

# POWER TO THE PEOPLE: EVIDENCE FROM A RANDOMIZED FIELD EXPERIMENT ON COMMUNITY-BASED MONITORING IN UGANDA\*

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This paper presents a randomized field experiment on community-based monitoring of public primary health care providers in Uganda. Through two rounds of village meetings, localized nongovernmental organizations encouraged communities to be more involved with the state of health service provision and strengthened their capacity to hold their local health providers to account for performance. A year after the intervention, treatment communities are more involved in monitoring the provider, and the health workers appear to exert higher effort to serve the community. We document large increases in utilization and improved health outcomes—reduced child mortality and increased child weight—that compare favorably to some of the more successful community-based intervention trials reported in the medical literature.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Approximately eleven million children under five years die each year and almost half of these deaths occur in sub-Saharan Africa. More than half of these children will die of diseases (e.g., diarrhea, pneumonia, malaria, measles, and neonatal disorders) that could easily have been prevented or treated if the children had had access to a small set of proven, inexpensive services (Black, Morris, and Bryce 2003; Jones et al. 2003).

Why are these services not provided? Anecdotal, and recently more systematic, evidence points to one possible reason—ineffective systems of monitoring and weak accountability

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relationships.<sup>1</sup> This paper focuses on one of these accountability relationships, citizen-clients' ability to hold providers accountable, using primary health care provision in rural Uganda as a testing ground.

To examine whether community-based monitoring works, we designed and conducted a randomized field experiment in fifty communities from nine districts in Uganda. In the experiment, local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) facilitated village and staff meetings in which members of the communities discussed baseline information on the status of health service delivery relative to other providers and the government standard. Community members were also encouraged to develop a plan identifying key problems and steps the providers should take to improve health service provision. The primary objective of the intervention was to initiate a process of community-based monitoring that was then up to the community to sustain and lead.

The community-based monitoring project increased the quality and quantity of primary health care provision. A year after the first round of meetings, we found a significant difference in the weight of infants—0.14 *z*-score increase—and a markedly lower number of deaths among children under five—33 percent reduction in under-5 mortality—in the treatment communities. Utilization for general outpatient services was 20 percent higher in the treatment compared to the control facilities and the overall effect across a set of utilization measures is large and significantly positive. Treatment practices, including immunization of children, waiting time, examination procedures, and absenteeism, improved significantly in the treatment communities, thus suggesting that the changes in quality and quantity of health care provision are due to behavioral changes of the staff. We find evidence that the treatment communities became more engaged and began to monitor the health unit more extensively. Using variation in treatment intensity across districts we show that there is a significant relationship between the degree of community monitoring and health utilization and health outcomes, consistent with the community-based monitoring mechanism.

Community-based, randomized, controlled field trials have been used extensively in medical research to evaluate the

1. For anecdotal and case study evidence, see World Bank (2003). Chaudhury et al. (2006) provide evidence on the rates of absenteeism. On misappropriation of public funds and drugs, see McPake et al. (1999) and Reinikka and Svensson (2004).

effectiveness of various health interventions (see footnote 14). Our paper is related but differs in one important dimension. Whereas the medical field trials address the question of impact of a biological agent or treatment practice when the health workers competently carry out their tasks, we focus on how to ensure that the health workers actually carry out their tasks and the impact that may have on health utilization and health outcomes.

This paper also relates to a small literature on improving governance and public service delivery through community participation. Olken (2007) finds minor effects of an intervention aimed at increasing community participation in the monitoring of corruption in Indonesia. Our work differs in several ways. First, the intervention we evaluate was structured in a way to reduce the risk of elite capture. Second, unlike corruption, which is not easily observable, the information discussed in the meetings was basic facts on utilization and quality of services based on the community's own experience. Finally, the intervention sought to address two constraints highlighted in the literature on community monitoring: lack of relevant information and inadequate participation. Banerjee, Deaton, and Duflo (2004) evaluate a project in Rajasthan in India where a member of the community was paid to check whether the nurse-midwife assigned to the health center was present at the center. The intervention had no impact on attendance and the authors speculate that a key reason for this is that the individual community member did not manage to use his or her information on absenteeism to invoke community participation. Here, on the contrary, we explicitly try to address the participation constraint by involving a large number of community members and encouraging them to jointly develop a monitoring plan.

