

## Original Research Article

# Terms around Female Same-Sex Sexual Relationships: Resource for Social Behavior Change Communication Interventions Targeting Women Who Have Sex with Women in Tanzania

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**Abstract:** Social behavioral change communication interventions in Tanzania target populations engaging in high- risk sex behaviors and practices: anal intercourse, sex work, injecting drugs and male same sex relationships excluding women who have sex with women (WSW) or women who identify lesbians. In this paper, I describe terms used in reference to female same-sex sex or sexual relationships, important in health social behavior change communication targeting WSW in Tanzania. Data presented are part of cross-sectional descriptive and retrospective formative study among WSW conducted in Dar-es-Salaam region, Tanzania in 2021. WSW aged 18 and above, stayed in Dar-es-Salaam for six months or more; had had sexual contact with a woman in the past year participated in this study. Participants were recruited via snowball method. Community leaders/members and managers of NGOs/institution supporting WSW were purposively selected to take part in this study. Researchers used four methods to generate data needed for this study: focus group discussion, in-depth interviewing, observation and collecting WSW's life stories. Content data analysis was conducted to create categories of terms around female same-sex sex or sexual relationships reported by study participants. Four categories of terms around female same-sex sex or sexual relationships emerged: terms referring to women who identify WSW or lesbians; terminologies referring to female same-sex sex; terms referring to female same-sex-related behaviors and practices; and terminologies referring to items/materials used during female same-sex sex. I conclude WSW in Dar-es-Salaam have coined terms that express their socially- created world. I recommend social behavior change communication programmers in the health education and promotion context to use these terms in developing comprehensive and WSW-friendly research protocols for sustainable behavior change among WSW and the public towards making female same-sex sex safe for reduced HIV and STIs transmission in Tanzania.

**Keywords:** Women who have sex with women, lesbians, women's sexuality, female same-sex sex, lesbian vocabulary, social behavioral change communication, Tanzania.

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## INTRODUCTION

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) attacks cells that help the body fight infection, putting a person at high risk and vulnerable to other infections and diseases. Scientifically, HIV is known spreading mainly by contact with certain bodily fluids of a person with HIV, most commonly via unprotected sex [sex without a

condom or Pre- exposure prophylaxis (*PrEP*)], through sharing injection drug equipment, or through mother-to-child transmission. If left untreated, HIV can lead to the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). Currently, HIV prevention approach around the globe, and in Tanzania in particular, involves various behavioral and biomedical interventions among the general population and vulnerable groups: men who have

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sex with men (MSM); injecting drug users (IDUs); females engaged in sex work (FSWs), women in entertainment industry, migrant populations and long-distance truck drivers.

Initially, behavioral interventions implemented in Tanzania targeted the identified social and biological contexts and cofactors known to influence (increase or decrease) the probability of risk behaviors for HIV infection (IPHRB, 1997). Technical guidelines for these interventions are guided by the National Policy for HIV and AIDS 2012 and constantly updated to accommodate new development in behavior and biological national, regional and global study findings and recommendations (TACAIDS, 2012). Recently, Tanzania has extended HIV behavioral and biological studies and interventions to other 'newly recognized' country's sexually minority populations including bar and restaurant female attendants, women working in food and recreational facilities (FRFs), fishing populations and migrant workers/laborers to the exclusion of WSW (Kamazima, *et al.*, 2021).

Lack of research on WSW in the country (and other parts of the developing world) in comparison to heterosexuals, as well as MSM, in general, can be attributed to perceived lower risk of HIV, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and other diseases (like cancer, depression, mental health or reproductive health needs and wellbeing) among WSW (Zaidi, *et al.*, 2017). As a result, more data is available on the vulnerabilities of MSM, IDUs and FSWs. Subsequently, there remains a silence regarding WSW-specific vulnerabilities, particularly in the African and Tanzanian contexts. As a matter of fact, female same-sex sexual relationships, the WSW in particular, are not risk free.

