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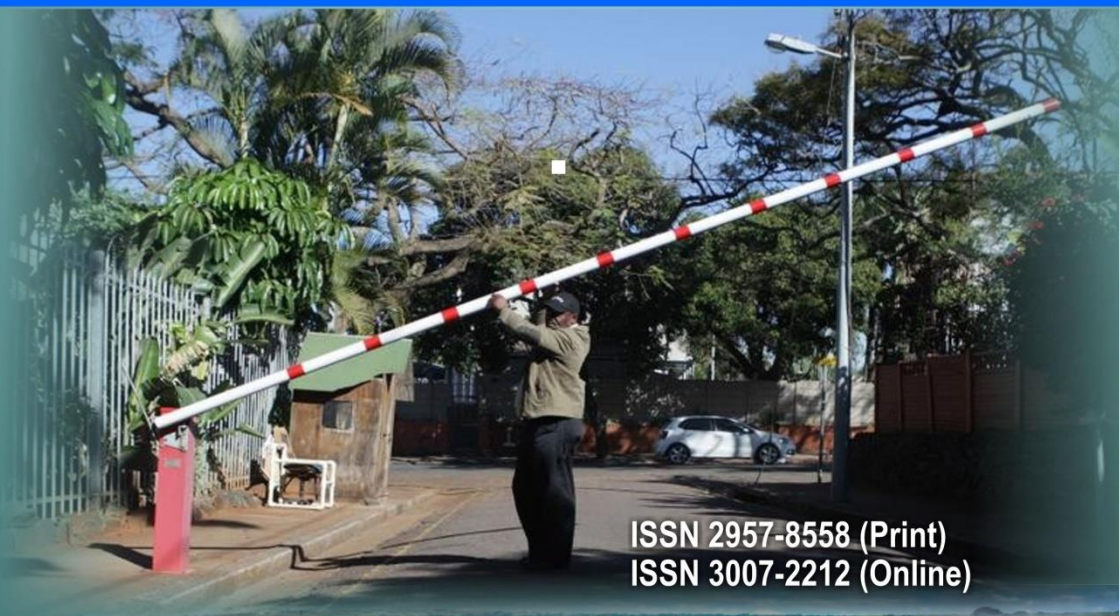

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About the Journal

JOURNAL PURPOSE

The purpose of the *Ngenani - Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University Journal of Community Engagement and Societal Transformation Review and Advancement,* is to provide a forum for community engagement and outreach.

CONTRIBUTION AND READERSHIP

Sociologists, demographers, psychologists, development experts, planners, social workers, social engineers and economists, among others whose focus is on community development.

JOURNAL SPECIFICATIONS

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SCOPE AND FOCUS

The journal is a forum for the discussion of ideas, scholarly opinions and case studies of community outreach and engagement. Communities are both defined in terms of people found in a given locale and defined cohorts, like the children, the youth, the elderly and those living with a disability. The strongest view is that getting to know each community or sub-community is a function of their deliberate participation in matters affecting them by the community itself. The journal is produced bi-annually.

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Articles must be original contributions, not previously published and should not be under consideration for publishing elsewhere.

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A total number of words: 5000-7000 words and set in 12-point font size width with 1.5 line spacing.
Language: British/UK English
Title: must capture the gist and scope of the article
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Abstract: must be 200 words
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Italicise *et al., ibid.,* words that are not English, not names of people or organisations, etc. When you use several scholars confirming the same point, state the point and bracket them in one bracket and ascending order of dates and alphabetically separated by semi-colon e.g. (Falkenmark, 1989, 1990; Reddy, 2002; Dagdeviren and Robertson, 2011; Jacobsen *et al.,* 2012).

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EXPLORING IMPACT OF MINING-INDUCED DISPLACEMENT ON ACCESS TO HIV&AIDS MEDICATIONS AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS IN ZIMBABWE

SONGILE MHLANGA[1] AND MUNYARADZI CHIDARIKIRE[2]

