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# Ethical challenges in Primary Healthcare Re-Engineering

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# Background



- Primary health care (PHC) re-engineering with a focus on Municipal Ward-based PHC Outreach Teams
- Many of the ideas central to PHC re-engineering can be found in the model of Community-Oriented Primary Care (COPC)
- The study sought to understand stakeholder views on implementation challenges to PHC re-engineering

# Details of the Study

- 28 focus group interviews with stakeholders in 5 of the 7 sub-districts of City of Johannesburg
- Key stakeholders included government, community, private and/or academic institutions in Johannesburg, as well as people in the community identified as influential to the implementation of COPC/PHC re-engineering in Johannesburg
- Qualitative data analysis followed the framework method



# Ethical concerns with the current health service

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- **Poor Services: You can't re-engineer what is fundamentally broken**

“You cannot reengineer without looking at the previous challenges that occurred.”

- **Poor Standards of Care**

“The services at hospitals are putrid, as far as I'm concerned. The services at clinics are getting just as much putrid, because nobody seems to care.”

- **Concerns with medication**

# Ethical concerns with the current health service (cont.)

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- **Attitudes – What happened to *Batho Pele (People First)*?**  
“You get to the clinic and you are coughing the nurses say 'shoo shoo, you are irritating us' ... they are quick to judge and make fun.”
- Patients described as rude & disrespectful  
“Even if people are sick at home they choose to just sit at home and die
- **Fear of attending clinics**

# Ethical challenges within PHC re-engineering

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- **Issues with Confidentiality**

“What about what would happen if you have a condition that doesn’t want someone else to know.

- **The Reception of CHWs in the Community**

“We [CHWs] must go inside the houses and we must take their names, phone numbers, so the people will not trust us

- **Challenges encountered by CHWs**

“They need to go for debriefing because sometimes they are so stressful, whereby they cannot handle it anymore.”

“How do somebody go and volunteer in the house where there’s food and jewellery and all those things? Are we not creating thieves in our community?

# Ethical challenges within PHC re-engineering (cont.)



- **Political Dynamics**

“We must learn to stand up for ourselves, not depend on anyone, not depend on the government and if you’re going to depend to the government, you’ll wait forever”

“The political interference in most of these public places is doing more harm.”

- **Corruption and Nepotism**

“You are forgetting one other aspect, corruption”

“The city will inform the councillors, those are the politicians that are in your ward; I’m coming to implement the COPC, then those politicians, they’ll want their people to be part of that COPC”

# Discussion



- Concern over the monitoring and surveillance of bodies (Foucault).
- Concern over the issue of professionalism.
- Is it ethically sound to send poorly trained, incapacitated, non-professionals into dangerous, poor areas to deal with serious problems with little to no debriefing?



# Questions?

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