Recent studies, the Australian study (Eowyn, 2011), for example, did find lesbians to be more promiscuous than straight women; lesbian relationships being short lived (17.3% of lesbians had relationships that lasted more than 3 years); 93% of lesbians reported having had sex with men. The same study showed that 75-90% of WSW have also had sex with men. Lesbians are 4.5 times more likely than heterosexual women (9% of lesbians vs. 2% of heterosexual women) to have more than 50 lifetime male sex partners. Furthermore, studies indicate that some WSW, particularly adolescents, young women, and women with both male and female partners, are at increased risk for STIs and HIV as a result of certain reported risk behaviors including having sex with partners from the high-risk groups, injecting drugs and sex work. In addition to diseases that may be transmitted during female same-sex sex, a study at an Australian STD clinic found that lesbians were 3 to 4 times more likely than heterosexual women to have sex with men who were at high-risk for HIV (Eowyn, 2011). Unfortunately, most of these studies have been conducted in the U.S.A. Australia and in Britain with a

complete neglect of WSW in countries located in Africa (Kamazima, *et al.*, 2021).

The public health importance and medical consequence of this promiscuity and other risky behaviors and practices is that WSW have a likelihood of contracting HIV, syphilis and other STIs from high risk and the general populations (Muzny, 2014). Certainly, this finding suggests that because WSW have sexual partners in the highest- risk groups and other partners; they are another 'bridge population' forming a transmission bridge from the highest- risk groups (HRG) to the general population and vice versa. Scientific evidence demonstrates that HIV and STIs are principally behavioral diseases and the heart of behavior interventions. Behavioral interventions, therefore, have been and remain a heart of behavior change through communication or transferring health information that would equip individuals with knowledge and motivation to change and sustain healthy behaviors. The perception is that since HIV is mainly transmitted via specific patterns of risky behavior (unsafe sex, for example), it can be prevented by suitable change in behavior (for example, reduction of number of concurrent sexual partners and consistent and effective use of condoms) through strategic behavior change communication (Kamazima & Kakoko, 2017).

Despite the risks associated with same-sex sex behaviors and practices, studies on the transmission of STIs including HIV have focused on MSM (Kamazima, *et al.*, 2021). Consequently, the understanding of female same-sex sex behaviors and practices in HIV and STIs transmission among the WSW and between the WSW and the general population, has remained limited in the developing world. However, while the literature on female same-sex sexual relationships is increasing in a few African countries — South Africa, Kenya, for instance — there is limited data on this public health issue in Tanzania (Kamazima, *et al.*, 2021). Importantly, except in the context of male-to-male sex, there is limited discussion of female same-sex sexual relationships in HIV and STIs research and prevention. As a result, there is limited understanding of the role of female same-sex sexual relationships in HIV and STIs transmission. In this paper, therefore, I present terms around female same-sex sexual relationships captured by a cross-sectional descriptive and retrospective formative study among WSW conducted in Dar-es-Salaam region, Tanzania. I am contented, the use of these terms could facilitate developing comprehensive and WSW-friendly research (questions, objectives and tools) protocols whose findings would inform the social behavior change communication (SBCC) process aimed at bringing sustainable behavior change among WSW and the public towards making female same-sex sex safe for the reduction of HIV and STIs transmissions in Tanzania.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Study Design and Setting*

Researchers conducted a cross-sectional descriptive formative study in Ilala, Kinondoni and Ubungu districts of the Dar-es-Salaam region, Tanzania between January and February 2021. The researchers purposely selected Dar-es-Salaam region because it is the largest commercial city in Tanzania, hosting people from diverse backgrounds, lifestyles and presenting wide range of sexual behaviors and practices (MoHSW/NACP, 2012). Dar-es-Salaam region, therefore, allowed easier access to study participants.

