

Beyond “White Medicine”: Bubonic Plague and Health Interventions in Colonial Lagos

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Summary

While studies have unveiled the implications of the bubonic plague outbreak in colonial Lagos in the areas of town planning, environmental health and trade, there is a dearth of scholarly writings on the multiplex nature of the biomedical, Christian, Muslim, non-Christian and non-Muslim African responses to the epidemic outbreak. Based on the historical analysis of colonial medical records, newspaper reports, interviews and the literature, this paper concludes that the multiplex and transcultural nature of local responses to the bubonic plague in Lagos disavow the Western biomedical triumphalist claims to epidemic control in Africa during colonial rule.

Keywords: African Responses, Biomedicine, Bubonic plague, Colonial Lagos, Christian Responses, Health Interventions, Muslim Responses