

## **The Role of Culture in Managing the Cancer Crisis in Kenya**

Naom Nyarigoti<sup>1</sup>, **Quin E. Awuor**<sup>2</sup> and Eunice Nyamasyo<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>United States International University, Africa

<sup>2\*</sup>**Department of English and Linguistics Technical University of Kenya**

<sup>3</sup>Kenyatta University.

### **Abstract:**

Cancer is among the leading causes of death across the world. Knowledge about the causes of cancer, and interventions to prevent and manage the disease is extensive. However, in nations that are characterized by high illiteracy levels and conservative cultural practices, this knowledge can be inaccessible resulting in increased cancer morbidity and mortality rates. In Kenya, for instance, although efforts have been made by the government and other organizations to sensitize people about prevention, early detection and management of cancer, the disease continues to claim many lives with the latest survey ranking it third on causes of deaths in the country. This study examined how culture influences knowledge utilization and management of three types of cancer: breast, prostate and cervical. Using a qualitative design, interviews and focus group discussions were used to collect data from five counties in Kenya. Findings show that although there is huge chunk of information available about cancer, cultural beliefs shared by different ethnic groups contribute to individuals' response to the information. Stigma, myths, and taboos held by different communities negatively affect efforts to fight the pandemic. Keywords: Health literacy, culture, cancer

International Journal of Innovative Research & Development Vol.6 (6) pp.39-44 (2017)

See more at: <http://www.ijird.com/index.php/ijird/article/view/116313/80622>