

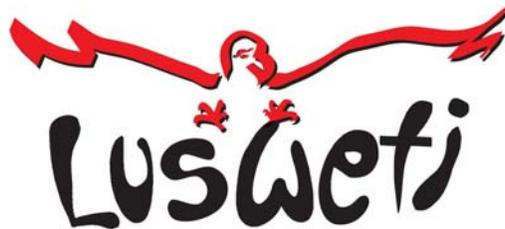


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Multiple and Concurrent Sexual Partnerships in Swaziland

**A Target Audience Research Report
September 2008**



Health Communication
for Change



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Acronyms and Abbreviation

AIDS	: Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
CSC	: Communication for Social Change
HIV	: Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
MCP	: Multiple Concurrent Partners
SADC	: Southern African Development Community
SHAPE	: Schools Health and Population Education
STI	: Sexually transmitted infections
TAMDR	: Target Audience Message Development Research

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Executive summary

This report is based on a study conducted as part of *Luswet*'s target audience formative research process to inform its intervention on Multiple Concurrent Partnerships (MCP). The target audience included men and women from 16 to 49 years of age. These research participants were divided into groups with age brackets of 16–19 years, 20–29 years, 30–39 years, and 40–49 years. The groups were further divided into people who are involved in MCP: hawkers, truck drivers, soldiers, factory and seasonal workers, and others. This research will inform HIV prevention interventions aimed at reducing multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships for the next five years.

Key Findings of the Study

Generally, the target audience felt that MCP are 'bad' as they constitute promiscuous behaviour – even though certain social and cultural norms and values prescribe that men have a right to have more than one sexual partner. The research showed that both men and women are involved in MCP and it emerged that MCP are seen to contribute to the spread of HIV and AIDS. According to participants, many people in MCP – especially men often – often insist on not using condoms and their partners – generally women – feel powerless to negotiate for safer sex.

Dissatisfaction in relationships emerged as one of the major reasons that people become involved in MCP. Respondents said there is often limited or no sexual pleasure and a lack of communication in their primary relationships, and this leads them to seek additional partners. Poverty and materialism were also identified as factors that drive people to have multiple partners – where poverty-stricken people exchange sex for money or material goods. According to respondents other people exchange sex for luxuries rather than necessities and some people become involved in MCP as it gives them elevated status among their peers.

The research identified culture and certain social norms as major contributors to the practice of MCP. Culture promotes male dominance and looks up on men who have more than one partner as virile and 'manly'. This culture of male superiority also leads to dissatisfaction with partners and bitterness in relationships.

Alcohol emerged as a major contributing factor to multiple sexual partners. People often have sexual encounters because they are drunk and their judgement is impaired.

Mobile workers, such as truck drivers, were identified as the group most involved in MCP. The mobility associated with this work can lead to individuals feeling insecure and not part of any settled community and being away from family creates an opportunity for people to have other relationships. Because of this, mobile workers tend to find partners wherever they go.

Affluent people – often celebrities – are also active participants in MCP. Respondents said these people use their status and money to attract multiple partners.

1. Background

Lusweti Institute for Health Development Communication is a non-profit organisation based in Swaziland, which implements Communication for Social Change (CSC) programmes in partnership with local and international organisations. Lusweti came into existence in 2002 as a programme implemented by Schools Health and Population Education (SHAPE) and started operating independently in 2008. Lusweti's CSC programme, which includes multimedia edutainment, advocacy and social mobilisation, is part of a Soul City Institute regional initiative in sub-Saharan Africa that includes eight other countries. These countries are Mozambique, Lesotho, Botswana, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa.

The Soul City Regional Programme (SCRP) harnesses the power of mass media to influence social change. In the six years of its existence, Lusweti has adapted Soul City print, radio and television material and distributed or broadcast it nationally in every region of Swaziland. The 2007 independent evaluation study of the SCRCP indicates a remarkable impact on behaviour change among the Swazi population due to the influence of Lusweti programmes.

1.1 A Regional Intervention on MCP

Among Lusweti's immediate focus areas within the next five years is multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships. As this is an HIV driver across the region, MCP will be addressed in all the SCRCP countries. Each country will undertake a localised MCP campaign simultaneously.

This initiative was informed by the SADC Think Tank meeting in Maseru, Lesotho, in May 2006 where multiple and concurrent partnerships by men and women with low consistent condom use, and in the context of low levels of male circumcision were identified as key drivers of the HIV pandemic in southern Africa. Male attitudes and behaviours, intergenerational sex, gender and sexual violence, stigma, lack of openness, untreated viral STIs and lack of consistent condom use in long-term multiple and concurrent partnerships were identified as significant contributing drivers of the epidemic. The report concluded that these factors, in the context of high population

mobility, wealth inequalities, cultural factors and gender inequality, explain the high HIV prevalence in the region.

Another process, a SADC Regional Consultation on Social Change Communication for HIV Prevention was held in Swaziland in October 2006. The meeting recommended, among other things, that sexual partner reduction in groups that engage in MCP practices be a key focus for CSC interventions at country and regional levels for the next five years.

A collective effort on MCP will facilitate regionally harmonised messaging. The regional message will be linked to locally-relevant initiatives. The initiatives will be designed in part around the results of the survey published here. The message development research also includes literature reviews, and other stakeholder consultations.

1.2 Objectives of the Message-development Research

The focus of the research has been to:

- find out the audience's understanding of MCP
- find out the audience's needs, feelings, perceptions and attitudes around the topic
- establish the audience's behaviour regarding MCP
- find out what social norms and practices impact MCP and how
- assess the barriers to change regarding the practice of MCP.

2. Methodology

2.1 Age Segments

MCP are most prevalent among people from age 16 to 49 years, therefore the study sampled people in that age group. The 16 to 49 year age group was segmented into four different age categories: 16–19, 20–29, 30–39 and 40–49 years. Since this is a qualitative study where focus group discussion was one of the techniques used to obtain information, age segmentation of the groups was designed to facilitate free expression and eliminate the self-censorship that often occurs in groups with large age differentials.

2.2 Sampling Definitions

As the study identified, defined and sampled different groups of people, the most appropriate technique was sought to interview each sample population in order to bring about the most uninhibited and useful information sharing. The techniques used with each sample category are discussed below where each sample is defined.

- **The general public:** Participants from the general public were recruited on the basis of their age group, the area where they lived and their gender. Focus group discussions were used to obtain information from these participants. A total of 16 groups were selected from the general public:

Table 1 General Public Group Segmentation

Age group (in years)	Sex	Area classification	Number of groups	Total
16–19	Female	Urban and rural	2	4
	Male	Urban and rural	2	
20–29	Female	Urban and rural	2	4
	Male	Urban and rural	2	
30–39	Female	Urban and rural	2	4
	Male	Urban and rural	2	
40–49	Female	Urban and rural	2	4
	Male	Urban and rural	2	
Overall total				16

- **People in Concurrent Partnerships:** this group was made up of people who had more than one partner at the time of the survey. A recruitment profile identified people involved in MCP. The study segmented this group in terms of region, sex and income. The income based segments were categorised as follows:

It was not easy to find people who fitted each of these design segments – only six people were identified and most of them were from the same region. This eliminated the possibility of examining the influences exerted by income, region and sex.

Table 2 People Involved in MCP In-Depth Interviews

Income bracket	Sex	Number in-depth interviews
Unemployed to E1 000.00	Male and female	2
+E1 000.00 to E5 000.00	Male and female	2
+E5 000.00 to E10 000.00	Male and female	2
+E10 000.00 to E15 000.00	Male and female	2
+E15 000.00	Male and female	2
Overall total		10

- **Mobile group:** four major categories of mobile worker were identified for this study. Information from each of the categories was vital and the methods used to get the information varied from one group to the next.
 - Factory workers were further divided into two parts: factory workers from the Matsapha area who migrate from rural areas to find work.

Table 3 Factory Workers in In-Depth Interviews

Factory workers	Age group (in years)	Sex	Number of in-depth interviews	Total
Matsapha	20–29	male and female	2	4
	30–39	male and female	2	
Seasonal workers	20–29	male and female	2	4
	30–39	male and female	2	
Overall total				8

- **Seasonal workers** are usually employed by big companies in the sugar and pulp industries. They are called seasonal workers because they are not permanently employed but are called upon by companies to work at certain times – for example, during harvests.
- **Hawkers** travel in and out of the country to buy and sell their products. They are predominately women and as such two female hawkers were interviewed for the study.
- **Truck drivers** also travel in and out of Swaziland ferrying goods. They are predominantly male and therefore two male truck drivers were interviewed.

Table 4 Hawkets and Truck Drivers in In-Depth Interviews

Hawkets and truck drivers	Age group (in years)	Sex	Number of in-depth interviews	Total
Hawkets	20–29	female	1	2
	30–39	female	1	
Truck drivers	20–29	male	1	2
	30–39	male	1	
Overall total				4

- Research participants from the uniformed forces are members of the police force, the army and prison warders. Members of the army have a slightly different context to that of the other uniformed forces interviewed. They live in isolated camps and see their families only at certain times. This appears to make them more likely to be involved in MCP than the police or prison warders.

