

ABSTRACT

Untold Stories of Abortion: Masculinities and Fatherhood

Keino Tario St. Patrick Senior

A review of literature and programmes have indicated that the focus on abortion continues to be mainly on women, suggesting that in this regard, less is known about men. In fact, in Jamaica men are typically imperceptible in research studies on abortion.

Feminist epistemology was used to guide this qualitative research of 30 Jamaican men whose partners had an induced abortion. In-depth interviews, document checks, conversations, observations and a reflective journal were used to describe and interpret the 6 research questions of roles, attitudes, reactions, influences and perceptions. The post modernist and feminist philosophies guided the study's methodological approach and the constant comparative method was used to analyse data.

The findings, presented as themes, indicated that men played several roles in their partners' induced abortion ranging from financial providers and encouragers to dissuaders. Men's attitudes towards their partners' induced abortion varied and their emotional reactions included having nightmares, regret, relief, silence, anger, substance abuse and fright. Men's stances on abortion were extensive and age, socio-economic backgrounds and religious affiliations were influential factors.

Men's perception of their masculinity incorporated their role as protectors, supporters and providers, and having children. There was a general perception that abortion denied fatherhood, however, this did not shape men's construction of their masculinities. The significance of this paper is to underscore the need for a new understanding of abortion and men and how this may be interpreted to recommend an additional way of reading and comprehending masculinities.

Keywords: Keino Tario St. Patrick Senior; men; abortion; masculinities; fatherhood; reproductive health.