

**Traditional Youth Hangout Places Contribution to Risky Sexual Behavior, in Gambella Town South Western Ethiopia, a Qualitative Study.**



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**June, 2014**

**JIMMA, ETHIOPIA**

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## **Abstract**

**Background:** Studies conducted in Ethiopia on risky sexual behavior show a gap and the need for urgent comprehensive health education as an intervention method. A substantial proportion of the adult and youth population are engaged in risky sexual behavior. The potential negative outcomes of young people practicing unsafe sexual practices are contracting STIs including HIV. In Gambella region Ethiopia, HIV prevalence is four times higher than the national rate and the region is characterized by a relatively higher magnitude of risky sexual behavior than any other region.

**Method:** The study was conducted in Gambella town Ethiopia. A grounded theory research design was used to attain the objective. Data was collected by an in-depth interview for 10 individuals from those youth that participate in these hangout places and participant observation was also held for 23 days. The sample consisted of youth that attend this event until data was saturated with relevant information. Ethical considerations were addressed by ethical clearance paper, anonymity, confidentiality and voluntary participation.

**Results:** Findings from the study show that risky sexual activities are being held in these youth hangout places. The risky sexual activities held included multiple sexual partnerships, trans-generational sex, intercourse with a stranger, transactional sex and no/inconsistent condom use.

**Conclusion:** Participants in the study confirmed that risky sexual activities are being held in this youth hangout places. Activities associated with risky sexual behavior have been uncovered in this research project and these activities may contribute to the spread of HIV infection in the region.

**Recommendation:** The researcher recommends the city administration and the regional health bureau to intervene on these traditional youth hangout places by offering education on safe sex and offering condoms at these places.

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## **Acronyms**

<b>HIV/AIDS</b>	Human immune deficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
<b>EDHS</b>	Ethiopian demographic and health survey
<b>DHS</b>	Demographic and health survey
<b>UDHS</b>	Ugandan demographic and health survey.
<b>MDGs</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>SNNP</b>	Southern nation's nationalities and people of Ethiopia.
<b>KAP</b>	Knowledge, attitude and practice
<b>HAPCO</b>	HIV/AIDS prevention and control office
<b>VCT</b>	Volunteered counseling and testing
<b>STI</b>	Sexually transmitted infections
<b>PMTCT</b>	Prevention of mother to child transmission
<b>TB/HIV</b>	Tuberculosis /human immune deficiency virus
<b>RTI</b>	Reproductive tract infection
<b>KAP</b>	Knowledge, attitude, practice
<b>ANC</b>	Antenatal care



## **Chapter one: Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

While risky sexual behavior appears to have increased markedly around the world in the 1990's and leveled off or decreased slightly since then, a substantial proportion of the adult and youth population still continue to engage in risky sexual behavior. This means that without continued focus on prevention, there is still a huge potential that the HIV epidemic may continue to be a threat to public health(1)

Safer sex behaviors such as correct and consistent condom usage and a monogamous relationship are important for protection against STDs including HIV/AIDS .Hence we know that HIV/AIDS is a growing problem in younger age group as well as the adult ages. Promotion of safer sex behaviors such as correct and consistent condom usage along with a monogamous relationships can lead to control of this epidemic.(2) BecauseSexual risk behavior accounts for a large number of opportunities for acquiring HIV infection.(3)

In Ethiopia behavioral risks are not distributed uniformly throughout a population. On average, some subpopulations or communities may have higher levels of risk behavior than others. Which subpopulations or communities are particularly vulnerable can vary greatly from country to country and may need to be defined locally in terms of occupation, migration status, sexual orientation, geographic location, income level, or any number of other factors. Behavioral data can help identify those subpopulations or communities at risk locally and can suggest the pathways HIV might follow if nothing is done to break its spread.(4)

Of greatest concern is the HIV prevalence of close to 6% recorded in rural Gambela. Whether one could identify specific hot spots within the region or not it does not call into question the inescapable fact that something is happening within the region to push its HIV prevalence rate far above the national average. Further investigation is needed to understand the causes of this, but in the interim, interventions including both prevention and care programs should be targeted to Gambela as a priority in addition to the current priority regions. (5)

## 1.2 Statement of the problem

There is growing concern that the prevalence of risky sexual activity among young people may be rising in Africa. (6) Adolescents' sexual behavior is of major public health interest because adolescents often are not equipped to cope with the consequences of early and unprotected sexual activity. In sub-Saharan Africa, where HIV prevalence is very high, sexual behavior of adolescents has even more severe consequences. Thus understanding patterns and motivations of risky sexual behaviors like early sexual debut, non-use of condoms, and multiple partnerships is an important contribution to HIV prevention strategies. Some countries used behavioral survey as an evidence to prove that change in high-risk human behaviors resulted in the reduction of AIDS prevalence in the past. (5)

Studies conducted in Ethiopia on knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) on various target groups provided a baseline data on the consequences of risky sexual behavior and the identified the urgent need of comprehensive health education as an intervention method. (7) The potential negative outcomes or consequences of young people and unsafe sexual practices are high risk of contracting STIs including HIV, through high rates of unprotected sex with multiple partners (8). And these days the number of cases of STIs including HIV is considerably increasing (9). And adequate knowledge on transmission of HIV by itself is no use if individuals do not know that they can get infection from asymptomatic carriers who look well and healthy (10)

Many people often remain uninformed or misinformed about the nature of the disease and have little access to available precautionary and/or preventive measures in the country. (11) Only one-quarter of young women and one-third of young men have a comprehensive knowledge of AIDS, meaning that they know the two major methods for preventing HIV transmission, know that a healthy-looking person can be HIV-positive, and reject the two most common misconceptions about HIV/ AIDS by the year 2011. (12)

Assessment of high risk behaviors in Ethiopia was initiated as early as 1990s and a High score on change in the consequences of risky sexual behavior was documented by intervening on sexual behavior especially in raising awareness both in the general and sub-group of the population. (13)

In Ethiopia the young populations especially female face the greatest risk of HIV infection. This is associated with an early age of sexual debut and sexual mixing with high-risk older men, on top of their biological and gender-related vulnerability .Therefore, prevention and mitigation programs need to be established and given priority in this population. In addition Youth-friendly educational and counseling services need to expand in all parts of the country, including school settings, providing not only services but also training in condom negotiating skills and other HIV prevention strategies(1)

In Ethiopia the other concern is that national prevalence rates of the HIV epidemic often masks variations in the rate at which the epidemic is prevailing in some regions and a thorough study is required in order to generate evidences to explain the fundamental basis of the regional variationsby conducting behavioral surveys and high prevalence of HIV in gambella region should also be justified. (11)

