

# Introduction to the Special Issue

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## Abstract

*This special issue of African Population Studies is produced under the theme 'Population and Health'. It was coordinated by the Research Niche Area 'Population and Health' (RNA\_PH) of the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences, North West University (Mafikeng Campus). The RNA\_PH has a mission to conduct high quality research and train researchers in the broad area of population and health that will be relevant to South Africa and the wider region, with the aim of understanding society and informing policy-making and practice. The niche area is divided into three sub-programmes in line with the priority areas of population and health in South Africa and the continent as a whole: Household and Population Dynamics, Poverty and HIV/AIDS, and Quality of Life and Health.*

## Résumé

*Ce numéro spécial d'études sur les populations africaines est produite sous le thème «Populations et santé». Il a été coordonné par le centre de recherche « population et santé» (RNA\_PH) de la Faculté des Sciences Humaines et Sociales, North West University (Mafikeng Campus). Le RNA\_PH a pour mission de mener les recherches de qualite et former des chercheurs dans le vaste domaine dela recherche sur les populations et la santé qui seront pertinents pour l'Afrique du Sud et les autres régions dans le but de comprendre la société et d'informer l'élaboration des politiques et la pratique. Le centre de recherche est divisé en trois sous-programmes en conformité avec les domaines prioritaires de la population et de la santé en Afrique du Sud et sur le continent : les ménages et la dynamique des populations, la pauvreté et le VIH / SIDA, et la qualité de vie et la santé.*

The idea of producing this special issue was reached in 2013 when RNA\_PH members decided to have such an avenue to publish findings of the research they have been doing. The main purpose of this special issue is to continue building a research culture in the faculty as well as a capacity development strategy. The Editor-in-Chief of APS confirmed the idea in September 2013. All articles were submitted by November 2013. It was decided that the two blind review processes usually followed by APS should also apply to the special issue. The first review cycle was coordinated by the RNA\_PH where an established researcher was chosen to review each article. By January 2014, all reviews were done and all authors revised their articles accordingly. To this end, the assistance of the following reviewers is greatly appreciated: Dr Chiweni Chimbwete, Dr Henry Doctor, Professor Joshua Kembo, Dr Anne Khasakhala, Professor Pranitha Maharaj, Professor Monica Magadi, Dr Zitha Mokomane, Dr William Muhwava, Ms Nompumelelo Nzimande, and Dr

Naseema Vawda. The second cycle of the review process was coordinated by the Editor-in-Chief.

Population and Health research involves all demographic as well as health related matters that affect the population. It is, therefore, very relevant to the APS audience. The disciplines taking part in the RNA\_PH are population studies, psychology, sociology, development studies, and social work. In other words, population and health matters can be investigated by using any approach adopted by the five listed disciplines. We believe that any developmental agenda should embrace population and health (including their interrelationships) 'challenges. It should be noted that this is a very broad area and can be investigated from various angles. What the special issue is offering is just a sample of the type of research the RNA\_PH is doing. As the articles reveal, we are also not confined to a specific geographical area. What is important to us is the contribution to science.

The special issue has ten articles presented in no particular order. The contribution by Akim J Mturi

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and Lucia Gearwe discusses the gender differences in sexual behaviour among university students. They interviewed a total of 1,060 students from a university campus in Mahikeng, South Africa. It was reported that, on average, females initiate sexual activities 2 years later than males. In addition to gender, education levels attained by these students play a significant role in deciding when to have first sex. The analysis on risk sexual behaviour shows that females are more likely to indulge into risky sexual activities than males. This conclusion was reached partly because the interviewees had not used condoms in their most recent sexual encounter at the time of conducting the interviews. The paper ends by recommending that the HIV/AIDS programmes on campus should also consider establishing measures to combat 'irresponsible' sexual activities.

The article by Ishmael Kalule-Sabiti, Acheampong Yaw Amoateng and Yaw Johnson Arkaah has the title "The effect of socio-demographic factors on risky-sexual behaviours of adolescents in the North West Province of South Africa". This study collected data from 1065 black African pupils still attending middle and high schools in one district municipality. Contrary to Mturi and Gearwe's finding on university students, Kalule-Sabiti and colleagues reported that male learners are more likely and frequently engage into sexually risky behaviours than females. This implies that different data sets and approaches may result into different findings on the same issue. This study also found that whilst parent-child relationship is crucial in engendering pro-social behaviours in adolescent child, strong attachment to peers is not always the best in ensuring pro-social behaviours in the adolescent child.

Godswill N. Osuafor and Akim J. Mturi present a paper entitled "Attitude towards sexual control among women in conjugal union and its implication for HIV infection in Mahikeng, South Africa". They conducted a household survey of 568 married and cohabiting women and 33 individual in-depth interviews. The study investigated whether married/cohabiting women can demand and/or reject sex with their partners. Although less than 20% of respondents reported that a married/cohabiting woman cannot demand sex, over 40% said cannot reject sex. These findings have a lot of implications to the escalation of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa. The authors conclude by stating that women empowerment initiatives should be considered as a means to assist women to control their sexuality.

The paper by Ayo Stephen Adebawale and Martin Enoch Palamuleni has a title "Determinants of unmet need for modern contraceptives and reasons for non-use among married women in rural areas of Burkina Faso". The authors used the 2010 Burkina Faso Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) data to investigate the determinants of the unmet need for modern contraception for women in childbearing ages. This is a society where the use of contraception is very low (15%) and the unmet need is very high (40%). The authors identified two variables that influence unmet need, namely being married more than once and husbands approval of family planning.

The same authors (Adebawale and Palamuleni) made another contribution on "Prevalence and Determinants of Unintended pregnancies in Malawi". They used the 2010 Malawi DHS. The conclusion reached was that there is no single factor but many that are related with the high rates of unintended pregnancy in Malawi.

The paper by Samuel E. Oladipo, Malomo Bolajoko and Ishmael Kalule-Sabiti has a title "Demographic factors predicting knowledge of HIV/AIDS among undergraduates in Nigeria". Authors collected data from 572 undergraduate students from three institutions in Nigeria. It was found that although gender was not a significant factor in influencing level of knowledge of HIV/AIDS, religion and institution of learning had a strong influence.

The paper by Paul Bigala and Natal Ayiga dealt with "Prevalence and predictors of elder abuse in Mafikeng local municipality in South Africa". The authors surveyed 506 elderly males and females in 2008. They showed that over 60% of the respondents had experienced elder abuse. Physical abuse was more common among males whereas emotional, financial and sexual abuses were more common among females.

The contribution by Acheampong Yaw Amoateng, Ishmael Kalule-Sabiti and Miriam K. Ngake has a title "The effect of socio-demographic factors on the utilization of maternal health care services in Uganda". This study used the 2006 Uganda DHS data. The factors associated with utilization of maternal health care services were rural/urban residence, educational attainment, birth-order and wealth index.

The paper by Natal Ayiga and Karabo Mhele is on "Predictors of school reintegration of black women who previously dropped out of school in the North West province of South Africa." This paper used data

from 306 black women, who had dropped out of school in two district municipalities of the North West province. They found out that the rate of school re-entry of the girl child who previously dropped out of school is low and the reasons for dropping out were pregnancy, peers and rural neighbourhood influences.

Finally, the contribution by Erhabor S. Idemudia goes under the title "Associations between demographic factors and perceived acculturative stress of African migrants in Germany". The author collected data from 85 migrants from the general population and prisons in various cities in German. The results emphasize the importance of

demographic variables and acculturative stress among respondents.

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