Table 5 Segmentation of Army Groups

Age group (in years)	Sex	Number of Focus Group Discussions
20–29	Male and female	2
30–39	Male and female	2
Total		4

2.3 Total Sample

As shown in Table 6 below, the study consisted of a total of 20 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and 18 in-depth interviews (IDIs). There were 16 FGDs done with members of the general public, four IDIs with people who are involved in multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships, eight IDIs with factory workers, two IDIs with hawkers, two IDIs with truck drivers, four FGDs with members of the army and two IDIs with 'custodians of belief systems'.

Table 6 Total Sample Groups and Interviews

Sample Group	Number of FGDs	Number of IDIs	Total number of interviews
General public	16	–	16
People involved in MCP	–	4	4
Factory workers	–	8	8
Hawkers	–	2	2
Truck drivers	–	2	2
Army	4	–	4
Custodians of belief systems	–	2	2
Totals	20	18	38

2.4 Interviewing Guides

The study used three interviewing guides to interview participants. There was a 'general public guide', which was used with members of the general public and specific groups such as truck drivers, etc. A separate guide was used to interview people involved in MCP.

2.5 Data Collection

Lusweti has a pool of external fieldworkers trained in qualitative data collection techniques who collected data for all the groups. Internal Lusweti fieldworkers facilitated groups like the army. Data collection prioritised groups drawn from the general public. These groups were completed before moving to the next group of interviews. Tape recorders were used to record the information.

2.6 Transcription and Translation

The first group discussions were transcribed within a week of data collection. The data was transcribed verbatim to avoid paraphrasing and interpretation of the data at this stage by the fieldworkers.

2.7 Analysis and Report Writing

The data was analysed thematically. Analysis commenced after all group discussions and interviews were transcribed and collated. Each category of data was analysed separately and meta-analysis was done across all the first results of the category analysis. The findings are reported in the following section according to the themes drawn out of the analysis.

3. Findings

3.1 Impressions of MCP

MCP are promiscuous

There was general consensus among people involved in FGDs and IDIs that multiple concurrent sexual partnerships are ‘not good’ and constitute promiscuity. Respondents generally said that they do not approve of MCP even given that having more than one sexual partner is a culturally acceptable practice – especially for men. Married and religious people especially felt that MCP go against their moral value systems. To illustrate this point, participants pointed out that married woman will sometimes do things for their pastors that they would not do for their husband. Leaders of religious institutions also get involved in sexual relationships with more than one partner, respondents said.

It is just bitchiness, especially these churchgoing women. You find that she doesn't bake for her husband at home but she goes to church carrying a cake tin with for the priest. She does not kneel down to her husband but she will get down on her knees when approaching the priest saying: 'this is what I baked for you Father.' Her husband at home would be dying of hunger. They don't even mind talking boldly about having more than one partner. Often you hear them say: 'I have my thing over there (meaning that she has a secret lover)...

Female 40–49 years, Urban, Lubombo

...a lot of these bad habits happen even in the churches. Promiscuity has moved to the churches. The women who have husbands are the ones who perpetrate promiscuity.

Female 40–49 years, Urban, Lubombo

Sex is rampant and unprotected

Participants generally said that ‘sex is rampant nowadays’. Females between the ages of 40 and 49 years explained that even primary school children are sexually active, which would not have been the case in previous generations. The 16 to 19 year olds also reported high levels of sexual activity among their peers. They said they often go to parties where most people are in couples and so they find partners themselves. As alcohol is usually freely available at parties, these teenagers often drink too much and then have sex with the partners they have found there. The teenagers revealed that most sexual encounters in these situations happen without protection.¹

¹ This is discussed in depth later in the report.

...Even a child in primary school is having sex now. Which is something that you would have never thought would ever happen. Not to mention those in high school...

Female 40–49 years, Urban, Lubombo

3.2 Types of Sexual Relationships

Husband and wife

When the respondents were asked what types of sexual relationships exist in their communities, they offered marriage – specifically between a man and a woman – as one type of sexual relationship.

I think of a husband and his wife

Female 20–29 years, Army

Polygamous relationships

The second type of sexual relationship participants reported in Swazi communities is a polygamous relationship. Respondents explained polygamy as a cultural practice where a man has more than one wife. They felt this practice socialises boys into thinking that it is okay to have more than one partner.

It is this polygamy that brought this. It also makes a young Swazi boy growing up in a family not to have one partner he loves as he grows up because our culture says that we can have four wives so he also continues with that.

Female 40–49 years, Urban, Lubombo

Kulamuta

As focus group discussions progressed, respondents revealed that *kulamuta* (flirting/sexual relations with an in-law) is another type of sexual relationship in Swazi communities. In *kulamuta*, a woman or man, flirts with or has sexual relations with a brother- or sister-in-law. Participants said that this practice is embedded and reinforced in Swazi culture via songs that promote *kulamuta*. One example is the song sung by young Swazi ‘maidens’ about submitting to sex with a brother-in-law.

There is this song that the maidens sing during the reed dance (respondent sings) ungiphatse kwaze kwasa ye m’lam’ wam’ (this song translates as ‘you [brother in law] touched me until the morning)

(Laughter)

For a child to be so crazy about this song which says her brother-in-law touched her all night, makes it easy her to be receptive instead of resisting moves by her brother-in-law because our culture allows brothers-in-law to have their way and please themselves with us.

Female 40–49 years, Urban, Lubombo

Intergenerational sexual relationships

Respondents identified abusive relationships as another type of relationship. They mentioned intergenerational relationships (relationships between older men and younger children and specifically between teachers and learners, as well as incest).

Female respondents from the age 20 to 49 years spoke a lot about intergenerational relationships. Participants said that these relationships happen, for example, when a child lives with a relative to be closer to school. If the child is related to the man's wife, he might take advantage and start a sexual relationship with the. Respondents said children in intergenerational relationships risk contracting HIV because the men they have sex with often have additional relationships. In teacher–learner relationships, said participants, female learners often have relationships with more than one teacher in a school at one time.

Okay let's say I take my child and send her to live with my sister. She is young and maybe the reason I am sending her there is that she will be closer to school. So my sister leaves her husband and the husband remains and makes my daughter his wife. That is not right in our communities. This country is finished, it is filthy. Nowadays men sleep with children.

Female 40–49 years, Urban, Lubombo

It is not a girl; it is a child, a small, small child. You find an old man with a bald patch down to the neck with a small child. What is that? What is he doing to her? An old man! He is going to infect her with his virus that he got from where he started with his women. He just gives her money in return.

Female 40–49 years, Urban, Siteki

It's the relationship between teachers and students yet the teacher has got a wife or girlfriend and at the same time the student has got a boyfriend."

Female 20–29 years, Rural, Shiselweni]

Rape and incest

Rape and incest were identified not as sexual relationships but as incidents or practices involving sexual intercourse. In a group of females of 40 to 49 years a woman told a story of a young man who forces one of his half-sisters to have sex with him whenever he is drunk. A group of army men reported that they were raped when they were children. These men said that a boy's first sexual experience is usually a non-consenting experience with an older female.

After that he'd have sex with his sisters when he gets home. If he doesn't get a girl on the road he'd force sex with a girl child with another surname here at home. That would be the same person who was lifting bottles on the road and the virus spreads...

Female 40–49 years, Urban, Lubombo

...if I look at it very closely, a majority of us have been raped in one way or the other. If you can find out how most of us started having sex, you'd find that we started with an older female cousin. You will find that some also started with older people and most of the time it would happen when the elders are not home. So if you'd try and find out it would come out and a majority would tell you different experiences, but it's something that we do not talk about.

Male 20–29 years, Army

Casual sexual relationships

Participants in the 16 to 19 year age category said that casual-sex relationships are common among young people of their age regardless of whether they are in or out of school. The teenagers referred to casual sexual relationships as 'flings'. They explained that a fling is when two people have sex without dating first.

I think it's things like going around having sex anyhow like...casual sex... having sex with anyone and anywhere... even with people you don't know. Let me make an example...let's say a girl that drinks (meaning alcohol)... sometimes it happens that you will end up having sex with a person, the person you are not even in love with him; you just negotiated and ended up having sex without even using a condom. In the end she gets a virus.

Female 20–29 years, Factory worker

Secret affairs

Secret affairs were named as the most prominent type of sexual relationship in Swazi communities. According to participants, men and women of all ages – married and unmarried – and those involved in intergenerational, abusive and especially casual relationships, have secret affairs.

Another thing is that of married couples where you find that the husband has got girlfriends then the wife would want to revenge by also doing the same and it ends up being a lichungechunge (string).

Female 20–29 years, Rural, Shiselweni]

Or maybe just your secret lover...you have a secret lover who approached you and proposed love to you, and you told him that you have a husband and he said no don't worry we'll do it in secret. So you go to him and say 'come by today.'

