



A Scoping Review of Sustainable Medical Practices in Southern Africa: An African Perspective

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Abstract

The global need for sustainable healthcare is acknowledged. Southern Africa faces distinct environmental, economic, and social challenges that require context-specific approaches. A synthesised overview of these approaches from an African perspective is not available. This scoping review aimed to map the literature on sustainable medical practices within Southern Africa. Its objectives were to identify key concepts, approaches, and evidence gaps, while specifically exploring an African-centred perspective on sustainability in medicine. The review followed the Joanna Briggs Institute methodology for scoping reviews. A systematic search was conducted across multiple electronic databases. Peer-reviewed articles, reports, and relevant grey literature were considered. Data were charted and analysed thematically. The search yielded a limited but growing body of literature. A prominent theme was a focus on practical, low-resource innovations, such as reprocessing single-use devices and waste segregation protocols. Community-based care models were frequently cited as a cornerstone of sustainable practice. A significant proportion of the literature framed sustainability holistically, encompassing system resilience and equitable access alongside environmental concerns. Sustainable medical practice in Southern Africa is conceptualised through a pragmatic, resource-conscious lens that integrates environmental, social, and economic dimensions. The literature underscores the importance of locally adapted solutions over imported models. Future research should prioritise empirical studies evaluating the clinical and environmental impact of identified sustainable practices. There is a need to develop context-specific metrics for assessing healthcare sustainability within the region. Policymakers should support integrating these pragmatic approaches into national health strategies. Sustainable healthcare, medical practice, Southern Africa, low-resource settings, scoping review This review provides a foundational map of sustainable medical practices from a Southern African perspective, clarifying key themes and gaps to inform future research and policy.

Keywords: *Sustainable healthcare, Southern Africa, Scoping review, Context-specific interventions, Health systems strengthening, Resource-limited settings*

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