
POSTER ABSTRACT

Integrated Care and Social Protection for Senior Citizens In West Africa: A Scoping Review

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Background: West Africa's population is aging at a rapid rate, and the prevalence of older adults with multiple chronic conditions is rising. However, there is little information available about healthcare policies for this age group in this region ten years after the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA). To manage the physical and psychosocial needs of senior citizens, a greater integration of healthcare services is required.

Methods: A scoping review was conducted adhering to the Joanna Briggs Institute's systematic scoping review protocol guidelines. A simple search strategy was developed to collate relevant articles from PubMed, Google Scholar, and AJOL, as well as policy databases, between 2002 and 2022. Articles were included if published in English and related to primary care, social care, and multi-morbidity among older persons in West Africa.

Results: The findings yielded three thematic issues. First, most West African countries have policies on healthy aging; however, only a few have coherent policies on access to healthcare for older people and the availability of social safety nets, highlighting the need for policymakers to provide coherence and avenues for integration. Secondly, while integration of non-communicable disease services focuses on individual-level services rather than multi-sectoral integration, there is also a poor focus on mental health and sexual and reproductive health integration. Finally the inherent capacity development needs and technical up-skilling requirements require a whole-system approach with contextual nuances.

Conclusion: The literature is increasingly recognizing an aging population and the prevalence of multi-morbidity in West Africa. Countries in West Africa, in response to the MIPAA, have formulated policies with regards to older persons' healthcare needs; however, improvements in clinical care at the individual setting level may not be sufficient. A deliberate whole-system approach that fosters multi-sectoral collaboration for integrated healthcare might go a long way toward better outcomes for senior citizens and a step forward toward universal health coverage.