



# Harnessing the Potential: The Role of Youth in Advancing African Medical Practice and Policy

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## Abstract

The demographic profile of many African nations, including Equatorial Guinea, is predominantly young. This presents an opportunity for the medical sector, yet the specific role of youth in shaping medical practice and health policy is not well understood, particularly within obstetrics and gynaecology. This paper analyses the current and potential contributions of young medical professionals and students in Equatorial Guinea to clinical practice and policy development. It identifies barriers to their engagement and proposes pathways for their meaningful inclusion. A qualitative, multi-method approach was used, involving semi-structured interviews with young doctors, medical students, and senior practitioners. A thematic analysis of national health policy documents was also conducted to assess youth representation in formal frameworks. Young professionals showed strong motivation to innovate, particularly in adopting digital health tools for maternal care. However, systemic marginalisation was a key theme, with most interviewees reporting their ideas were rarely sought in policy discussions. Their contributions were often limited to task-oriented clinical roles rather than strategic input. The youth in Equatorial Guinea's medical field are a substantial, underutilised resource. Without structured mechanisms for their inclusion, the sector risks losing innovative potential and failing to address intergenerational gaps in healthcare delivery and policy relevance. Establish formal youth advisory committees within the Ministry of Health and professional obstetrics and gynaecology associations. Implement structured mentorship programmes pairing young professionals with senior policy-makers. Integrate health policy and leadership training into medical and postgraduate curricula. Youth engagement, Medical practice, Health policy, Obstetrics and gynaecology, Equatorial Guinea, Africa This paper provides original qualitative evidence on the barriers to youth inclusion in medical leadership in Equatorial Guinea, offering concrete recommendations for integrating their perspectives into practice and policy.

**Keywords:** *Youth engagement, Medical workforce, Sub-Saharan Africa, Health policy development, Demographic dividend, Capacity building*



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