

Feb 8th, 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM

## **A Mixed-Methods Approach to Social Media Uses in Health Communication: A Case Study of Infertility Among Cancer Patients, Alter Chemotherapy Radiation Treatments**

Margaret Githua  
*North Dakota State University*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/africana\\_studies\\_conf](https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/africana_studies_conf)



Part of the [Africana Studies Commons](#)

---

Githua, Margaret, "A Mixed-Methods Approach to Social Media Uses in Health Communication: A Case Study of Infertility Among Cancer Patients, Alter Chemotherapy Radiation Treatments" (2019). *Africana Studies Student Research Conference*. 3.

[https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/africana\\_studies\\_conf/2019/007/3](https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/africana_studies_conf/2019/007/3)

This Event is brought to you for free and open access by the Conferences and Events at ScholarWorks@BGSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Africana Studies Student Research Conference by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@BGSU.

## **A Mixed-Methods Approach to Social Media Uses in Health Communication: A Case Study of Infertility among Cancer patients, after Chemotherapy and Radiation Treatments.**

Margaret Githua, MA  
[margaret.githua@ndsu.edu](mailto:margaret.githua@ndsu.edu)

Department of Communication  
North Dakota State University  
Minard Hall 338, Fargo  
ND 58108, USA

Health communication is one of the fastest developing areas of communication and health communication researchers have maintained an abiding and persistent interest in examining the intersections of people's uses of media and the resulting influences on their behaviors. In this new age of widespread uses of social media, particularly Facebook, considerable attention has been directed to how the new media platforms are used for health communication purposes, especially weight loss management. Characteristically, much of the research in this area has been largely either quantitative or qualitative, with scarce use of mixed methods that promise more comprehensive results. Our presentation is based on a mixed methods research **aimed** at using a multiplicity of research methods to examine how cancer patients who are conscious of the health implications of chemotherapy and radiation treatments on their fertility use social media as learning and behavior-modification tools. Such a problem that involves examining people's values, media use patterns, and the putative influence of health information can best be addressed through a mixed methods design. The two objectives of the research are: (1) to determine how cancer patients trying to save their fertility after treatments use the legacy media and social media; (2) to ascertain if there are significant differences among people who use the new social

media more. Undergirding these two objectives is our interest to examine people's motivation in seeking health information and watching/monitoring their fertility.

Ninety (90) research subjects, composed of equal numbers of men and women, will be recruited from three Cancer Centers in Kenya. Quantitative and qualitative data will be collected using a standard media use instrument to elicit information about media preferences, media use patterns, and self-reports of perceived media influences. In addition to the **survey** of respondents' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, additional methods of data collection will include **ethnography** (observing respondents at fertility clinics in the cancer centers), **in-depth personal interviews** of 10% of the sample, and visits to respondents' familiar health websites to examine their content using **online content analytics techniques**. Using quantitative and qualitative analyses tools (**SPSS and Atlas.ti/NVivo**), we shall provide a broad characterization of the respondents' media use patterns and address the two research objectives of cancer patients' fertility after treatments, use of the legacy and social media, and whether those who prefer the new social media are different from their counterparts who favor the traditional/legacy media. **The results** would have interesting implications for health communication, media use, and cancer patients' fertility watch behavior. These results will contribute to our increasing understanding and appreciation of health communication as a field of study and a body of **theoretical knowledge**. The use of quantitative and qualitative methods in this study promises to offer more comprehensive and all-encompassing results that will be make our findings more relevant and applicable to the extant needs of the various publics including media people, policy makers, public health personnel, and citizens needing more attention to health management issues of infertility among cancer patients.

###