

## **Rebecca Livengood**

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### **The elderly, parent-child relationships and AIDS in rural South Africa**

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Using qualitative interviews, we explore the impact of the AIDS epidemic on parent-child reciprocity relationships, from the perspective of young and old rural South Africans. Typically, adult children provide monetary support and care to aging parents reciprocating for care given while growing up; however, this relationship may be changing due to a 21.5% national HIV-prevalence among 15-49 year-olds, leading to elderly parents frequently outliving their children. Reciprocity relationships are particularly important in developing countries where institutionalized social programs for elderly are weak or nonexistent. South Africa is unique among developing countries in that the government provides assistance through non-contributory pensions; however, these pensions may not fully meet the needs of the elderly, with AIDS straining already scarce resources and creating demands to pool household incomes. Understanding current expectations of the parent-child relationship will assist in developing policies that respond to the needs of young adults, the elderly and their households.