

---

## CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

### **Improving the affordability and accessibility of healthcare services: A model for the integration of homoeopathy into the public healthcare system in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

ICIC20 Virtual Conference – September 2020

Nokuthula Sibiya<sup>1</sup>

1: Durban University Of Technology, Durban, South Africa

---

#### ***Introduction***

The public healthcare system in South Africa services the majority of its population, as many are unable to afford the services that exist in the private sector. The public sector has become overburdened with many issues. Some of the issues that plague this sector include a lack of resources, insufficiency of personnel and financial constraints due to over-usage. Based on this context, the introduction of complementary alternative medicine, such as homoeopathy, into the public healthcare system exists as one of the potential resolutions to this burdened healthcare sector. Therefore, the aim of the study was gather data, both descriptive and statistical, from healthcare professionals in order to develop a model for integrating homoeopathy into the public healthcare system.

#### ***Methods***

The researcher conducted a mixed methods study using the explanatory sequential design. Thus, the study was conducted in two Phases. Phase 1 employed quantitative measurement tools, where data was collected from medical doctors, nurses and homoeopaths through paper-and-pen/ electronic surveys. Phase 2 incorporated qualitative measurement tools, where data was collected from Chief Operating Officers as well as nursing managers through semi-structured interviews. The data from both phases was then compared and contrasted to guide the development of a model for integration.

#### ***Discussions***

Based on the current circumstances that exist in South Africa, it was established from the results of the study that the integration of homoeopathy into the public healthcare system would be complex in nature, due to the changes that would need to be made in both the public and private sector.

#### ***Conclusions***

The findings of the study have revealed that integration is not an isolated event and if were to occur, would involve the participation of various stakeholders. Currently, homoeopathy only exists in the private sector, along with the other natural therapies as well as mainstream medicine. The public sector only offers mainstream medicine and this has been a reality since inception of this sector. Though there have been some talks of

certain natural therapies, such as traditional medicine being integrated into the sector, no solid discussions have been concluded.

### ***Lessons learnt***

The public healthcare sector in South Africa is under increasing pressure. The users of this sector are not always guaranteed health benefits and are unfortunately not able to receive the same quality of care as those who can afford the services of the better resourced private healthcare sector. The integration of homoeopathy presents as a possible solution to some of the issues experienced. The government in South Africa has raised the possibilities of an integrated approach to healthcare to address these issues, albeit it has been unclear how such integration will take place.

### ***Limitations***

Patients/public sector users being excluded from the study was seen as one of the biggest limitations. The researcher believed that patients' perceptions are equally important as those of the practitioners.

### ***Suggestions for future research***

The model not being tested and implemented presented as a limitation of the study. This meant that further research ought to be considered regarding the phenomenon being investigated.