Gender Perspectives on Medical Practice and Access in Liberia: A North African Comparative Analysis

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Abstract

Gender dynamics influence medical practice and healthcare access, but comparative regional analyses are scarce. This study examines these dynamics within Liberia, using a comparative lens with North African models to understand how gendered perspectives shape the medical field. The primary purpose was to investigate gender-based perspectives on medical practice and patient access in Liberia. Specific objectives were to compare these perspectives with documented North African frameworks, identify key barriers and facilitators for female practitioners and patients, and analyse the perceived impact of gender on clinical interactions and healthcare-seeking behaviour. A cross-sectional survey design was employed. Structured questionnaires were administered to a purposive sample of medical practitioners and a stratified random sample of healthcare users across three Liberian counties. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics, while qualitative responses were examined using thematic analysis. A pronounced gender disparity was observed in perceptions of medical authority, with most respondents associating senior clinical roles with male practitioners. Female patients reported significant access barriers, including socio-cultural stigma when discussing gynaecological issues with male doctors. Comparative analysis indicated that Liberia's challenges share similarities with some North African contexts, particularly regarding patriarchal structures in healthcare leadership. Gender remains a critical, structuring factor in Liberian medical practice and healthcare access, with patterns that invite comparison to certain North African settings. These embedded perspectives continue to influence professional hierarchies and patient experiences. Implement policy reforms to support the advancement of female medical practitioners into leadership roles. Integrate gender-sensitivity training into medical education curricula. Design community-based health programmes that address specific access barriers and stigma faced by female patients. Gender, Medical Practice, Healthcare Access, Liberia, North Africa, Comparative Analysis, Survey This survey provides empirical evidence on gender perspectives within Liberia's medical sector and offers a comparative analysis with North African models, highlighting common structural challenges. It contributes a foundation for gender-responsive policy and programme development in similar contexts.

📄 ABSTRACT-ONLY PUBLICATION

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