

How are health systems in sub-Saharan Africa adapting to protect human health from climate change threats?

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Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) stands out as one of the regions most affected by the climate crisis, while it has contributed to the problem only marginally. The foreseen negative effect on health adds overwhelming stress to the already overburdened health systems. Health systems' adaptation to climate change is, therefore, unavoidable to protect human health. Objective: The aim of this study was to understand how health systems in SSA are adapting to climate change threats. Methods: To achieve this, we combined a scoping review with a single case study. We 1) identified adaptation measures in SSA, 2) analysed the adaptation policymaking process using Benin as a case study and 3) suggested recommendations to improve adaptation efforts. Results: Fourteen papers were included in the review. Climate change adaptation remains a niche literature in SSA dominated by a network of authors from Europe and South Africa. Based on the scoping review, it follows that health systems in SSA are adapting through actions in seven domains: 1) health systems strengthening, 2) policy and planning, 3) financing and implementation, 4) information and capacity building, 5) citizen and migrant resilience, 6) disaster risk prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery and 7) mitigation. The Benin national adaptation plan was financially and technically dependent on international actors. The policy made adaptation options on health risks associated with the prioritized climate hazards. Conclusion: Health systems in SSA are adapting to climate change. However, systemic challenges are jeopardizing their efforts. A systemic approach with positive guiding principles is important for effective adaptation.

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Hashim holds a dual Master of Science degrees, one in Public Health and another in Food and Environment Toxicology, each reflecting his commitment to multifaceted approaches in addressing health challenges. Furthermore, Hashim boasts an inter-university diploma in e-Health, showcasing his dedication to harnessing technology for innovative healthcare solutions.