According to EDHS Gambellaregion is characterized by a relatively higher magnitude of risky sexual behavior than any other region in the country. (1) Elevenpercent of women report they had more than one sexual partner in the year before 2011 and multiple sexual partnerships is most common among men in Gambella (9%). Again Women in Gambella report an average of more than 8 lifetime sexual partners, while men report an average of about 6 lifetime sexual partners. In addition to that Paid sex is most common among older men aged 40-49 living in the region(15%). (12)

It has become increasingly clear that HIV prevention programs implementation in the country often prioritize the wrong targets basing their objectives only on national statistics, with a subsequent waste of resources and failure to address those subgroups who are much in need , because of a basic lack of information about who is becoming infected and who needs the service more.(1)

And because of the heterogeneity of the epidemic, HIV/AIDS programs should not be based on national-level statistics, but need to be more focused geographically, and directed to those regions, districts or communities exhibiting higher prevalence rates. This will necessitate conducting research and disaggregating data to the district level in order to identify hot spots and communities at higher risk.(1)

Since the socio-cultural contexts and determinants of sexual behavior in the region are not well understood further research is needed to confirm the reasons for the unexpectedly high prevalence, and if gaps in behavioral risks are confirmed to be present and high, programs need to be developed to target the high-risk populations.(10) And for this reason epidemiologic research and continued surveillance of known and emerging high-risk groups needs to be prioritized in the region as an additional program activity, and funds need to be made available or solicited for these activities to be carried out by government, academic, and even private research institutions in order to reach a consensus on the regions prevalence and nature of risky sexual behavior.(1)

### **1.3. Significance of study**

Although there exist a wealth of research regarding the issue of risky sexual behavior among youth in Ethiopia, risky sexual behavior in Gambella region Ethiopia hasn't been much of a study area for researchers and the contribution of traditional youth hangout places to high HIV prevalence rates in the region Ethiopia has received very little attention.

Gambella region has the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in the country and has recorded high risky sexual behavior in Ethiopia according to some studies. One of the studies EDHS suggests that further research is needed to confirm and understand the reasons for the unexpectedly high prevalence in the Region, and if gap in safer sexual practices are confirmed, intervention programs need to be developed to target the high-risk populations.

The reason behind this study is to assess the presence and patterns of risky sexual behaviors practiced, the overall contribution of this traditional youth hangout places for risky sexual behavior and their contribution to the high prevalence of HIV in the region. The study findings will help understand the patterns of risky sexual behavior among youth, the possible explanations that push youth to risky sexual activities and the challenges that pull the youth away from safe sexual practices. It will also identify an untouched area of intervention in the region, it will aware officials for new intervention area and strategies, the need for healthy youth recreation facilities in the region and adequate safe sex education.

## **Chapter two: literature review**

### **2.1 Global overview**

Risk behaviors like unprotected sex, multi partnership ,no or inconsistence use of condoms and drug of abuse are extremely determinate to health of adolescents and young adults putting them at high risk to HIV/AIDS and other Sexual transmitted diseases.(1)

Young people around the world are at risk for HIV, and millions face serious barriers to prevention. Yet rates have fallen by over 25 percent among young people in 16 of the world's 21 worst affected countries. In most of these, young people have reduced numbers of partners, increased condom use, and are waiting longer to have sex. Young people have shown that given the tools, including youth friendly services, complete information about HIV, and access to contraception, and condoms, they can protect themselves. A combination of approaches, and the removal of societal barriers to prevention, can give this generation the power to prevent HIV. (7)

Around the world, 5 million young people ages 15-24 are living with HIV. Young people ages 15-24 represent 41 percent of all new HIV infections, and 890,000 acquire HIV each year, meaning that around the world, nearly 2500 young people acquire HIV every day .At least 95 percent of all new infections occur in less developed countries, with sub-Saharan Africa by far the hardest hit.(7)

### **2.2 Distribution in Africa**

There are signs of an increase in risky sexual behaviors in several countries. Recent evidence indicates a significant increase in the number of sexual partners in some countries (Burkina Faso, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guyana, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe), as well as a decline in condom use (in Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Senegal and Uganda).(6)

In sub-Saharan Africa, nearly 3.8 million youth are living with HIV/AIDS, comprising 76 percent of the world's HIV positive youth .However ,between 1994 and 2010, 13 countries in sub-Saharan Africa saw declines in HIV prevalence of more than 25 percent.(8)

The relationship between perception of risk and sexual behavior is complex and poorly understood. Several studies conducted in different cultures have associated HIV risk perception with a wide range of variables: number of sexual partners, knowledge of sexual partner's past sexual behavior, fear of AIDS, shame associated with having AIDS, community perception of AIDS risk, knowing someone with AIDS, discussing AIDS at home, closeness of parent-child relationships and religious affiliation. In Sub-Saharan Africa, socio-cultural norms and practices are major determinants of sexual risk-taking behavior (14)

### **2.3 Situation in Ethiopia**

Due to the existing socio-cultural diversity of Ethiopia, the pattern and distribution of HIV in the country varies widely. Some regions are more highly affected than others. Recent reports indicate that there is a large discrepancy in HIV prevalence across region of the country and place of residence. According to 2011 Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey the prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS ranges from the highest prevalence rate 6.5% in Gambella region to the lowest level of 0.9% in South Nation Nationality People (SNNP) region. (9) Gambella is characterized by a relatively higher magnitude of risky sexual behavior than any other region. (1) Men who had multiple sexual partners and with premarital sexual experience have higher practice of alcohol use during intercourse than men with a single partner in Ethiopia in the year 2011 (14)

## **Chapter three:Objectives**

### **3.1. General Objective**

- To assess the contribution of traditional youth hangout places for risky sexual behavior in Gambella town 2014 G.C

### **3.2. Specific Objective**

- To assess the youth's beliefs and perceptions on safe sex in these youth hangout places.
- To identify risky sexual practice in these youth hangout places.
- To assess opportunities and challenges for safe sex in these youth hangout places.



## **Chapter four: Methods**

### **4.1. Study area and study population**

This research was held in Gambella town, the capital of the Gambella region from February-April 2014. The Gambella Peoples National Regional State has a population size of about 406,606. Administratively the region has three zones that are Agnua, Nuer and Majanger under these zones there are 12 woredas, in addition 1 special woreda and Gambella Town administration. The region is one of the lowland areas in the country with an annual temperature estimated average minimum of 18<sup>0</sup>c and maximum of 38<sup>0</sup>c that can reach occasionally 45<sup>0</sup>c and an annual rainfall of 1400mm to 2000mm. Gambella town is the capital of Gambella Peoples National Regional State and is 767 km away from Addis Ababa. The town has total population of 51,660 out of which 25,313 are male and 26,347 are female.

