

Yes, My Husband Never Settled: Experience of Chagga Wives Living Separately from Their Husbands in Rural Kilimanjaro, Tanzania

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Objective: To explore the experience of tribal wives who live in separate locations from their husbands and their perceptions of HIV risk in Moshi rural, Tanzania.

Methods: This was a Qualitative study in married women in rural Moshi, Kilimanjaro. Ten homogenous focus group discussions were conducted with a total population of 60 female spouses. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis.

Results: Sixty married women were interviewed within 10 FGD. Their occupations included home wives, small-scale farmers, and entrepreneurs. Most were Christians, with the majority attained a primary school level of education. The findings were grouped under three major themes; i) reasons for living far apart, ii) effect of living far apart, and iii) perceptions of HIV risks. The most reported reasons were husband's career 'Yes my husband never settled in one place as he has to move here and there fetching money, his business is very dynamic...', the wife was left in the village taking care of children, elderly and coffee farms. 'I cannot follow to leave with my husband as I have to look after the farm otherwise the children will have no food to eat. Male spouses lacked the feeling of being settled in the rural area. Living far apart caused a lack of trust in the sexual safety of their marriage. However, frequent visits "saved couples" living separately, 'I cannot say I am living with my partner because he comes once in a month or on a special occasion to visit us. Drivers of long safari trucks are prone to HIV transmission '...my huit's and drive long safari track for three months. When he arrives home, he stays with me for 2 days, its such for the past five years, 'it's easy for me to get HIV infection since my husband when in safari it easy to have another relationship.'

Conclusion: Husband's occupation was the main reason that caused them to live separately from their wives. These relocations increased the risk of contracting HIV infection as perceived by these women. This separation was seen as contributing to the husband's engagement in extramarital relationships, breaking down trust in their marriages and offering little protection from HIV.

