



A Critical Intervention: Reviewing East African Medicine Policy from a Cape Verdean Perspective

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Abstract

Medicine policy in East Africa is influenced by complex historical, economic, and geopolitical factors. An external analysis from a comparable regional perspective, such as that of Cape Verde, may reveal insights not captured by internal or Global North evaluations. This intervention study aimed to critically review East African medicine policy through a Cape Verdean lens. Its objective was to identify systemic challenges and transferable lessons to inform a new framework for regional policy analysis. A qualitative, document-based critical review was performed. This involved systematic analysis of policy documents, legislative texts, and published reports from East African nations. The review was supplemented by structured consultations with a purposive sample of Cape Verdean health policy experts, pharmacists, and clinicians to provide an external analytical perspective. The analysis identified donor dependency as a major theme undermining long-term policy sustainability. From the Cape Verdean perspective, policies were found to disproportionately prioritise vertical disease programmes over integrated primary care systems. This imbalance was a critical barrier to achieving universal health coverage. Applying a Cape Verdean perspective to East African medicine policy exposes systemic fragilities related to external dependency and a lack of programme integration. It demonstrates the value of South-South policy critique in generating context-aware insights. East African policymakers should consider establishing formal South-South policy review mechanisms with nations like Cape Verde. Policy and funding should be rebalanced towards integrated, horizontal health systems to reduce fragmentation and build resilience. Health policy, medicines, East Africa, Cape Verde, critical review, intervention study, South-South cooperation This study provides a novel South-South analytical framework for health policy review, offering a distinct perspective for identifying systemic challenges and opportunities for reform in regional medicine policies.

Keywords: *Health Policy Analysis, Sub-Saharan Africa, Pharmaceutical Policy, Comparative Case Study, Critical Review, Policy Transfer, Anglophone Africa*



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