

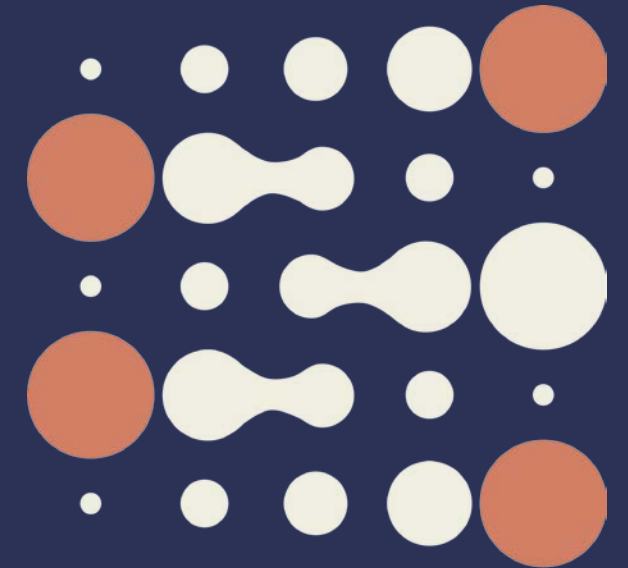
The language of cancer communication in Africa

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Introduction/Background/Motivation

- Communication is an essential aspect of cancer care and research
- Largely understudied and neglected in the African setting.
- To conduct a survey of cancer terms in African languages that;
- Highlights linguistic ethno-cultural diversity
- Investigates what these terms mean in English
- To identify thematic areas in the English translated terms



Design



Cancer

Biopsy

Radiotherapy

Palliation

Tumour

Chronic

Staging

Reccur

Benign

Metastasis

Surgery

Survival

Malignant

Chemotherapy

Trial

Remission

Results

What is cancer in your language?

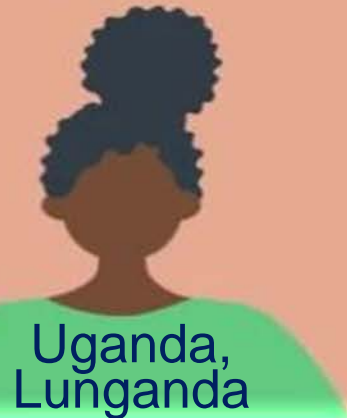
Kokolo
“A scary thing”

Umdlavuzo
“Destroyer”

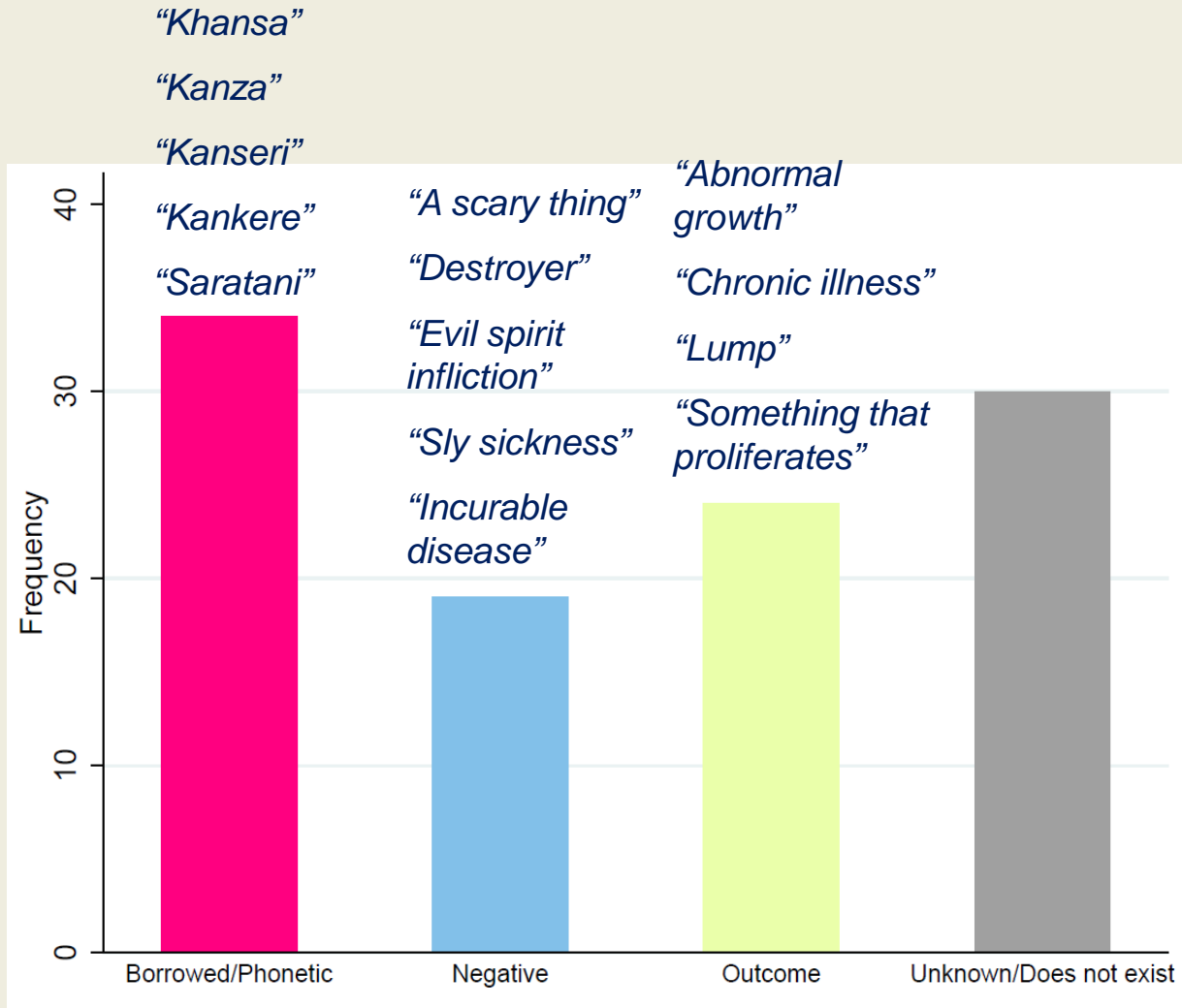
Gomarara
“A parasitic plant that grows on another plant”