In Gambella town there are special events of celebration which are socially accepted and deep rooted into the culture in which youth are the main participants. The culture originally started by one of the 5 tribes living in Gambella region, the Agnua community but now is being practiced by all interested in it with no restrictions, which makes it rich with a variety of ethnicities. These events are held during weekends and holidays at a regular basis. Though these events are socially accepted, counted as celebration of happiness and used by the youth as a means of spending their leisure time, different activities are held here; late night stays, multiple sexual partnership, unsafe sex and alcohol consumption including under aged groups which all may have their own role in the spread of HIV infection.

### **4.2. Study design**

A grounded theory research design was used to attain the objective and literature was reviewed to gain an insight on the topic and to develop a data collection tool. Grounded theory is a qualitative methodology that acquires its name from the practice of generating theory from research, which is 'grounded' in the data. The aim of the grounded theory approach is to develop explanatory theory about common social patterns. Grounded theory gives us a picture of what people do, what their prime concerns are, and how they deal with these concerns, grounded theory is useful when little is known about a particular subject or problem area. It is useful to

gain a fresh perspective in a familiar situation, especially in areas of change or incongruence.(15)  
And since this study is a new one and very little is known about it grounded theory study design was chosen to be the best fit for the topic.

The process of Grounded Theory encompasses an acknowledgment of the researchers' bias, the selection of a data collection site, the data collection process, the process of coding and analysis, and the compilation of results. Coding and analysis included three stages: open coding, selective coding, and theoretical coding. This stage resulted in dense, saturated core categories. The core categories were then sorted, written, theorized, and cross-referenced with literature, during theoretical coding. The results of this last stage of coding are a basic social process and a theoretical model, which was the final product of Grounded Theory research.(16)

### **4.3. Sample size**

A total of 10 youth were selected for the in-depth interview and interviewed to attain the research objective and data saturation was made Shure by repetition of ideas.participant observations were also held in order to support findings from the in-depth interview.

#### **Inclusion criteria for in-depth interview;**

The youth that attend this youth hangout places and that were willing to participate in the study and have agreed to the terms of the informed consent were included.

#### **Exclusion criteria for in-depth interview;**

The youth that were first time attendants or guests to this youth hangout places were excluded due to reasons that they may not represent practices done at the traditional youth hangout places.

### **4.4. Sampling technique**

A theoretical purposive sampling technique was used to identify the interviewees for the in-depth interview.Participants were recruited based on attending this hangout places more than once. And for the participant observation all participants that come to the traditional youth hangout places were observed in their natural setting based on the tool developed.

## **4.5. Trustworthiness (Data quality management)**

The data was collected by the investigator, which has taken courses on conducting in-depth interview and participant observation. Guba and Lincoln criteria of trustworthiness was used to assure trustworthiness of the study, which includes these four factors (credibility, transferability, dependability, conformability)(17)

### **Credibility**

To achieve credibility the investigator stayed for a persistent and prolonged time in the study area .Interview findings were supported by findings from participant observation .Peer debriefing was ongoingprocess .Data saturation was assured by repetition and overflow of comments.

### **Transferability**

In order to assure transferability many data sources including books, research articles and journals were used to verify that the concepts related to risky sexual behavior found in the study could be applied and understood in other similar contexts or situations.

### **Dependability**

To assure dependability data was collected and transcribed by the investigator for a prolonged stay all responses were documented in text form and supported by evidence from tape recorder.so that if data was collected and transcribed by another individual it would have the same outcome.

### **Conformability**

To assure conformability the in-depth interview guide and the participant observation was based only on the objective it avoided questions or observations that were out of the intended research objectives.

## **Other declarations**

### **1. Reflexivity**

The investigator tried best not to interfere with or influence the data or findings as much as possible. The investigator performed all activities based only on the aim of the study but not on the investigators interest.

## **2. Positionality**

The investigator declares positionality with respect to the study as against the practices practiced at these youth hangout places. The researcher's stance is strictly based on intention to reduce risky sexual behavior and show the harm it has on youth rather than prejudice or discrimination against the society.

## **4.6. Operational definitions**

### **Youth**

It is the time of life when one is young, but often means the time between childhood and adulthood or maturity. Most literature refers 15-25 years of age.

### **Traditional youth hangout places or“chang watt” in local terms.**

In Gambella town there are special events of celebration which are socially accepted and deep rooted into the culture in which youth are the main participants .These events are held during weekends, holidays and week day night time at a regular basis. Though these events are socially accepted by the community , counted as celebration of happiness and used by the youth as a means of spending their leisure time, different activities are held here; late night stays and alcohol consumption including under aged groups which all may have their own role in the spread of HIV. These places are referred to as traditional youth hangout places or “chang watt” in local language of agnuak.

### **Risky sexual behavior**

Is behavior that increases the chances of a negative outcome or increase the chance of contracting or transmitting disease and unwanted pregnancy.It consists of having more than one sexual partner or multiple sexual partnerships, practicing unprotected sex, transactional sex, trans-generational sex and unreliable birth control methods.

**Perception of risk**

Is the subjective judgment that people make about the severity of a risk.

**Multiple sexual partners**

It is the act of having casual or random sexual relations frequently with different partners without selecting or choosing of the partners.

**Transactional sex**

It is any sexual relationship or negotiation held in exchange for other items, it may be financial or of material exchange in return for any sexual practice.

**Unreliable birth control methods**

They are birth control methods that may fail to function properly or that may have negative outcomes even though they are properly utilized.

**Trans-generational sex**

It is a sexual relationship or practice that is practiced between two different generations of age.

**Sexually active**

It is the state of an individual when he/she is coming into contact with other person to have sexual intercourse or an individual that has started practicing sexual intercourse.

**4.7. Data collection tool/Instrument.**

**In-depth interview guide**-contains 14 open ended questions, including opening question, transition questions, key questions and ending question based on the objectives set. The in-depth interview guide was adopted and steering probes were used whenever necessary. While required during the interview translators were used for language translation.

**Participant observation**- the researcher performed participant observation based on the guide adopted from scratch.

#### **4.8. Data collection procedure**

First the investigator attended these events and then identified interviewees based on the inclusion criteria, then the investigator communicated with these participants and asked for their willingness to be interviewed, then an appointment was scheduled based on the interviewees interest and a suitable place was set to conduct the interview and contact information was also exchanged. And both met at the appointed place and the interviewee was offered with the informed consent, and then the interview proceeded from there, after agreement to the informed consent. Then the interviewer asked for interviewee's willingness to be recorded and continued the interview by taking notes simultaneously with the recording.

