



Sustainable Development and Maternal Healthcare: An Analysis of Progress and Challenges in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

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Abstract

The Sustainable Development Goals frame global maternal health targets. Maternal mortality remains a critical public health issue in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Understanding the relationship between sustainable development initiatives and maternal healthcare outcomes is necessary for effective policy. This study analysed progress and challenges in maternal healthcare within the DRC's sustainable development context. It aimed to evaluate trends in key maternal health indicators and identify systemic barriers to improvement. A mixed-methods approach was used. This involved systematic analysis of national health survey data, policy documents, and institutional reports. Qualitative thematic analysis of interviews with healthcare providers and programme managers in selected provinces supplemented this. Analysis showed a modest national improvement in the maternal mortality ratio. Progress was highly inequitable, with a pronounced urban-rural disparity. Qualitative data identified persistent insecurity and fragmented health system governance as critical barriers. The proportion of births attended by skilled personnel remained below 50% in many rural regions. Progress in maternal health indicators in the DRC has been insufficient and uneven. Sustainable development in maternal health is severely constrained by systemic challenges, including conflict, poverty, and weak health infrastructure. Prioritise targeted investment in rural healthcare infrastructure and the community-based health workforce. Strengthen health system governance and integrate maternal health services with conflict-sensitive programming. Enhance data collection systems to better monitor equity in service coverage. Maternal health, Sustainable Development Goals, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Health systems, Healthcare access, Maternal mortality This research provides an integrated analysis of quantitative trends and qualitative systemic barriers to maternal healthcare in the DRC, offering evidence for equity-focused health system strengthening.

Keywords: *Maternal mortality, Sustainable Development Goals, Sub-Saharan Africa, Healthcare systems, Millennium Development Goals, Reproductive health*



ABSTRACT-ONLY PUBLICATION

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