

Towards Achieving Sustainable Development Goal Number 3 in Nigeria: Assessment of the Healthcare Budgetary Allocation

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Introduction: Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG 3) aims to ensure and promote good health and well being without discrimination of any kind. The goals also make a bold commitment towards achieving universal health coverage (UHC) without considering financial constraint as a barrier to access good healthcare. The aim of our study was to assess health budgetary allocation in Nigeria and the efforts of the country in achieving SDG 3.

Methods: The study utilized a qualitative-based method and exploratory research design. In selecting relevant sources, a chain-referral sampling method was employed which led the researchers to relevant articles and data sources for the study. Data utilized in the study were gotten from journal articles, conference abstracts, newspapers, databases, country national report, internet and books. No date restrictions on the search for literatures were observed and only literatures written in English were reviewed. The inclusion criteria for the study were based on topic pertaining to healthcare, finance in healthcare, budgetary allocation, UHC and SDG 3 in Nigeria.

Results: The annual national budget of the health system in Nigeria is far below the Abuja declaration agreed by the African union member countries in year 2001. Within a ten year period (2006 – 2016), the average allocation to health was estimated to be 5.3%, which is 1.13% less than the 2017 budget. Even though, the country experienced economic recession in 2017 with a corresponding fall in the value of naira, the budgetary allocation for 2017 was similar to that of 2007 despite a 40% increase in the dollar rate. Although, the total budgetary allocation for 2018 was significantly higher than 2017 (16% higher), the healthcare budget, however, experienced a decline by 0.22%. Poor budget allocation to healthcare is indeed a serious threat to achieving UHC and SDG 3 in Nigeria which justifies the rise in health challenges in the country.

Conclusion: With the current state of healthcare budget allocation in Nigeria, achieving good health for all remains a mirage and even poses a serious threat to achieving other SDGs. We recommend a paradigm shift in the commitment of the government to improving health of the people. Another way is to seek out for donation from various organizations and well-meaning Nigerian to healthcare which in the long run, contributes to reduction in out-of-pocket expenditure among Nigeria living below the poverty line. Leveraging on the public-private partnership is another strategy that can be used in reducing financial constraints.