

Health beliefs and practices of individuals within the context of circular migration in Nairobi, Kenya

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Abstract

Ensuring a high standard of living, quality of life, sound health and well-being is part of the African Union Agenda 2063 goals. Cities in Africa have become economic and cultural hubs due to rapid urbanization. This however, has also provided an environment where diseases thrive. This is further exacerbated by the fluid nature of boundaries between the city and its hinterlands especially as a result of circular migration. Cities in Africa have often been conceptualized as separate entities from their hinterlands. This view however distorts individual health realities and imaginations given that individuals encounter different experiences given the different spaces and places they find themselves. The objective of this paper is to assess circular movements within Nairobi city and its hinterlands, explore individual experiences in addressing their health needs within the context of the circular movements, and to determine the influence of culture in their health seeking behaviours within their interactions with the city and the hinterlands. A rapid review of literature on circular migration, illness narratives and experiences has been conducted. Theories on spatializing culture, and meaning-centered approaches were also reviewed. This article endeavours to provide an understanding that diseases provoke individual and social responses which are codified as ethnomedical systems. The ethnomedical systems help us to understand how individuals think about diseases and organise themselves towards achieving medical care. The health care systems also need to be understood within the context of migration networks embracing cities as facilitating, permeable, expanding and fluid towards the achievement of inclusive healthcare. (250 Words)

Keywords: Circular movements/migration, cities, health seeking behaviours, health systems, illness narratives