

# Health microinsurance in Zimbabwe: a contextual review

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[https://doi.org/10.35609/gcbssproceeding.2020.11\(166\)](https://doi.org/10.35609/gcbssproceeding.2020.11(166))

## ABSTRACT

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Health microinsurance, a relatively novel financial product, is garnering increasing recognition as an important part of the solution to healthcare financing problems and poverty reduction efforts for low income households (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2000; Murdoch, 2004; Cohen and Sebstad, 2005; Churchill, 2006; Dror, 2006; International Labour Organisation [ILO], 2008; Ruuskanen, 2009). The adverse implications of health shocks and the consequent huge expenditures disproportionately impoverish millions of low-income households across the globe, especially those living in developing countries. Put bluntly, health risks are an enduring poverty reduction and development challenge at large. In fact, World Bank (2010) reports that more than 100 million people are driven into poverty every year by health-related costs across the globe (as cited in Mosley, 2009). Regardless of microinsurance's acclaimed benefits in securing the lives of low-income people, its potential to secure poor households is yet to be ascertained in Zimbabwe, where the poor are extremely vulnerable to fall and be entrapped in poverty, a monumental development challenge to this country.

**Keywords:** Health insurance, health financing, health costs, Zimbabwe.