



Mental Health Services Utilization Patterns Among Urban Kenyan Women in Informal Employment,

Amina Gitau Gikunju¹, Mukami Chepkitale Kibui^{2,3}, Oscar Muthomi Mutai⁴, Nina Wambui Njuguna^{5,6}

¹ Strathmore University

² Kenyatta University

³ Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, Strathmore University

⁴ Technical University of Kenya

⁵ Department of Research, Kenyatta University

⁶ Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT)

Published: 02 December 2001 | **Received:** 30 July 2001 | **Accepted:** 10 October 2001

Correspondence: agikunju@hotmail.com

DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.18732595](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18732595)

Author notes

Amina Gitau Gikunju is affiliated with Strathmore University and focuses on Arts & Humanities research in Africa. Mukami Chepkitale Kibui is affiliated with Kenyatta University and focuses on Arts & Humanities research in Africa. Oscar Muthomi Mutai is affiliated with Technical University of Kenya and focuses on Arts & Humanities research in Africa.

Nina Wambui Njuguna is affiliated with Department of Research, Kenyatta University and focuses on Arts & Humanities research in Africa.

Abstract

Mental health services in Kenya are often underutilized, particularly among vulnerable groups such as urban women in informal employment. A mixed-methods approach combining qualitative interviews and quantitative survey data was employed, targeting 200 urban women in Nairobi's informal sector who were employed but not formally registered as such. The findings revealed a significant disparity where only 35% of the surveyed women had utilised mental health services due to stigma and lack of awareness about available resources. The majority (65%) preferred self-management strategies or sought help from family members rather than professional support. Urban Kenyan women in informal employment face substantial barriers to accessing mental health support, with cultural stigmas and limited access being primary impediments. Implementing culturally sensitive public awareness campaigns could improve utilization rates of existing services. Strengthened partnerships between non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local authorities are recommended to enhance service accessibility.

Keywords: *African Geography, Urbanization, Vulnerable Populations, Qualitative Research, Empirical Studies*

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