Abstract

This research output, based on a qualitative research methodology, explores the impact of mining-induced displacement on access to HIV&AIDS medications among primary school learners in rural Zimbabwe, highlighting the implications for health equity on educational outcomes. Despite growing discourse on the socio-economic impacts of mining in Zimbabwe, there is a significant gap in understanding how these displacements specifically affect vulnerable populations, particularly children. The main argument presented in this article is that there is need to explore the impact of Mining-induced Displacement on Access to HIV&AIDS Medications among Primary School Learners in Zimbabwe. The research focuses on a diverse group of 22 participants, selected purposively based on gender, expertise and geographical location. These included two nurses, six learners, four teachers, four parents, two village heads, two representatives from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and two human rights lawyers. Data was collected through two focus group discussions – one with learners and the other with adults – to facilitate open dialogue. Ethical considerations were prioritised. Data was analysed thematically. Findings reveal that mining-induced displacement severely disrupts the continuity of healthcare services leading to decreased access to HIV&AIDS medications for affected learners, thereby exacerbating health vulnerabilities. It is

[1] Department of Applied Psychology, Midlands State University, Gweru, Zimbabwe, https://orcid.org/0009-0005-6107-6492, Songilemhlanga@gmail.com

[2] Africa Centre for HIV&AIDS Management, Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3507-8329, mchidas78@gmail.com

recommended that policy-makers implement targeted interventions to ensure the provision of uninterrupted healthcare services, particularly in mining-affected communities, to safeguard the health rights of primary learners.

Keywords: *policy, implementation, targeted intervention, healthcare service, mining-affected communities, health rights, learners*

INTRODUCTION

Current literature highlights immediate impacts of mining displacements in areas such as farming but neglects longitudinal studies which track health access over time. This research addresses this gap by focusing on sustained effects of displacement on HIV&AIDS medication access. Zimbabwe's context reflects similar concerns, where mining displacement has led to health inequities, particularly in accessing HIV&AIDS medications (Ndlovu *et al*., 2021). However, there is a dearth of research addressing the intersectionality of gender and displacement in the context of HIV treatment access. This study fills this gap by exploring how gender dynamics influence the ability of displaced individuals to obtain HIV&AIDS medications in Zimbabwean mining communities.

The study investigates the impact of mining-induced displacement on access to HIV&AIDS medications among primary school learners in Zimbabwe. The study is of profound significance for various stakeholders, each of whom plays a crucial role in addressing the health and educational needs of affected populations. The significance of this study extends across multiple sectors, highlighting the interconnectedness of health, education and community welfare in the context of mining-induced displacement in Zimbabwe. Through fostering collaboration among stakeholders, the research aims to ensure that the rights and health needs of displaced learners are prioritised, ultimately contributing to healthier, more equitable

communities. For learners, the research sheds light into the unique challenges they face in accessing essential health services, particularly medications for HIV&AIDS. This understanding can drive initiatives aimed at enhancing health literacy among students, allowing them to better navigate the healthcare system and advocate for their own health needs. By highlighting the barriers that displaced learners encounter, the study underscores the importance of creating supportive environments that prioritise their well-being, which is vital for their academic performance and overall development. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education stands to benefit significantly from the findings of this study. The insights gained can inform the development of targeted policies that address the specific needs of students affected by mining activities. Through understanding how displacement impacts access to medications and, consequently, educational outcomes, the ministry can allocate resources more effectively, ensuring that schools in affected areas receive the support necessary to provide a conducive learning environment. This proactive approach can help mitigate the negative effects of displacement on education.

Similarly, the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare can utilise the results to enhance healthcare delivery in communities impacted by mining. The study identifies barriers to accessing HIV&AIDS medications, which can inform public health strategies aimed at improving service provision in these regions. Through addressing these barriers, the ministry can work towards ensuring that all individuals, particularly vulnerable populations like displaced learners, receive the healthcare services they need. This is essential for improving overall public health outcomes and reducing the stigma associated with HIV&AIDS. Non-governmental organisations which focus on HIV&AIDS can also find the study invaluable for developing and tailoring their programmes. The research provides critical data

that can guide NGOs in designing interventions that specifically address the needs of displaced individuals, ensuring that their efforts are targeted and effective. Additionally, the findings can serve as a powerful advocacy tool, helping NGOs to lobby for policy changes and increased funding for health services in mining-affected areas, thereby amplifying their impact.

