



A Data Descriptor on the Informal Healthcare Sector and Maternal Medicine in Urban Morocco

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Abstract

The informal healthcare sector is a significant but poorly documented source of maternal health provision in urban African contexts. In Morocco, urban reliance on informal providers for maternal medicine is considerable, yet systematic data on their operations, the medicines they supply, and their clientele remain limited. This gap impedes the development of effective policy and integration strategies. This data descriptor presents a structured dataset characterising the informal maternal healthcare sector in urban Morocco. Its objectives are to document the range of services offered, the types of medicines dispensed, the profiles of providers, and the demographics of their clients, thereby creating a foundational resource for analysis. Data were generated using a mixed-methods approach in selected urban centres. The methodology comprised structured surveys with informal providers, inventories of available medicines, and anonymised exit interviews with clients. Ethical guidelines for research involving human participants were followed. The resulting dataset is structured, cleaned, and stored in non-proprietary formats to promote accessibility and interoperability. The dataset delineates a complex ecosystem where informal providers serve as a primary source of maternal medicine for many urban women. A prominent finding is the common availability of prescription-only medicines, such as uterotonics and antibiotics, without formal prescription. Initial review indicates that a majority of recorded transactions involved medicines for prenatal care. This dataset offers a unique empirical basis for examining the informal sector's role in maternal healthcare within an urban North African setting. It underscores critical intersections between informal practice and formal pharmaceutical systems, revealing a need for nuanced public health engagement. Researchers are encouraged to utilise this dataset to investigate themes including medicine safety, regulatory gaps, and health-seeking behaviours. Policymakers should consider these data when formulating targeted interventions for medicine regulation and designing training programmes to enhance maternal health outcomes. Maternal health, informal sector, medicine access, urban health, Morocco, healthcare provision This data descriptor contributes a novel, structured dataset documenting the practices, supply chains, and client interactions of the informal maternal healthcare sector in urban Morocco, filling a critical evidence gap for researchers and policymakers.

Keywords: *informal healthcare, maternal health, urban Africa, health systems research, Morocco, qualitative data, mixed-methods*



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