

Female education, adolescent sexuality and the risk of sexually transmitted infection in Ariaal Rendille culture

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Abstract:

Sub-Saharan Africa today features the worlds highest levels of fertility, infant and child mortality and sexually transmitted infectious diseases, with the last including Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome(AIDS) (National Academy of Sciences 1996). All three parameters are affected by female education. Beginning with Caldwell (1979) seminal analysis of Nigerian survey data, two decades of research link maternal education with decreased fertility and child/infant mortality (see, for example, United Nations 1985, Cleland and Kaufmann 1990, Cleland and Van Ginneken 1989). Relationships between maternal education and fertility are, however, not as straightforward as the 'dose and response' patterns measured for infant/child mortality, and in some cases may actually reveal a positive relationship (Jejeebhoy 1995, United Nations 1997, Bledsoe (1991, 1999a). Nonetheless the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, 1994, strongly called for universal female access to education because