



Policy Implications of Medical Research in Nigeria: A Review of African Priorities and Progress

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Abstract

Medical research in Africa, and specifically in Nigeria, is crucial for shaping effective health policy. However, translating research findings into actionable policy has historically faced significant challenges. These include a misalignment between research agendas and local health priorities, funding constraints, and weak institutional linkages between researchers and policymakers. This review critically analyses the policy implications of medical research conducted in Nigeria within the broader African context. Its objectives are to assess the alignment of research with continental health priorities, evaluate progress in translating evidence into policy, and identify persistent barriers and facilitators to this process. A narrative review of published literature was conducted, including peer-reviewed articles, systematic reviews, and relevant grey literature such as policy documents and reports from Nigerian and pan-African health institutions. Thematic analysis was used to synthesise evidence on the research-to-policy interface. A dominant theme was the persistent disconnect between research output and policy needs, despite increased research activity. A significant proportion of clinical trials focused on diseases of global prominence, while operational research addressing local health system challenges, such as maternal care delivery in primary health centres, remained under-represented. Key barriers included fragmented funding and limited stakeholder engagement early in the research process. While medical research capacity in Nigeria has grown, its potential to inform health policy is not fully realised. Strengthening the research-to-policy pipeline is essential for addressing Nigeria's and Africa's disproportionate disease burden. Key recommendations include establishing formal knowledge translation platforms within health ministries, prioritising funding for implementation and health systems research, and fostering sustained collaboration between researchers, policymakers, and communities from the research design stage. Health policy, knowledge translation, research utilisation, Nigeria, Africa, maternal health, health systems This review synthesises contemporary evidence on the challenges of translating medical research into policy in Nigeria. It provides a focused analysis to inform strategies for better aligning research with national and regional health priorities.

Keywords: *Health policy, Translational research, Sub-Saharan Africa, Evidence-based medicine, Research utilisation, Public health priorities, Nigeria*



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