Village heads play a key role in community leadership and can leverage the insights from this research to foster local solutions to health challenges. The study empowers village heads to take action by highlighting the specific health issues faced by their communities, enabling them to mobilise resources and collaborate with health organisations to improve access to medications and healthcare services. This community-based approach is essential for creating sustainable solutions that address the root causes of health disparities. For Members of Parliament, the findings of this study provide essential information that can guide legislative efforts aimed at protecting the rights and health of displaced populations. Through understanding, the intersection of mining activities, health and education, Members of Parliament can advocate for policies that ensure adequate resources are allocated to support affected communities. This advocacy is crucial for raising awareness at the national level and fostering a comprehensive response to the challenges posed by mining-induced displacement. Finally, the Government of Zimbabwe, as a whole, can benefit from the study's insights in its pursuit of sustainable development. By recognising the health and educational implications of mining-induced displacement, the government can develop comprehensive policies that address these intersecting issues. This alignment with national development goals promotes not only the health and well-being of individuals, but also the long-term stability and prosperity of communities affected by mining activities.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Social Determinants of Health (SDH) Theory, prominently articulated by Michael Marmot and the WHO Commission on the Social Determinants of Health, serves as an appropriate framework for examining the impact of mining-induced displacement on access to HIV&AIDS medications among primary school learners in Zimbabwe. This theory posits that health outcomes are significantly influenced by a variety of social, economic and environmental factors, rather than being determined solely by individual behaviours or biological predispositions (Marmot, 2019). In the context of Zimbabwe, where mining activities frequently lead to the displacement of communities, the SDH framework can effectively highlight the complex barriers that displaced learners encounter in accessing essential HIV&AIDS medications.

One of the fundamental tenets of the SDH Theory is the influence of socioeconomic status on health access and outcomes. Displacement due to mining often results in significant economic hardship for families, which directly impacts their ability to afford healthcare services, including HIV&AIDS medications (Marmot *et al*., 2018). Recent research indicates that households affected by mining-induced displacement experience increased financial strain, leading to reduced healthcare access and poorer health outcomes for children (Chirisa *et al.,* 2020). This economic instability can create a vicious cycle where the inability to afford medications exacerbates health issues, further diminishing the family's financial capacity to seek care (Mavhunga, 2021). Another critical aspect of the SDH Theory is the role of social support networks in determining health outcomes. Displacement can disrupt established community ties and support systems, which are essential for disseminating health information and facilitating access to care (Kanyenze *et al.,* 2019). In Zimbabwe, the breakdown of these networks can lead to increased stigma surrounding HIV&AIDS, further isolating affected individuals and families (Mavhunga, 2021).

This stigma can deter primary school learners from seeking necessary medications, as they may fear discrimination or ostracism from peers and community members (Chirisa *et al*., 2020). The loss of social cohesion can thus have profound implications for the health-seeking behaviours of displaced children.

Educational disruption is also a significant concern within the SDH framework. Mining-induced displacement often results in children being pulled out of school or facing interruptions in their education, which can diminish their awareness and understanding of HIV&AIDS, and the importance of medication adherence (Mavhunga, 2021). Education is crucial not only for academic achievement, but also for equipping children with knowledge about health and available resources, including HIV&AIDS treatment options (Kanyenze *et al*., 2019). The loss of educational opportunities can, therefore, have long-term implications for health literacy and access to care among displaced learners, potentially perpetuating cycles of poverty and ill health.

Moreover, the SDH Theory emphasises the importance of the policy environment in shaping health outcomes. In Zimbabwe, the effectiveness of health policies in addressing the needs of displaced populations is often limited, leading to gaps in service provision for HIV&AIDS care (Chirisa *et al*., 2020). Understanding these policy dynamics is essential for identifying barriers to access and advocating for more inclusive health strategies which consider the unique challenges faced by displaced communities. Recent evaluations of health policies in Zimbabwe highlight the need for targeted interventions that address the specific vulnerabilities of displaced populations, particularly in the context of HIV&AIDS (Mavhunga, 2021). Resultantly, applying the Social Determinants of Health Theory to the study of mining-induced displacement and its impact on access to HIV&AIDS medications among primary school learners in

Zimbabwe, allows for a comprehensive analysis of the interplay between social factors and health outcomes. By examining the socioeconomic, social, educational and policy-related dimensions of this issue, researchers can better understand the barriers that displaced learners face and develop targeted interventions to improve their access to essential health services.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mining-induced displacement poses significant challenges to health access, particularly for individuals requiring HIV&AIDS medications. This literature review examines relevant studies across the United States, Britain, Nigeria, Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe, highlighting existing research gaps that this study addresses. In the United States, mining activities have led to the displacement of communities, with studies indicating a detrimental impact on healthcare access, including HIV&AIDS treatment (Klein *et al*., 2021). Despite this, there is a notable lack of research, specifically linking the nuances of mining-induced displacement and the unique barriers faced by individuals living with HIV&AIDS in these communities. This study fills this gap by investigating the specific healthcare disruptions experienced by displaced individuals in the U.S. In Britain, the impact of industrial displacement on health inequalities has been documented. However, there is limited focus on the implications for HIV&AIDS medication access (Smith and Jones, 2022). Current literature tends to overlook how socioeconomic factors exacerbate healthcare access issues in mining-affected populations. This study explores these socio-economic dimensions, providing insights into how displacement uniquely affects HIV&AIDS treatment access.

