

ABSTRACT

This paper examines how men negotiate masculinity in reproductive healthcare interactions at one of Kenya's Level 6 teaching and referral public health facilities. Guided by Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, this qualitative study used observation and audio-recorded doctor-male patient consultations to explore how men navigate and ratify positive masculinity during reproductive health encounters. Findings reveal shifts away from hegemonic norms towards masculinity prioritizing well-being. Men negotiate masculine identities through communication strategies such as euphemism, minimal responses, and silence, allowing them to engage in sensitive discussions while maintaining face and respect. Positive masculinity was expressed through active partnership with men accompanying spouses to address infertility, and independent help-seeking for fertility evaluations. These behaviors challenge long-standing norms framing infertility as solely a woman's problem, discouraging men from seeking reproductive health services. The study highlights the role of health professionals in shaping narratives normalizing men's engagement in reproductive health. It recommends promoting male-friendly reproductive health services, cultivating a safe and supportive clinical environment, enhancing provider communication skills and attitude and implementing gender-sensitive public health campaigns. Sustained efforts could adopt a model of masculinity in Kenya where seeking help and prioritizing health are recognized as markers of manhood.