwa nangokungabhekwa. Lolucwaningo luhlela ukuphenya mayelana nezininselelo abahloli bezintombi abahlangabezana nazo, nokuthi azinawo yini umthelela omubi ekuhlolweni kwezintombi. Ucwaningo luzoqhubeka lubheke ukuthi ngabe ukhona yini umehluko phakathi kwezininselelo abahloli ahlangabezana nazo ezindaweni zasemakhaya nakulezo ezisemadolobheni. Kuyingxenywe yalolucwaningo futhi ukubheka ukuba ngabe lezinselelo abahloli bezintombi ababhekana nazo aziliphazamisi yini isiko lokuhlolwa kwezintombi

Ukuba ingxenywe yalolu cwaningo akuphoqelekile, uvumelekile ukuhoxa noma ingasiphi isikhathi uma uzizwa ungasathandi ukuqhubeka ngaphandle kokuthi uze unikeze isizathu. Uma kwenzeka ubhekana nengcindezi ngenxa yokuba ingxenywe yalolucwaningo, kuzokwenziwa izinhlelo zokuthi uthole usizo lwezenqondo.

Yimina Ozithobayo

Zama Kunene (Nksz).

INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

(Participant)

Project Title: Exploring experiences of virginity testers in Mtubatuba area, KwaZulu-Natal.

Zama Zakhona Kunene from the Department of Psychology, University of Zululand has requested my permission to participate in the above-mentioned research project.

The nature and the purpose of the research project and of this informed consent declaration have been explained to me in a language that I understand.

I am aware that:

1. The purpose(s) of the research project is:
 - To explore the experiences encountered by virginity testers, both positive and negative experiences.
 - To find out under which circumstances do virginity testers do their work.
 - To determine whether there is a difference between experiences encountered by virginity testers in township than in rural areas.
 - To determine whether those experiences have a negative or positive effect on the effectiveness of virginity testing.
2. The University of Zululand has given ethical clearance to this research project and I have seen/ may request to see the clearance certificate.
3. By participating in this research project I will be contributing towards educating the community about the problems experienced during virginity testing that may in future destabilize the practice. As a virginity tester I will get a chance to unpack the experiences that people do not know of. This is necessary in order to create or increase awareness among the community as whole as to how their reactions and critics may affects the custom. It will also determine under which circumstances virginity testers do their work.
4. I will participate in the project by engaging in face-to-face individual interviews with the researcher. The interviews will be conducted in the venue preferred by the participant, where the participant will feel comfortable to share the information. Open-ended questions will be asked. I would be asked to share my experiences as virginity testers, including both positive and negative experiences. The follow up questions will be asked in order to get deeper understanding on the information provided. The interviews will be conducted in isiZulu. The interviews will be tape-recorded with the consent from the participant. The conversation between the researcher and the participant will be recorded by the researcher using a tape recorder while the interview is in process. In addition, the background information (e.g. age, religion, level of education and occupation) of the participant will be recorded.
5. My participation is entirely voluntary and should I at any stage wish to withdraw from participating further, I may do so without any negative consequences.

6. I will not be compensated for participating in the research, but my out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed.
7. There may be risks associated with my participation in the project. I am aware that:
 - The researcher will get permission from the community leaders to conduct the study. Accordingly, a letter explaining the research purpose(s) will be sent to each community leader for approval before commencement of data collection process.
 - The informed consent will be issued to each participant to sign if she agrees to participate. Each participant will receive a letter asking for participation in the study, which will address the purpose(s) of the study.
 - The consent form illustrates that in case participants may experience emotional distress as a result of participating in the present study; they will be given contact details to self-refer to relevant sites or may contact the researcher for such referral.
 - Confidentiality will be highly ensured. The study will not require any identification of names. Participants will be requested to only supply their age, gender, level of education, religion, place where they live and where they conduct virginity testing. This information is not sufficient for the identification of individual participants.
8. The researcher intends publishing the research results in the form of a dissertation as a fulfillment of Master's Degree in Psychology. However, confidentiality and anonymity of records will be maintained and that my name and identity will not be revealed to anyone who has not been involved in the conduct of the research.
9. I will not receive feedback regarding the results obtained during the study.
10. Any further questions that I might have concerning the research or my participation will be answered by Miss Z.Z. Kunene. Contact details are as follows: **0786599193 or zkunenez@gmail.com**
11. By signing this informed consent declaration I am not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.
12. A copy of this informed consent declaration will be given to me, and the original will be kept on record.

I,have read the above information / confirm that the above information has been explained to me in a language that I understand and I am aware of this document's contents. I have asked all questions that I wished to ask and these have been answered to my satisfaction. I fully understand what is expected of me during the research.

I have not been pressurised in any way and I voluntarily agree to participate in the above-mentioned project.

.....

Participant's signature

.....

Date

RESEARCHER'S DECLARATION

I,declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to

.....