### *Study Participants' Recruitment*

Due to the illegal context within which female same-sex behaviors are practiced in Tanzania, researchers used snowball method to recruit WSW aged 18 and above, had stayed in Dar-es-Salaam for six months or more; have had sexual/physical attraction to other women, had engaged in same-sex sex in the past year or were in same-sex sexual relationships; and were knowledgeable of WSW's lived experiences. WSW's willingness to participate in the large behavioral and biological surveillance survey was an added advantage for inclusion in this study. Researchers used purposeful sampling method to recruit community leaders, community members and underground-operating NGOs/institutions' managers supporting sexually minority groups in the study area as they are knowledgeable of issues around female same-sex sexual relationships in their areas. Interestingly, all potential WSW contacted willingly accepted to participate in this study.

### *Methods and Study Tools*

The main objective of this (unique and the first one in the country) formative study was to generate data to inform a planned larger national study: "*Behavioral and biological surveillance survey among women who have sex with women in Tanzania.*" To generate such comprehensive data needed, researchers used four qualitative methods: focus group discussion (FGDs) with WSW; in-depth interviews (IDIs) with WSW and community leaders/members; observation (of openly presented female same-sex sexual relationship-related behaviors and practices) throughout their stay in the study area; and documentation of WSW's life stories for qualitative information on motives, historical perspectives and same-sex sex experiences. The use of four methods of inquiry enabled the researchers to understand, recognize and appreciate female same-sex behaviors and practices from the WSW's perspective.

### *Focus Group Discussion (FGD)*

A focus group is a small-group (of between 6 and twelve relatively homogeneous individuals) discussion guided by a trained leader. It is used to learn about opinions on a designated topic, and to guide future action. Twelve WSW participated in each of the two FGD conducted. Three research assistants (RAs) —

a moderator, a time keeper and a recorder — conducted the FGDs in Kiswahili, the Tanzania national language known and spoken by the participants. The RAs conducted the FGDs in Kinondoni District because it was reported harboring several recreational places frequented by (MoHSW/NACP, 2012) and residence of majority of WSW (Kamazima, *et al.*, 2021). The RAs conducted FGDs in all-WSW supporting NGOs/institutions or in places perceived convenient to the WSW invited to participate in the group discussions. With permission from the FGD participants, all FGDs were audio-recorded. However, the recorder took short notes on emerging key issues to supplement recorded information. The average duration of the FGDs was one and half hours. However, as participants had interest in this study, the two FGDs conducted took longer time, up to two hours.

### *Interviewing (IDI)*

Is an optimal qualitative method for collecting data on individuals' personal histories, perspectives, and experiences, particularly when sensitive topics are being explored (FHI360, 2005:2). Same-sex sex and, female same-sex in particular, is illegal in Tanzania making discussion around female same-sex sex sensitive that individuals would hesitate talking about openly. It is with this understanding that researchers applied different interviewing strategies to gather information needed for this study. Researchers conducted interviews in Kiswahili, the national language. Data generated from IDIs enabled capturing lived personal and general experiences created within and outside the WSW's-defined world.

The researchers conducted initial interviews with three leaders of WSW's organizations running services supporting all-WSW groups in the study area identified by a previous study on MSM (Moen, *et al.*, 2012). Through these initial interviews, we were able to identify participants in the FGDs we conducted in Kinondoni. Researchers conducted IDIs with eight WSW, three with community leaders, one with a male (businessman) community member and three with WSW- supporting NGOs managers. Three managers of NGOs/groups supporting WSW were interviewed three times each to clarify on issues that emerged from IDIs, FGDs and observations. The average duration of the IDIs was one and half hours. However, as participants had interest in this study, some IDIs took longer time, up to two hours. With permission form the participants, all IDIs were audio recorded.

### *Observation*

Observation method helps qualitative researchers to learn the perspectives held by study populations. In this study, researchers presumed that participants had multiple perspectives of female same-sex sex, which we were interested to understanding the interplay between and among them. To accomplish this task, therefore, the research team conducted observations

alone or both observing and participating, to varying degrees, on the study community's daily activities. The goal was, in regard to female same-sex sex, to learn what life is like for an "insider" while remaining, inevitably, an "outsider." While in these community settings, the research team recorded what they saw and informal conversations and interactions with members of the study population in as much detailed as possible. Researchers used data from observations in different ways: facilitate developing positive relationships (rapport) among researchers and key informants, stakeholders, and gatekeepers, whose assistance and approval were needed for this study to become a reality; identifying and gaining access to potential study participants; improving the IDI and FGD guides and facilitating the interpretation of data collected through discussions and interviews.

