

# **Spatial interaction and environmental health attitudes of Nigerians in the UK**

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## **Abstract**

This paper explores the behavioral dynamics produced within the context of medical systems interaction brought about by international migration. Using the Ibibios (an ethnic group from Nigeria) in the UK, the paper focuses on the various subtle but oppositional tactics utilized in reproducing and sustaining the Ibibio traditional medical attitudes and implications on the UK medical system. I used a combination of structured questionnaires, in-depth interviews, discussions with key informants and follow-up interviews to collect necessary data on socio-demographic and economic characteristics, common sicknesses and healing practices as well as the determinants of medical attitudes dynamics. The results demonstrate that not much has changed in the medical attitudes of the respondents as the patterns of sickness types, severity and causation as well as treatment options still depend on cultural and religious beliefs, previous health histories, experiences and biographies. However, the role of the UK medical system and its health care practices rarely fit well with the medical worldview and ideology of migrants. This was observed to be the basis for the emergence of ‘illicit’ and informal medical spaces to service the medical interest of the migrants. As such informal medical spaces are outside the surveillance gaze of the UK State, we argue that it would be in the UK public health interest expanding its medical space to incorporate the diverse medical traditions to make regulations and monitoring easier.

**Keywords:** Environmental health attitudes, spatial interaction, migration, Nigeria, UK