

# Randomised Field Trial of Community Health Centre Systems for Clinical Outcomes in Uganda

*A Methodological Evaluation*

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Community health centres are pivotal for primary care delivery in sub-Saharan Africa, yet robust methodological frameworks for evaluating their systemic impact on clinical outcomes are lacking. Existing evaluations often rely on observational designs, limiting causal inference.

**Purpose and objectives:** This study aimed to methodologically evaluate a novel cluster-randomised field trial design for assessing the impact of a streamlined patient management system on key clinical outcomes within Ugandan community health centres.

**Keywords:** *Randomised controlled trial, Community health centres, Sub-Saharan Africa, Clinical outcomes, Health systems evaluation, Primary health care, Uganda*

### Article Highlights

- Intervention increased composite treatment completion rate (aOR 1.42, 95% CI 1.15–1.76).
- Hybrid data verification (routine data + spot-audits) was essential for >90% completeness.
- Cluster-randomised design proved feasible for health systems evaluation in Uganda.
- Methodological blueprint for experimental evaluation in low-resource primary care settings.

### Core Methodological Insight

Outcome ascertainment required hybrid data collection—combining routine health information with targeted spot-audits—to achieve the >90% completeness threshold necessary for stable effect estimates.

*This study provides a methodological framework for experimental health systems research in resource-constrained environments.*

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