

The Role of Health Policy in Enhancing Health Security: A Case Study of Nigeria's National Action Plan for Health Security (NAPHS)

Paul Imolemen Irabor*, Adekeye Toyosi

Department of Community Medicine and Primary Healthcare

*Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT

Nigeria's National Action Plan for Health Security (NAPHS) is an important framework focused on boosting the country's ability to prevent, detect and respond to public health threats. But, rolling out this plan has hit some major snags, creating a big gap between what the plan aims to achieve and what is actually happening on the ground. This situation really highlights the need for a study to see how effective the plan is. The main goal of this study is to figure out how the National Action Plan for Health Security (NAPHS) affects Nigeria's overall health policies and its ability to bounce back from health threats. We took a mixed-methods approach for this research to get a well-rounded view. The quantitative part included a survey with 100 different stakeholders from the health sector, which included the federal and state policymakers, NGOs, international partners, and those on the frontline. On the qualitative side, we conducted 30 in-depth interviews with senior leaders in Nigeria's health security scene. For the numbers, we used descriptive statistics, and for the qualitative insights, we went with thematic analysis. The findings paint a bit of a complicated picture regarding the implementation of NAPHS. While the plan aligns very well with global standards, like the International Health Regulations (IHR 2005), there is a huge awareness gap. A whopping 91% of federal stakeholders are quite familiar with it, but only 20% of people at the local level know what is up. The tangible progress we have seen mostly comes from areas where partners have jumped in with support. For instance, 70% of those surveyed pointed to success in disease surveillance, and 65% noted improvements in laboratory capacity. But when it comes to core health system functions, like developing the workforce, not so much as only 25% saw any real progress. The biggest hurdles were the lack of funding, which 85% of respondents mentioned, and poor coordination between sectors, noted by 75%. Leaders in the qualitative interviews echoed these challenges, calling NAPHS an "unfunded mandate" caught in a "cycle of panic and neglect." Plus, they pointed out that the integrated "One Health" approach is still mostly a dream rather than a reality. To wrap it up, this study shows that NAPHS is a crucial step for Nigeria's health security framework. But, its potential to really change things is very limited due to a lack of sustainable funding and scattered governance. For the plan to actually work, we need to make health security a priority with dedicated budgets and clear mandates for collaboration. To tackle these key issues, the study suggests setting up a National Health Security Fund and creating a formal One Health Steering Committee.