Female 30–39 years, Army

It happens that a person will sleep with different people but that person has somebody who they are steady with.

Female 20–29 years, Army

3.3. How MCP Start

Tempting situations

Analysis showed that the following theme emerged in many different aspects of group discussions and interviews. Respondents reported that people who are dissatisfied in their relationships – as a result of abuse, lack of attention, lack of fulfilment or for any other reason – generally look for another partner for solace. One way that people get into MCP is through confiding in someone of the opposite sex about their problems hoping for relief and comfort. These relationships develop into sexual relationships as the parties interact. The 29 year old respondents reported that these relationships can also start as a result of peer pressure. The way these relationships start emphasises the casual nature of the sexual relationship.

...It might happen that we visit one of our girlfriends and we find her with a friend. In order for the couple to have time and space with his girlfriend, the other two would have to come to keep each other busy. I may not love this person but somehow I have to keep her busy so as to balance the equation. The intention was not to meet her but maybe you will have sex and she will then set up another meeting and eventually date if you both want.

So you entertain her by having sex with her.

Male 20–29 male, Rural, Shiselweni

Proposals

After analysis, this finding was shown to crosscut many other findings regarding the contributory factors to MCP as well as the types of relationships existing in Swazi communities. As discussed above, people generally become involved in MCP because of frustration or dissatisfaction in an existing relationship. These relationships start when a man proposes to a woman or a woman challenges a man to propose to her.

Participants referred to various strategies used by men to lure women into relationships.

This thing is habitual. It starts innocently by proposing to girls for no particular reason. All you know is that if there is a girl next to you, you must propose love to her just for the sake of it. You can't even talk about something else apart from asking her out...

Male 20–29 years, Urban, Manzini

Nowadays there are many tools for socialising. So I can invite a girl to in my house to listen to music. ...there are many things that can bring us together nowadays compared to yester-years... so things are easy... I mean the social tools make things easier because ... they are irresistible. You can stay at home and listen to it the whole day then before you know it she will be standing at your door and be like 'I was passing by and I heard you playing some nice house music, so I thought I should come by and listen to it...'

Male 20–29 years, Urban, Manzini

3.4. Causes of MCP

Culture promotes MCP

According to respondents, cultural norms such as polygamy and male dominance further endorse and encourage MCP. Men and women in the study agreed that the Swazi culture promotes polygamy and polygamous mindsets where men are allowed to have more than one sexual partner. As boys grow up, they are socialised to think that it is acceptable to have more than one sexual partner. As such, males generally have concurrent partnerships from an early age and maintain the practice into adulthood. According to participants it is unusual to find a Swazi male who is involved with only one woman.

Male respondents said that they need to have a range of partners so that they will be in a position to choose a suitable wife, or many wives and/ or girlfriends so that they will be well looked after. If one partner is not treating them well, the men said, they move on to another partner who will give them what they desire.

Culture, however, does not permit women to challenge men's behaviour – women are obliged to submit to men and to be passive in sexual matters. According to cultural norms, sex must be initiated by a man and a woman may not express any interest in sex at any point. This expectation presents a problem especially in situations of polygamous marriage where wives are not treated equally in sexual and other matters, said respondents. Wives who are feeling neglected often look for additional partners to satisfy their sexual and emotional needs.

I blame our polygamous culture; it is not good, it has never been good. ... Polygamy has two parts to it: the favourite wife and the not so favourite. Really the unfavoured is just as good as the favourite. ...but only one of them is fully satisfied and well taken care of. ...so the other one will have to go out and fend for herself. I really don't find polygamy to be a good thing. ...it also makes growing up young Swazi boys not to have one partner he loves.

Female 40–49 years, Urban, Lubombo

... the good thing is that, let's say I have a wife and she doesn't treat me good, and maybe I have another girlfriend outside, who treats me good; cooks good food and respects me as a man, I think it's good to have many partners if this woman doesn't treat me good. I can go to the other one where I will be happy.

Male 20–29 years, Rural, Shiselweni

Another thing is that these boys say they will not have one girlfriend because maybe she would not be ready to marry him, so he would have five girlfriends to see, check out and decide on which one to marry. When he finally chooses the one that he wants, he would have left the others with the virus. When he has left the ones that [he] did not choose, they will start looking for people to marry them and they would carry the virus with them and transmit it to their new lovers.

Female 40–49 years, Urban, Lubombo

Participants also referred to the song about a young girl having sex with a brother-in-law in the context of culture, socialisation and MCP. Respondents said they are angry about the song because it socialises young girls into thinking that it is okay to have sex with a brother-in-law. Another cultural practice that the participants identified as facilitating MCP is forced marriage, such as wife inheritance (*kungenwa*) and arranged marriages (*kwendziswa*). Respondents said it is usually women who do not want these arranged marriages because the men are not their desired sexual partners. In these situations, women will often have sex with additional partners of their own choice.

... The wife may be too respectful and not question him or complain to her husband. In the Swazi culture they say you never question your husband even if he can come home very late.

Female 30–39 years, Rural, HHohho

Sometimes we (woman) are afraid to make the first moves on our husbands even when we want sex. This may increase the spread of HIV because the woman may end up having other relationships. I think our culture also contributes here because we've been socialised to believe that the man has to make the first move. Even if he makes that move once a month you have to wait for him yet you feel that you want it.

Female 30–39 years, Rural, HHohho

Our culture... eyi... polygamy is a problem; those cultures 'ayang'bhora mine' (bore me).

Female 30–39 years, Hawker

As discussed above, both male and female participants believe that culture, which has recognised and respected men for the number of wives they have had, contributes to MCP. Historically, polygamy was a sign of wealth – and prosperity and positions of

responsibility were given to polygamous men. In polygamous households, respect would be bestowed and reinforced based on competition between women in a polygamous relationship. Women would seek to win over a husband by submitting to him and accepting the patriarchy. Men and women said that some of these mind sets still exist among Swazi people. Young men believe they have to have more than one sexual partner to boost their ego and be accepted by their peers and women often compete with each for men's attention.

M: Culture is something we are not clear about but back then, you would not be a man in the community when you had one wife. You would not be at a certain position. You were a man when you had many wives. It then becomes a habit to have more than one wife maybe because you want to eat different food each day. You will think you will live a good life when you have many wives.

M: Yah! How can you chew with one jaw? (How can you have sex with one wife?) Obviously she will not respect you. When they are more than one, they will compete in respecting you so that you can visit her.

M: If they are two the competition will be high. If one lacks respect, I will add a third one.

Males 20–29 years, Rural, Shiselweni

I think that I can be 'ingwenya' (crocodile but used to mean hero.) How am I going to be seen as 'ingwenya' if I have one girlfriend? I will show off with a girl I have sex with. At football practice you usually hear guys talking about girls saying 'Ekse, when you look at her eish! 'upakshile phela ekse, icaravan' (terms used in describing a girl with a 'good' body) You do this so that you can be seen as a real guy especially when you have money because these days you can have sex with anyone when you have money. I have sex with good girls so that I can be known even among the guys.

Male 20–29 years, Rural, Shiselweni

Another thing that happens when you are a guy with many girlfriends is that you become a hero and the other guys will respect you because you have many girlfriends and then your ego will be boosted in the process.

Male 20–29 years, Urban, Manzini

Alcohol and drugs

When the respondents were asked why people have more than one sexual partner, they said alcohol and drugs contribute to impairing judgment which often results in people having sex with additional partners. Older women in the study disapproved especially of women drinking alcohol – claiming that women under the influence of alcohol are unlikely to refuse sexual advances they would refuse when sober. According to

participants, alcohol and drugs, specifically marijuana, are easily accessible in Swaziland. Cultural ceremonies like the reed dance also provide opportunities for girls to drink. Participants say they believe that alcohol is the greatest new killer of Swazi people. This reality, said respondents, is prompting them to look critically at the benefits of cultural practices like the reed dance.

...I hear women talking about the reed dance, saying that the reed dance preserves young maidens, I said to myself these women are very dishonest. These children go there to drink carry packs and different alcoholic drinks. Once a female child gets drunk she cannot say no, she will not say no. So what has this culture done for them? It has just endangered them even more. You know when it comes to this culture of ours; I wish that I was not a Swazi.

Female 40–49 years, Urban Lubombo

...and in most times alcohol and drugs make you end up having sex with many people.

Female 20–29 years, Factory worker

What I have to say is about what happens in bars; you find that they are drinking and eventually get drunk. The alcohol will go down there and then you'll find that they end up having unsafe sex because when you are drunk you hardly think of using a condom. And then you get this virus, because it is there.

Male 20–29 years, Rural, Shiselweni

Mobility

Men and women said that many people travel to other countries or other places within a country to seek employment. When working away from home people – especially men – often look for other partners and neglect their partners at home. Participants identified police, soldiers, construction workers, miners and hawkers as some of the professions most affected by this dynamic. It emerged that when people are apart they are often concerned that their partner will be unfaithful and so look for other partners themselves to ensure their own security. The 20 to 29 year old males said that scholars often have to move locations when changing schools and this means they often change partners or have additional partners.

