

E. LEKALAKALA-MOKGELE. Conducting research with an African elderly population. Gerontechnology 2016;15(suppl):44s; doi:10.4017/gt.2016.15.s.653.00 **Purpose** This paper examines the ethics and the notion of vulnerability of older African persons within the context of research. **Method** A literature search on the vulnerability of older African persons was performed through a multiple electronic data base, using the combined key words of elderly, older person, vulnerability, ethics, consent and research. Access to the database was mainly via EBSCO¹. Sixty-eight (68) articles were selected and reviewed. **Results & Discussion** Older people are considered a vulnerable group in society² and may sometimes have diminished ability to provide informed consent³. Disease, as well as general physiological decline, render them vulnerable⁴. Possible cognitive impairment and dementia amongst older people is a particular challenge when it comes to understanding the informed consent⁵⁻⁷. Older people are consistently among the poorest in all societies⁸. Populations with limited resources are particularly vulnerable as their economic circumstances may limit independent consent which may also be distorted through the giving of incentives⁹. Frail elderly are also said to be experiencing high social vulnerability¹⁰. Low level of literacy amongst older African persons raises a concern about their ability to adequately comprehend the research process, and their potential risk for an effective and informed voluntary decision^{8,10}.

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Address: Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University, Pretoria, South Africa;

E: Sebi.Lekalakala@smu.ac.za