



Gender, Health and Healing: A Comparative Analysis of Medical Practice in Uganda,

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Abstract

The gender dimensions of medical practice significantly influence healthcare delivery and outcomes, yet remain under-analysed in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Uganda, understanding how gender norms shape clinical encounters, professional hierarchies, and patient experiences is critical for improving care. This study aimed to analyse the role of gender in Ugandan medical practice. It sought to compare gendered patterns in patient-provider interactions, career progression within the medical profession, and the integration of gender-sensitive approaches in clinical care. A qualitative comparative design was employed, utilising historical policy analysis and contemporary data from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Participants included biomedical practitioners, traditional healers, and patients from selected urban and rural health facilities. Documentary analysis of national health policy frameworks supplemented the primary data. The analysis revealed persistent gendered hierarchies within the medical profession, with women practitioners disproportionately concentrated in nursing and midwifery and underrepresented in surgical specialisms. Female doctors often reported employing specific communication strategies to establish credibility with patients. The integration of gender considerations in clinical guidelines was inconsistent. Gender remains a fundamental organising principle in Ugandan medical practice. Deeply embedded norms continue to shape professional trajectories and clinical interactions, which may affect healthcare quality and equity. Medical training curricula should incorporate critical gender analysis. Health institutions must implement targeted mentorship and leadership programmes for women clinicians. Policymakers should develop and enforce standards for gender-sensitive care across all health facilities. Gender, Medical Practice, Uganda, Healthcare Delivery, Health Professions, Comparative Study, Sub-Saharan Africa This study provides a nuanced, comparative analysis of the gendered dynamics of medical practice in Uganda, contributing evidence to inform more equitable health policy and professional development.

Keywords: *Sub-Saharan Africa, Gender-based analysis, Medical pluralism, Healthcare delivery, Traditional medicine, Health systems, Uganda*



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