...some men leave their wives and go to Jo'burg. They leave their wives and kids behind. You may find that he even has girlfriends where he stays. The wife left behind may be tempted to get a boyfriend. This also promotes HIV/AIDS.

Female 30–39 years, Urban, Hhohho

...you find that you get employment in Manzini and you see your partner once in a while you'll eventually get makhwapheni (a secret lover).

Female 20–29 years, Rural, Shiselweni

When I am sleeping here at the camp, not at my home, I don't know who my husband back home is with. A week is very long, he is letting them in that side and I am here at the camp asleep.

Female 30–39 years, Army

Some of it happens naturally as we live life. You find that I do my form 1 to 3 in this school and I have girlfriends there, then I move to another high school... and I'm single there, so I will need to get another girlfriend. When schools are closed I also see my other girlfriends from the other school when I am home.

Male 20–29 years, Urban, Manzini

I travel to a lot of places so wherever I go I make sure that I get myself a partner so that whenever and wherever I have a problem with spending the night, I'll know that I have someone and a place to sleep.

Male 20–29 years involved in MCP

Women invite and challenge men

In an army group of 20 to 29 year old men, the men said that women invite men to approach them. They said they dress and 'prepare' themselves in order to attract men. In some cases, women verbally challenge men to make approaches to them and if the men do not respond, the women look down on them.

You end up having many 'cause they are also challenging you...

Male 20–29 years, Army

They prepare themselves for us because they do things that will move us. I remember one time hearing a girl in her bedroom while spraying a perfume; when she sprayed herself around the neck, she said 'in case of a hug' and around the hands she would say 'in case of a hand shake' she said many things that I do not remember... .

Male 20–29 years, Army

Revealing clothes

Men and women in the groups aged 20 years and above, felt that girls dress in revealing clothes, such as mini-skirts, tight trousers and tops and conduct themselves generally in a tempting manner. The problem with this, say participants, is that men are weak and struggle to control their feelings of sexual attraction – they 'fall in love through their eyes'. According to respondents, modern parents neglect their responsibility to guide female children as to what is appropriate and responsible dress and behaviour in order to avoid attracting unnecessary attention from men.

Even when they are wearing their pants you find them sitting with their legs wide apart as though they are boys and when they get up they have to hold the back of their pants up because if they don't it would show everything at the back. Then she be seen by men wearing that and they will be attracted by that. They will approach her and she'll get confused because these men are also handsome.

Female 40–49 years, Urban Lubombo

Indeed the clothing has played a major role in increasing this thing because a man's eye is not the same as a woman's. It's mainly the clothing that attracts these men to all these different girls because even the pants they wear sit right on the private parts and everything is out in the open. You can see its size and everything

Female 40–49 years, Urban Lubombo

Lust

The fact that men 'always want to have sex with different people' – sometimes just for the sex itself, emerged prominently as a theme in the research. The 40 to 49 year old women in the study said the fact that it has become common practice for men and women to share a bed makes men lustful. This is in contrast to past practice where, there would be separate beds and a man would invite a woman for sex by hitting a stick on the floor.

Yes, it is because they share the same bed nowadays, it is no more that the man will beat a wooden stick on the ground then you hear that he is calling you. That is why there is this never ending lust.

Female 40–49 years, Rural, Shiselweni

Nowadays men do not have love, they are just full of lust, but they come to you and tell you that they love you knowing very well what they are after. When they get what they want, they won't care about you but they will keep telling you that 'I love you, Zodwa'. That is another thing that results in multiple partners. You love everyone you come across when in fact that is just lust.

Female 20–29 years, Army

Infertile women cheat

The female army respondents said that infertile women take advantage of their condition and cheat because they know that they will not fall pregnant.

She knows that she can't have children so even if she can leave her husband and go outside she knows that she can do that and come back again, she won't fall pregnant. She can come back with a disease such as gonorrhoea or HIV, but she won't come back with an unknown child.

Female 20–29 years, Army

Lack of respect and the breakdown of morals

Respect was raised as an issue by all groups. The respondents aged from 30 to 49 years felt strongly about what they perceive as a lack of respect among young people. These participants complained about the modern trend for children to show affection in public and drink in front of their elders.

Another thing is that there is no respect. Nowadays children do not fear adults. I had to chase other children at a meeting by telling them that I would like to see them leave because I'm older and they are children. They are not afraid anymore. We used to hide from the older people. They just stand now and they don't care.

Female 40–49 years, Urban Lubombo

It also emerged that people do not respect other people's lovers or partners. According to the 30 to 39 year old army females, spiting another female by having sexual relations with her partner is common practice among women.

As girls, we want to spite each other, knowing perfectly well that so and so is this one's boyfriend, we would want to go there. Yet it is such a bad thing.

Female 30–39 years, Army

Participants also said they believe the cultural practice of having sexual relations with an in-law is disrespectful and a sign of the breakdown of morality generally. A group of 40 to 49 year old females were adamant that having sex with an in-law shows a lack of morality regardless of culture.

Respondents pointed to the fact that parents behave inappropriately and said this is reflected in the behaviour of young people. Respondents elaborated with examples of parents calling each other by affectionate names, intimately touching each other and watching inappropriate (sex or intimate) scenes on television in the presence of their children. They said sometimes parents would show their children that they have more than one sexual partner. Thus the children are exposed to sex and intimacy sooner than they should be and will not listen to parents' advice and guidance on matters of dating and sex because they don't consider them to be suitable role models.

Lastly, it emerged that women earning more than their husbands tend to lose respect for their partners. They often become the decision makers and disregard their male partner's opinions and they often have additional sexual partners. Participants said that

men also engage in MCP as a result of the lack of respect they experience from their female partners.

...it is caused by the parents that do not have respect for their children. Not to say that they abuse them but what I mean is that they do things in front of the kids. They turn on TVs, when there are people having sex on the TV and let the children watch.

Female 40–49 years, Urban Lubombo

...Children do not learn anything from us because children see our mischief. You wouldn't be able to tell them anything because when you tell them something they would say what about you?

It's not good for a child to know that mum will leave when Mr. so and so's car comes.

Female group 40–49 years, Urban Lubombo

I think respect is also important. If, for instance, the woman earns more she will then lose respect for her husband. She will feel like a bread winner in the relationship. The husband may also be working and contributing what he can afford. In such relationships you find that the husband does not have a say in the family and the woman takes the leading role. This may even affect their sex life. The woman might have a relationship outside the marriage and wouldn't get sexual with her husband. This can contribute to HIV/AIDS prevalence. The husband has sexual needs and since the wife wouldn't provide for his sexual needs he may look elsewhere for satisfaction. This goes back to respect; the wife in this case doesn't respect the man as her husband.

Female 30–39 years, Rural, Hhohho

Poverty and unemployment

Many children, who do not have basics such as food, find it hard to resist men who offer what they need in exchange for sex, said participants. In such situations, where parents are unable to provide for their children they feel powerless against people who may take advantage of their children. It also emerged that many adults – especially women – are involved in transactional relationships to get food for their children. Some of these people would be unemployed and neglected by their employed partners who work far away.

There's the issue of poverty and I don't know how we can handle this as a country. Everyone has to do something. Fine [so] there are initiatives that we see, but they are usually not successful. I think the poverty issue forces mostly women, not men this time, to spread the virus. Since she would not be working but in need of food (hungry), she would end up having a number of boyfriends. I feel something should be done so that everyone affords to buy at least basics like food. The initiatives should be successful and the funds should reach the people who need them the most. It becomes difficult to access the money from these funds. Poverty and lack of jobs promotes this thing.

Female 30–39 years, Rural, Hhohho

Being needy... maybe you are unemployed or maybe that is how you have fended for yourself since you were young. You make a living from sleeping with people and they give you money. You move around from one person to another, that is just your life and you don't know any other existence or what it is like to have a job.

Female 30–39 years, Seasonal worker

Materialism

Other people, young and old get into such relationships out of greed and due to peer pressure. Some school going children have sexual relationships with more than one partner in order to get money to buy material things such as cell phones and clothes. They do this to fit in with or be like kids who can afford these luxuries. According to the 30 to 39 year old army females, some women leave their men because they do not have cars. They leave for those that have cars. Related to this was that the 30 to 39 year old female army respondents said that soldiers are viewed as high income earners. People want to get involved with them in order to get money.

It goes back to what I have just said. Other people are being enticed by material things. These men will offer to buy your goods and then tell you he will take care of you. ... He will also promise to buy you a decent meal, give you lunch and take you with his car to his place. Other hawkers see the cars that these men drive and easily fall for them. Many hawkers find themselves trapped in that and forget that they went to that country to sell their products not to sell their bodies. ... Others then find it difficult to stop.

