



Gender Dimensions of Medical Practice and Access in Chad: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

Gender is a critical social determinant of health, shaping both medical practice and healthcare access. In Chad, a nation within Sub-Saharan Africa facing substantial health system challenges, understanding these gendered dynamics is vital for promoting equity. A comprehensive synthesis of evidence on this specific topic is currently absent. This systematic review aims to synthesise existing literature on the gender dimensions of medical practice and healthcare access in Chad. Its objectives are to map the roles and experiences of male and female healthcare providers and to analyse how gender influences patients' access to and utilisation of medical services. A systematic search was executed across multiple electronic databases for peer-reviewed literature published in English and French. Pre-defined inclusion criteria focused on studies examining gender in relation to medical practice or access in Chad. Study selection, data extraction, and quality assessment were conducted by two independent reviewers following established systematic review protocols. The search identified a limited number of eligible studies, underscoring a significant evidence gap. The available literature indicates pronounced gender segregation within the medical workforce, with female clinicians heavily concentrated in nursing and midwifery, while specialist and leadership roles are predominantly occupied by men. A consistent finding was that cultural norms restrict women's access to male healthcare providers for obstetric and gynaecological conditions. Gender profoundly structures both the medical profession and patient care pathways in Chad, reinforcing workforce imbalances and constraining access to care, particularly for women. The paucity of focused research highlights a critical need for more rigorous, gender-sensitive health systems enquiry in this context. Future research should employ robust, mixed-methods designs to explore gendered barriers within medical education and career progression. Health policy must actively promote gender equity in medical training and leadership, and develop culturally sensitive service models to improve women's access to appropriate care. Gender, healthcare access, medical workforce, Chad, Sub-Saharan Africa, health equity, systematic review. This review consolidates the fragmented evidence on gender and medicine in Chad, identifies critical knowledge gaps, and provides an evidence base to inform equitable health policy and future research priorities.

Keywords: *Gender, Healthcare access, Sub-Saharan Africa, Medical practice, Health equity, Systematic review*



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