And for the participant observation the researcher attended and participated in the activities the youth perform and socialized with them for a total of 23 days while performing the observation. In the participant observers stay on the traditional youth hangout places locally called the "Chang Watt", the observer has observed activities held there gained an insight of the culture and the also their contribution to risky sexual behavior. In order to help the researcher understand more about the phenomena under investigation key informants were identified by communication with those individuals who are observed to be frequent and active participants and unclear scenarios were clarified by them. And based on the checklist prepared relevant field notes were taken and unclear ideas were supported by findings from steering probes added on the in-depth interview guide. The data was collected, summarized and supported the findings from the in-depth interview and vice versa. And for the protection of the investigator from possible harassment or danger a male individual had to accompany the investigator though in different sitting arrangement as recommended by the culture of the community with the investigator.

#### **4.9. Data processing and presentation**

Different contributing factors for risky sexual behavior were assessed in this youth hangout places. Data was collected by in-depth interview and participant observation and analyzed by the use of ATLAS Ti software and result findings were summarized and presented by the help of quotes, thematic presentations and finally a theoretical framework was developed to explain the risky sexual behavior, the reasons for practicing risky sexual behavior and the challenges that hinder safe sexual practice among youth in this youth hangout places.

#### **4.10. Dissemination of findings**

Research findings will be submitted to Jimma University department of health education and behavioral sciences, Gambella regional health bureau, the regional HAPCO and other NGO's or governmental organizations working on youth.

#### **4.11. Ethical considerations.**

Formal letter from department of Health Education and Behavioral Sciences was submitted to Gambella regional health bureau in order for the gain of permission for the research to be held. After that a letter was written to the city municipality by the regional health bureau to allow the research to be held in the city. Informed verbal consent was obtained from the volunteered participants and their confidentiality and anonymity was kept intact by informing the participants that the data will not be available to anyone except the researcher and that they are not required to mention their names respectively. Voluntary participation on the in-depth interview assured the right of the participants to be or not to be included in the study and after inclusion to withdraw from the study at any time they want and risk of harm was also assured.

The city municipality permitted the participant observation to be held, but with special attention on the privacy of the participants identity and use of any recording material not to be used while doing the participant observation. The city municipality also informed the investigator not to cause any harm on study participants.

## Chapter five: Results and discussion

### 5.1. Results

#### Socio-demographic characteristics

A total of 10 participants were interviewed by the use of the in-depth interview out of which their age ranged from 18 to 25. Their sexes were 6 male and 4 females, four of them were married and six of them were single eight of them followed protestant religion ,one of them was muslim and the other was catholic. Seven of them have completed at least 10<sup>th</sup> grade and 3 out of them had graduated from college. Eight of them were of agnuak ethnicities one was mejeng and one was of oromo. Their participation at this hangout places ranged from 2 to 7 years.

**Table 5.1.Socio demography of in-depth interviewees.**

Sex	Male				Female			
	6				4			
Marital status	Single	Married	divorced	Widowed	Single	Married	Divorced	Widowed
	3	3	-	-	3	1	-	-
Educational status	Below 8th	At least 8 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup> complete	College graduate	Below 8th	Atleast 8 <sup>th</sup>	10th complete	College graduate
		2	2	2		1	1	2
Ethnicity	Agnua	Mejeng	Oromo	Others	Agnua	Mejeng	Oromo	Others
	4	1	1	-	4	-	-	-

The findings of the study were organized into quotes; the quotes were then coded by open coding. There were a total of 137 quotations related to the subject matter. 54 different types of



codes were finally obtained from the data. These codes were then classified into 3 families as mentioned below, finally the families were networked to create a framework that gives description of the Risky sexual Practices held at these traditional youth hangout places and their Possible explanations for practicing risky sexual behavior and challenges that hinder safe sexual practice. There were a total of three families included that explained risky sexual behavior as an outcome. They are “risky sexual practices held at these traditional youth hangout places”, “possible explanation for the risky sexual behavior” and “challenges against safe sexual practice”. Each family includes codes that describe it the most under it, as mentioned below.

### **Theme 1; Risky sexual Practices held at these traditional youth hangout places**

Activities that are held in the traditional youth hangout places that are considered to be risky sexual behaviors include no or inconsistent condom use, multiple sexual partnership, trans generational sex, transactional sex and intercourse with a stranger as supported by the data below. The reason this traditional youth hangout places are different from other hangout places is because they are accepted by the community as a good culture and that it has been practiced from generation to generations for a long time now. And because they are part of culture interventions are not done yet though problems are seen widely.

#### **1.1. No or inconsistent condom use**

No or inconsistent condom use is one of the risky sexual behavior admitted to be practiced in this youth hangout places. Due to many factors like absence of the condom when needed, no negotiation skills on condom use or resistance to accept condom use as a habit interviewees mention that condom is not used always at this traditional youth hangout places. Findings from the participant observation show that there is no condom available at this hangout places and at some places there are empty condom boxes.

*“In my community i have seen many girls have sex with different men but they don’t use protection, because they are ashamed of telling them to use condom because the men give them money and buy clothes for them.”*

*A 25year old male*

*“...Oh that is common here, majority of youth don't take care and they don't like condom. They hate using condom and again they go out with many girls or boys and they say there is no HIV and that they can't get it.”*

*A 20 year old male*

*“I mean even if they know they have HIV, older men still involve with young girls and don't use condom”*

*A 23 year old male*

## **1.2. Multiple sexual partnerships**

“changg watt” is blamed to force risky sexual behavior like multiple sexual partnerships. And some youth mention that multiple sexual partnerships are a common phenomenon observed at this hangout places. Observations show that when the sun starts to set most youth get drunk and the music makes it difficult for them not to dance .And large amplifiers invite passing by youth to join, dancing mostly begins with a few participants and after a while most youth start dancing. Till late afternoon boys dance with boys and girls dance with girls .But after sun set Chang watt gets wild and you see, most people couple up, then change partners after that.

*“For me ,even coming to this party places is a risk, because they force you to go out with many girls, even for me at the end of the party i sometimes feel like i want to go out with another girl though I'm married.”*

*A 23 year old male*

*“Even though they are married it doesn't stop them from cheating”*

*A 23 year old male*

*“Yes culture contributes to HIV because a man may have as many wives as he can afford and want. But he may not satisfy them all sexually so they may go out and bring HIV to him”*

*A 24 year old male*

## **1.2. Trans-generational sex**

Some findings show the presence of trans-generational sex in the region and that they are held in this traditional youth hangout places. Older male are said to use the opportunity of finding youth girls there and they practice trans-generation sex which is mentioned to increase the spread of HIV in different literatures. Youth from the age group 16 to 28 years of age are the ones mostly observed and sometimes those of the age 14 and 15 years of age are observed coming here. When its night time some older men are observed at this traditional youth hangout places, this is supported by the following data.