Female 30–39 years, Hawker

I'm not an old member of this community but during my stay here, 85% of the guys who don't work are going out with women of about 38 years, letikotana (recently married women), especially those who have money. These boys are so into them; they don't even mind sharing the same woman as long as she has the money. They say that whenever they are with the woman they always come back with something.

Male 20–29 years, Rural, Shiselweni

Another thing would be that, you always have money but I should say it is for a short time.

Female 20–29 years, Rural, Shiselweni

I would say when looking at the standard of the living nowadays, it is just too high. So somebody might say it's an advantage to have five lovers because he or she will be able to get some money from them. Not all five of them who will not give her money; you'll find that only one won't give her money but the others will give her money. They know that she has to buy soap to wash and bath. After all she is coming to see them.

Female 20–29 years, Army

Human rights

The 20 to 29 year old female respondents reported that perceptions of 'human rights' contribute towards MCP. They said parents cannot punish their children for wrong doing for fear of being accused of abusing them. This incapacitates parents who feel they cannot instil discipline and guide their children.

Children's rights are also a contributing factor because these days if you happen to punish your child for wrong doings the child would report you and you might end up in jail. There no ways of disciplining children nowadays. For instance if you beat her up for having a relationship at an early stage, you are likely to go to jail just for a small bruise.

Female 20–29 years, Urban, Shiselweni

Religious activities

Religious activities that happen at night often promote MCP, said participants. For example, in night vigils people would be found standing in couples in dark corners while those who attend services like choir practices often end up having sexual relationships. It also emerged that the general church practice of discouraging youth to date openly forces them into secret. This secrecy makes it easier for people to have more than one partner.

I just wanted to say that fine you can go to church but nowadays there are MCP in churches as well. There are these night vigils now and again and you find people standing in couples in corners outside the tents instead of inside. So I think it calls for a person to be true to him/herself.

Male 20–29 years, Rural, Shiselweni

Did you know that even Christianity promotes multiple relations especially amongst the youth? First of all, at church they discourage relationships amongst the youth but we do it. I for one go to church, but I also have a girlfriend. They discourage that. What we do is hide it, isn't it? So if I hide it, I can have five girls and hide all of them. If the church and parents could encourage people to be open about having girlfriends so that they know that he has one girlfriend, I think you wouldn't find yourself with many partners because multiple relationships are a result of hiding things. Everything is hidden. So you can hide your ten relationships. So I blame the church. It church has contributed to people having multiple concurrent relationships. Even with HIV and pregnancy, the church has contributed to the spread of these things because the church is not realistic.

Male 20–29 years, Urban, Manzini

Dissatisfaction in Relationships

Participants commented at great length and with much feeling on the subject of dissatisfaction with relationships. These comments cut across a number of the themes that emerged in the research. Relationship dissatisfaction was shown to contribute prominently to MCP.

Women are innately dissatisfied

The 40 to 49 year female respondents argued that women by nature are generally not satisfied with anything. They want more than one sexual partner in the same way that they want more of most other things in life.

Another thing my sister is that females are never satisfied with what they have; they always want more. Even the things that they do for you at home are not enough. Also, life has just become so advanced, you find school children with cell phones so you also envy that and you end up resolving to get yourself in multiple concurrent partnerships that can provide you with financial support so that you can get that cell phone and other things.

Female 40–49 years, Urban, Lubombo

Lack of fulfilment

Both male and female respondents in the study, including those who felt that women are dissatisfied by nature, identified marrying young as contributing to people's general dissatisfaction in marriage relationships. Participants said that after a while in a marriage boredom creeps in and one of the partners goes outside of the marriage to satisfy their various needs. These needs include a need for sexual gratification.

Getting married at a young age is another reason. You find that a girl gets married very young and not only sleeps with that man. After a while she will meet people who will make her think she missed out. When the going gets tough in the marriage she will consider going out and if she does it once she will realise what she was missing and want to experience it when she is already married.

Female 40–49 years, Urban, Lubombo

Lack of attention

As mentioned above, participants said that favouritism in a polygamous relationship causes dissatisfaction. Generally, when one of the female partners in a polygamous relationship is not fulfilled she finds other partners outside of marriage.

The 30 to 39 year old army females and 20 to 29 year old factory workers said that women like to be pampered. When their partners become less attentive and flattering, women look to other men to fulfil their need to be appreciated. But it is not only women who need to feel loved and appreciated, said participants, men also need this kind of attention. As with women, when men do not get the kind of attention they want from their partners, they look for other women to fulfil these needs. Men struggle, particularly, to adapt when their wives have babies.

...the person she was in love with before loves her but she no longer does the things that she used to do, like say every day she would call him and say 'hawu unjani sweetie' (meaning how are you my sweetheart?). You find that she no longer addresses you with such words and you will think maybe he no longer loves you. So you'd go out and they'd ask you out and you'd agree if you are a girl and if you're a man you'd go and ask someone else out. . You end up with many people at a time because you don't dump the other because you still love him. You'd do all these things because you think the relationship is not the same as before.

Female 20–29 years, Factory workers

F: It is the times that we are living in today that you sleep in the same bed with your husband. Even when you arrive from hospital with a newborn baby, they put the baby in the middle.

F: You push the man off the bed then he goes elsewhere.

Females 40–49 years, Rural, Shiselweni

Arguments and nagging

Nagging was also identified as a cause of dissatisfaction in relationships – prompting people to engage in MCP. Men and women complained that arguments and nagging in relationships can be exhausting. These things were perceived as incidental factors that contribute to partners' dissatisfaction in relationships and to them looking for other partners for solace. Once again people said they would not leave a partner they are unhappy with but that they would simply begin additional relationships.

...maybe I am a wife and you'll find that I nag the husband a lot. You find that when he comes back home maybe late as a result of being held up somewhere and not because he was with some other woman but when he gets home I'll talk a lot and shout at him. You know a man can easily get annoyed. When it's time to go to bed, he won't do anything to you but you'll be expecting him to do something to you and even beg you for some as the mother of his kids but he won't do that because you annoyed him and got him out of the mood. So he would rather go outside rather than continue with you.

Female 20–29 years, Army

Say the two of you live together and you fight a lot. Say maybe he saw you walking with someone else and other things you end up being upset that every time you go to the house it will be fights. You then date someone else in the hope to refresh your mind and if it's a man he will ask out other girls.

Female 20–29 years, Factory worker

Abuse in relationships

Another significant reason that participants gave for women become involved in additional relationships was abuse in their primary relationships. In cases where women are abused by their partners they often start an additional relationship.

...another contributing factor can be abusive relationships. You find that your husband is abusive and when you tell another man out there about your situation he feels pity and comforts you. In that way a relationship can start. Obviously you will not tell your husband that there is a man out there who hugs and comforts you when you've been abused...laughter. So that is how it also starts.

Female 20–29 years, Rural, Shiselweni

Sexual dissatisfaction, desire and curiosity

Many 20 to 29 year old male respondents said that they engage in MCP because they 'desire to taste' all the beautiful girls they meet. According to these men, women often seek out men their friends have slept with who have a reputation as good lovers. Men are unwilling to refuse these advances and so have sex with many women at the same time. Men also said that women 'challenge' them by the way they dress and behave and they felt they cannot 'backdown' when this happens for fear of being ridiculed by other men.

You hear guys saying I want that girl yinhlaba sikipa (literally translated it would mean 'she is a t-shirt stabber' but used to mean she is beautiful). In that way, you will keep on moving from one person to the next since you want to taste all of them. There is the idea that once she has big hands, thick lips and she's hairy, she's the one to go for.

Male 20–29 years, Army

Another thing that I can add that makes guys have many sexual partners is that girls have a gossiping problem. Say you are with a girl, you end up having sex and she likes it. She will be so happy that she will go and tell her friend about it. When girls talk, they are very specific. ...Then I ask you, doesn't the other friend want to experience that good thing her friend is talking about and where is she going to get it? From the same person who gave her friend a good time. In a way that person will be involved in MCP.

Male 20–29 years, Urban, Manzini

Partners with extensive sexual experience

Dissatisfaction in a relationship can also be a result of one partner having extensive sexual experience, said participants. While prior sexual experience was viewed as good in terms of a person knowing how to sexually satisfy a partner – especially a steady, official or life partner – respondents revealed that it can also be a problem because it can create sexual performance benchmarks. Primary partners with less experience felt that their sexual performance might be compared negatively to that of previous partners. In these cases the more experienced partner might be dissatisfied and opt to engage MCP.

Maybe another advantage would be getting sexual experience.
Male 20–29 years, Urban, Manzini

Incompatible private parts

Participants were very clear that sexual ‘fit’ is important. It emerged that men prefer a woman to have a ‘tight’ vagina. If their life or married partner’s vagina is not tight enough to fit their penis, they look for another partner whose size is more compatible with their own. Respondents revealed that women also want penis sizes that ‘fit’ and they would likewise look for men with big enough penises to sexually satisfy them. Both men and women said they would not leave the partner who is not able to satisfy them when they engage with another partner.

