



Title: A practice framework for the cooperative treatment of cancer between Traditional Health Practitioners and Radiation Oncologists in KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa

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Abstract:

Background: Cooperative practice between traditional health practitioners (THPs) and radiation oncologists (ROs) is crucial for the continuity of care in the treatment of patients with cancer. However, scant information exists on how to co-ordinate cooperation between these health practitioners without interrupting the treatment of the patients.

Aim: The study aimed to explore the practices of THPs and ROs in cancer treatment and ultimately derive a workable practice framework between these health practitioners in

the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province.

Methods: A qualitative study using a descriptive phenomenological approach was conducted to collect data from 28 THPs and four ROs from public oncology hospitals. Focus groups and individuals interviews were conducted to collect data from THPs and ROs, respectively. Framework analysis was used for data analysis to identify themes.

Results: The study found that THPs and ROs are working in parallel yet patients consults with both for cancer treatment and this results in interruptions of treatment.

Furthermore, the two groups work in an environment with no relationship, respect and trust, open communication and referral of patients by ROs to THPs. Both groups understood cooperation between them as the provision of continuity care, where the parties work independently but share certain patient related information regarding