Neqersa
“An affliction that can't be treated”

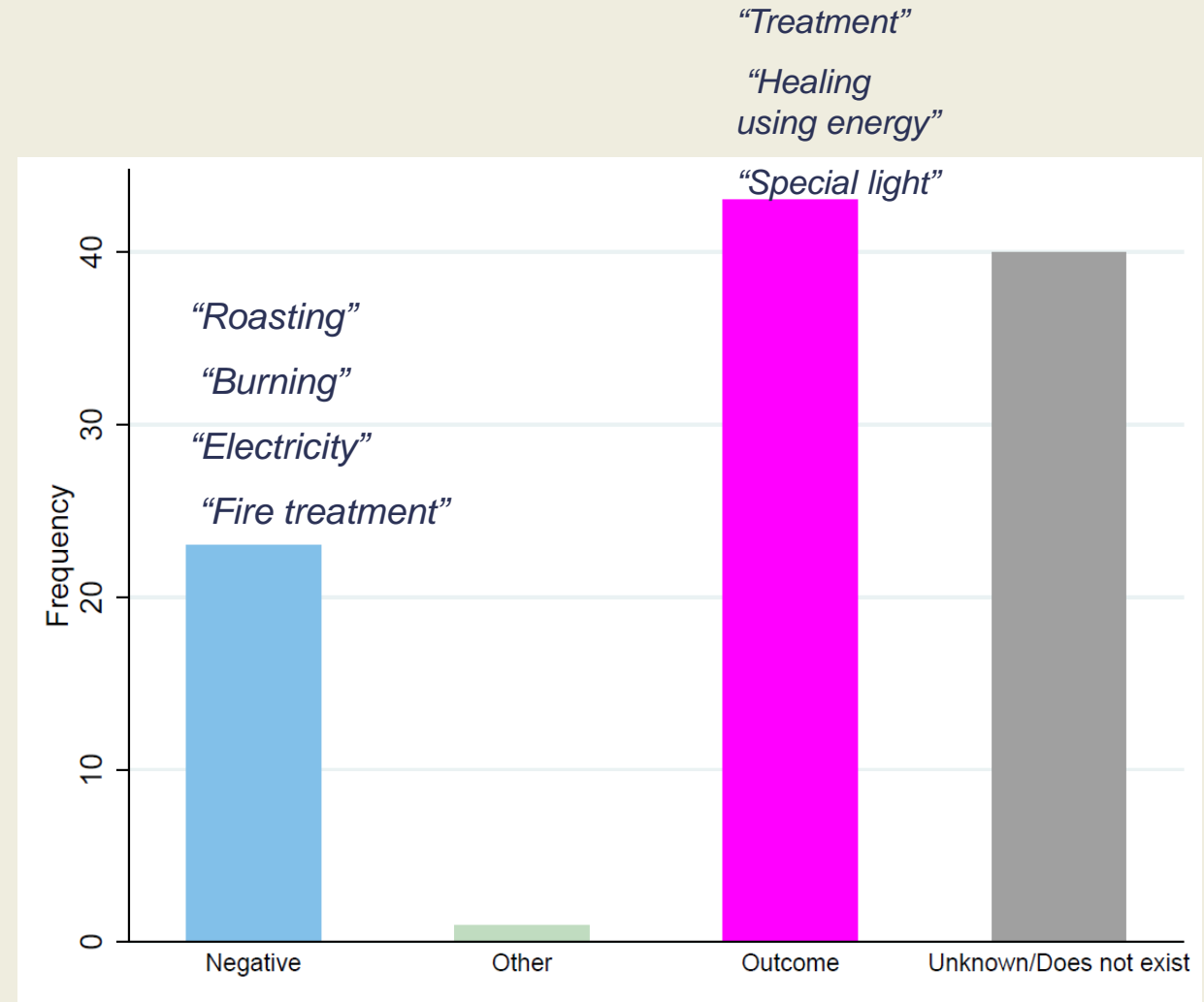
Bi ngnoiri
“A devouring wound”