### **Life Stories:**

We collected life-stories (or personal account of informant's life and in her/his own words) of three WSW: one transgender man on hormonal treatment, one tomboy and Manager of NGO supporting WSW; and one WSW engaging in sex work with both men and women. Life stories allow the researcher to explore a person's micro- historical (individual) experiences within a macro-historical (history of the time) framework and challenge him/her to understand an individual's current attitudes and behaviors and how they may have been influenced by initial decisions made at another time and in another place (Ssali, *et al.*, 2015). Data from life stories enabled capturing personal experiences in the WSW's-defined and external worlds. Therefore, WSW's life stories collected facilitated the understanding of individual and general motives for a female's sexual or physical attraction to other women that would trigger long term relationships or same-sex marriages and the contexts within which female same-sex sexual behaviors and practices are conducted in Tanzania. With permission from the participants, eight life stories collected were audio recorded.

### **Research Assistants' Qualifications, Selection, Training and Roles**

Researchers selected and trained three female RAs to assist in some aspects of this study: data collection and transcribing recorded interviews. The RAs held first degrees in social sciences, had good experience in conducting field research and with good probing skills. Researchers had worked with these RAs on other studies, specifically during the baseline human trafficking studies (Kamazima, 2009; Kamazima, *et al.*, 2016), the HIV Behavioral and Biological Surveillance Survey among Female Sex Workers in Dar-es-Salaam, 2010 (MoHSW/NACP, 2012) and cross-border cooperation along the Tanzania-Uganda border (2002 and 2017/2018). Researchers trained the RAs for five days to orient them on the objectives and procedures for the study. In addition, the RAs were made aware of the WSW's vulnerability and exposed to proper interaction

and interviewing procedures/ethics with the study participants. The study tools were pre-tested among WSWs not included in the study. Tools' pretesting results were used to modify the tools, mainly adding terms and concepts as known and used among the WSW's community.

### **Data Analysis**

The RAs transcribed recorded IDIs and FGDs verbatim. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis approach by applying five stages according to Braun and Clarke (2019) to establish meaningful patterns: familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes among codes, reviewing themes and presenting the results (Braun & Clarke, 2019); where open systematic coding of data in the participants' language and combining emerging emic concepts with preconceived theoretical constructs. Nvivo 12 version computer software was used to aid data analysis process.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Researchers applied and obtained research clearance for the study protocol from The Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS) Institutional Review Board (IRB). The District Administrative Secretaries (DAS) granted permission to collect data needed in their respective areas. The Street authorities, managers of NGOs/institutions caring for WSW granted permission to conduct the study in their respective areas and institutions. The process of interacting with the study participants (interviewing and observing) had no harm to them (NOT putting them at higher risk of danger) and we kept their story telling to only needed information (NOT re- traumatizing them).

With permission of the participants, all FGDs and IDIs were audio recorded. Due to the illegal status of female same-sex sexual behaviors and practices in Tanzania, all study participants provided oral consent. Researchers anticipated chances of encountering cases of (potential) traumatized WSW, their relatives or fellow WSW. Researchers, therefore, arranged with the WSW activist organizations and healthcare providers to provide appropriate assistance. Researchers compensated study participants with TShs, 10,000 [Appr. \$4] for transport fare (to and from interview places) and for time spent during the interviews.

## **RESULTS**

### **Characteristics of Study Participants**

A total of 39 participants were selected and interviewed to generate data needed for this study. Two of them, the Religious Leader and a businessman, were men. Their ages ranged between 26 and 60 years. Participants' education level ranged from primary school education completed to tertiary level (college and university). All the WSW were currently single or in unstable same-sex sexual relationships. Of the seven WSW interviewed, five reported never married and two were divorced. WSW who reported ever-given birth, had

one to three children. Five of the eight WSW interviewed reported having sex with men and three of them reported regularly engaging in sex work (with men, women or both) for survival.

