‘The way the virus spoke, it was like it was talking to me’: Fear and efficacy in the television drama series, *Intersexions*

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Cadre

Tsha Tsha
Health communication

“A MAN WHO TAKES RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS ACTIONS.
A MAN WHO CHOOSSES A SINGLE PARTNER OVER MULTIPLE CHANCES WITH HIV.
A MAN WHOSE SELF WORTH IS NOT MEASURED BY THE NUMBER OF WOMEN HE CAN HAVE.
A MAN WHO MAKES NO EXCUSES FOR UNPROTECTED SEX, EVEN AFTER CRINING.
A MAN WHO SUPPORTS HIS PARTNER AND PROTECTS HIS CHILDREN.
A MAN WHO RESPECTS HIS WOMAN AND NEVER LIFTS A HAND TO HER.
A MAN WHO KNOWS THAT THE CHOICES WE MAKE TODAY WILL DETERMINE WHETHER WE SEE TOMORROW.
I AM THAT MAN, AND YOU ARE MY BROTHER.

Yenzaahle!
Do the right thing
Health communication

ZAZI
Know Your Strength

zazi.org.za / #teamzazi / fb teamzazi
‘Connectivity’ and # of sexual partners

- Number of Concurrent Partners
  - Mean: 1.66
  - Mean: 1.74
  - Mean: 1.60
  - Mean: 1.66

- Largest components
- Bicomponents in red

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It’s all about acute infection...

Viral load over time...

![Graph showing viral load over time with stages of disease](Image)
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.
'Our lives intersect in a vast network that affects us all. In sex, there are no strangers...
Do you know who your previous lovers slept with?

Previously on...

Can be counted on one hand.

Do you know your lovers’ lovers?
Social media presence

InterSEXions
76,628 likes - 1,614 talking about this

TV Show
Brings drama to your screens every Tuesday at 20:30 on SABC 1.
Visit http://www.intersexions.co.za/

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Videos
Notes
Social media presence

Maria Sethebe Love it, love it, love it!
Tonight's episode was awesome, totally PRICELESS!
12 hours ago · Like · Comment

Lieketseng Dee Mokoena likes this.

Write a comment...

Olwethu Nhonky Molose .......... cant wait to buy an Intersexions 1 dvd....... Mr Producer it better b in the pipeline.
12 hours ago · Like · Comment

Busisiwe Sinayo Radebe likes this.

Busisiwe Sinayo Radebe The DVD is a must have, Big up intersexions
12 hours ago · Like

Write a comment...

Mabokala Motsele Wow! Intersexions is da best tv series ever in a long time in SA. Big up u guys. Such original romance... Priceless!
12 hours ago · Like · Comment

Busisiwe Sinayo Radebe likes this.

Write a comment...

InterSEXions In last night's episode we saw Zamo tell Ntando that positive before anything else happened between them. Two questions you continue with the relationship if you found out your new lover was HIV+?
02 February at 10:27 · Like · Comment

26 people like this.

View all 79 comments

Thabo McLoving Temba LmAo Lol u made my nite intersexions ;)
13 hours ago · Like · Comment

Brendon Mampela shapa inter shapaaaaa, diz episode wat fab, expect again next week(style sa ko magaeng)

InterSEXions Most men who cheat are unhappy in their relationships? or false?
Sunday at 17:45 · Like · Comment

25 people like this.

View all 215 comments
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?
New understandings about HIV

- **Complexity** of sexual networks
- Networks *traverse social, geographical boundaries*
- **Speculation** about chain of infection
- **Fear** of the non-discriminatory nature of HIV

Internalisation of the message:

- Intense engagement with the concept of *sexual connectivity*
  - *Realisation of personal sexual interconnectedness*
  - *Insight into HIV risk consequences*
- Reflection on personal sexual risk
  - *Questioning current partners’ fidelity and sexual history*
Personification of ‘Mr. V’

- Mr. V gave a *human quality* to the virus
- Seen to permeate ones personal & social space
- *Embodiment* of HIV gave the feeling that HIV ‘is very close’

I also like the way he made HIV sound so human; he made you feel that it is real and it will get to you the same way he said it would

(Male, 18-24, peri-urban, North West)
The series appeared to enhance viewers’ understanding of the nature of HIV risk & their personal vulnerability by arousing a kind of fear that provoked a desire to control the danger of the threat of HIV, rather than a sense of powerlessness.

The sense that Mr V ‘is always there next to you saying, if you do not use a condom, I will get you’ was described as frightening and often accompanied by a call to take action.
Interpersonal communication
Self-reported behaviour change

- Transference of meanings derived from the series to their own lives and social contexts;
- *Actionable forms of knowledge* led to conceptualised and enacted behaviour change
  - Could do, will do, have done..
- HIV testing, condom use, communication with sexual partners, reductions in alcohol use and # of partners
Conclusion

The series met its overall objectives and its impact took various forms...

- Enhanced knowledge about nature of HIV and sexual network in particular;
- Personal reflection, identification with 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

Image credit: Vukosi Marivate, Rutgers University: the most common words from 30,000 Intersexions tweets!
Partners

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