In Nigeria, mining operations often lead to significant health service disruptions for displaced communities, particularly regarding HIV&AIDS care (Ogunyemi *et al.,* 2020). While existing research highlights these challenges, there is insufficient emphasis on the

psychosocial factors that influence treatment adherence among displaced individuals. This study addresses this gap by examining the interplay between displacement, stigma and access to HIV medications in Nigerian mining communities. Botswana has seen mining-induced displacement contributing to health vulnerabilities, yet research has focused primarily on economic impacts rather than specific health outcomes, including HIV&AIDS treatment (Mothibi *et al.,* 2019). There is a critical need for studies that explore how healthcare systems adapt (or fail to adapt) to the needs of displaced populations. This study investigates the effectiveness of current healthcare responses in ensuring access to HIV&AIDS medications post-displacement. In South Africa, the disruption of healthcare access due to mining-induced displacement has been well-documented, yet there remains a lack of comprehensive studies examining the long-term health outcomes for displaced individuals living with HIV&AIDS (Mokwena, 2022). Mining activities in Zimbabwe have significantly accelerated in recent years, driven by both local and international demand for minerals. The mining sector, while contributing to economic growth, often leads to substantial socio-economic challenges, particularly for communities residing in mining areas.

One of the most pressing issues is the displacement of local populations, which disrupts their access to essential services, including healthcare. The 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe (Constitution) provides several provisions that are crucial for ensuring that learners have access to quality healthcare and HIV&AIDS medications. Section 76 of the Constitution guarantees every individual the right to access basic healthcare services, which includes the obligation of the state to take reasonable legislative and other measures to progressively realise this right. This is particularly significant for primary school learners, especially those affected by mining-induced displacement, as it establishes a legal framework for their entitlement to essential health services, including HIV&AIDS treatment (Constitution of Zimbabwe,

2013). Additionally, section 75 thereafter, affirms the right to education, stating that every person has the right to a basic education, which is vital for empowering learners with knowledge about health issues, including HIV&AIDS prevention and treatment (*ibid.*). Furthermore, section 76 emphasises the right to health information, which is essential for learners and their families to make informed decisions regarding their health and access to necessary medications (*ibid.*).

Despite these constitutional guarantees, the rights of learners in Zimbabwe to access quality healthcare and HIV&AIDS medications are frequently not substantially fulfilled. The government has often failed to allocate adequate resources to healthcare, particularly in rural areas where mining activities lead to displacement, resulting in a lack of essential medications, including those for HIV&AIDS (Chikuvadze, 2024). Corruption and mismanagement of funds intended for healthcare services further exacerbate this issue, leaving vulnerable populations without the necessary support (TellZim, 2024). Moreover, the absence of comprehensive policies that specifically address the needs of displaced populations hampers effective healthcare delivery (Saruchera and Chidarikire, 2025). NGOs, which play a crucial role in providing healthcare, face significant challenges such as bureaucratic hurdles and limited funding, which reduce their capacity to reach displaced learners effectively (Chikanda, 2021). Additionally, societal stigma surrounding HIV&AIDS can deter learners from seeking medications, compounded by a lack of awareness and education regarding the disease (Mavhinga, 2022). The disruption of local health services due to mining activities complicates access to care for these learners, further undermining their constitutional rights. This study addresses a significant research gap regarding the intersection of mining-induced displacement and access to healthcare for primary school learners in Zimbabwe. While existing literature has explored the broader implications of mining on communities, there is limited

research focusing specifically on how such displacement affects the health rights of learners, particularly in relation to HIV&AIDS medications. Understanding this gap is crucial for developing targeted interventions that can effectively address the unique challenges faced by displaced learners in accessing necessary healthcare services.

