

New Vistas

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Abstract

Introduction

Hypertension is a major global health issue, especially in developing countries, where its prevalence is increasing and contributing significantly to cardiovascular diseases. Despite the growing urgency to control hypertension, there is limited understanding of healthcare-seeking behaviour among adults with the condition. This study explores how hypertensive adults seek healthcare in Africa and identifies factors influencing these practices across the continent.

Methods

This scoping review used the Arksey and O'Malley framework, enhanced by the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) approach, and followed the PRISMA-ScR checklist. Five stages guided the review: identifying the research question, identifying relevant studies, selecting studies, charting data, and summarizing results. A comprehensive search was conducted across six databases: CINAHL, PubMed, Scopus, Academic Search Elite, Embase, and PsycINFO. Search terms focused on "healthcare-seeking behavior," "hypertension," "adults," and "Africa." Using the PCC framework, the population included hypertensive adults aged 18 and above; the concept was healthcare-seeking behaviour; and the context included both urban and rural African settings.

Results

Most included studies were quantitative and community-based. Findings show that adults with both hypertension and diabetes are more likely to use formal health services. Public hospitals and health centres are preferred for quality and accessibility, while informal providers and over-the-counter medicine shops are more common in rural areas. Traditional remedies are frequently used alongside biomedical treatments, particularly among rural and low-income populations. Despite interactions with the health system, blood pressure control remains low, especially in underserved areas. Key research gaps include integrating NCD services, the role of health insurance, urban-rural disparities, and traditional healing practices.

Conclusion

Understanding healthcare-seeking behaviour for hypertension is crucial for improving care in Africa. Policies must consider socio-economic and cultural factors. Further research is vital to strengthen healthcare use and reduce hypertension-related complications.

Keywords

Scoping review, Healthcare seeking behaviour, Hypertension, Adults