*“...yes some old men and married men ask me if i know the phone number or name of the girl they lay eyes on just because i am smaller in age, the problem is today they sleep with her with their money and then they take disease to their wife and new born, the problem is they don't protect themselves because they think this youth can't get HIV at this age but they are very wrong.”*

*A 22 year old male*

*“In gambella the older men go to party places for youth girls and start enjoying alone, then they see girls there and introduce them to themselves during dancing or they send an individual her age to communicate her and they invite both a drink. And once she gets drunk many things happen.”*

*A 23 year old male*

*“Sometimes old men whom we know come here and they look for girls. They invite you to another place to drink with them but finally they ask you to sleep with them .yes i have encountered this but i tell them that i will tell their wife or i will talk if they force me to do anything i don’t want so i go home safely after that.”*

*A 21 year old female*

*“Hangout places provide alcohol for youth and they cause youth to have unprotected sex.And those who have high places in the officeknow that girls have a lack of basic need and moneyfor enjoyment, like clothes,dancing and partying money. Butmaybe he has HIV then he goes out with the girl and offers her money, then the girl doesn’t care if he is married or not, if he is sick or not and if he is using condom or not. Because maybe her families don’t have money to buy herclothes, this is what we see daily.”*

*A 20 year old male*

*“The old people that go there may be carriers and with the help of alcohol ,youth may meet with carriers and get HIV ,the next time youth will sleep with someone their own age and then she/he may transmit the disease again.”*

*A 25 year old male*

### **1.3.Transaction sex**

Transactional sex is another risky sexual behavior that is practiced in this traditional youth hangout places, due to lack of basic needs or due to financial reasons young girls are mentioned to practice transactional sex with older men or those who can offer it.

*“...And those who have high places in the office, know that girls have a lack of basic need and money for enjoyment, like clothes, dancing and partying money. But maybe he has HIV then he goes out with the girl and offers her money, then the girl doesn’t care if he is married or not ,if he is sick or not and if he is using*

*condom or not .because may be her family don't have money to buy her clothes ,these is what we see daily.”*

*A 20 year old male*

*“I mean she cannot resist to go out with the man because he shows her a lot of money”*

*A 23 year old male*

*“A lot of facts exist the first thing is money. Many older men and powerful ones, i mean authority wise use their money in wrong way.Sometimes they use their money to buy them anything including lives.”*

*A 23 year old male*

*“And the girls want to follow fashion of cloth and jewelry,want to be equal with their friends and so they are forced to go out with older men who have money because their boyfriends can't afford it.”*

*A 23 year old male*

*“After we drink we dance we have fun and go to other places with men who invite us,but me and my friends come back home afterwards.If i stay late my mother will call me and she will not be happy.*

*An 18 year old female*

*“If a man invites you beer then he wants you to sleep with him, he forces you go to a room with him, you can say no but you will never be invited again and he will start to invite your own friend and buy clothes for her to make you jealous.”*

*An 18 year old female*

#### **1.4. Intercourse with stranger**

These places are used as a meeting place for individuals of no previous contact which in turn promotes sexual intercourse with stranger. This may be facilitated by alcohol and other drug use or other reasons which is one form of risky sexual behavior. As observed by the participant observer when the programs end the youth start to go home or hotels and clubs to continue having fun and drinking, but this time not alone but with their partners they pick at the chang watt or their previous partners.

*“I have seen many who come to this party places want to go home with a girl they meet here ,once its night time people look for each other exchange phones and then spend the night ,or if they have a family they just have sex and then separate soon.”*

*A 25 year old male*

*“...Yes you know this place is a place where people meet and find new girlfriend and boyfriend. And even some people get married after they meet here.”*

*A 21 year old female*

*“The next party they don’t find that girl and they still want to have fun but then they want to negotiate with another one. This is how they get many sex partners. But for me i have a wife.”*

*A 23 year old male*

### **Theme 2;Possible explanations for practicingrisky sexual behavior**

The possible explanations identified for the practice of risky sexual activities that are held in the traditional youth hangout places are alcohol and other drug use, misinformation on safe sex, misinformation and absence of circumcision, absence of partner at hangout places,unavailability of protective materials like condom, financial problems and some cultures like polygamy.

#### **2.1.Alcohol and other drug use**

The use of different drugs and the contribution of alcohol and other drugs for risky sexual behavior and their abuse in the “changwatt” is mentioned by the youth as follows. Findings from the participant observation show that in the past they used traditional music instruments and only local drink for the “Chang watt” , but this days beer and other alcohol are also served .Chang watt has a purpose of youth spending time together but older age groups are not invited and they don’t come at all but nowadays when it’s late you see some old men come and attend, some of them may dance but most of them don’t.

Some youth volunteer to usher for others by serving what is prepared to drink .they serve local drinks like “borde” ”wocheta” and “abet kamera” that are prepared easily with low coast, but if they prepare drinks like beer and other alcohol they may charge money to replace the cost, then the money is kept and another Chang watt is prepared with it.

*“Chat, alcohol and mariwana are used in party places like this and after that people get very careless and they forget themselves.”*

*A 22 year old male “When you get drunk everybody seems so nice to you and attract you ,so it makes you like any girl available .Before i got married i go out with new girls and the next morning i wonder is this the girl i slept with last night and i feel ashamed.”*

*A 23 year old male “Alcohol drinking is the main reason youth go to party places for and then it again brings many bad behaviors like fighting and one night love ,the next day you don’t remember the girls name you meet there then you repeat it again and again and then the girls fight for you, all this is a caused by alcohol.”*

*A 20 year old male “I understand why most of my friends have many girlfriends. When we go to party places together they start talking with a girl and then when it’s late since we take a lot of alcohol they start negotiating a girl to go home with them and then they go with her and they repeat it with another one the next day.”*

*A 23 year old male*

*“some people don’t know how to protect themselves from HIV and others know how to but still they cannot decide to use a condom, because they drink too much alcohol, "borde" or "wachata" then they risk their life, i know many girls who have gone out with a man because they were drunk and without knowing whether he is healthy or not.”*

*A 21 year old female*

*“Oh i see alcohol do many crazy things that you regret the next day, i think alcohol is the cause of all problem in this party places, ether it is disease or fighting between people.”*

*A 21 year old female*

*“Alcohol brings too many problems, because you may not know what you do you may even have sex with bad girls and may even fight with people with no reason .when i say bad girls i mean girls who sleep with men for money and stand on streets looking for men.”*

*A 24 year old male*

*“Drinking alcohol may contribute to HIV because you may not take care when you are drunk and if you chew chat it makes you want to drink after that, so i think the two drugs are much related.”*

*A 24 year old male*

*“I think if you drink too much alcohol, you can’t decide .and when a man asks you to go out with him without protection then you say ok. so i think it’s not good to drink very much alcohol in party place.”*

*A 24 year old female*



## **2.2.Misinformation on circumcision**

Some individuals are evidence of misinformation's or lack of awareness's on the benefits of circumcision in the region and that there was no practice of circumcision in the past ,some individuals find it difficult to accept the new culture and some are even against it this is confirmed by interviewees as follows.

