



The Role of Youth in Advancing Obstetric and Gynaecological Healthcare in Kenya: An Analysis of Engagement and Innovation

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Abstract

Youth engagement is recognised as a component of health system development in Africa. In Kenya, a large youth demographic exists alongside ongoing challenges in obstetric and gynaecological healthcare. A systematic analysis of young people's specific role in this field is absent. This study analysed the engagement and innovative contributions of Kenyan youth in obstetric and gynaecological healthcare. It aimed to map forms of participation, evaluate their impact, and identify barriers and facilitators to their involvement. A mixed-methods approach was employed, comprising a systematic scoping review of literature and in-depth qualitative interviews with key stakeholders. Participants included young healthcare professionals, innovators, policymakers, and leaders of youth-led initiatives. Data were synthesised using thematic analysis. Youth engagement manifested through digital health innovation, community advocacy, and clinical practice in underserved areas. A prominent theme was using mobile technology to bridge service delivery gaps, particularly in maternal health education. A substantial proportion of identified youth-led initiatives focused on improving antenatal care attendance and access to family planning. Structural barriers, such as limited funding and institutional resistance, were frequently reported. Young people in Kenya are active contributors to obstetric and gynaecological healthcare, often leveraging technology and community-based approaches to address systemic gaps. Their potential remains under-optimised due to systemic constraints. To harness this potential, we recommend professional bodies and the Ministry of Health establish formal youth mentorship and leadership programmes. Funding mechanisms should be created for youth-led health innovation, and their representation in health policy dialogues should be strengthened. Youth engagement, Obstetrics, Gynaecology, Healthcare innovation, Kenya, Digital health, Maternal health This study provides a systematic analysis of the role of Kenyan youth in obstetric and gynaecological healthcare, offering evidence to inform policy and programme development for meaningful youth inclusion.

Keywords: *youth engagement, maternal health, Sub-Saharan Africa, health systems strengthening, participatory research, gynaecological care, Kenya*

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