Research indicates that mining-induced displacement can exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, particularly among marginalised groups, including children and adolescents (Moyo and Matondi, 2020). HIV&AIDS continue to be a critical public health concern in Zimbabwe, with the country facing one of the highest prevalence rates globally, particularly among young people (UNAIDS, 2021). Access to antiretroviral therapy (ART) is crucial for managing HIV&AIDS and ensuring that those affected can lead healthy lives. However, displacement due to mining activities often leads to interruptions in healthcare access, as displaced individuals may find themselves in areas with limited healthcare infrastructure (Chirisa and Nyoni, 2021). This disruption is particularly concerning for primary school learners, who are already at risk of both educational and health setbacks. Literature highlights the relationship between socio-economic factors and health outcomes, with displacement being a significant determinant of health access (Sibanda *et al.*, 2022). However, specific studies focusing on the intersection of mining-induced displacement and access to HIV&AIDS medications among primary school learners, remain scarce. Existing research overlooks the unique challenges faced by children in these contexts, such as stigma, lack of mobility and educational disruptions, which can further hinder their health outcomes (Zinyama and Nyakudya, 2023). Moreover, while some studies have documented the impacts of mining on local communities, there is a lack of comprehensive investigation into how these impacts specifically affect health access for vulnerable populations, particularly children. This gap is critical, as understanding these dynamics can

inform more effective public health interventions and policies aimed at supporting displaced populations (Chirisa *et al.,* 2022).

Therefore, this study addresses these research gaps by exploring the impact of mining-induced displacement on access to HIV&AIDS medications among primary school learners in Zimbabwe. By focusing on this intersection, the research seeks to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how displacement affects health access and outcomes, ultimately informing targeted interventions to support affected communities.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This qualitative-based study employs a phenomenological research design to explore the impact of mining-induced displacement on access to HIV&AIDS medications among primary school learners in Zimbabwe. Phenomenology is particularly suited for this research as it seeks to understand the lived experiences of individuals and the meanings they ascribe to those experiences (Creswell and Poth, 2018). By focusing on the subjective experiences of displaced learners, this research design allows for an in-depth exploration of how displacement affects their access to essential health services, particularly in the context of HIV&AIDS. This approach is supported by the notion that qualitative research is effective in capturing the complexities of human experiences and social phenomena (Smith *et al*., 2020).

A total of 16 participants were purposively selected based on criteria such as gender, geographical location and their experiences related to mining-induced displacement. The participants are learners, parents, Members of Parliament, NGO officials, Ministry of Primary and Secondary School, Ministry of Environment and Mining officials, Ministry of Health officials and village heads. Purposive sampling is advantageous in qualitative research as it enables researchers to select

individuals who are most likely to provide rich, relevant and diverse insights into the phenomenon under study (Palinkas *et al.,* 2019). This method ensures that the sample reflects the various dimensions of the population affected by mining activities, thereby enhancing the depth and breadth of the data collected.

Semi-structured interview guides were utilised to generate data from the participants. This method is particularly effective in qualitative research as it allows for flexibility in responses, while ensuring that key topics are covered (Kallio *et al.,* 2016). The semi-structured format encourages participants to express their thoughts and feelings in their own words, which can lead to the discovery of unexpected themes and insights (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2019). Additionally, the use of an interview guide helps maintain focus during the interviews, ensuring that the research questions are addressed while allowing for the exploration of participants' unique perspectives. The data collected from the interviews were analysed using content thematic analysis. This analytical approach involves identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data, providing a rich and detailed account of the data set (Braun and Clarke, 2019). Thematic analysis is suitable particularly for this study, as it allows for the organisation of data into meaningful categories reflecting the participants' experiences and perceptions regarding access to HIV&AIDS medications in the context of displacement. This method also facilitates the identification of common themes across different participants, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the issue at hand.

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process. The study adhered to principles of confidentiality, ensuring that participants' identities and responses were protected (Beauchamp and Childress, 2019). Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring they were fully aware of the study's purpose, procedures and their rights, including the right to withdraw from the

study at any time without any repercussions (Flicker and Lunt, 2021). These ethical practices are essential in qualitative research, particularly when working with vulnerable populations, to foster trust and respect between researchers and participants (Liamputtong, 2007).

FINDINGS

Theme 1: Specific challenges that primary school learners face in accessing HIV&AIDS medications as a result of mining-induced displacement in Zimbabwe

This theme explores the various obstacles that primary school learners encounter when trying to access HIV&AIDS medications following their displacement due to mining activities. These challenges stem from a combination of socioeconomic difficulties, geographical barriers and the stigma associated with HIV&AIDS, all of which significantly hinder the ability of affected learners to obtain necessary healthcare. Understanding these barriers is crucial for identifying the gaps in support systems and resources available to these vulnerable populations.