It’s because you find that hers does not grip so you go and look for the one who is still gripping, I mean her private parts are still tight.
Male 20–29 years, Army

Lack of foreplay and orgasm

Respondents also attributed sexual dissatisfaction to a lack of foreplay and orgasm among women. Participants said that men generally do not romance their wives before sex, but rather they rush sex and stop when they are satisfied. Despite often not feeling desire, many women agree to have sex when their partners ask, but they become frustrated when their partners do not attend to their need for sexual satisfaction. When a woman consistently does not reach orgasm with her official partner, she would seek other men with whom she would reach orgasm. Impotence, which is common among men, was also mentioned by the respondents as a cause for sexual dissatisfaction. They felt that a man who could not get an erection would not be able to satisfy a partner sexually.

Another thing is that the man doesn’t play with the woman (meaning foreplay), because he is supposed to play with her first so that she can also be in the state that he is in, then the games can begin, together. The man just

climbs on top, finishes and leaves. So the woman gets left on the way. Therefore, she will go to town and agree to anything because that man left her along the way.

Female 40–49 years, Rural, Shiselweni

I mean that when they have sex she should satisfy him. If she doesn't satisfy him, it can make him go and look for another woman.

Male 20–29 years, Rural, Shiselweni

Yes. Just to add to what my brother is saying but this time it's about the women; if you as the man, do not satisfy her in bed, it can make her go and look for other people.

Male 20–29 years, Rural, Shiselweni

Menstruation and giving birth

Participants from all age groups said that men become sexually starved when women have monthly menstrual cycles. The 40 to 49 year old respondents reported that men also get sexually deprived after the birth of a child because custom dictates that there should be no sex for 6 months after the birth of a child or until the umbilical cord falls off. During these times men would look for other sexual partners. The 40 to 49 year old respondents said that when people these days ignore this custom and have sex with a partner shortly after the birth of a child, they often get diseases.

It could happen for a man to find his wife in a bad condition because every month we are in that bad condition. When that happens, the man goes out to a girlfriend outside. When he finds that the river is full, he moves along and he comes back with his mouth wiped clean.

Female 40–49 years, Rural, Shiselweni

F: Let us go back to our culture; when you arrive home from giving birth you must sleep in your granny's house for six months.

F: Nowadays my child doesn't even come home to me from the hospital. The newborn is carried by Malinga (the husband) from the hospital and my daughter would follow behind. They are going to their house. They don't come to me to raise the baby until the umbilical cord falls off.

F: Then the boy will find darkfan...laughter...he will get it...you find that when you get back from hospital you desire it. Go home and sleep at your parental home.

Female group 40–49 years, Rural, Shiselweni

Disappointment and unfaithfulness

In conclusion it emerged that dissatisfaction in relationships may be caused by hurt and disappointment, resulting from the discovery that a partner is cheating. In such situations, the aggrieved party often looks for another partner themselves. According to the respondents, a husband might also be disappointed to discover that his new bride is not a virgin and he might then go looking for a virgin partner. Participants also said that sometimes when people discover they are HIV positive they become hurt and angry and engage in MCP to spread the virus –hoping this will help them feel less alone.

I think some people have bad hearts. Most people test and are aware of their HIV status. People who test positive may say they don't want to die alone. They will try by all means to infect others.... I wish we could come up with a solution to this. People should learn to accept their positive status. ... Another thing is that we should encourage the use of condoms, they could minimise the rate of re-infection. These HIV positive people take ARVs which make them look nice and healthy.

Female 30–39 years, Rural, Hhohho

When we go to churches, as boys we say that we are virgins and when we meet other girls from the church who also say that they are virgins, we'll ask the pastor to bring us together and we end up married. When I have sex with this girl, I discover that she is what they call a brand new second hand. The body is good but the engine is dead, in short she is not a virgin. What follows there is a divorce. Now I will want to go out until I find a virgin.

Male 20–29 years, Rural, Lubombo

Yes...I want to choose. It once happened that I had one partner and I loved her a lot and I think it was the first time loving someone the way I loved her. I think she also noticed that I loved her a lot from the way I used to do the things I did and the lovely words I would tell her but she disappointed me, as I found out that she had other relationships...

Male 20–29 years, Involved in MCP

3.5. Myths Related to MCP

HIV can be cured

When asked about the causes and consequences of MCP, participants said men believe that when they sleep with a virgin they will be cured of HIV and so they 'scramble for young girls'. It also emerged that people have unprotected sex with many partners because they believe that AIDS can be cured – as advertised on private TV channels.

Right now there are these people from Luphawu who tell us that they cure AIDS. I think that if they are lying that they can cure AIDS then AIDS will not stop because nowadays people just don't care about AIDS. They know that the people from Luphawu say Mvuthuza can cure AIDS. People just don't care, when you try to tell guys about AIDS they will tell you that AIDS can be

cured nowadays. So if these people are lying that they can cure AIDS, we will just make a mess and die.

Female 20–29 years, Involved in MCP

Another thing is if he gets young blood, fresh blood, I'm talking about an HIV positive man, he will want to sleep with as many of them as possible because men have this belief that if they sleep with virgins they will be cured of it. They don't realise that they are putting themselves in more danger; they are increasing the virus in their bodies and also infecting clean blood.

Male 20–29 years, Army

People are affected by evil spirits (*Bayahabula*)

Participants related a Swazi belief that people from certain families should not eat certain foods. Children in family units would be raised with this awareness. If a child eats what they should not eat, the belief is that they would become possessed by evil spirits. Thus if a child's parenting is confused because a mother has been involved with multiple partners, the child might not know his real family identity and eat the wrong foods. This child would grow up and be unruly and could engage in destructive behaviour such as rape and abuse.

At that home this child will eat food that he/she is not supposed to eat ... because the mother got this child somewhere else and she came back and claimed that this child belongs to this family. The child goes crazy and he goes around raping and stabbing people. It's because he was given things that are not for his real clan.

Female 40–49 years, Urban, Lubombo

3.6. Consequences of MCP

The spread of HIV

Participants in all groups and in the interviews spontaneously offered evidence that they are aware that multiple concurrent partnerships cause the spread of HIV. The respondents said that whatever people's reasons for engaging in MCP, concurrent relationships contribute to the spread of HIV. This is because people do not use protection with all their sexual partners. It emerged that in some cases a condom would be used the first time, but this stops as soon as partners develop some level of trust. The respondents revealed that men also claim that they want to have sex 'flesh to flesh' and women usually give in because they love them or they need the money the men give them in exchange for sex.

Case Study 1: Female 30–39 years, Hawker

I don't find any good in it because almost all the people I know who did these things ended up having many problems and it brought bad results to their lives. In one instance a woman was so disappointed by the father of her child when she found him having sex with another female around where she lived, she decided to retaliate by going out and having sex with other men. She joined a certain group of people and started drinking – then she found herself dating a lot of men. She says she did all this because her heart was in pain for what her live-in partner did.

So later on she got together with the father of her child. She got pregnant with his child again. After sometime after the child was born, some people came to her and told her to take the child to his real father because the child did not look like the man she claimed was the father. When she told me, it dawned to me that something happened before. She ended up telling me that paternity results came out and they showed that the child was her man's. Another thing, I think they told her at the clinic when she was delivering the child that she is HIV positive because she said '*eyi nginyanyiswa nguzibanibani utsi ungibonile e VCT*' (meaning someone upset her when he or she said they saw her at the VCT – Voluntary Counselling and Testing) so the consequences were being HIV positive and having another man's child. I think these are the bad results from not taking care of yourself.

Then there was another sister that we used to help and wash her clothes because she was no longer able to do things. She had three kids but the first kid died followed by the second and the third. In the end, I saw her on classifieds in the newspaper which meant that she died. So I am saying at times money makes people have sex with many people because she was deprived so she was after money. This way you get in the danger of getting HIV. I remember one night I came across the man I was talking about in the company of another woman. The next day I asked him where they met and he said at the drinking spot. I continued to ask him if he used condoms and he said he doesn't know the use of a condom and he did not use it. So I think others need to be taught a lot about the virus because they believe that there is nothing like it.

Neglect, disputes and poverty in families

It emerged that men, especially those that work far away from their home, often neglect their families and bear children with their new lovers wherever they are. Sometimes in

these situations when a man dies, the mistress will bring the man's children to his wife and expect her to take care of them. MCP cause divorces and children suffer because they do not grow up in a safe and loving environment with the guidance and protection of both parents. It was also reported that MCP cause instability in families as a result of dispute and ill-treatment of children by their step parents. The respondents said children in such situations often opt to leave home and find shelter elsewhere. They said they often find people who would be willing to look after them in return for sexual favours. In addition, it emerged that MCP cause fights between lovers when one discovers that the other is cheating.

F: Soldiers are worse because you find that when winter time comes they also want to go into warm blankets; these people stay in tents. So they want others. Around here in Siteki they have houses rented out and there are people living with them but these soldiers have wives back home but they are living with mistresses here...

