**Achieving Universal Health Coverage in Nigeria: Do pecuniary factors matter?**

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Abstract

Nigeria has adopted Primary Health Care (PHC) as the anchor of the Nigerian health system in its efforts to improve equal access and utilization of basic health services and thus achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC) for some forty years (1988 -2018) now. The approach has gone through various improvements leading to some modest achievements. Yet Nigeria ranks as the third leading country in infant mortality rate in the world (UNICEF 2017). This is in addition to the high rate of maternal mortality, unemployment, poverty and the daunting economic recession. The objective of the research is to give a narrative of the forty years journey in the primary health care approach to achieving universal health coverage and to know what factors are critical to strengthening the PHC approach to achieving UHC in Nigeria. Using a vector autoregressive dynamic model approach the study aims to determine the unique pecuniary factors that can enhance health outcomes thereby giving credence to the primary health care approach to achieving universal health coverage for accessing basic health care services. The study found that in Nigeria, the following pecuniary factors, public health expenditure and per capita income have the capacity to sustain the primary health care approach to achieving UHC, through their effect on improved access to health services and health outcome while high rates of inflation and high exchange rate lowers access to health care services and thus limits the capacity of the primary health care approach to achieve the universal health coverage. The study recommends that health expenditure be increased to ensure steady supply of health care services and per capita income should be increased in line with macroeconomic realities while inflation and exchange rate should be effectively managed by the monetary authority to regulate its fluctuations and subsequent distortion of the economy with implications on health. The study concludes that primary health care remains the best approach to achieving UHC in so far as members of the society finds health services available, accessible and affordable.