

RETENTION OF HEALTH WORKERS IN RURAL HOSPITALS IN ZIMBABWE: A CASE STUDY OF MAKONDE DISTRICT, MASHONALAND WEST PROVINCE

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ABSTRACT

The study explores the factors that influence the retention of health workers in rural areas in Zimbabwe. Critical shortages of health workers in developing countries have been widely researched and a plethora of strategies proffered however the situation remains unabated in the face of evolving dynamic factors. A sample of thirty-four (34) health workers based in Makonde Rural District in Mashonaland West Province were interviewed using self-administered questionnaires. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics. The key study findings showed the main factors influencing the retention of health workers in rural areas as inter alia: poor salaries and incentives, inadequate, obsolete and often unavailable work-related infrastructure, medical supplies and drugs, inadequate career prospects, poor living conditions and lack of basic recreational amenities. The key recommendations are that to attract and retain health workers in rural areas the government and key stakeholders should continuously review and improve salaries and incentives, career developmental opportunities and socio-economic needs of health workers.

KEYWORDS: Health Workers, Retention, Rural Workers, Zimbabwe