AGEING AND FORGETFULNESS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA
WITCHCRAFT ACCUSATION DEPRIVES OLDER PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA OF PARTICIPATION

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Aim of this study was to understand beliefs and perceptions relating to dementia in SSA.
The study consisted of a descriptive and explorative design in a cross sectional survey.

Tab. 1: Characteristics of respondents (n=1,642)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex (n=1,690)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1,059</td>
<td>64.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>35.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (n=1,607)</td>
<td>20.7 (± 8.36)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (n=1,677)</td>
<td>Never visited any school</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Current pupil / went to school</td>
<td>1,086</td>
<td>77.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Currently student / went to university</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduated from university</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion (n=1,382)</td>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>1,292</td>
<td>93.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dementia awareness of respondents

23% have heard about dementia \( (n=364) \)

Respondents who have heard about dementia tend to have knowledge about dementia.

\( \text{Fisher exact Test: } p<0.001 \)

22% have knowledge about dementia \( (n=343) \)

Respondents with a higher education have greater knowledge about dementia.

\( \text{Chi}^2 p<0.001 \)
Dementia awareness vs. education

Fig. Dementia awareness vs. education. Have you ever heard about dementia?; n=1,363
In Africa, accusations of witchcraft still a reality for many women

JACQUELINE MURRAY AND LAUREN WALLACE
CONTRIBUTED TO THE GLOBE AND MAIL
PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 25, 2013
UPDATED APRIL 9, 2018

In 1981, the United Nations declared Nov. 25 the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, inspired by the brutal assassination, in 1960, of the Mirabal sisters, political activists in the Dominican Republic. Today, millions of women continue to be the victims of myriad forms of gender-based violence.

Ghanaian woman burned to death for being a 'witch'

Evangelical pastor among five people arrested for dousing 72-year-old Ama Hemmah in kerosene and setting her ablaze

A 72-year-old Ghanaian woman has been burned to death on suspicion of being a witch, prompting condemnation from the country’s human rights groups.

When people with dementia are perceived as witches.
Consequences for patients and nurse education in South Africa

Flora Mkhonto RN, Psychiatric Nurse, Master in Nursing | Ingrid Hanssen RN, Dr.Polit.Sci, Professor

Aims and Objectives: To explore and describe the link between culture and dementia care with the focus on the influence of the belief in dementia as witchcraft and people with dementia as witches.

Background: In South Africa, especially in townships and rural areas, dementia is often perceived as connected to witchcraft rather than to disease. Persons labelled as witches—mostly older women—may be bullied, ostracised, beaten, stoned, burned, even killed.

Method: One strand of findings from a larger international study is presented with in-depth qualitative interviews of one close family member and seven nurses caring...
Belief in witchcraft

Fig. Believe in witchcraft as a spiritual power. 
Do you believe in witchcraft?; n=1,642

45% (n=736)
55% (n=895)

Fig. Fear of potential harm by witchcraft. 
Do you think witchcraft works?; n=1,642

42% (n=673)
58% (n=929)
Fig. Contact to a person which has been affected by witchcraft (n=1,613)

Fig. Witchcraft belief in the family (n=1,612)
Peoples behaviours linked to witchcraft

- Seeing dead family members: 45%
- Behaving aggressive: 40%
- Problems with language: 24%
- Memory problems: 23%
- Swearing at others: 23%
- Disorientation: 21%
- Forgetting things: 20%
“I lost my mind! Am I a witch?”
Circular flow of missing awareness

- Lacking Awareness
- Stigma
- Exclusion

STIGMA

EXCLUSION

LACKING AWARENESS

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Involving the younger generation
Acknowledgement

“OUR VISION IS TO CREATE A SOCIETY WHICH IS DEMENTIA FRIENDLY AND DEMENTIA LITERATE WHERE A PERSON WITH DEMENTIA CAN LIVE WITH DIGNITY AND HONOUR, WHICH HE/SHE DESERVES.”