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Poster Presentation P28

**THE EFFECT OF GENDER AND CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS ON YOUNG
WOMEN IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HIV/AIDS**

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Studies on rising HIV/AIDS rates have shown a variety of factors influencing the heightened vulnerability of South African women. Even though young people generally have an adequate understanding of HIV/AIDS, their infection rates continue to increase. Societal norms and traditional gender roles render women more vulnerable to contracting the disease, in part by denying women the rights to ensure safe sex and monogamous relationships. Accepted norms regarding men's sexual "needs" and standard sexual conduct in relationships have influenced the low success rate of condoms in preventing transmission. This presentation will examine how and why these norms, attitudes, HIV/AIDS education, governmental roles, individual economic incentives, and other factors contribute to South African young women's disadvantage in the fight against this epidemic.