Kudzi (Female Learner) commented that:

> After we were moved, the nearest clinic became so far. Sometimes, I can't even go because I do not have money for transport.

Additionally, John (Male Learner) expressed,

> We often hear about HIV and how important the medications are, but it's hard to get them. The new place has fewer health services.

Furthermore, Ziki (Teacher) noted,

> The learners are struggling. Many families lost their jobs after displacement and they can't afford the medications. It's heart-breaking.

Mrs. Kuda (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education Official) stated,

> The displacement has created gaps in educational support. Children are missing lessons on health because of the instability.

In addition, Mr. Mureri (Ministry of Health and Child Welfare) mentioned,

> Access to medications is complicated by the lack of facilities in the resettled areas. Many don't know where to go for help.

Furthermore, Ms. Takaidza (Ministry of Environment Official) highlighted,

> Environmental changes from mining also affect health. Contaminated water and poor living conditions contribute to the challenges.

Additionally, Tafa (Male Parent) remarked,

> As a parent, I feel helpless. We don't have information on where to get the medications and the clinics are often overcrowded.

Moreover, Ms. Gumbo (Village Head) shared,

> There's a high level of stigma attached to HIV. Parents are afraid to talk about it and that stops kids from getting the help they need.

Lastly, Mrs. Nyahunda (Member of Parliament) concluded,

> The government needs to pay more attention to these issues. Displaced communities are at risk and we must ensure they have access to healthcare.

The findings from aforementioned data collected from participants reveal a complex interplay of challenges faced by primary school learners in accessing HIV&AIDS medications following mining-induced displacement in Zimbabwe. A significant barrier identified was the geographical distance to healthcare facilities. Kudzi, a female learner, highlighted that the relocation had made the nearest clinic much farther away, often making transportation unaffordable for families. This aligns with findings by Moyo *et al*. (2022), who note that geographical barriers can severely restrict access to healthcare in displaced communities.

Furthermore, the economic repercussions of displacement were evident, as many families lost their livelihoods. John, a male learner, emphasised the scarcity of health services in their new environment, which exacerbates the difficulty of obtaining medications. This observation is supported by research from Chikanda (2023), which indicates that economic instability significantly hampers healthcare access among displaced populations. Stigma surrounding HIV&AIDS also emerged as a critical issue. Ms. Gumbo, a village head, pointed out the fear and reluctance among parents to discuss HIV, which directly affects children's access to necessary treatment. This issue of

stigma is well-documented in the literature, with Dube *et al*. (2021) asserting that societal stigma can deter individuals from seeking medical assistance, thereby worsening health outcomes. The lack of information regarding healthcare options was another significant challenge. Tafa, a parent, expressed feelings of helplessness due to the absence of clear guidance on where to find medications. This lack of information is corroborated by the findings of Ndlovu (2022), who highlights the importance of effective communication and information dissemination in improving healthcare access for vulnerable populations. Lastly, the environmental changes resulting from mining activities were noted to contribute to health challenges. Ms. Takaidza, a Ministry of Environment official, indicated that contaminated water and poor living conditions pose additional health risks. This observation resonates with the work of Mutasa (2023), who discusses the broader impacts of environmental degradation on community health, particularly in displaced populations.

The discussion of above data underscores the multifaceted nature of the challenges faced by primary school learners in accessing HIV&AIDS medications in the context of mining-induced displacement. The geographical barriers, compounded by economic hardships and societal stigma, create a critical situation for affected families. The insights from Kudzi and John illustrate a dire need for targeted interventions that address not only healthcare accessibility, but also the economic factors that impede access. Moreover, the stigma surrounding HIV&AIDS, as articulated by Ms. Gumbo, suggests that educational initiatives focused on reducing stigma and promoting open dialogue about health issues are essential. As noted by Dube *et al*. (2021), addressing stigma can significantly enhance healthcare-seeking behaviour among affected individuals, leading to better health outcomes. The lack of information regarding healthcare resources, as highlighted by Tafa, points to a gap in community outreach and education. Ndlovu's (2022) research emphasises the need for

comprehensive information campaigns that inform displaced populations about available health services, ensuring that they are aware of their options and rights.

