

## Task-Shifting Malnutrition Screening

*Evaluating Community Health Worker-Led Mid-Upper Arm Circumference Assessments on Referral Completion in Kayes, Mali*

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** In rural Mali, health system constraints often limit the reach of nutrition services. Community health workers (CHWs) are a critical human resource, but their role in systematic malnutrition screening is not fully optimised.

**Purpose and objectives:** This study assessed whether task-shifting moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) screening to CHWs using mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) tapes improves the rate of completed referrals to therapeutic feeding programmes.

**Keywords:** *Community health workers, Mid-upper arm circumference, Task-shifting, Malnutrition screening, Referral completion, Sub-Saharan Africa, Acute malnutrition*

#### Article Highlights

- CHW-led MUAC screening tripled the odds of referral completion (aOR 3.42).
- Study demonstrates feasibility of task-shifting malnutrition screening in rural Mali.
- Findings support decentralising MAM screening to improve health system reach.
- Investment in CHW training and MUAC tape supply is a critical success factor.

#### Core Finding

The adjusted analysis indicates community health worker-led screening resulted in over three times the odds of a child completing a referral to therapeutic feeding.

*This study provides actionable evidence for strengthening community-based management of acute malnutrition.*

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