*“I don't know the benefit of getting circumcised i think it's painful and it's against my culture in short i don't like it and I will not be circumcised.”*

*A 23 year old male*

*“I think circumcision may bring disease because there is nothing to cover the smooth area. I think to protect yourself from disease you should immediately take a shower after you have sex and wash off the disease.”*

*A 24 year old male*

*“I have seen many uncircumcised youth friends of mine they sleep with a girl without protection and then they don't shower then they get affected with disease every time.”*

*A 22 year old male*

## **2.3.Absence of circumcision in the past**

A statement reminds the past absence of circumcision in the region caused many individuals not to accept it in the present and that a lot should be done on this area as an intervention.

*“Male circumcision is not done in Gambella it is not a culture, but i have heard that it protects HIV so if it does really i think it is good to get circumcised for men.”*

*A 21 year old female*

*“It is useful because it protects you from diseases .but men in my society don’t want to be circumcised because its culture not to.”*

*A 25 year old male*

#### **2.4.Unavailability of protective materials like condom**

One of the explanations for the practice of risky sexual behavior includes incidences where condom may not be available when needed this may cause individuals to be forced to practice risky sex though they don’t want it.

*“when you go to party places the girls come there looking very beautiful and they also want a man to sleep with and you may not have a condom with you, but you may be very interested in a girl .you may not want to lose the chance of finding her there so you may sleep with her without a condom.”*

*A 24 year old male*

*“Safe sex is using a condom and being faithful, nowadays in gambella we all knowabout safe sex but the problem is decision when we are with a girl, some men can’t sleep if they don’t have a condom with them if they are with a girl.”*

*A 22 year old male*

*“Onceit’s late there will be no protection available and you and you won’t want to lose the opportunity and you have sex without protection.”*

*A 23 year old male*

*“I advise others to use too and carry it with them whenever possible. I mean it may not be available at night because shops close at night and the room or hotel you stay in may not provide a condom.”*

*A 24 year old male*

## **2.5.Misinformation on safe sex**

Some individuals confirm presence of misinformation on safe sexual practice among the youth the following responses are an excellent example for this where simple interventions like sexual health education can prevent them.

*“I have seen many uncircumcised youth friends of mine they sleep with a girl without protection and then they don’t shower then they get affected with diseases every time.”*

*A 22 year old male*

*“To be honest most of us have sex with different girls but the thing is that if you don’t take care of your girlfriend financially and mentally she may want to go to another man, but again protection is necessary always. Some friends of mine have two or three girlfriends and thinking they will be faithful to them they don’t use condom with all of them, this is when problem comes.”*

*A 24 year old male*

*“Then i ask about the girls’behavior and life from her friends and those who know her then i inform my family and friends to look at her when I’m not around.”*

*A 20 year old male*

*“Circumcision is very good, it reduces the disease when you take a shower or not, but if you are not circumcised and don’t take a shower you may get an STD.”*

*A 20 year old male*

## **2.6.Financial problems**

One of the main explanations for practicing risky sexual behavior is financial problems as supported by data bellow. It is mentioned that youth girls practice paid sex due to financial

problems to satisfy their needs as a youth or due to lack of basic needs. As the observations show change starts mostly at 3:00 pm in the afternoon and ends at 10:00 pm night time. Those youth who are friends or neighbors come together, dressed with the best outfits they own, or they sometimes even borrow outfits from their friends to look their best there. And the excellent place that provides this opportunity is coming to this traditional youth hangout places in order to meet men that come for this reason.

*“You know some girls go to party places to get money. I mean to sleep with a man and take money from him. If the men want to have sex with no condom they will do it looking for their money, they don’t realize that problems will pass away.”*

*A 21 year old female*

*“I have seen married girls going here and there with other men daily, because what they get from other men daily is more than what their husband gives them per month, so they choose to cheat on their men and they give disease to their husbands just for the sake of money.”*

*A 22 year old female*

*“...and the girls want to follow fashion of cloth and jewelry, want to be equal with their friends and so they are forced to go out with older men who have money because their boyfriends can’t afford it”*

*A 23 year old male*

*“...yes, I see girls who want money from men and they go out with them after party is finished .then they go home with a lot of money, in the next day they invite me and when i ask where the money comes from, they tell me the last night man gave them and my student friends who have a poor family have many clothes and jewelry which they get in the same way.”*

*A 24 year old female*

*“I mean she cannot resist going out with the man because he shows her a lot of money.”*

*A 23 year old male*

*“A lot of facts exist the first thing is money. Many older men and powerful ones, i mean authority wise use their money in wrong way. Sometimes they use their money to buy them anything including lives.”*

*A 23 year old male*

*“There are men who go to party places like this and go withone girl for money and another girl”*

*An 18 year old female*

*“If a man invites you beer then he wants you to sleep with him, he forces you go to a room with him, you can say no but you will never be invited again and he will start to invite your own friend and buy clothes for her to make you jealous.”*

*An 18 year old female*

## **2.7. Some cultures like polygamy.**

This section explains the pressure culture exerts against the practice of safe sex .polygamy is one form of multiple sexual partnering and due to presence of this culture in the region it could be counted as a form of risky sexual behavior. And another cultural factor is that at party places men and women don't sit at chang watt together so they are forced to sit alone though they are partners, and this provides opportunities for risky sex.

*“Because in our culture men and women sit separately at most places ,i sit with my girlfriends and then i come back home alone ,my husband leaves the party with his male friends and after that they stay long before he comes home, so i pray for God to protect us.”*

*A 21 year old female*

*“...yes culture contributes to HIV because a man may have as many wives’ as he can afford and want. But he may not satisfy them all sexually so they may go out and bring HIV to him”*

*A 24 year old male*

*“In our culture men are allowed to marry more than one wife and they live in all their wife's houses, they have sex and they have kids from every wife so if one wife has HIV then all of them have HIV .This is a bad thing everyone should marry one wife because of HIV, in the past there was no HIV but now there is ,so we have to change our culture.”*

*A 24 year old female*

## **2.8. Absence of partner at traditional youth hangout places**

The absence of partner there is mentioned to cause multiple sexual partnerships as mentioned by interviewees. Findings from the observation show that at the beginning boys arrive with boys and ladies arrive with ladies and sit at a separate arranged place for them because of the cultural norms of the agnua community that male and female don't sit together. And the high humidity forces it to be held outdoors.