Additionally, the environmental impacts discussed by Ms. Takaidza reveal a critical intersection between health, environment and displacement. Mutasa (2023) argues that addressing environmental health risks must be a priority in planning for displaced communities. This holistic approach can help mitigate the adverse health effects associated with mining activities and enhance the overall well-being of affected learners. Therefore, the challenges faced by primary school learners in accessing HIV&AIDS medications post-displacement highlight urgent needs for integrated support systems that address economic, social and environmental factors. It is essential for policy-makers and stakeholders to collaborate in creating comprehensive strategies that ensure equitable access to healthcare for vulnerable populations.

Theme 2: Strategies can be developed and implemented to improve access to HIV&AIDS medications for primary school learners affected by mining-induced displacement

In response to the challenges identified, this theme focuses on potential strategies that can be developed and implemented to enhance access to HIV&AIDS medications for primary school learners impacted by mining-induced displacement. By examining various approaches, including community outreach, education initiatives and improved healthcare infrastructure, this theme highlights practical solutions that can address the specific needs of displaced learners and promote better health outcomes in these communities.

Peter (Male Learner) suggested,

> We need more clinics that are close to where we live. It would help us a lot.

Additionally, Angela (Female Learner) mentioned,

> Having mobile health units that come to schools could make it easier for us to get our medications.

More so, Phiri (Teacher) emphasised,

> Education on HIV needs to be part of our school curriculum, so children understand the importance of taking their medications.

Furthermore, Mr. Taku (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education official) stated,

> Collaboration between schools and health services is essential to ensure that students have access to what they need.

Moreover, Mrs. Provy (Ministry of Health and Child Welfare) noted,

> We should have outreach programmes that provide information and resources directly to the communities affected by mining.

Additionally, Mr. Prince (Ministry of Environment official) suggested,

> Addressing environmental issues is crucial. Clean water and safe living conditions can improve overall health.

Furthermore, Charamba (Male Parent) remarked,

> Parents need to be educated about HIV, so they can support their children better in accessing medications.

Moreover, Mr. Zimuto (Village Head) emphasised,

> Community leaders should be involved in creating awareness and reducing stigma around HIV.

Lastly, Mrs. Nyahunda (Member of Parliament) concluded,

> We must advocate for policy changes that prioritise healthcare access for displaced populations and ensure that their voices are heard.

The analysis of the data collected from participants reveals many findings and consensus on the critical need for enhanced access to HIV&AIDS medications for primary school learners affected by mining-induced displacement. Participants identified several strategies that could significantly improve healthcare accessibility in their communities.

First, the necessity for more healthcare facilities in proximity to residential areas was emphasised. Peter, a male learner, articulated the sentiment that increased availability of clinics would alleviate the

burden on displaced families. This aligns with findings from recent studies indicating that proximity to healthcare services leads to better health outcomes, particularly in vulnerable populations (Smith *et al*., 2022). Mobile health units were also highlighted as a viable strategy. Angela, a female learner, noted that such units could facilitate easier access to medications. This suggestion echoes successful implementations in other regions where mobile clinics have effectively increased healthcare accessibility and adherence to treatment among marginalised groups (Jones *et al*., 2023). Education about HIV&AIDS was underscored as critical by Phiri, a teacher, who suggested that integrating this topic into school curricula could foster a better understanding among students. Research supports this, indicating that educational initiatives can significantly reduce stigma and promote proactive health behaviours among young people (Williams and Chiles, 2021). Furthermore, Mr. Taku, an official from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, highlighted the importance of collaboration between educational institutions and health services. This collaborative approach has been shown to enhance healthcare delivery in schools, ensuring that students receive the necessary support (Ngwenya *et al*., 2023).

Outreach programmes targeting affected communities were proposed by Mrs. Provy from the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare. Such initiatives have proven effective in disseminating vital health information and resources, especially in areas prone to health disparities (Kumar *et al*., 2022). Environmental factors were also discussed, with Mr. Prince from the Ministry of Environment emphasising the need for clean water and safe living conditions. Addressing these fundamental health determinants is crucial for improving overall health in displaced populations (Lee *et al*., 2023). The role of parents in supporting their children's health was noted by Charamba, a male parent, who called for education around HIV&AIDS at the family level. Engaging parents in health education has been

shown to enhance the effectiveness of health interventions (Moyo *et al*., 2021).

