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Perceived Impacts of Large-Scale Mining Activities on Maternal and Child Health Conditions in Mozambique: A Qualitative Study

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Currently Mozambique endows more than 350 industrial mining projects and many more are planned. While large economic development from the extractive industry is expected, potential negative impacts on maternal and child health (MCH) are serious concern in affected communities.

Objective: This study aims to describe women and MCH nurses' perceptions about the impacts of opening and operation of industrial mining projects on MCH in Mozambique.
Methods: We use a qualitative research design and collected data in Montepuez, Moma, Larde and Moatize districts by means of focus group discussions (FGDs) with pregnant women and caregivers of at least one child aged under-five years and semi-structured interviews (SSIs) with MCH nurses. Data was scrutinized following a thematic approach based on coding with Nvivo 12.

Results: Based on the voices of women (207 from 19 FGD) and MCH nurses (15 from SSIs), the opening and development of mining projects were, in most instances, negatively associated with various MCH conditions, of which the most concerning across study districts were sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS, gastrointestinal disorders, neurophysiologic, respiratory and cardiovascular. The mechanisms of impacts were complex and interconnected, varying with type of commodity and extraction method. While the perceived mechanisms included mine-induced changes on individual, community, structural and environmental determinants of health, factors often involved mine-induced in-migration and changes in socioeconomic and environmental conditions. In addition, a number of potentially positive inputs from mining projects were reported, although were not directly focused on specific, nor targeted specifically at MCH.

Conclusion: Our results provides a context specific perception of the impact of opening and development of industrial mining projects on MCH in Mozambique. Further, interventions to mitigate the perceived impacts should be context-specific as well as the extraction method applied by the mining projects, while targeting specific population groups, particularly women and young children. In addition, we are en route to identifying a climate justice geopolitics that transcends scales and spaces.

ACESSO PÚBLICO



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