

Information and Facilitation Interventions for Accountability in Health and Nutrition: Evidence from a Randomized Trial in India

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Abstract

Community-based accountability interventions have the potential to improve delivery of public services. There is limited evidence on the effectiveness of such interventions when implemented by developing country governments at scale. We study the effectiveness of accountability interventions implemented by the Indian state government of Uttar Pradesh aimed at improving delivery of primary health and nutrition services to children and pregnant mothers. Using a village-level randomized trial design, we investigate key mechanisms through which accountability interventions are hypothesized to improve healthcare delivery and health outcomes - information provision and facilitation of collective action for community monitoring. We find large improvements in child nutritional outcomes, immunization rates, treatment of childhood diarrhea, and institutional delivery rates, but no effects on child mortality. We also find large reductions in fertility rates in the treatment areas. Overall, the effects of information combined with facilitation are larger and statistically significant more often than that of providing information alone. We also find evidence of gender disparities with most of the average effects being driven by improvements among boys, with little to no effect of accountability interventions among girls. We do not find evidence of heterogeneity in treatment effects by caste.

Speaker Profile

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