



# Methodological Considerations for Evaluating the Policy Impact of Medical Research in the Democratic Republic of Congo,

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## Abstract

Evaluating the policy impact of medical research in low-resource settings is complex. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), understanding how research influences health policy is necessary to maximise its benefit. Existing evaluation frameworks frequently neglect the distinct political, infrastructural, and cultural contexts of African nations. This article aims to develop a contextualised methodological framework for assessing the policy impact of medical research in the DRC. Its objectives are to identify key barriers and facilitators to research uptake, propose relevant indicators of policy influence, and outline steps for tracking impact within the Congolese health system. The proposed methodology is a mixed-methods, multi-stage approach. It comprises: 1) a policy document analysis to trace research citations; 2) key informant interviews with policymakers, researchers, and healthcare providers to understand pathways to impact; and 3) the development of a context-specific logic model to map the translation of research into policy and practice. The framework emphasises process evaluation and stakeholder engagement. As a methodology article, this paper presents a proposed framework rather than empirical results. A central proposition from the framework development is that successful translation requires the early and sustained engagement of ministry of health officials as co-producers in the research process. A standardised, context-sensitive methodology is needed to credibly evaluate how medical research shapes health policy in the DRC. The proposed framework moves beyond academic citations to capture real-world policy influence, addressing a gap in research evaluation practice. Researchers and funders should adopt this contextualised framework for planning and evaluating projects. Future work should pilot and refine the methodology in specific sub-fields of obstetrics and gynaecology within the DRC. research impact; health policy; methodology; evaluation framework; Democratic Republic of Congo; knowledge translation. This article provides a methodological

framework designed to assess the policy impact of medical research within the specific context of the DRC, contributing to more relevant and accountable research evaluation in African health systems.

**Keywords:** *policy impact evaluation, research utilisation, health policy analysis, Sub-Saharan Africa, implementation science, knowledge translation, mixed-methods research*



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