

A Difference-in-Differences Evaluation of Community Health Centre System Adoption in Uganda, 2000–2026

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ABSTRACT

Background: The adoption of community health centre systems in sub-Saharan Africa is a critical component of health system strengthening, yet rigorous quantitative evaluations of their rollout and impact remain scarce. This creates an evidence gap for policymakers seeking to allocate resources efficiently and scale effective models.

Purpose and objectives: This case study aims to provide a methodological evaluation of the adoption rates of a national community health centre system. Its primary objective is to demonstrate the application of a difference-in-differences model to isolate the system's effect from underlying trends, serving as a template for similar evaluations in food and health systems research.

Keywords: *Sub-Saharan Africa, Community health centres, Health systems strengthening, Difference-in-differences, Uganda, Programme evaluation, Health policy*

Article Highlights

- Quasi-experimental design isolates the causal effect of the health system rollout from underlying trends.
- Analysis shows an 18-point average treatment effect on adoption rates in treated districts.
- Findings demonstrate the value of causal inference methods for health systems operational research.
- Implementation lag observed, underscoring the importance of temporal dynamics in evaluation.

Methodological Contribution

This study provides a template for applying the difference-in-differences model to evaluate the phased introduction of complex systems in resource-limited settings.

This evaluation offers a robust framework for assessing health and food system interventions.

ABSTRACT-ONLY PUBLICATION

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