

Publication

Health impact assessment and health equity in sub-Saharan Africa : a scoping review

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Author(s) Leuenberger, A.; Farnham, A.; Azevedo, S.; Cossa, H.; Dietler, D.; Nimako, B.; Adongo, P. B.; Merten, S.; Utzinger, J.; Winkler, M. S.

Author(s) at UniBasel [Leuenberger, Andrea](#) ; [Farnham, Andrea](#) ; [Azevedo, Sophie](#) ; [Cossa, Herminio Fernando Humberto](#) ; [Dietler, Dominik](#) ; [Nimako, Belinda](#) ; [Merten, Sonja](#) ; [Utzinger, Jürg](#) ; [Winkler, Mirko](#) ;

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Background: Natural resource extraction projects can have positive but also negative effects on the health of affected communities governed by demographic, economic, environmental, physical and social changes. Negative effects often prevail and these need to be addressed. **Methodology:** We conducted a scoping review to determine whether and to what extent HIA in sub-Saharan Africa addresses health equity. We included peer-reviewed publications and guidelines pertaining to HIA, environmental impact assessment (EIA) and social impact assessment (SIA). Health equity was investigated by identifying (i) how health considerations were addressed and (ii) whether health was stratified by subgroups of the community. **Results:** Out of 1'640 raw hits, we identified 62 articles (16 HIA, 36 EIA, one SIA and nine integrated assessments), 32 of which specifically addressed health. While 20 articles focused on children or marginalized groups as a measure of health equity. Another 12 papers referred to the community in a more general way (e.g. affected). Without exception, health was an integral part of the nine included guidelines. HIA guidelines addressed health systematically through environmental health areas, risk assessment matrix or key performance indicators. **Conclusions:** We found evidence that previously conducted HIA in sub-Saharan Africa and current guidelines address health equity. However, there is a need to stratify community inequities by "leaving no one behind", as suggested by the Sustainable Development Goals.

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