During the IDIs and FGDs we asked our study participants about terms they use to express issues around female same-sex sexual relationships. The analysis of data collected generated four categories of terms used in the female same-sex sex industry: terms referring to the WSW; terms referring to female same-sex sex; terms referring to female same-sex sexual behaviors and practices, and terms referring to items/materials used in daily life situation and during same-sex sex in particular.

**Terms Referring To the WSW**

In Table 1, I present terms used by the WSW community to refer to themselves — the WSW. ‘Lesbian’ or ‘*Msagaji*’ (pl. lesbians or ‘*Wasagaji*’), ‘*Asiyejua utamu wa mboo*’ (WSW have no idea of vagina-penis penetration’s glorification), ‘*Malaya*’ or ‘*Mjuaji wa mtaa*’ (literally, a prostitute or a FSW) were the common terms used by the WSW themselves and members of the public to refer to WSW in general. ‘*Mbuchu*, ‘*Rejiaji top*’ or ‘lesbian top’ are terms reported referring to a woman who plays the ‘male’/masculine position/role in female same-sex sex or sexual relationships.

‘*Kuchi*, ‘*Rejiaji bottom/base*’, ‘Lesbian bottom’, ‘Lesbian lipstick’ or ‘Feminine’ is a woman playing a female role in female same-sex sex or sexual relationships. ‘Lesbian top *na* bottom’ refers to a woman who switches roles (feminine to masculine and vice versa) in female same sex-sex.

‘Bisexual’ means a heterosexual woman who also has sex with women; some would switch roles depending on sexual service (s) demanded. “*Straight*’ refers to a woman who has sex exclusively with men or heterosexual woman. ‘*Jike dume*’ is a term referring to a tomboy, a woman who present masculine (dressing and behavior) and has sex exclusively with women. “*Msafiri jinsia*’ a male or female not identifying with his or her prescribed gender. ‘*Msafiri jinsia mwanamume*’ is a female transitioning from a feminine to a masculine gender ‘*Msafiri jinsia mwanamke*’ is a male transitioning from masculine to feminine gender. ‘*Baba*’, ‘*Darling*’ ‘*Mzee*’, ‘Mr.’, ‘Brother’, ‘Baby’, ‘*Mpenzi*’, ‘*Mume wangu*’, ‘My love’ or ‘My sweet’ are terms these women use when referring to or introducing a male partner in the female same-sex sex or sexual relationships. “Baby’, ‘Darling’, ‘My sweet’, ‘Wife’, ‘*Mpenzi*’, ‘*Mtoto*’, ‘My love’ or ‘*Mke wangu*’ are terms used by this community when introducing or referring to a female partner in female same-sex sexual relationships.

**Table 1: Reported terminologies around female same-sex relationships referring to WSW**

Term	Equivalent LGBTI term	Interpretation
<i>Msagaji/Mkoboaji</i>	WSW/Lesbian	Metaphors used for a lesbian or a woman who has sex with women.
<i>Asiyejua utamu wa mboo</i>		
<i>Malaya/ Mjuaji wa mtaa</i>		
Lesbian		
Lesbian top/ <i>Mbuchu/Mpuchu</i>	Lesbian top	Controls the relationship and behaves and presents masculine.
<i>Kuchi</i> /'Lesbian bottom'	Lesbian bottom	Plays a female role in the relationship.
Rejiaji top, bottom/base		
Lesbian lipstick/ Famines		
Lesbian top <i>na</i> bottom	Lesbian top and bottom	A woman or lesbian who switches roles (masculine to feminine and vice versa) in female same sex-sex.
<i>Jike dume</i> /Tomboy	Tomboy	Has develops hatred for men; has sex exclusively with women; behaves and presents masculine.
<i>Msafiri jinsia</i>	Transgender	Male or female who does not identify with ascribed gender.
<i>Msafiri jinsia mwanamume</i> /Transgender man	Transgender man	A woman/girl struggling to achieve the male gender.
<i>Msafiri jinsia' mwanamke</i> /Transgender female	Transgender female	A male/boy struggling to achieve a female gender.
Straight	Straight woman/heterosexual female/woman	A woman having sex exclusively with men.
Bisexual	Bisexual	Heterosexual woman and has sex with women.
<i>Baba/Mzee</i> /Mr./Brother/ <i>Baby/Mpenzi/Mumewangu</i> /Mylove/ My sweet/Darling	Masculine partner in female same sexual relationships	Terms/words used to refer or introduce a woman who plays masculine roles in female same-sex sex or sexual relationship
<i>Baby/Mysweet</i> /wife/ <i>Mpenzi/Mtoto</i> / My love/ <i>Mke wangu</i> / Darling	Female partner in female same sexual relationships	Terms used to introduce one’s bottom partner/wife.

