



A Comparative Study of Policy Implications for Medical Research in Uganda,: An African Perspective

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Abstract

Medical research policy in Africa is critical for directing resources and improving health outcomes. Uganda represents a significant case study, having experienced substantial shifts in its research governance landscape. Understanding these changes is important for informing future policy development across the continent. This study aimed to compare the evolution of medical research policy in Uganda and analyse its implications for research practice and public health. It sought to identify key trends, challenges, and opportunities within the national policy framework from a contemporary African perspective. A qualitative comparative study was conducted using a document analysis framework. Key policy documents, strategic plans, and regulatory guidelines were systematically reviewed and thematically analysed. This was supplemented by insights from a purposive sample of expert informants involved in policy formulation and research implementation. The analysis identified a dominant theme of progressive formalisation and strengthening of ethical review and regulatory oversight. A shift was observed from externally-driven research agendas towards greater prioritisation of national health priorities, with an increasing emphasis on local capacity building. However, a persistent challenge was the inconsistent translation of policy into sustained practice and funding. Uganda's medical research policy landscape has matured, creating a more structured environment for research. While this fosters greater accountability and relevance, a gap remains between policy intent and operational reality, potentially limiting the full impact of research on health systems. Future policy should focus on mechanisms for improved implementation, including stable domestic funding streams, enhanced monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and stronger linkages between research findings and health policy decision-making. Regional harmonisation of policies should also be encouraged. research policy, medical research, health policy, Uganda, Africa, comparative study, research governance This study provides a consolidated analysis of Uganda's medical research policy evolution, offering evidence-based insights for policymakers and stakeholders aiming to strengthen research systems in similar contexts.

Keywords: *Sub-Saharan Africa, Health Policy Analysis, Research Governance, Translational Medicine, Comparative Case Study, Global Health Equity, Capacity Building*

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