

## ABSTRACT

### OBLIGATION AND TABOO: INSIGHTS INTO THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MASCULINITIES, EDUCATION AND HIV RISK AMONG A GROUP OF TEN TRINIDADIAN MEN

Arden Mclean

This dissertation is a qualitative one which employed a modified grounded theory methodology using in-depth interviews as the primary and principal source of data collection as an attempt was made to gain insight into the relationships between masculinities, education and HIV risk among a group of ten Trinidadian men.

Men are socialized into believing that their masculine identity must be proven and to this end they engage in different kinds of activities that may put them at risk for contracting HIV. The discourse on masculinity reflects a rigid adherence to a binary code of obligatory and taboo prescriptions.

The kinds of risks each man takes is specific to his socialization and more importantly relates closely to the relationship he has with his father. The involved father acts as a protective factor in terms of delaying his son's sexual debut and /or influencing the kinds of precautions taken with respect to his sexual practices.

In conclusion, in light of the fact that in Trinidad & Tobago the family structure has changed considerably and the kind of support that was once available to many students no longer obtains (World Bank, 2003) this thesis puts forward a case for a comprehensive HIV education programme in schools as one possible response to an epidemic which has impacted, both socially and economically, many countries world wide.

Keywords: Arden Mclean, Young males, masculinities, sexuality, gender codes, HIV risk, father factor, school connectedness, HIV education, Trinidad.