

# Nurse Managers' Perspectives on Care Quality and Safety in Rural Hospitals in Uganda

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## Abstract

Rural hospitals in sub-Saharan African countries play a key role in dealing with a high level of disease burden, but are usually poorly equipped with resources. Ward nurse managers in rural hospitals are in an ideal position to negotiate resources and bridge gaps in quality improvements. The aim of this study was to explore nurse managers' perspectives on quality and safe care in rural hospitals in Uganda. This was a qualitative interpretive study in which 11 ward nurse managers with at least two years' experience in the role were purposively selected to participate in the study. In-depth interviews using a semi-structured interview guide were applied for data collection. Thematic analysis was applied to analyse the data. Four themes were identified from the interviews. These themes explained how nurse managers engaged stakeholders in quality and safe care for patients; supported staff through supervision; improvised practices to cope with resource and equipment constraints; and being constrained by poor working conditions. Nurse managers in rural hospitals in sub-Saharan Africa face unique challenges in ensuring quality and safe care for patients due to a lack of basic human and material resources. The strategies they apply in quality improvements have implications for policy and resource development.

**Keywords:** nurse managers; rural healthcare facilities; Uganda; quality and safe care; nurse

## Introduction

The majority of populations in sub-Saharan Africa live in rural areas (United Nations 2018). Although rural hospitals in this region play a key role in dealing with a high level of disease burden, they are usually poorly equipped with human resources, medication supplies and equipment (World Health Organisation 2015). Disparities in quality and safe care for patients between low-income countries and middle- and high-income



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