- requested him/her to ask questions if anything was unclear and I have answered them as best I can
- I am satisfied that s/he sufficiently understands all aspects of the research so as to make an informed decision on whether or not to participate.
- The conversation took place in isiZulu / English
- I used/did not use an interpreter

.....

Researcher's signature

.....

Date

IFOMU LOKUZIBOPHEZELA

(obambe iqhaza)

Isihloko socwaningo: Ukuhlolwa kwesipiliyoni sabahloli bezintombi endaweni yaseMtubatuba, KwaZulu-Natal

UZama Zakhona Kunene ovela ku Mnyango wezobuchwepheshe benqondo, University of Zululand ube nesicelo semvume yokuzibandakanya kulolucwaningo olulotshwe ngenhla.

Imvelaphi kanye nenhloso yalolucwaningo, nalolu lwazi nophawu lokwamukela ukuzibophezela ngichazeliwe ngalo ngolimi engilwaziyo.

Ngiyakuqonda ukuthi:

1. Izinhloso zalolucwaningo uku yilezi ezilandelayo:
 - Luhlela ukuphenya mayelana nezinsalelo abahloli bezintombi abahlangabezana nazo, okuhlanganisa ezinhle nezimbi. Luzohlola nokuthi lezinsalelo azinawo yini umthelela omubi esikweni kuhlolwen kwezintombi.
 - Ukuthola ukuthi iziphi izimo abahloli bezintombi abasebenza ngaphansi kwazo kulomsebenzi wabo wokuhlolwa kwezintombi.
 - Ucwanoingo luzoqhubeka lubheke ukuthi ngabe ukhona yini umehluko phakathi kwezinsalelo abahloli ahlangebezana nazo ezindaweni zasemakhaya nakulezo ezisemadolobheni.
 - Kuyingxanye yalolucwaningo futhi ukubheka ukuba ngabe lezinsalelo abahloli bezintombi ababhekana nazo aziliphazamisi yini isiko lokuhlolwa kezintombi
2. Inyuvesi yakwaZulu inikezele ngemvume kubenzi balolu cwanoingo ukuba benze loluhlelo futhi ngiyibonile leyomvume/ngingacela ukubona isitifiketi semvume.
3. Ngokubamba iqhaza kulolucwaningo ngizonikezela iqhaza ngokufundiseni umphakathi mayelana nezinkinga abahloli bezintombi ababhekana nazo ezingaba nomthelela omubi ekuqhutshweni kwalelisiko ngomuso. Njengomhloli wezintombi ngizothola ithuba lokuthi ngikhulume ngezinkinga esibhekana nazo kodwa abanye abantu abangazi ngazo. Lokhu kubalulekile ukuze sizokwakha noma sikhulise ulwazi emphakathini wonkana mayelana nokuthi imibono kanye nokugxekwa kwesiko kungalibulala kanjani. Lolucwaningo luzobuye lusize ekutholeni ukuthi abahloli bezintombi basebenza ngaphansi kwaziphi izimo.
4. Ngizobamba iqhaza kulolucwaningo ngokuthi ngihlanganyele ubuso nobuso ezingxoxweni nomcwanoingi. Izingxoxo zizobanjelwa endaweni ekhethwe imina, lapho engizozizwa ngikhululekile khona ukunikezela ngolwazi lwami. Umcwanoingi uhlele ukubuza imibuzo evulelekile. Ngizocelwa ukuba ngabelane nomcwanoingi mayelana nesipiliyoni sami njengomhloli wezintombi, okuhlanganisa okuhle nokubi. Imibuzo eqhubekayo izobuzwa ukuze umcwanoingi ezothola ukuqonda okunzulu mayelana nolwazi oluzobe lunikeziwe. Izingxoxo zizokwenziwa ngolimi lwesiZulu. Izingxoxo zizoqoshwa uma umhlanganyeli eyinikezile imvume yalokho. Umcwanoingi uzosebenzisa isiqophamazwi ukuqopha ingxoxo phakathi kwakhe nomhlanganyeli ngesikhathi ingxoxo iqhubeka.