F: Children are crying back home...the wife has nothing to eat...
Female group 40–49 years, Urban, Lubombo

We rent our flats so you may find that I will show all my partners where I live. Each of them would have to come and check on me and that will cause a problem when it happens that they find each other or come to my house at the same time, there will definitely be a fight.
Female 20–29 years, Urban, Shiselweni

'The children's mothers must bring the kids,' Bring them to whom because their father died so whom are they coming to, to do what, just to annoy this person who is helpless now?
Female group 40–49 years, Urban, Lubombo

Pregnancy

Pregnancy emerged as another consequence of MCP, as has been mentioned above. Such pregnancies lead to children suffering, perhaps as a result of lack of food and lack of attention from the parents, or when one of the parents dies. The respondents reported that pregnancy ruins many young girls' futures because they drop out of school to care for the children. Pregnancy in situations of MCP also increases the number of babies dumped and the number of abortions.

There is this Thokozani bus driver, his bus used to stay at Msangeni. The parents would say it's like we are dipping our children somewhere. School girls were getting pregnant all over because of this man. You'd find that many children get pregnant by this one man and he had wives – not one, [but many] wives.

Female 40–49 years, Rural, Shiselweni

Sometimes it may destroy your future. For instance, when you happen to fall pregnant you drop out of school and may find yourself shortening your life from contracting diseases like AIDS.

Female 20–29 years, Urban, Shiselweni

You find that by having more than one sexual partner you would not know who impregnated you which is also the cause for baby dumping because the boyfriends would refuse paternity.

Female 20–29 years, Rural, Shiselweni

Adult practice socialises children to engage in MCP

Participants said that the extent to which MCP are practiced and accepted in communities in Swaziland normalises this behaviour for children who then follow the adults' example.

The children that grow up in such an environment will think that it is a way of life, which is not okay.

Female 20–29 years, Rural, Hhohho

MCP are financially draining

In conclusion, the respondents reported that MCP are expensive. Attending the social activities and meeting or eating in restaurants with additional partners uses a lot of money. Respondents said wives and children at home often go without food because their husbands and fathers are spending money on other partners.

These days are not like in the past where you would meet under trees. She will want you to go to Steers, KFC, Debonairs and many other places. So when they are many, the expenses accumulate...

Male 20–29 years, Army

3.7. Who is Involved in MCP

Men and women

When asked whether men or women are more likely to be involved in MCP, female respondents spontaneously stated that men were mostly involved with more than one sex partner. Male groups and individual respondents in the study concurred with this view. They said men do it more because in Swazi culture they are allowed to have more

sexual partners. They also pointed out that men have greater access to material things than women and they use the material things to attract multiple partners. Certain men including men in mobile employment, affluent men, famous and prominent like musicians and sports personalities are well-known as people engaged in MCP.

If you notice these days, most of the famous sports personalities end up with ikesi, what they call AIDS, because they have sex with anyone. Even the famous musicians...

Male 20–29 years, Shiselweni

It is usually males, like when I'm in love with this man and I actually think we have a future together then suddenly I find out he is also involved with someone else and in that way I also do the same 'cause I don't know that how many are still going to come out along the way. I then do it out of disappointment.

Female 20–29 years, Rural, Shiselweni

I think it is men who drink a lot and also men who have money. For instance my husband left me years ago. My last born who was a year old then is now in standard one. I take care of myself and don't have the virus. I test every now and then. My point is woman do take care of themselves but man no! They drink a lot of alcohol and then get the virus. They then come back home and have sex with their wives.

Female 30–39 years, Rural, Hhohho

However, after a lot of deliberation among the respondents it emerged that, while many men are involved in MCP, many women also have concurrent relationships with different partners. Because it is more socially acceptable for men in Swazi society to have many partners they are public about it and people talk about it, said participants. However on reflection, men and women from all age groups felt that in modern Swazi society, men and women are probably equally involved in MCP. As with men, it is often women with good jobs and a disposable income, and who thus feel in control of their own lives, who engage in MCP. Respondents also said men do not generally have MCP with other men.

I also say it's the same, we can't be blaming men. Who are they sleeping with? They sleep with women through mutual consent. I think alcohol encourages this. It's a pity even young ones drink it now. Alcohol arouses sexual needs as such they end up sleeping with the wrong people. It really promotes the spread of the virus.

Female 30–39 years, Rural, Hhohho

I think it's the same... I have this relative (female) who has a business; she also has her secret boyfriends. The man is always busy so this lady keeps herself busy with her boyfriend when her husband is not there. Women also promote it.

Female 30–39 years, Rural, Hhohho

It is rich women, who have good jobs because those women cannot be controlled by men, because she tells herself that she has money and a superior position. Maybe the husband doesn't work or he has an inferior position; he earns less. So when the man tries to lay down some rules the woman says remember that I earn more than you and leaves him and goes outside to look for the boys. These rich women who have good jobs are the ones who have many sexual partners.

Female 30–39 years, Army

Young and old

Respondents in all the groups believed that age does not influence how likely a person is to have MCP. Male and female respondents reported that married people, both young and old, are extensively involved in MCP. In fact, it came out that married people have the disguise of marriage to hide the consequences of the MCP.

But it is not young people only; even adults do these things, more so than the younger ones. Especially the married ones, they know that even if they were to fall pregnant at least they are married. If a married woman falls pregnant, everyone assumes that it is by the husband whereas for a young person, her promiscuity is limited because if she were to fall pregnant she will be afraid of what she will say to her parents, or her other partners. The older woman is very promiscuous because she knows that her husband works in Manzini and only comes back in the evening for example. She will go to town to meet up with her lovers and come back. By the time the husband gets back home he will find his wife sitting innocently at home.”

Female 40–49 years, Urban, Lubombo

Mobile workers

Respondents maintained that mobile workers of both genders and all ages are generally involved in MCP. They said that this is because mobile workers travel and spend time away from their families and this opens opportunities for them to have other partners. The respondents identified soldiers, police, hawkers, contract workers, factory workers, bus conductors, and bus and truck drivers as people most likely to be involved in MCP.

Like here we are not like the other forces as we do not stay with our partners, so for me it's a hit and run from one person to the other and we go our separate ways. Yet with the other forces they stay with their loved ones.

Male 20–29 years, Army

Wherever the taxi sleeps he will want someone who will cook for him, so he will leave children behind wherever he is working.

Female 40–49 years, Urban, Lubombo

There are men that have temporal jobs, say contracts of three months in different places. They usually have different girlfriends during each quarter.

By the end of a year that person would have slept with four different women. He might not even know of their HIV status. I think that also promotes the spread of the virus.

Female 30–39 years, Rural, Hhohho

To add on this, especially on the issue of the truckers... since there is a border in our area, the truckers come with girls from Siphofaneni and when they get to the border, they can't cross with the girl. So the girl has to stay behind. So when she is left behind she won't have a place to stay, so she will wonder in the bars where we will hijack her and maybe you find that she even has the virus. That means the virus will keep spreading that way. So the reason why HIV keeps spreading in our area is because this is where truckers leave their girls when they go through the border.

Male 30–39 years, Rural, Shiselweni

While it emerged that there is a strong correlation between the work that certain people do and their tendency to be involved in MCP, the group of 20 to 29 year old army females were adamant that the nature of a person's work does not oblige them to become involved in MCP.

It doesn't contribute to it – it's just up to the person. Work doesn't...when you are at work there is no reason for you to be naughty because the people at work satisfy you. It would just be you being unfaithful because even now you could sneak out from work and do what you want to do.

Female 20–29 years, Army

3.8 Dealing with MCP and combating the spread of HIV

Promote HIV testing and use condoms

The truck drivers in the study felt they would not be able to change their behaviour around MCP because of the nature of their work. They said that they could practise safe sex if they were provided with condoms. Generally, participants were aware that it is important to use a condom for every sex act. Women in the study said that men do not want to use protection and are reluctant to test for HIV. Testing together would help people to support each other in taking ART and would avoid re-infection, participants said.

On the issue of testing, women are complaining that their husbands don't want to test. They don't want to know the results of their tests. They will say if you are positive, it is yours and you are the one who picked it up. If you insist on discussing it, things become sour. It then becomes difficult if you have tested positive and you have to change your sleeping habits. They are so impossible, bamaSwati emcadvo (they are traditional Swazis). They don't want to hear about testing and using condoms. I think this also increases the spread of the virus. You find that people test positive and continue to sleep with their husbands without any protection. This affects both of you. I get re-

infected which will make my antibodies weaker and the husband will get more affected especially if I am taking the pills. In most cases, women are willing to go and check but the men don't want to do it.

Female 30–39 years, Rural, Hhohho

Legislation governing relationships

Respondents suggested that there should be legislation to govern how people have sexual relationships.

...or maybe there should be some form of fine that if you start many relationships you will be punished in this way because it's through these relationships that we get HIV...

Male 30–39 years, Rural, Shiselweni

Branding people with HIV

To deal with the spread of HIV in relation to MCP respondents suggested that people with HIV should be branded so that everyone can see and know this person is infected.

