



# Innovative Medical Practices in Algeria: A Qualitative Exploration of Sub-Saharan Influences and Local Adaptations

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## Abstract

Medical practice in Algeria is influenced by diverse knowledge systems, including those from Sub-Saharan Africa. The integration and adaptation of these influences within Algerian healthcare, particularly in obstetrics and gynaecology, are not well understood. This study aimed to explore the nature of medical innovation in Algeria, focusing specifically on identifying Sub-Saharan African influences and examining how healthcare practitioners locally adapt them. A qualitative, exploratory design was employed. Data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of obstetricians, gynaecologists, and midwives across multiple Algerian regions. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the interview transcripts. Analysis identified three primary themes: pathways of knowledge transmission, processes of syncretic adaptation, and practitioners' perceptions of efficacy. A notable proportion of participants reported incorporating at least one diagnostic or therapeutic practice perceived to be of Sub-Saharan origin, most commonly in postnatal care and the management of some gynaecological conditions. These practices were often modified to align with local cultural expectations and available biomedical resources. Medical innovation in Algeria involves a dynamic, syncretic process where Sub-Saharan influences are actively integrated and adapted. This challenges a purely Eurocentric view of medical knowledge transfer and underscores a more complex, bidirectional flow of practices within Africa. Medical curricula and continuous professional development programmes should acknowledge and critically engage with these syncretic practices. Further research should quantitatively assess the associated clinical outcomes to inform evidence-based practice. Medical innovation, qualitative research, Algeria, Sub-Saharan Africa, obstetrics,

gynaecology, knowledge adaptation, syncretism. This study contributes a nuanced understanding of how Sub-Saharan African medical knowledge is transmitted and adapted within Algerian clinical practice, highlighting a under-recognised dimension of intra-African medical exchange.

**Keywords:** *Medical anthropology, Qualitative research, Sub-Saharan Africa, Traditional medicine, Healthcare integration, Post-colonial medicine, Algeria*

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