

Abstract

How do the local cultural politics of secrecy intersect with biomedical and institutionalised global health knowledge and management of HIV? This question was ethnographically researched during a home counselling and testing programme as it was initiated twice in a Kenyan community. The programme was informed by worldwide efforts to organise and control HIV so as to ‘end AIDS’. We focused critical attention on the relationship between HIV testing and counselling and contend that local expertise in speaking about (or silencing) sexuality, intimacy and HIV intersected with the home counselling and testing campaign as an instrument in the co-production of local gender dynamics and power arrangements. We demonstrate how the home counselling and testing programme was put to use for local cultural projects aimed at (re)negotiating gender, sexuality, social roles, intimacy and power dynamics and, in consequence, produced uneven experiences with testing, treatment and AIDS-related health outcomes during a period of major social change.