You see like my cell phone, maybe it must have 2 lights; one green and the other red. So that when I try to approach a female, if a red light blinks it means that woman has a disease. If the green one blinks it means she is ok.

Truck driver, 30–39 years

Revisit cultural practices and beliefs

Respondents expressed the need for a review of cultural practices and beliefs in the light of the HIV epidemic. These include polygamy, wife inheritance, forced or arranged marriages as well as notions that manhood is defined in terms of the number of women a man can have sexual relations with. Revisiting cultural belief also means rethinking waiting for men to initiate sex.

Yah. You see my brother, in Swaziland in the past, you weren't thought of as a man if you didn't have two or more wives. Nowadays though, there is this virus, so I would say we shouldn't follow that culture.

Male 30–39 years, Rural, Shiselweni

Promote respect and faithfulness

Respondents felt strongly that people must change their sexual practices and start to be faithful to one partner. They suggested that this is the only way in which the spread of HIV can be reduced. Faithfulness was also identified as a sign of respect and self control. Women should let men head their households and men should give women a respected place in the home. Money should not be the determinant of whose decisions matter in a relationship. Analysis showed participants felt that this should be done in the context of communication and gender empowerment not submission and passivity.

Women in the older age group (40 to 49 years) said women need to be firm in order to

be faithful to their husbands while the male groups felt men need to control themselves in order to remain faithful.

I think what can help us and keep us safe from this virus is to be faithful to each other. Also celebrating being a Casanova (inganwa) should stop because the times we live in today, do not allow for it. You just have to find one partner and stick to that partner forever.

Male 30–39 years, Rural, Shiselweni

I think faithfulness will help to minimize the spread of the virus. If everyone could be faithful to his or her partner I don't think the virus infection will spread as it does.

Female 30–39 years, Rural, Hhohho

What I can say about what they are talking about is that, for example, I have a wife and I see beautiful girls and admire them, but I should not go after them. So you can see beautiful girls and want them but you have to control yourself at that time because saying no is the same as telling yourself that I will not eat this.

Male 30–39 years, Rural, Shiselweni

...If it happens that you break up with your boyfriend, take your time and test again with your new partner. By so doing you will learn to be honest to each other. It is very important to test. It is easy to get the virus but almost impossible to get rid of it. If you know that you don't have it, it then becomes necessary to be honest to your partner to avoid getting it at all costs. ...I think it is important to test and then be faithful to each other.

Female 30–39 years, Rural, Hhohho

Openness and communication

Respondents expressed the opinion that partners should learn to communicate with each other about all aspects of a relationship so as to overcome the dissatisfaction in relationships that is the primary cause of people looking for additional partners.

I think us woman can conquer this virus. I think us woman should tell ourselves that we can only be satisfied by our husbands. If he fails to do so, you can discuss it with him to come up with a solution that satisfies everyone... We should learn to be satisfied and be faithful to ourselves, partners and families.

Female 30–39 years, Rural, Hhohho

Empower young people with self identity

Empowering young people to value themselves and others is another critical area that needs to be addressed to deal with MCP, said participants. The 20 to 29 year old males said self worth and identity will allow the youth to be proud of who they are and to be

able to resist social pressures such as MCP. In order to give them that sense of self worth, identity and pride, the youth need to be given information.

Ok, more than anything in all that we have said about friends and about what you want and about not being able to say no, I think what is important is that as young people we need to be empowered. Maybe self identity amongst us is the one that can enable us to face the problems where you can't say "no". If you know who you are and you are empowered and have that pride within yourself, I think you can be able to. You no longer need counselling...

Male 20–29 years, Urban, Manzini

Another thing could be sticking with the right people... what can I say is choosing the right friends you see. You see, for example, let me say we grew up in the same home and we are the same type of people who have told themselves that we want to stick to one partner. If all of us have told ourselves that and we are focused on it, then you find that Ace is in a group of people who are always talking about girls and I stick with the people who are poor and are always in church. Chances are Ace would have MCP because in his environment they are always talking about girls and sometimes you will be taken away. So your choice of friends counts.

Male 20–29 years, Urban, Manzini

Dressing respectably

The older female groups said it is imperative for government to intervene and correct the way people dress. Parents should monitor their children's dress and make sure they look dignified.

If it were to happen that the leadership of the country fixed the way that people dress, this virus would not be so bad. There is just too much bad dressing, and as parents you watch your children and what they wear when they leave home. If all of us as parents would do that; to monitor that if you are getting dressed either to school that the uniform is the right length for that youth, not up to the buttocks. Also the pants in our homes you must monitor at what stage your child can wear pants because it differs, for example maybe your child is married, when she is with her husband then she can wear her pants because if she is not married and she wears pants on her own they will bother her, she will end up finding this one, but this one was attracted by the pants.

Female 40–49 years, Urban, Lubombo

4. Discussion

4.1 Intergenerational, Child Abuse and MCP

Parents often send children to live with relatives due to scarcity of schools. Many children in such arrangements face sexual abuse. This abuse can continue at schools where teachers date and have sexual relationships with students. These abusive relationships generally happen in the context of multiple partnerships and, apart from having damaging psychological effects on the children; they expose these young people to the risk of contracting HIV and AIDS. Because of the power dynamics in abusive relationships, children in these situations are unable even to negotiate for safe sex. Sex in this context is as rape.

4.2 Alcohol and MCP

As indicated in the findings of the study, alcohol and drugs impair judgment and people often engage in unprotected sex when they are under the influence of alcohol. This exposes them to contracting HIV thereby increasing the number of people infected and in turn affected by HIV and AIDS.

4.3 Culture and MCP

The implication of polygamous relationships in the context of HIV and AIDS and in relation to what was discussed by the respondents in the study confirms that polygamy contributes to the spread of HIV. The polygamous mindset, which supposes that a woman is not allowed to have more than one sexual partner, while a man may have many, places women in a vulnerable position. A woman in a polygamous relationship would have to accept the rules laid down by her husband on sexual matters, which would include whether he had additional partners and whether or not he used a condom during sex. Women in polygamous relationships often seek out additional partners themselves for various reasons and this raises the risk of contracting and spreading HIV.

Research showed that a man in Swazi culture is celebrated for having many partners – even if he is married or involved in a relationship. Men are expected to continue having sexual relations into their old age when it is traditional that they marry a young woman.

Cultural practices such as these and others mentioned above – inheriting a brother's wife when he dies (*umlamu*) or having sex with an in-law (*kulamuta*) – have their roots in historical social norms that are no longer relevant and their continued practise in the context of HIV and AIDS is detrimental to Swazi society.

4.4 Trust/security and MCP

Lack of trust between lovers is an issue that often leads to one party having other secret relationships. Research showed that people begin additional relationships because they fear that their partners might be engaging in MCP and having additional partners give them a sense of security. Even when people know that their partners have other partners they do not leave them because of the love they have for them, but find additional partners themselves. This practice, accompanied by the fact that people generally do not use condoms when having sex, feeds the spread of HIV and AIDS.

5. Conclusion

MCP fuel the spread of HIV. Poverty, peer pressure, materialism, population mobility, alcohol misuse, relationship dissatisfaction, inability to communicate within relationships, culture and disappointment are the major reasons people become involved in MCP. Curbing HIV is to a large extent dependent on dealing with social and cultural norms that promote MCP among men. The contributing factors identified in this research not only fuel HIV but exacerbate poverty and abuse in Swazi society. It emerged clearly in the study that, while the advantages of MCP include variety and choice, and money and material gain, the adverse effects of the practice outweigh these 'advantage'. HIV and AIDS impact on population and economic growth which further fuel the proliferation of HIV and AIDS. Dealing with MCP remains an enormous challenge that must be addressed to check the spread of HIV and AIDS.

6. Recommendations

- There is a need to transform Swazi society in order to deal with the challenges posed by MCP and HIV and AIDS. Social change campaigns need to be intensified in order to reach all levels of society in an effort to overcome customs and traditions that hinder progress and expose people to HIV and AIDS.
- Government and other stakeholders must put more effort into alleviating poverty in order for people not to engage in MCP as a means of livelihood.
- The youth must be given a sense of identity, pride and self worth in order for them to avoid getting involved in MCP. Interventions that seek to build people's self esteem need to be put in place to help youth develop the skills that will enable them to resist established practice and see MCP as a risky behaviour even beyond HIV and AIDS.
- Media interventions need to address issues of communication about sexual matters between partners. There is a need to de-taboo sex talk to allow free and open discussion.
- Interventions have been focusing on empowering women in society because they have been often been deprived of human rights. Interventions promoting gender equality should be strengthened and should extend to target men, who need to accept that power and rights must be shared and people must respect each other.
- Army recruits should be allowed to have houses and live with their spouses like other forces such as the police. Reviewing the conditions of employment of this group is necessary to address this issue.

7. References

1. Southern African Development Community. Expert think tank meeting on *HIV prevention in high prevalence countries in Southern Africa*. Maseru, 10–12 May 2006. SADC, July 2006