

Title: New Medical Schools in Sub-Saharan Africa – What are they doing?: A Cross-sectional Survey of Educational Structures, Operations, and Policies

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Introduction:

The African continent shoulders the world's highest burden of disease and given the magnitude of health professionals needed, new medical schools are needed. Many have been built and graduated doctors, but the educational structures and operations of these schools remain poorly understood. This study aimed to better understand dimensions of newer medical schools.

Materials and methods:

We developed and implemented an online survey covering topics that included admissions policies, curricular design, assessment, accreditation, faculty development, research capacity, postgraduate training, and COVID-19-specific challenges. The survey was sent to 130 schools.

Results and conclusions:

Responses represented ten countries (response rate ~30%). Curricula were mostly lecture-based (75%). Electronic platforms and information technologies were used by over 75% of schools. About half have implemented postgraduate training programs. Most schools had a formal accreditation process (70%), but the source of accreditation varied. The biggest challenge facing schools was financial (87%) followed by faculty/staff recruitment, training, and retention (65%). New medical schools in Sub-Saharan Africa are a gateway to the next generation of medical doctors in a region where medical professionals are desperately needed. This survey of new schools is an important step in better understanding their status and needs, especially with the onset of the pandemic.

Keywords: *Medical education, Sub-Saharan Africa, Pedagogy, Curriculum Development*