

The psychosocial experiences of black African males diagnosed with prostate cancer at a tertiary hospital in the Gauteng province, South Africa.

¹B. Mdletshe, ¹M. P. Maepa and ²L. Muila

¹Department of Clinical Psychology, Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University, Pretoria, South Africa

²Department of Psychology, Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University, Pretoria, South Africa

Abstract:

Prostate cancer remains one of the most prevalent cancers affecting men globally, with a growing burden in South Africa. Despite its increasing incidence, limited research has explored the psychosocial experiences of black African men diagnosed with prostate cancer within their sociocultural context. This study aimed to explore and describe the psychological, social, and cultural experiences of black African men living with prostate cancer in Gauteng.

A qualitative exploratory research design was employed. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with a purposively selected sample of men diagnosed with prostate cancer at a tertiary hospital. The data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis.

The findings revealed four major themes: (1) psychological distress following diagnosis, characterized by fear, anxiety, and uncertainty about the future; (2) disruption of masculinity identity, particularly linked to sexual dysfunction and perceived loss of manhood; (3) relational dynamics and social support, highlighting both the protective role of family support and challenges related to stigma and communication; (4) coping mechanisms, including spirituality, acceptance, and avoidance strategies. The findings further underscore the influence of cultural norms and expectations on how men interpret and respond to illness.

This study contributes to the limited body of literature on prostate cancer among black African men and highlights the need for culturally sensitive, holistic psychosocial interventions. The findings have implications for clinical psychology practice, healthcare provision, and policy development in South Africa, particularly in improving patient-centred care and psychosocial support services for men living with prostate cancer.

Keywords: African men, prostate cancer, masculinity, psychosocial distress