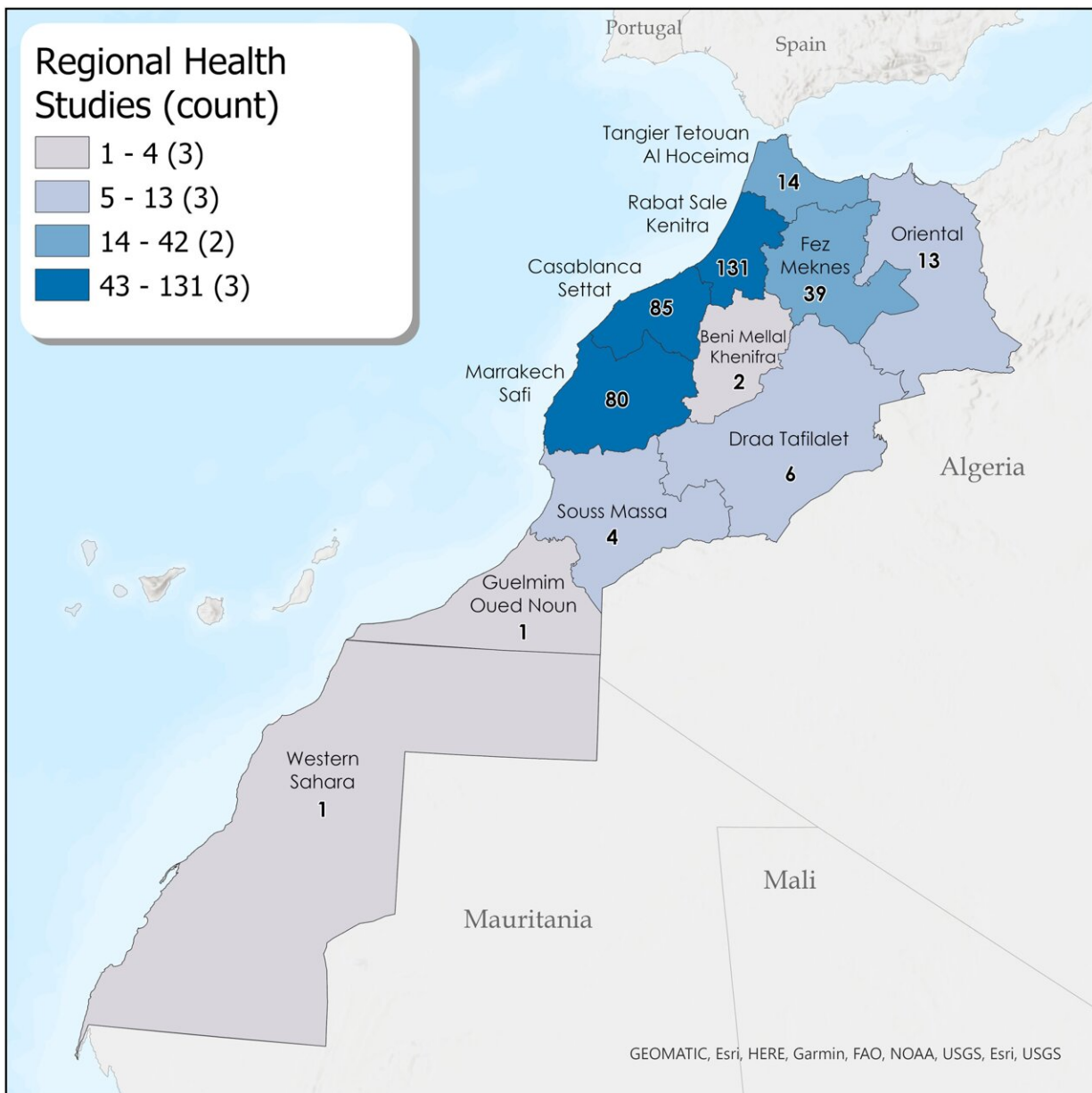


New scoping review maps maternal and infant health in Morocco

July 19 2024



Regional distribution map of study locations. Credit: *PLOS Global Public Health* (2024). DOI: 10.1371/journal.pgph.0003488

A comprehensive scoping review led by McMaster University researchers provides the first map of the field of Maternal and Infant Health (MIH) research in Morocco over a span of 22 years, from 2000 to 2022 and suggests a different way to study global health.

Ellen Amster, Jason A. Hannah Chair in the History of Medicine at McMaster University and associate professor in the Department of Family Medicine, spearheaded the extensive review [published](#) on July 18, 2024 in *PLOS Global Health*. The review is the first research output of the Morocco-Canada Network in Maternal and Infant Health.

"Morocco is celebrated as a global health success story in maternal [infant health](#), meeting World Health Organization and Sustainable Development Goal targets. However, many Moroccans feel the health system is not working. There was a revolt in the north (Hirak Rif) in 2017, doctors have gone on strike, and medical students have refused to sit the exams. There is clearly a difference between official health stats and social reality on the ground," says Amster.

In 2018, Amster along with other McMaster researchers traveled to Morocco to create the network with local colleagues and discuss MIH issues in three environments: Rabat, Marrakesh, and the High Atlas Mountains.

Canadian researchers gained firsthand experience in the field, interacting with Moroccan women's NGOs, discussing with Moroccan health care professionals the challenges they are experiencing, understanding Muslim women's rights and social status and learning about the health

work of local NGOs in the remote rural High Atlas mountains.

The Morocco-Canada Network in Maternal and Infant Health was established by Canadian and Moroccan MIH researchers to foster their research collaboration and exchange.

The scoping review aimed to map existing knowledge, identify gaps, and explore the "unseen" in MIH research in Morocco. Findings revealed that MIH research focused on well-developed and high income regions, while rural, lower income areas—particularly those where the majority speak Tamazight ("Berber")—remained virtually unstudied. Many vulnerable populations also remained invisible to research.

"This review will be a resource for Moroccan researchers and policymakers and inform future directions for research, [clinical practice](#), and advocacy," says Amster.

"Using interdisciplinary research methods can help bridge gaps within MIH research and inform [policy decisions](#)," Amster explains. "Future global health research should also ask who and what are not captured by official statistics. In Morocco, studies should broaden their geographic scope to capture neglected and vulnerable populations."

More information: Ellen Amster et al, Mapping maternal and infant health in Morocco: A global scoping review of themes, gaps, and the "unseen" in the published health research literature, 2000–2022, *PLOS Global Public Health* (2024). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pgph.0003488](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pgph.0003488)

Provided by McMaster University

Citation: New scoping review maps maternal and infant health in Morocco (2024, July 19)

retrieved 19 July 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-07-scoping-maternal-infant-health-morocco.html>

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