

Cancer in Africa: Anthropological Perspectives

Hybrid Seminar (Bush House, SE Wing, Room 1.04 & on Zoom)

Organisers: Political Stakes of Cancer Network

July 13 2022

13:30 - 16:30

Please sign up using this [link](#)

13:30-14:15	Lunch (at the venue)
14:15-14:20	Introduction
14:20-14:50	Lesego Kgatitswe , University of Witwatersrand <i>Engaging an African Feminist lens in understanding the lived experience of women diagnosed with breast cancer in Kimberley, South Africa</i>
14:50-15:20	Sinenhlanhla Zondo , University of Strathclyde, Glasgow <i>The Extrinsic Factors affecting patient access, referral and treatment of lung cancer in selected oncology public health facilities in KwaZulu-Natal</i>
15:20-16:00	Discussion
16:00-16:30	Tea & Coffee (at the venue)

Lesego Kgatitswe, University of Witwatersrand

Engaging an African Feminist lens in understanding the lived experience of women diagnosed with breast cancer in Kimberley, South Africa

Amongst the many social problems experienced in Africa as a result of systemic violence, the continent must contend with cancer as an emerging epidemic. The increasing cancer-related deaths is a cause for concern. In general, there is a problem of poor knowledge and awareness of cancer, late detection and advanced stage of disease at diagnosis, under-resourced and understaffed healthcare systems, under-reporting and mismanagement of cancer registries, and a dearth of political will in addressing health inequities. Every year, 1.7 million women, worldwide, are diagnosed with breast cancer, making it the most common cancer among women with just over half of all cases occurring in middle to low-income regions (Ginsburg et al., 2017). In South Africa the life-time risk of breast cancer is estimated to be one in twenty-nine women (National Cancer Registry, 2011) and this is likely to have significantly increased. The World Health Organization considers breast cancer a public health problem and the South African Health Department has declared breast cancer a national priority (Breast Cancer Prevention and Control Policy, 2017). Using an African feminist lens, I seek to understand the illness experience of socially diverse women diagnosed with breast cancer in Kimberley, South Africa. By way of in-depth ethnographic interviews, from March 2020, I documented life stories with twenty-three women. I explore how various intersecting forms of marginality, culture and spirituality shape the meanings constructed around cancer, and how women cope and manage the illness. I draw from philosophical and theoretical concepts of *Botho* (humanity), *Gofelegetsa*

(accompaniment/support) and sisterhood, which form part of the women's cultural milieu, and show how these strengthen local forms of resistance and resilience in disruptive and difficult moments in the illness experience.

I am a budding scholar and academic, born and grew up in the vibrant township of Soweto in Johannesburg, South Africa. I am committed to the social justice and academic project through progressive teaching, feminist research, and public sociology. My research area is in the Sociology of Health and Illness and my research interests are broadly around women's health and the socio-cultural drivers of health and illness. I am also interested in exploring creative and innovative research methodologies such as photo-voice, digital storytelling and applied theatre.

I have since worked for different research institutions in the area of health and peace-building such as the Medical Research Council (Gender and Health Unit), Human Science Research Council (HIV/AIDS, STIs and TB Unit) in various capacities. I am currently working as a lecturer at Sol Plaatje University, a newly established university. This role has provided a space for me and other emerging academics to be innovative and stretched.

My goal is to complete my doctoral studies this year and develop my thesis into a book that can be widely accessible to the public.

Sinenhlanhla Zondo, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow

The Extrinsic Factors affecting patient access, referral and treatment of lung cancer in selected oncology public health facilities in KwaZulu-Natal

Patients' insights into the factors affecting access, referral and treatment of lung cancer in public healthcare facilities, are key to the fight against this disease. On the other hand, the lack of epidemiological information on the actual burden of lung cancer, makes it difficult for public healthcare facilities to be adequately equipped to deal with foreseeable challenges in the oncology units. In order to inform patient-centred interventions and lung cancer control programmes, this study explored extrinsic factors that affect lung cancer patients throughout the cancer care continuum in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Nineteen patients receiving care in the three public healthcare facilities providing oncology services in KwaZulu-Natal, were interviewed using an interview guide. Following data saturation, thematic analysis was used to develop the themes relating to the extrinsic factors affecting the provision of cancer care. Five themes emerged from the analysis, namely: geographical dynamics affecting patient access to a healthcare facility, lung cancer suspicion index in the diagnostic trail within the different levels of care, decision-making trail for the referral system, equipment-induced delays and healthcare-patient communication. A number of lung cancer patients utilising oncology services in public healthcare facilities in KwaZulu-Natal, are often met with various extrinsic factors affecting their progression through different stages of cancer care continuum. Therefore, the results of the extrinsic factors explored in this paper through the lung cancer patients' lenses may be used for designing mitigation plans to reduce delays in lung cancer care in KwaZulu-Natal.

Sinenhlanhla (Sne) Zondo is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow. Before undertaking her PhD journey, she worked with the Multinational Lung Cancer Programme in the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa as a junior researcher looking at barriers to lung cancer care in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Her component of the research contributed to the broader needs assessment that aided in obtaining additional funding to build an oncology wing in one of the public hospitals in the province. Her research interests are in exploring health and healthcare disparities amongst marginalised groups. By doing this, she is interested in contributing to the body of knowledge with primary research and providing adoptable solutions to key community health issues. Her submitted abstract is based on her peer reviewed paper that discusses the various barriers that diagnosed patients experienced throughout their cancer journey in public healthcare. The barriers show the political context in which South African public health exists which leaves marginalised communities without basic diagnostic tools. This context also shows how a province with a legacy of racial segregation still existing in post-colonial times, continues to suffer from inequalities to access to the management of cancer.