



UvA-DARE (Digital Academic Repository)

Coping with cancer and adversity : Hospital ethnography in Kenya

Mulemi, B.A.

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Mulemi, B. A. (2010). Coping with cancer and adversity : Hospital ethnography in Kenya Leiden: African Studies Centre

General rights

It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations

If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: <http://uba.uva.nl/en/contact>, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.

Contents

List of tables.....x

Preface.....xi

1	TREATMENT AND PERSISTENT STRUGGLE SCENE	1
	Study question and goals	6
	Personal experiences and healthcare issues	8
	Individual level	10
	Micro-social level	11
	Intermediate level	12
	Macro-social level	12
	The hospital	13
	Cancer crisis and research in Kenya	17
	Dissertation outline	19
2.	ETHNOGRAPHY INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE HOSPITAL	21
	Anthropology in medical settings	22
	Admission to the hospital as ethnographer	26
	Participants	32
	Events and places	34
	My position	36
	Data collection	39
	Data processing and analysis	43
	Summary and discussion	44
3.	THE CANCER WARD: HOPE AND ENDURANCE	48
	'District hospital'	49
	Ward layout	51
	Care services and facilities	53
	Human resources	56
	Bed scarcity, waiting and care delays	58
	Enduring the ward situation	60
	Summary and discussion	67
4.	PATIENT CARE INTERACTIONS	73
	Hierarchy and participation	75
	Consultant and ward physician	75

Pharmacists	82
Nurses	84
Marginal professionals	87
Patients' participation	95
Relatives: 'Visitors' or care partners?	97
Summary and discussion	99
5. STRUGGLE WITH PAIN AND EATING DIFFICULTIES	103
Unspoken pain	105
Expression of pain and quest for relief	106
'Missing chances to eat'	108
Caregiver responses and patient satisfaction	116
Resistance	120
Patient inputs	123
Summary and discussion	127
6. THE 'EXTRA BAGGAGE': UNMET PSYCHOSOCIAL CONCERNS	133
Disintegrating bodies	134
Fear and information flow	138
Unfolding misfortune	141
Stigma and hospital refuge	147
Dimensions of isolation	151
Daily living and the future	153
Summary and discussion	156
7. LIVELIHOOD, TREATMENT AND HOSPITALISATION	163
Livelihood backgrounds	164
The burden	165
Livelihood strategies	169
Livelihood organisation	180
Livelihood insecurity	184
Informal support	186
Formal support	189
Discussion	191
Conclusion	195
8. HOSPITAL ETHNOGRAPHY AND COPING WITH CANCER IN KENYA: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	197
Summary	197
Hospital ethnography	199
The hospital and cancer patients' plight	208
Recommendations	220

Appendix 1: Patients quoted in the ethnography	227
Appendix 2: The cancer ward layout	233
Appendix 3: In-patient statistics	234
Appendix 4: Nutrition counselling guide for cancer patients	235
Appendix 5: Tables	238
References	241
Epilogue	251
Summary	253
Samenvatting (Dutch summary)	258
About the author	262