

‘Seeking for clarity in genetic science’: exploring the factors behind men’s decisions to seek DNA testing in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The study investigates factors that influence men’s decisions to seek deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) paternity tests in Zimbabwe. A qualitative descriptive phenomenological design was used as a research design. the data was collected from (n = 12) non-paternity fathers and (n = 2) key informants, recruited for convenience and purposeful sampling. the study used semi-structured and key-informant interview guides with open-ended questions as research tools. using a descriptive phenomenological approach in data analysis, five key themes emerged as major factors that influence men’s decisions to seek paternity tests, which included the need to settle legal disputes, personal reasons to solve family disputes, the need for peace of mind in case of uncertainties, medical reasons, and general curiosity to certify fatherhood. the findings have implications for the legal, social, and medical aspects of non-paternity fathers’ well-being. the study highlights the need for accessible and affordable DNA paternity testing, support and counseling services, health insurance coverage, and public education campaigns to ensure that men can seek resolution in paternity disputes and address the emotional, psychological, and health-related impact of paternity disputes on men.

Keywords: DNA testing; men’s health; paternity testing; genetic testing; Zimbabwe; healthcare decision-making