



# A Meta-Analysis of Health Policy Implications from Medical Research in South Africa,

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## Abstract

Medical research in South Africa produces considerable evidence, but its translation into health policy and practice is inconsistent. A synthesis of the documented policy implications from this research is required to assess its influence and identify common themes. This meta-analysis aimed to systematically identify, synthesise, and characterise the explicit health policy implications proposed within medical research conducted in South Africa. Its objective was to map the predominant themes and gaps in these recommendations. A systematic search of multiple electronic databases was conducted for relevant peer-reviewed articles. Included studies reported primary medical research conducted in South Africa that explicitly stated policy implications. Data on study characteristics and the nature of policy recommendations were extracted. A thematic synthesis was performed. The analysis revealed that most policy implications were directed at national and provincial health system levels. A prominent theme was the recommendation to integrate specific clinical interventions or technologies into public health programmes. There was recurrent advocacy for task-shifting and strengthened community-based care models to improve access. Medical research in South Africa frequently proposes health policy changes, focusing predominantly on system-level integration and service delivery redesign. The connection between research evidence and the practicalities of policy formulation is often not clearly articulated. Researchers should formulate policy implications that are specific, feasible, and consider contextual implementation barriers. Policymakers and funding bodies should prioritise research incorporating health systems and implementation science components to bridge the evidence-to-policy gap. health policy, research utilisation, evidence-based policy, South Africa, medical research, systematic review This synthesis provides a consolidated overview of the policy recommendations emerging from South African medical research, highlighting thematic priorities and gaps to inform future research agendas and policy dialogue.

**Keywords:** *Meta-Analysis, Health Policy, Evidence-Based Medicine, Sub-Saharan Africa, Research Utilisation, Systematic Review, South Africa*



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