

THE “GOOD” KIND OF CANCER? BEING DIAGNOSED WITH EARLY STAGE OR CURABLE CANCER

Department of Sociology & Criminal Justice
March 5th at 2:00pm in SO 5074, Kennesaw Campus



Linda Ann Treiber is a Professor of Sociology specializing in the areas of Medical Sociology, Sociology of Work, Occupations, and Social Inequalities, and Social Inequalities. Her major research foci include health care delivery, medical errors, nursing practice, and the lived experiences of people with chronic illnesses and disabilities.



Evelina Weidman Sterling is an Assistant Professor of Sociology specializing in medical sociology and public health. She became interested in the topic of early stage and curable cancer after her husband was diagnosed with stage 0 colon cancer. Her other research interests include women's health, maternal and child health, rural health, mental health and substance abuse, and gerontology.

A clear-cut division between cancer survivors and the terminally ill is often made; however, a critical middle stage exists. As screening and early detection technologies improve, many cancers are managed or cured without complicated treatments. Frequently, these non-life-threatening cancers are labeled the “good” cancers. Little is known about this sub-group and the long-term implications of living with a cancer diagnosis that does not fit within the typical cancer narrative. In this study, we analyzed qualitative data collected through interviewing 34 individuals who were diagnosed with early stage or curable cancer. Unique insights were gained, including determining whether or not such a thing as a “good” cancer even exists, expanding the definition of cancer to more adequately represent a more diverse range of cancers and experiences. As medicine shifts from evidence-based to personalization, more detailed data are needed to develop effective and appropriate interventions, education, and support across the entire cancer continuum.