

FACTORS' CONTRIBUTING TO MEN'S HIGH DEATH RATE AND ITS EFFECTS: A CASE OF PCEA NGECHA PARISH, NGECHA PRESBYTERY, KIAMBU COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

National statistics demonstrate that women outlive men in Kenya. The trend is no different in Kiambu County. Of particular interest to the present study is the alarming rate at which male residents have died in the last seven years within the PCEA church, Ngecha parish. The present study adopts Erick Erickson's psychosocial theory. The study assesses the factors contributing to high men's death rate and its effects, namely psychosocial and biological causes. The study also examines the social-economic effects as well as the role the church leadership can play to curb the high prevalence of male death. In the past, the church has been doing little in term of educating its members on health issues through its health committee. the Christian education committee as well lacks the capacity and needs to be empowered in order to be pro-active in the line with its motto." My people perish out of ignorance." Hosea 4:6The study used descriptive research design targeting members of the church, especially those who have lost loved ones. The study also uses purposive sampling design with two hundred with one hundred and sixty-one respondents. Primary data was collected using structured questionnaires, burial certificates and death certificates which stated the causes of death in men. The church record books from the parish headquarter office of Pcea Ngecha Parish, Tigoni sub-county records, as well as Ngecha Chief's office, was also a major source of data. Descriptive statistics were used in data analysis. The research found that a variety of social (smoking, heavy drinking, reckless behaviour and violence), psychological (suicide, homicide, relationship breakdown and depression) and biological (bad cholesterol and heart failure) factors play a significant contributing role on the observed high death rate among male residents in the study area. The researcher also found that social-economic effects of male deaths include loss of productive labour; lack of finances in families; the higher rate in school dropouts and slow economic growth and higher poverty levels. The study further concludes that the church has a major role to play in resolving the high rate of male deaths by to offering sensitization and psychological support to men who are either suicidal or suffer from relationship breakdown and depression. Finally, the study recommends that beyond spiritual nourishment and counselling, the church can also introduce physical fitness programs for its members to as well as encouraging them to have regular medical checkups to counter the biological and psychological causes which are leading to the high levels of men's death rate.

Keywords: Men, Mortality Rate, Generativity.