Algeria's Healthcare System in 2024: Progress Against Persisting Challenges

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BACKGROUND

Algeria, the largest country in Africa, spans 2,381,741 km² and is home to 46.7 million people across 58 wilayas (administrative divisions). With a GDP of \$266.78 billion, the country's healthcare system follows a mixed model, where the public sector remains dominant while the private sector is expanding steadily, both striving to meet the evolving needs of a growing population.

Despite notable strides in improving access to care, Algeria's healthcare system continues to face persistent challenges related to infrastructure, financing, and the equitable distribution of resources. Additionally, the growing burden of chronic diseases and emerging health threats underscores the urgent need for continuous reform and adaptation to meet the country's evolving healthcare needs.

RESULTS

I- Demographic Trends and Public Health

- ➤ Among North African countries, Algeria has the highest birth rate in the region¹. However, for the first time since 2010, the number fell slightly below 900,000² (Table 1), while still contributing to the 140 million births estimated annually worldwide by the WHO.
- ➤ In contrast, Egypt, traditionally the country with the highest birth rate in North Africa, is witnessing a significant decline in its birth rate, with a 3.8% drop for the first time since 2007, reaching 22.873 births per 1,000 people ³.
- Maternal mortality has also shown a significant improvement, declining to 40 deaths per 100,000 live births, which is well below the global target of 70. Although this decrease has been gradual, it marks a crucial milestone in the country's demographic evolution. ⁴
- ➤ Meanwhile, total deaths reached 192,000, according to the ONS, while infant mortality was reported at 17,797 deaths (19.9%), with a higher rate among boys (21.9%) compared to girls (17.8%) ⁵.

Table 1: Profile of Demographics Status of Algeria in 2024

Indicators	Metrics
Annual births	895,000 (21% by C-section)
Maternal mortality rate	40 deaths per 100,000 births
Infant annual mortality	17,797 deaths
Total annual deaths	192,000 deaths
Life expectancy	79.6 years
	Men: 78.2 years
	Women: 81 years

II- Healthcare Infrastructure and Distribution

In Algeria, the healthcare system comprises a network of public and private facilities spread across its 58 wilayas, with a total of 9,207 healthcare centers, structured as shown in Figure 1. ⁶

III- Incidence Data of Cancer Burden

Cancer remains a major public health concern, with 51,094 new cases in 2022 (Figure 2). ⁷

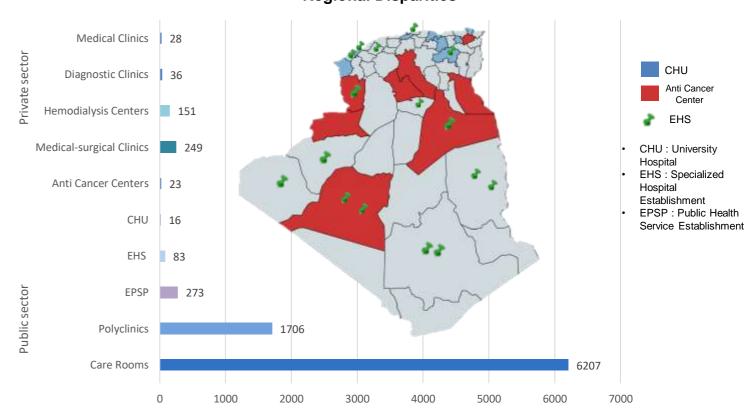
IV- Rare Diseases

The number of officially recognized rare diseases in Algeria has risen from 28 in 2013 to 109 in 2025, reflecting significant advances in both the medical and regulatory frameworks. ⁸

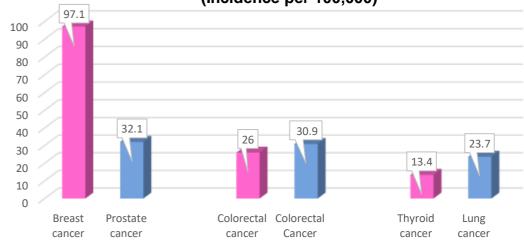
METHODS

A descriptive analysis of Algeria's Healthcare System based on reliable national and international data including WHO (World Health Organization), INSP (National Institute of Public Health) and ONS (National Office of Statistics), combined with open-access sources to evaluate disease burden and major health challenges.

<u>Figure 1</u>: Overview of Healthcare Infrastructure in Algeria: Sectoral Distribution and Regional Disparities



<u>Figure 2:</u> Comparison of the Three Most Common Cancers in Men and Women (Incidence per 100,000)



DISCUSSION

- In Algeria, significant progress has been made in the medical and regulatory landscape, particularly regarding rare diseases, with more pathologies being recognized. However, challenges persist, especially with conditions like Proximal Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) and Neuromyelitis Optica (NMO), which continue to face diagnostic delays and fragmented care pathways.
- A promising step is the pilot neonatal screening program for phenylketonuria and congenital hypothyroidism, aiming to expand to seven healthcare facilities by 2025 to enhance early detection.
- On the infectious disease front, Algeria is grappling with a rise in hepatitis A cases which surged by 28% from 2022 to 2023. The eastern region accounted for 50% of reported cases, highlighting regional disparities and the need for targeted public health measures.
- ➤ Simultaneously, the country is entering a pivotal phase with the launch of its National Cancer Control Strategy 2025–2035. This initiative, unveiled at a summit with 625 stakeholders, includes key measures such as higher taxes on harmful products, expanded cancer screening, faster access to treatments, and diversified financing through private insurers. However, only 50% of the 2015–2019 cancer plan's actions were implemented, due to administrative delays and poor coordination. 9
- ➤ In response to a 15% diabetes prevalence, Algeria has launched local insulin production, and specialists are advocating for innovative devices to improve patients' quality of life.
- ➤ The country also seeks to capture 1% of the global clinical trials market, potentially generating \$500 million annually, creating 4,000 jobs, and enabling treatment for 10,000 patients each year. ⁹

CONCLUSION

Despite significant progress, particularly in terms of decentralization, Algeria's healthcare system continues to face challenges, including disparities in access to care, a growing burden of cancers, chronic and rare diseases.

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