Results: Themes



Cancer



Radiotherapy

Results

Participant from Zimbabwe who speaks Shona

“The use of some terms like “burning treatment” with respect to chemotherapy and radiation therapy represent a common mis-translation in our setting.....There is great need to correct health worker and public understanding of cancer treatment terms in local languages to remove a potential barrier to treatment utilization in our setting”

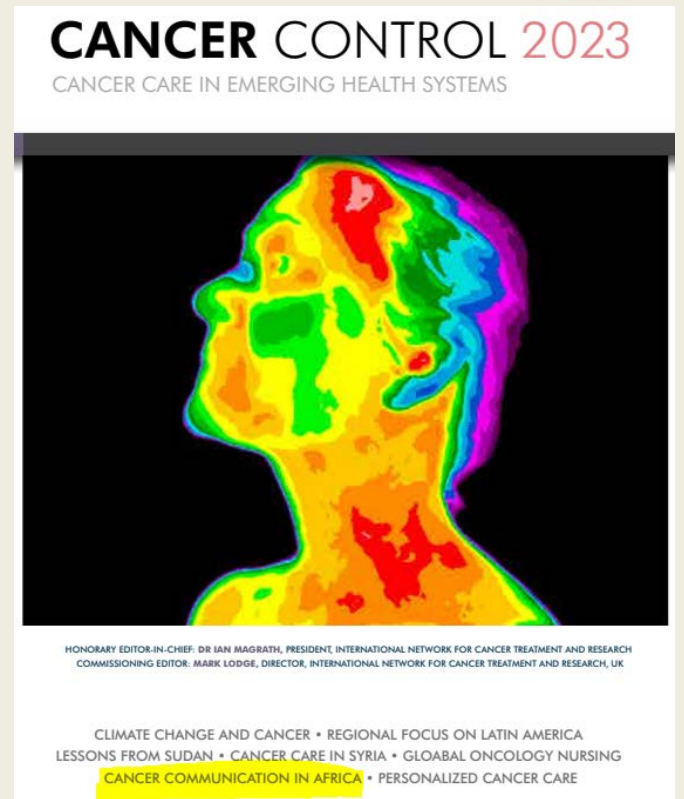
Participant from Ghana who speaks Gurene

“Generally, little vocabulary is known to describe cancer in my language, or perhaps I know very little about my language. Usually we tend to describe or explain the English word in the local language using the nearest in meaning words”

Discussion and Conclusions

We envision that information collected from this survey and our report will highlight the state of cancer communication in Africa and serve as platform for future in-depth work on the topic given the multiplicities of languages and cultures across the Continent.

- Studies investigating the impact of these terminologies on
 - Communication
 - Stigma
 - Patients' interactions with the health care system
- Development of terminology alternatives (TB terminology guide)



Key take-home messages

- Cancer terminology for diagnosis and treatment exists in African languages to very variable extents.
- Cancer terminology in African languages may contribute to fear, disparities for patients, and pose communication difficulties for Health Professionals.
- Only 31% of oncology healthcare professionals indicated strong confidence in cancer communication with patients in the local language.
- This work serves as a platform for future in-depth work on the topic given the multiplicities of languages and cultures across the continent.
- Development of terminology alternatives - for instance for “radiotherapy”, which is translated as “being burnt” or “roasting” in a number of languages - are needed.