*“The problem is if you don't come to party places with your girlfriend at the end of the day you may leave with another girl and the next day with another one.”*

*A 22 year old male*

*“...the next party they don't find that girl and they still want to have fun but then they want to negotiate with another one .This is how they get many sex partners but for me i have a wife.”*

*A 23 year old male*

*“I have a wife but my wife lives in dima as a man i have needs to have sex so i go out with girls, but i always use condom to protect me and my family.”*

*A 25year old male*

### **Theme 3; Challenges that hinder safe sexual behavior**

Some of the Challenges that contribute to risky sexual behavior in the traditional youth hangout places are perceptions that youth don't have HIV, unavailability of condom in some places, lack of parental communication and lack of circumcision in the past.

#### **3.1.Perceptions that youth don't have HIV**

Some individuals that come to this traditional youth hangout places are mentioned to perceive younger girls don't have HIV and for this reasons they don't use protection.

*“...Old men sleep with small age girls because they think they don't have HIV.”*

*A 23 year old male*

#### **3.2. Unavailability of condom in some places**

Some youth mention that shops close in the town very early and “chang watt” ends after shops close, so though youth intend to use protection it is not available for them. Findings from observation state that “chang watt” ends around 10:00pm the following quotes show condom is not available at some places when needed.

*“Once it's late there will be no protection available and you wouldn't want to lose the opportunity and you have sex without protection.”*

*A 23 year old male*

*“I advise others to use and to carry it with them whenever possible. I mean it may not be available at night because shops close at night and the room or hotel you stay in may not provide a condom.”*

*A 24 year old male*

### **3.3. lack of parental communication**

This section emphasizes on the need of parental communication with their offspring's in order to create a healthy sexual practice among youth ,but if this is absent youth may be led to unhealthy ways of practicing intercourse and they may be exposed to HIV and other STDs.

*“The thing i want to add is previously in my culture there used to be discussion between mother and female child, boy and father .but now parents don't spend much time with their kids i just don't know why.”*

*A 23 year old male*

### **3.4. Lack of circumcision in the past.**

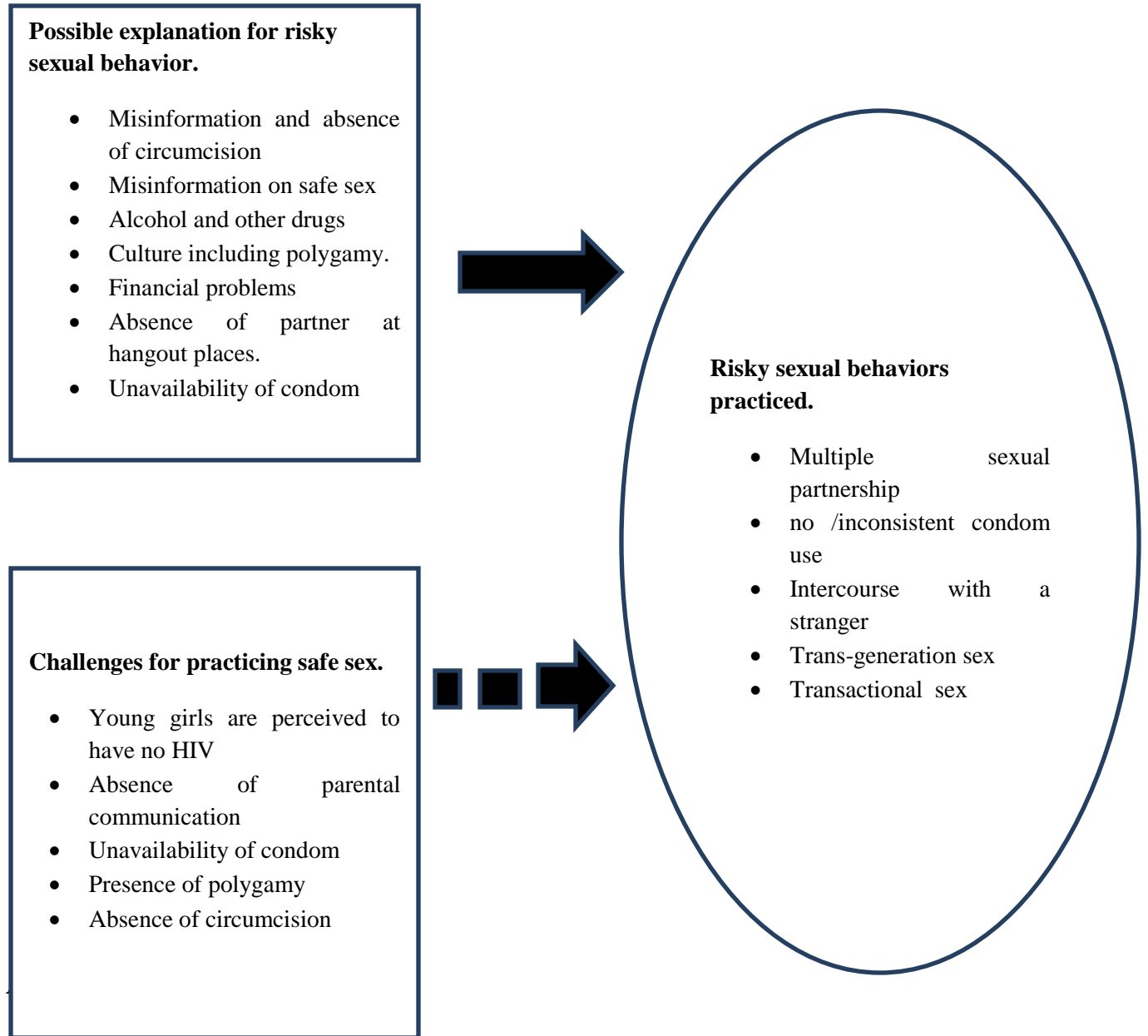
The lack of circumcision in the past is one of the factors that hinder safe sex.

*“Male circumcision is not done in Gambella it is not a culture, but i have heard that it protects HIV so if it does really i think it is good to get circumcised.”*

*A 21 year old female*



## 5.2. Frame work for the explanation of risky sexual behavior in the traditional youth hangout places



### **5.3. Discussion**

In traditional youth hangout places different types of risky sexual behaviors are practiced according to data collected by participant observation and in-depth interview.