**Terms Referring to Female Same-Sex Sex**

In Table 2, I present terms used by WSW community to refer to female same-sex sex. ‘*Kusagana*’ literally means grinding or vagina-vagina rubbing,

‘*Kujamiiana*’, ‘*Kutombana*’ terms equating female same-sex sex to heterosexual sex or vagina-penis penetration, and ‘*Kuvunjana*’, ‘*Kubinyana*’, or ‘*Kukamuana*’ are metaphors for female same-sex sex.

**Table 2: Reported terminologies around female same-sex relationships referring female same-sex sex**

Term	Equivalent LGBTI term	Interpretation
<i>Kusaga/Kukoboa</i>	Female same-sex sex	Metaphors for female same-sex sex.
<i>Kubinya/Kuvunjana</i>		
<i>Kukamua</i>		
<i>Kujamiiana/Kutombana</i>	Heterosexual sex terms used for female same-sex sex	Term equating female same-sex sex to heterosexual sex.

**Terms Referring to Female Same-Sex Sex-Related Behaviors and Practices**

In table 3, I present terms used among WSW when referring to female same-sex sex-related behaviors and practices. ‘*Pembe nne*’ a metaphor for breast touching/rubbing for sexual stimulation or masturbation. ‘*Kubusti*’, ‘*Kupekecha*’ or penetrating the vagina or anus with a dildo, tongue or fingers for sexual stimulation, fucking or masturbation. ‘*Ku-ruck* in and out’ means moving a finger, dildo or tongue in and out the vagina or

anus for sexual stimulation, masturbation or fucking. ‘*Kunyonya*’, ‘*Kuingia chumvini*’, ‘*Kuzama chumvini*’ connote oral vagina or anus sucking or licking for sexual stimulation, musturbation, or fucking. Sometimes kissing, licking or sucking is extended to other parts of the body including, but not limited to, neck, forehead, cheeks, ears, umbilicus, buttocks and thighs. ‘*Romansi*’, literally means foreplay during female same-sex sex, but also used to mean romantic/rhetoric female same-sex sex.

**Table 3: Reported terminologies around female same-sex relationships referring to female same-sex-related behaviors and practices.**

Term	Equivalent LGBTI term	Interpretation
<i>Pembe nne</i>	Breast touching/rubbing/sucking	Sexual stimulating by rubbing/touching/ sucking breasts.
<i>Kubusti</i> <i>Kupekecha</i>	Sexual stimulating	Use of dildos, fingers or the tongue to penetrate/suck the vagina or anus for sexual stimulation, fucking or masturbation.
<i>Ku-ruck</i> in and out	Vagina or anus figure, tongue or dildo in and out movements or fucking	Moving a figure, tongue or dildo in and out of the vagina or anus for sexual stimulation, masturbation or fucking.
<i>Kunyonya</i>	Vagina or anus licking or sucking	Vagina or anus sucking/licking.
<i>Kuingia/kuzama chumvini</i>	Oral vaginal or anus sexual stimulation or fucking	Anus or vagina sucking/licking for sexual stimulation, fucking or masturbation.
<i>Romansi</i>	Literally ‘foreplay’	Metaphor for female same-sex sex or foreplay.