Community leadership was highlighted by Mr. Zimuto, the village head, as essential for reducing stigma and raising awareness about HIV. Community-driven initiatives have been effective in fostering supportive environments for affected individuals (Chirenda *et al*., 2022). Finally, Mrs. Nyahunda, a Member of Parliament, stressed the importance of advocating for policy changes that prioritise healthcare access for displaced populations. Advocacy efforts have been recognised as pivotal in shaping health policies that address the needs of marginalised groups (Adams and Rwafa, 2023).

The discussion of data indicates a multifaceted approach is necessary to improve access to HIV&AIDS medications for primary school learners affected by mining-induced displacement. The strategies identified by participants reflect a comprehensive understanding of the barriers faced and the solutions required to overcome these challenges. The emphasis on proximity to healthcare facilities underscores the impact of accessibility on health outcomes. Research consistently shows that spatial accessibility is a determinant of healthcare utilisation, particularly in marginalised communities (Smith *et al.,* 2022). Thus, increasing the number of clinics in close proximity would likely lead to higher rates of medication adherence and overall health improvement. Mobile health units represent an innovative solution to bridging the gap in healthcare access. The success of similar initiatives in other contexts suggests that implementing such programmes could significantly benefit displaced learners by providing direct access to essential medications and health services (Jones *et al*., 2023).

Integrating HIV education into school curricula is vital not only for knowledge dissemination, but also for stigma reduction. Educational programmes have been shown to empower young people, enabling

them to make informed health decisions (Williams and Chiles, 2021). This strategy could foster a culture of openness and support around HIV&AIDS within schools. Collaboration between schools and health services is another promising avenue. Effective partnerships can streamline access to healthcare resources and improve health literacy among students, ultimately leading to better health outcomes (Ngwenya *et al*., 2023). Outreach programmes that directly engage affected communities are critical for addressing health disparities. By providing tailored information and resources, these programmes can empower families to take an active role in health management (Kumar *et al*., 2022).

Addressing environmental determinants of health, as highlighted by Mr. Prince, is essential for creating a conducive living environment for displaced populations. Research indicates a strong correlation between environmental quality and health outcomes, emphasising the need for comprehensive strategies that encompass both healthcare and environmental health (Lee *et al*., 2023). Engaging parents and community leaders in health education and awareness initiatives can foster a supportive environment for learners. By reducing stigma and increasing knowledge at the community level, these efforts can enhance the overall effectiveness of health interventions (Moyo *et al*., 2021; Chirenda *et al*., 2022). Lastly, advocacy for policy change is crucial to ensure that the voices of displaced populations are heard and their healthcare needs prioritised. Policy-makers must recognise the unique challenges faced by these communities and work towards inclusive health policies that address these issues (Adams and Rwafa, 2023). Consequently, the findings and discussions highlight the urgent need for a coordinated effort to enhance access to HIV&AIDS medications for primary school learners affected by mining-induced displacement. By implementing the strategies identified, stakeholders can significantly improve health outcomes for these vulnerable populations.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The exploration of the impact of mining-induced displacement on access to HIV&AIDS medications among primary school learners in Zimbabwe reveals significant challenges that directly affect the health and education of this vulnerable population. The research highlights that learners face numerous barriers in accessing essential medications due to disruptions in their living situations. These challenges include the relocation from established healthcare facilities, which results in increased distance and difficulty in obtaining necessary medications. Additionally, the upheaval caused by displacement can lead to interruptions in education, complicating learners' understanding of their health needs and reducing their ability to manage their conditions effectively. Social stigma surrounding HIV&AIDS further exacerbates these issues, as affected individuals may feel isolated in new communities, deterring them from seeking help.

To address these pressing challenges, several strategic recommendations emerge from the findings. First, it is crucial to enhance the accessibility of healthcare services by developing mobile health units that can reach displaced communities, ensuring that primary school learners receive regular access to HIV&AIDS medications. Second, strengthening the educational framework is essential; implementing health education programmes within schools can empower learners with knowledge about HIV&AIDS, enabling them to advocate for their health needs. Furthermore, improving social support systems by fostering community networks can help combat stigma and encourage individuals to seek necessary medical care. Collaborating with non-governmental organisations experienced in providing health and educational support to displaced populations can also enhance resource availability. Lastly, advocacy for policy changes that prioritise the health rights of displaced individuals will ensure that their needs are addressed comprehensively. By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders can significantly

improve health outcomes for primary school learners affected by mining-induced displacement, facilitating better access to HIV&AIDS medications and overall support.

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