Emigration of Nigerian Medical Doctors Survey

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Background

Emigration of Nigerian healthcare workforce, particularly medical doctors has been a lingering problem in the country. In a bid to measure the scope of this trend, Nigeria Health Watch in partnership with NOI Polls conducted a survey on medical doctors to assess the prevalence with which medical doctors pursue work opportunities abroad and probable reasons why.

Aims and Objectives

To understand the scope of emigrating doctors, the frequency, and some of the underlying factors.

Methods

The survey was targeted at Nigerian medical doctors, and it involved a mixed methodology approach employing quantitative and qualitative methods. For the quantitative method, an online survey using a standardized, well-structured questionnaire was employed; and a semi-structured interview guide was utilized for the qualitative approach. The various cadres of doctors were captured in both the quantitative and qualitative methods. Respondents to the online survey were not limited by geographical location, although the in-depth interviews were conducted with medical doctors in Nigeria’s Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Key findings

A large proportion (83%) of doctors who filled the survey and are based abroad are licensed in Nigeria. All respondents (100%) to the survey know medical doctors who are presently resident in Nigeria, who are currently seeking work opportunities abroad. Almost 9 in 10 respondents (88%) disclosed they are seeking work opportunities abroad.

Most respondents cited high taxes & deductions from salary (98%), low work satisfaction (92%), and poor salaries & emoluments (91%) as challenges doctors face that make them consider moving abroad. The United Kingdom and the United States are the top destinations where Nigerian medical doctors seek work opportunities. Prevalent reasons for emigrating include better facilities and work environment, higher remuneration, career progression & professional advancement, and better quality of life.

Majority of survey respondents (87%) believe government is unconcerned with mitigating the challenges facing medical doctors in Nigeria. Improved remuneration (18%), upgrade all hospital facilities and equipment (16%), increase healthcare funding (13%), and improve working conditions of health workers were the top suggestions respondents proffered to mitigate challenges doctors are facing.

Main Conclusions

The issue of emigrating doctors is an imminent problem as the findings from the survey clearly reveal. Alarmingly, majority of respondents who are resident in the country disclosed that they are considering work opportunities abroad. This problem is a crisis considering Nigeria’s rising population and growing demand for health care services.