**Terms referring to items/materials used in daily life situation and during same-sex sex**

In Table 4, I present terminologies around female same-sex sexual relationships captured, which refer to items/materials used in daily life situation and during sex in particular. ‘*Mboo bandia*’, ‘*Kikalagosi cha mboo*’ or ‘*Mboo feki*’ means an artificial penis or an object resembling a penis used for sexual stimulation or masturbation. ‘Toys’ a collection of sex objects used for sexual stimulation during female same sex-sex; or devices primarily used for human (heterosexual or homosexual) stimulation and pleasure. ‘*Mkasi*’,

‘*Mgusano*’ or ‘*Msagano*’ a metaphor for vagina-vagina rhetoric rubbing or female same-sex sex style. ‘*Kuma*’ a vagina in Kiswahili. ‘*Kwa bibi*’, ‘*Mbele*’ or ‘*Uke*’ are metaphors for a vagina in the WSW’s language/vocabulary. ‘*Kondomu ya mdomoni*’ or Dam stand for a latex or polyurethane sheet used between the mouth and vagina or anus during (same-sex or heterosexual) sex. ‘*Kilainishi* (pl. *virainishi*)’ means lubricants used during female same-sex sex. ‘*Dawa ya kusukutua*’ means a solution (mainly an industrial product) used to rinse the mouth after vagina or anus licking or sucking (oral sex).

**Table 4: Other reported terminologies around female same-sex relationships captured**

Term	Equivalent LGBTI term	Interpretation
<i>Mboo bandia/ kikalagosi cha uume/mboo feki</i>	Dildo	Artificial penis or toy.
Toys	Female sex-sex toys	Usually, penis toys
<i>Mkasi/Mgusano/Msagano</i>	Scissors sex style	Female same-sex sex style that allows rhetoric vagina rubbing.

Term	Equivalent LGBTI term	Interpretation
<i>Kuma</i>	Vagina	Vagina in Kiswahili.
<i>Kwa bibi/mbele/uke</i>	Vagina	A metaphor for vagina as used in WSW conversation.
<i>Kondomu ya mdomoni/Dam</i>	Dental dam	Latex or polyurethane sheet used between the mouth and vagina or anus during (same-sex or heterosexual) sex.
Gloves	Sexual protective gears	Plastic gloves used for protection during vagina or anus licking or fingering.
<i>Kilainishi/KY2</i>	Lubricants	Lubricants used during female same-sex sex.
<i>Dawa ya kusukutua</i>	Mouthwash	Hydrogen monoxide/peroxide lesbians/WSW use it to rinse their mouths after oral (anal/vagina licking/sucking) sex.

## DISCUSSION

Female same-sex sexual behaviors and practices or relationships are socially unaccepted and illegal by constitution in Tanzania, thus punishable to life imprisonment upon conviction (URT, 1998; Moen, *et al.*, 2012; Kamazima, *et al.*, 2021). Hence, WSW or lesbians (Kamazima, *et al.*, 2021) use various terms (metaphors) to cover female same-sex sexual behaviors and practices making them sound acceptable to WSW non-group members. The vital purpose for coning these terms is to keep outsiders (the public and law enforcement machinery, in particular) from comprehending what female same-sex sexual behaviors and terms mean or represent. Like other groups engaged in illegal activities, terms around female same-sex sexual behaviors and practices evolve, change and often carry different meanings to different people (the WSW and the public); vary from place to place, time, groups and contexts within which female same-sex sexual behaviors and practices are conducted (Kamazima & Kakoko, 2017).

Interestingly, available lists of terms and categories on female homosexuality (Stokes, 2016; Author, 2017); and categories/typologies of sex workers; categories of sex workers and sex buyers (Kamazima & Kazaura, 2018); trafficking in persons and human smuggling (Kamazima, 2010; Kamazima *et al.*, 2016); anti-malaria programs have been widely used in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of intervention campaigns, including HIV Social and Behavior Change Communication interventions targeting respective groups in Tanzania and elsewhere.

