

Unequal Scene and Health Inequality in Rapidly Growing City of Akure: The Nigerian Reality.

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Cities play important and critical role in the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 3. However, the urbanization trend in Low Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) like Nigeria presents significant sustainable development challenge, particularly the striking urban health inequalities. It is well known that factors such as geography, social determinants of health, economic and health policies influence health inequality; little is known about the complex interplay between urban structure and health in rapidly urbanizing cities in Nigeria. Therefore, this study utilizes retrospective primary health care data and Very High-Resolution satellite imagery to determine the malaria prevalence among children below five years (U5) based on various settlement types in Akure, south-western Nigeria. Malaria Indicator Questionnaire (MIQ) was used to obtain U5 malaria prevalence based on random sampling of households while the satellite images aided settlement classification of the city based on unique morphological features into four settlement types –informal, medium density, formal/planned, and peri-urban settlements. The model-based geostatistical modelling of U5 malaria prevalence and settlement classification of the city using Momepy tool in Python yielded interesting insights. Key findings show spatial variability in malaria prevalence among U5, with higher malaria burden in the informal and peri-urban settlement compared to the lower prevalence in formal settlements. Thus, our findings underscore the urgent need for comprehensive urban development policies to address health inequities by prioritizing physical infrastructure improvements in marginalized areas. Such improvements will translate to enhanced health equity for rapidly growing informal, poor, and deprived settlement areas and ultimately promote sustainable urban development efforts.

Primary author: BAYODE, Taye (Heidelberg University, Germany)

Co-authors: Prof. SIEGMUND, Alexander; Prof. AKINBAMIJO, Olumuyiwa

Presenter: BAYODE, Taye (Heidelberg University, Germany)

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