



A Systematic Review of Medicinal Access and Delivery Challenges in Kenya: An Analysis of the Literature from 2000 to 2026

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Abstract

Access to essential medicines is a critical component of healthcare delivery. In Kenya, persistent challenges in medicinal access and delivery are reported, with significant implications for maternal and reproductive health outcomes. A systematic synthesis of the evidence is needed to consolidate understanding of these barriers. This systematic review aims to synthesise and analyse published literature on the challenges affecting medicinal access and delivery in Kenya. Its objective is to identify, categorise, and evaluate the key systemic, infrastructural, and socio-economic barriers reported. A systematic literature review was conducted following PRISMA guidelines. Multiple academic databases were searched for peer-reviewed articles and relevant grey literature. Studies were screened against pre-defined inclusion criteria, with data extracted and analysed using thematic synthesis. The analysis identified five interconnected thematic challenges: supply chain fragmentation, financial constraints, geographical inequity, regulatory hurdles, and human resource limitations. A prominent finding was the recurrent theme of stock-outs of essential medicines, particularly in rural public health facilities. The literature consistently highlighted how these challenges disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, including women in remote areas. Medicinal access and delivery in Kenya are hindered by a complex, multi-faceted system of deeply entrenched and mutually reinforcing barriers. These challenges significantly compromise the quality and equity of healthcare, with direct consequences for obstetrics and gynaecological services. Future interventions must adopt an integrated, system-strengthening approach. Priorities include investing in robust, transparent supply chain management, enhancing public financing for essential medicines, and developing context-specific strategies to address geographical and socio-economic inequities. Kenya, access to medicines, drug supply, health systems,

maternal health, supply chain, systematic review. This review provides a consolidated evidence base on the multifactorial barriers to medicine access in Kenya, offering a structured analysis to inform policy and system-strengthening efforts aimed at improving healthcare delivery, particularly within obstetrics and gynaecology.

Keywords: *Healthcare access, Essential medicines, Kenya, Health systems, Sub-Saharan Africa, Drug supply, Maternal health*



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