5. Ekuzibandakanyeni kwami angizukubheka nzuzo futhi akukho lapho engizotholakala ngihoxa ocwaningweni, umakwenzeka ngeke kube nemiphumela emibi ocwaningeni.
 6. Mina angizukunxephezela ngokuzibandakanya kwami kulolucwaningo, kodwa izindleko ephume kwelami iphakethe zizokhokhelwa.
 7. Kungenzeka kube nezimo ezibucayi ekuzibandakanyeni kwami kulolucwaningo , ngiyakuqonda ukuthi:
 - Lowo owumcwaningi uzothola imvume yokwenza lolucwaningi kulowo owumholi wendawo. Ngakho-ke incwadi echaza kabanzi ngenhloso yalolucwaningo izothunyelwa kumholi womphathi ukuze anikezekele ngegunya ngaphambi kokuba kuqalwe ukuqoqwa kolwazi mayelana nocwaningo.
 - Ifomu lokuzibophezela lizonikezelwa kumhlanganyeli ngamunye ukuba ayishicilele uma kuwukuthi uyavumelana nokuba ingxenye yocwaningo. Umhlanganyeli ngamunye uzonikezwa incwadi emcelayo ukuba abe yingxenye yocwaningo, leyo ncwadi izobe ichaza kabanzi mayelana nezinhlalo zocwaningo.
 - Uma kwenzeka Umhlanganyeli ehlangabezana nengcindenzi ngenxa yokuba ingxenye yalolucwaningo, uzonikwezwa imininingwane yezindawo angazithinta ukuze athole usizo noma athintane nomcwaningi mayelana nokuthola ukusizakala.
 - Ukwethembeka kuzobe kuqinisekisiwe. Ucwaningo ngeke ludinge ukuqagulwa kwamagama abahlanganyeli. Abahlanganyeli bazocelwa ukuba banikezele ngemininingwane ephathelene ngeminyaka, ubulili, izinga lemfundo, inkolo, indawo lapho abahlala khona kanye nendawo lapho abahlolela khona izintombi. Lemininingwane ayanele ukuthi kungaqagulwa ukuthi bawobani.
 8. Umphequluli uzoshicilela imiphumela yalolucwaningo njengombhalo wokuphuthula izifundo zakhe zemfundo ephakeme kwezobuchwepheshe benqondo. Nokho, ubhalomfihlo, nofihlo-gama lwemininingwane izobe igciniwe nokuthi igama lami nobutho kwami angeke kubonakaliswe kumona yimuphi umuntu obengayona inhlango yocwaningo.
 9. Angeke ngiyamukele imiphumela/ngizoyamukela imiphumela emayelana nemiphumela etholakale ngesikhathi sesifundo.
 10. Eminye imibuzo ephathelene nalolucwaningo noma mayelana nokuzibandakanya kwami ingaphendulwa nguNksz Z.Z. Kunene. Imininingwane yakhe yokuxhumana: **0786599193 or zkunenez@gmail.com**
 11. Ngokusayina lamaformu angiqubuli ubuthi noma amalungelo kwezomthetho
 12. Ikhophi enolwazi oluphelele nophawu lokwamukela ukuzibophezela kwami ngizonikezwa, bese okungungqo kuyagcinwa.
- Minangilufundile loku okubhalwe ngenhla/ ngiyavuma ukuthi lolulwazi olungenhla ngichazelwe ngolimi lwami engilugqondayo futhi ngiyakuqonda okuqukethwe nokubhaliwe. Ngiyibuze yonke imibuzo engifunayo ukuyibuza, futhi yaphendulwa ngendlela engenelisayo. Ngiyayiqonda kahle ukuba kulindelekile ini kimi kulolucwaningo.

Angiphqwanga nakancane ukubamba iqhaza kulokhu kulolucwaningo

Isishicilelo kobambe iqhaza

Usuku

UKUZIBOPHEZELA KOMCWANINGI

Minangiyavuma
ukuthi

- Ngichazile ulwazi olukuleli bhuku ku
.....
- Ngicelile ukuthi kubuzwe imibuzo uma kukhona la kungaqonakali khona ngizoyiphendula ngobuqotho
- Nginelisekile ukuthi u-----uzwile indlela lolucwaningo oluzosebenza ngayo, lokhu okumenze wathatha isinqumo sokuthi alibambe yini iqhaza noma cha
- Ingxoxo yennziwa ngesiZulu
- Ngimsebenzisile noma/ angimsebenzisanga utolika

Isishicilelo somcwaningi

Usuku

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

ResearchTitle: Exploring experiences of virginity testers in Mtubatuba area, KwaZulu-Natal

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. **Age:** _____ (years)
 2. **Gender:** _____
 3. **Religion:** _____
 4. **Level of Education:** _____
 5. **Occupation:** _____
 6. **Where do you live?** _____
 7. **What is the name of your virginity testing centre?**

 8. **How did you get appointed as a virginity tester?**

-

MAIN INTERVIEW QUESTION

1. Could you please tell me about your experiences as a virginity tester.
(Probes)

UHLELOMBUZO (Zulu version)

Isihloko socwaningo: Ukuhlolwa kwesipiliyoni sabahloli bezintombi endaweni yase Mtubatuba, KwaZulu-Natal

IMINININGWANE NGawe

1. Iminyaka yakho yobudala: _____
2. Ubulili bakho: _____
3. Inkolo yakho: _____
4. Izinga lakho lemfundo: _____
5. Umsebenzi wakho: _____
6. Uhlala kuphi? _____
7. Yini igama lendawo lapho uhlolela khona?

8. Wahlonzwa kanjan ukuba ube ngumhloli wezintombi?

UMBUZO OMKHULU

1. Ngicela ungitshela kabanzi ngesipiliyoni sakho njengomhloli wezintombi.
(ukungena ugxile)