The first risky sexual behavior identified is no or inconsistent condom use, youth that come to this hangout places mention different reasons that cause this problem like lack of condom while needed because shops may be closed at night time or some could not afford to buy it .and again some individuals also mention that condom using practice is not accepted but some individuals and even a hate for condom exists among some. Literature review confirms that use of condom among adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa is very low. (18) And dislike of condom has been reported as a reason not to use condom in southern Africa.(19)

The second risky sexual behavior practiced at this youth hangout places is multiple sexual partnerships. As interviewees confirm this is a common practice encountered at this places, this is influenced by alcohol and other drug abuse ,absence of the youth sex partner there at the hangout place and also the presence of some cultures in the region like polygamy are some of the reasons mentioned for the practice of multiple sexual partnerships. This idea can be supported by a study done in southern Africa which includes multiple sexual partners as part of risky sexual behavior.(20)

The third risky sexual behavior practiced is trans-generational sex. Traditional youth hangout places provide the opportunity for older men to have a sexual intercourse with a younger female because the place serves as a meeting place. Trans-generational sex is based on the mutual benefit of some older men's need to enjoy or have intercourse with younger girls and the girls on the other hand have a need to satisfy their basic needs by the financial or material support they get from this men. Research shows that in sub-Saharan Africa wealthier men practice sexual partnerships with youth which they are able to maintain because of their wealth.(21)

The fourth risky sexual behavior encountered was transactional sex between girls and men who can offer goods for these girls. The goods for exchange may be of any type depending on their negotiation. This practice is initiated by the men who offer the goods and facilitated by younger boys serving as a negotiator so that there would be understanding between the two without fear between them. A study in Kenya shows a strong association between poverty and risky sexual

behavior. (22)And adolescents report of exchanging gifts and money in sexual partnership in Uganda. (23)

The last practice identified is sex with stranger as mentioned earlier at these places youth come together,meet new people, consume alcohol and get the chance to spend time with each other, so this provides an excellent opportunity for practicing intercourse with a stranger, as supported by findings above.This idea can be supported by a study done in southern Africa which includeshaving sexual intercourse with a casual acquaintance as risky sexual behavior. (20)

## **Chapter six: Conclusion and Recommendation**

### **6.1. Conclusion**

The aim of the study was to assess the contribution of traditional youth hangout places contribution to risky sexual behavior in Gambella town. Some of the activities associated with risky sexual behavior have been uncovered in this research project .Participants in the study confirmed that risky sexual activities are being held at large in this youth hangout places. And possible explanations have been presented to clarify them more. In addition to that some challenges that hinder safe sex have also been addressed.

The risky sexual activities held included were multiple sexual partnerships among youth and even with older age groups, trans-generational sex was another form of risky sexual practice held and older men hunt for girls in these places, sexual intercourse with a stranger was an encounter many witnessed and some youth admit to practicing or witnessing unsafe sex.

Some of the possible explanations identified were misinformation on safe sex, absence of their partner at the hangout places, use of alcohol and other drugs, anger issues with their partner, carelessness for the safety of others, absence of circumcision as a culture, incorrect handling of condom, some cultures like polygamy that increase promiscuity, hate or unwillingness to use condom and financial problems were the main explanations for the acts.

Finally the challenges against practicing safe sex were lack of parental communication with youth, young people perceived of not having HIV by older men, hate or not accepting of condom, unavailability of condom while needed and resistance to accept male circumcision as anew culture.

## **6.2. Recommendations**

The investigator recommends the town administration to intervene on these traditional youth hangout places by offering education on reproductive health and safe sex and in addition to offering condoms at these places regularly. The study findings show that there is a huge gap on youth knowledge related to safe sex so this could be addressed by changing the youth perceptions on risky sexual behaviors and on preventive mechanisms. Finally the researcher recommends the regional health bureau to interfere in all risky sexual activities held in this youth hangout places.

## **6.3. Limitation of study.**

The limitations of the study was the lack of literature review on risky sexual behavior practiced at other youth hangout places ,so the investigator was forced to use literatures on risky sexual behavior as a whole.The other limitations were unwillingness of some youth to be interviewed and Interviewee bias due to factors causing them to hide their thoughts.

## **6.4. Strength of the study**

The strength of this study was that, it was a new investigation though traditional hangout places have been attended for generations in the region.

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## **Annex II: instruments**

### **Section1:In-depth interview guide.**

This study is conducted in gambella town traditional youth hangout places. The study is conducted to identify these hangout places contribution to risky sexual behavior by the use of an in-depth interview that will take one and a half to two hours. By this form the researcher is asking your willingness to participate in this study verbally, and the researcher assures anonymity, confidentiality, right of the participant to withdraw at any time of the interview and voluntary participation.

ID \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Sex \_\_\_\_\_

Marital status \_\_\_\_\_

Religion \_\_\_\_\_

Educational status \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Duration of participation in the hangout \_\_\_\_\_

1. How often do you come to this youth hangout places and why?
2. What do you know about methods of prevention from HIV and other STIS?
3. What do you know about safe sex and how do you describe its benefits?
4. What do you understand about risky sexual behavior?
5. Did you observe any risky sexual activity among other youth in your stay at this youth hangout places?
6. If you are sexually active, how do you describe your sexual life?
7. How do you explain multiple sexual partnerships and what is your attitude towards it?
8. What is your attitude towards condom use (other prevention methods) and what is your personal experience on condom use?



9. Describe the role of alcohol consumption and other substances at these traditional youth hangout places?
10. What is your attitude towards male circumcision and its benefits?
11. What are the challenges for practicing safe sex in this youth hangout places?
12. How do you describe contribution of culture for risky sexual behavior in your community?
13. In your opinion what are the main issues youth should consider to attain a healthy sexual life?
14. Finally what additional points or concerns do you want to mention in relation to risky sexual behavior in this youth hangout places?

## **Section 2: Observation guide**

1. Observation related to alcohol consumption.
2. Observation related to any Sexual activity.
3. Observation related to payment agreements for sex.
4. Observation related to promiscuity.
5. Observation related to age of participants.

## **ASSURANCE OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR**

The undersigned agrees to accept responsibility for the scientific ethical and technical conduct of the research project and for provision of required progress reports as per terms and conditions of the Faculty of Public Health department of Population and Family health in effect at the time of grant is forwarded as the result of this application.

Name of the student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date. \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPROVAL OF THE FIRST ADVISOR**

Name of the first advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date. \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the second advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date. \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