In this study, WSW studied reported terms they use to refer to WSW, female same-sex sex, female same-sex sexual behaviors and practices and materials or industrial products they use during same-sex sex. The three Managers of NGOs supporting WSW, the transgender men and the tomboys knew and reported most of the terms used within and out of their communities/groups compared to lesbian bottoms and more so those women who engage in sex work regularly or occasionally for survival. Opportunities available for these categories of WSW: participation in same-sex women empowerment meetings, workshops in and out of country (in Kenya or South Africa); having networks in Kenya and South Africa; spoken and written English language skills; and being on transitioning treatments

(hormonal or surgeries) (Kamazima, *et al.*, 2021), explain in part, why tomboys, transgender men and Managers of NGOs supporting WSW demonstrated knowledge of female same-sex sexual relationships terms compared to other groups.

Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) is a framework that uses advocacy, behavior change communication (BCC) and community mobilization strategies to influence both individual and societal change. It uses a 360-degree approach focusing not just on mass media but integrates mid-media and interpersonal communication. It systematically addresses the complex processes integral to planning, designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating health communication interventions (Kamazima & Kakoko, 2017). In this context, it is important that communications professionals are able to design programs based on evidence and analysis; develop interventions and materials systematically and creatively; effectively manage implementation and program monitoring; and use research consistently to monitor, and measure outcomes.

Findings presented in this paper confirm that WSW develop female same-sex sexual relationships-related terms based on the (illegal) context they operate and survive in. Coined terms, therefore, evolve and vary between and among WSW categories, over time, space and contexts. These findings support the strategic, evidence-based social behavioral change communication principle that target populations are not homogeneous; different segments of the same population may have different experiences — health needs, for instance — that require different health communication approaches and messages. That is, different groups of the audience or target population have different characteristics that influence the extent to which they pay attention to, understand and act on different messages. Conducting audience segmentation, therefore, would facilitate developing BCC or SBCC health messages that correspond to WSW's health and wellbeing concerns within their specific situations and contexts.

Furthermore, findings showed that female same-sex sexual relationships-related terms and concepts are shared between WSW and the general population, and that some WSW also have sex with members of the general population, both men and women (Kamazima, *et*

al., 2021), suggesting female same sex sexual behaviors and practices are practiced among and between the two groups. WSW and sex workers are known groups at high risk of HIV and other STIs infections (Eowyn, 2011; MoHSW/NACP, 2012; Muzyn, 2014) due to risk behaviors and practices they engage in (Saronga, et al., 2021). In turn, this finding suggests high chances of HIV and other infections transmission between WSW and general population calling for further research to inform concurrent SBCC interventions aiming at making female same-sex sex safe. Finally, these findings suggest some terms around female same-sex sexual relationships have been used from time immemorial challenging the deep-rooted understanding that female same-sex sexual behaviors and practices are 'new' in Tanzania.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings from this study suggest that female same-sex sexual relationships, although illegal and socially discredited, are becoming common among WSW studied. WSW in the study area, and presumably all over Tanzania (Kamazima, et al., 2022), have coined different terms referring to: the WSW; female same-sex sex; female same-sex behaviors and practice, and to items/materials used in daily life situation and during sex in particular, which carry powerful messages in their socially-defined world. Researchers and public health professionals implementing health interventions aiming at changing and controlling or reducing health risk behaviors and practice among this group of citizens, would benefit recognizing and using terms recorded in planning, implementing and evaluating research and intervention programs geared to making female same-sex sex safe for the reduction of HIV, STIs transmission and other diseases among this group of *wananchi* (citizens).

This recommendation is in line with the SBCC principle that behavior change interventions, for example, developed and recognizing the WSW-defined world would be easily understood, socially accepted, WSW-owned and thus potential of generating more meaningful health outcomes. Similarly, from the BCC and SBCC perspectives, messages developed using same-sex sexual relationships-related terms common among this group/population would be more meaningful and accepted to them. In turn, this approach would efficiently contribute to and facilitate sustainable behavior change among the WSW and the general population towards making female same-sex sex safe for the reduction of HIV and STIs transmissions in Tanzania.

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