

Gender and Sexual Labor Near the End of Life: Advanced Breast Cancer and Femininity Norms

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Abstract

Feminist researchers have highlighted the increased hyper- and hetero-sexualization of breast cancer by drawing attention to the gendered dimensions of disease. In a set of interviews with women diagnosed with metastatic disease, I examined how participants labored to fulfill feminine gender and sexual ideals. Two themes were explored: gender labor, which included feeling fat and unattractive, and sexual labor, which included managing partners' sexual demands and sexual pain. This study builds on emergent feminist critiques that challenge expectations for a woman to be a "sexy cancer patient" and highlights how gender and sexual ideals continue to affect women negatively, even when they are extremely ill.

For full paper, see: McClelland, S. I. (2017). Gender and sexual labor near the end of life: Advanced breast cancer and femininity norms. *Women's Reproductive Health*, 4(1), 29-45.