Audience identification with a character’s dilemma to use traditional medicine vs. ART: the capacity of a television drama series to promote health-enhancing behaviour

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Intersexions

The moment someone becomes sexually active, they become part of a sexual network of people who are related even though they may be complete strangers.
Post-broadcast evaluation

- 12 focus groups, 11 in-depth interviews
- Six provinces; included 87 regular viewers
- Rich data on how viewers engaged the series and its impact on different levels:
  - Did participants interrogate existing understandings of themselves & social world?
  - Did they develop new conceptualisations that are conducive to healthy behaviour?
  - Were spaces for critical dialogue and reflection opened?
  - To what extent was behaviour change conceptualised and enacted?
Benefits of ART
Portrayal of traditional beliefs
Ntombi’s strength and agency
Communicating w/ elders about ART
Examples of behaviour change
Interpersonal communication
Conclusion

The impact of Episode 21 took various forms:

- **enhanced knowledge** about nature of HIV and benefits of ART in particular;
- opened up *communicative spaces* within families and communities about the health-enhancing benefits of ART

*Personal reflection* and identification with the characters and storylines:

- extended to key moments of realisation
- that sometimes accompanied the *conceptualisation of specific forms of action* that one might take
- or that had been taken in order to reduce risks of HIV infection

Careful and *emphathetic portrayal of cultural beliefs* and practices appeared to help this impact
Partners

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