



Sustainable Approaches to Medicine in Zimbabwe: An African Working Paper on Obstetric and Gynaecological Practice

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Abstract

Obstetric and gynaecological care in Zimbabwe is challenged by resource constraints, workforce shortages, and economic instability. This necessitates an examination of how clinical practice can be adapted for greater sustainability within the local context. This working paper aims to identify and analyse sustainable approaches within Zimbabwean obstetric and gynaecological practice. Its objective is to propose a framework for integrating sustainability into clinical care, medical education, and health system planning. The paper employs a narrative synthesis methodology, drawing on a review of relevant policy documents, grey literature, and published analyses from the region. These findings are integrated with insights from professional experience to develop a contextualised discussion. The analysis identifies task-shifting and strengthening mid-level healthcare workers as a central strategy for improving access to care. A key finding is the critical role of repurposing and maintaining existing medical equipment, rather than reliance on frequent new procurement, as a cornerstone of sustainable practice. Sustainable obstetric and gynaecological practice in Zimbabwe is achievable through context-appropriate innovations that prioritise workforce development, resource optimisation, and community-integrated care models. These approaches are essential for building resilient maternal health services. Key recommendations include: formalising training programmes for non-physician clinicians in obstetric surgery; establishing national guidelines for the maintenance and repair of medical equipment; and integrating sustainability principles into medical and nursing curricula. Sustainable medicine, obstetrics, gynaecology, Zimbabwe, task-shifting, resource-limited settings, maternal health This working paper provides a focused analysis for practitioners and policymakers, synthesising pragmatic strategies to enhance the sustainability of women's health services in a Southern African context.

Keywords: *Sustainable healthcare, Obstetrics, Gynaecology, Sub-Saharan Africa, Resource-limited settings, Maternal health*



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