

A Policy Analysis of Comparative Medicine in Rwanda: Regional Integration and Reproductive Health Outcomes,

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Abstract

Comparative medicine studies, which analyse healthcare systems across different regions, are used to inform health policy in Africa. Rwanda's health system reforms have incorporated regional integration as a central policy pillar. This analysis examines the intersection of comparative medicine, regional integration policies, and reproductive health outcomes in Rwanda. This policy analysis aims to assess how Rwanda's use of comparative medicine studies within its regional integration agenda has influenced reproductive health policy formulation and implementation. It seeks to identify the mechanisms of policy transfer and their consequences. A qualitative policy analysis was conducted. This involved a document review of Rwandan health policy frameworks, strategic plans, and regional integration agreements. A thematic framework was used to trace the influence of comparative studies on policy development. Regional integration, informed by comparative studies, has shaped the alignment of Rwanda's reproductive health policies with regional standards. A key finding was the strategic prioritisation of maternal health services within integration agreements. However, a tension exists between regional harmonisation and the need to tailor services to local demographic needs. Comparative medicine studies have provided an evidence base for Rwanda's reproductive health policies within a regional integration context. While this approach has facilitated standardisation and resource sharing, it also challenges the flexibility required to address specific national priorities. Policymakers should institutionalise systematic reviews of comparative evidence with explicit criteria for local adaptation. Future regional health protocols should allow member states to modify benchmarks based on local epidemiological data. Strengthening national health information systems is crucial for generating context-specific data. Comparative medicine, health policy, Rwanda, regional integration, reproductive health, maternal health, policy transfer This analysis contributes to the literature on health policy in Africa by examining the practical implications of using comparative medicine to advance regional integration goals in reproductive health.

Keywords: *Comparative medicine, Regional integration, Reproductive health, East African Community, Health systems analysis, Policy transfer, Rwanda*

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