Finally, the paper links to a growing empirical literature on the relationship between information dissemination and accountability (Besley and Burgess 2002; Strömberg 2004; Ferraz and Finan 2008). In this paper, however, we focus on mechanisms through which citizens can make providers, rather than politicians, accountable. Thus, we do not study the design or allocation of public resources across communities, but rather how these resources are utilized. Second, we use microdata from households and clinics rather than disaggregated national accounts data. Finally, we identify impact using an experimental design.

The next section describes the institutional environment. The community-based monitoring intervention is described in

Section III. Section IV lays out the evaluation design and the results are presented in Section V. Section VI concludes. Details about the experiment and additional results are reported in the Online Supplemental Appendix.

## II. INSTITUTIONAL SETTING

Uganda, like many newly independent countries in Africa, had a functioning health care system in the early 1960s. The 1970s and 1980s saw the collapse of government services as the country underwent political upheaval. Health indicators fell dramatically during this period until peace was restored in the late 1980s. Since then, the government has been implementing major infrastructure rehabilitation programs in the public health sector.

The health sector in Uganda is composed of four types of facilities: hospitals, health centers, dispensaries, and aid posts or subdispensaries. These facilities can be government-operated and -owned, private for-profit, or private not-for-profit. The impact evaluation focuses on public dispensaries. Dispensaries are in the lowest tier of the health system where a professional interaction between users and providers takes place. Most dispensaries are rural. According to the government health sector strategic plan, the standard for dispensaries includes preventive, promotional, outpatient care, maternity, general ward, and laboratory services (Republic of Uganda 2000). As of 2001, public health services are free. In our sample, on average, a dispensary was staffed by an in-charge or clinical officer (a trained medical worker), two nurses, and three nursing aids or other assistants.

The health sector in Uganda is decentralized, and a number of actors are responsible for supervision and control of the dispensaries. At the lowest tier, the Health Unit Management Committee (HUMC) is supposed to be the main link between the community and the facility. Each dispensary has an HUMC, which consists of both health workers and nonpolitical representatives from the community. The HUMC should monitor the day-to-day running of the facility but it has no authority to sanction workers. The next level in the institutional hierarchy is the health subdistrict. The health subdistrict monitors funds, drugs, and service delivery at the dispensary. Supervision meetings by the health subdistrict are supposed to appear quarterly but, in practice, monitoring is infrequent. The health subdistrict has the authority to reprimand,

but not dismiss, staff for indiscipline. Thus in severe cases of indiscipline, the errand will be referred to the chief administrative officer of the district and the District Service Commission, which are the appointing authorities for the district. They have the authority to suspend or dismiss staff.

Various local NGOs, so-called community-based organizations (CBOs), focusing primarily on health education, are also active in the sector.

### III. EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN AND DATA

#### *III.A. Overview*

In response to perceived weak health care delivery at the primary level, a pilot project (citizen report cards) aimed at enhancing community involvement and monitoring in the delivery of primary health care was initiated in 2004. The project was designed by staff from Stockholm University and the World Bank, and implemented in cooperation with a number of Ugandan practitioners and eighteen community-based organizations.

The main objective of the intervention was to strengthen providers' accountability to citizen-clients by initiating a process, using trained local actors (CBOs) as facilitators, which the communities themselves could manage and sustain.

Based on a small but rigorous empirical literature on community participation and oversight, and extensive piloting in the field, our conjecture was that lack of relevant information on the status of service delivery and the community's entitlements, and failure to agree on, or coordinate expectations of, what is reasonable to demand from the provider, were holding back initiatives to pressure and monitor the provider. Although individual community members have private information—for example, they know whether their own child has died and whether the health workers did anything to help them—they typically do not have any information on aggregate outcomes, such as how many children in their community did not survive beyond the age of 5 or where citizens, on average, seek care, or what the community can expect in terms of quality and quantity of service provision (Khemani 2006). Partly as a response to this information problem, and partly because monitoring a public facility is a public good that may be subject to serious free-rider problems, few people actively participate in monitoring their service providers. Relaxing

these two constraints was therefore the main objective of the intervention.

The key behavioral change induced by more extensive community-based monitoring was expected to be increased effort by the health unit staff to serve the community. In Uganda, as in many other developing countries, health workers have few pecuniary incentives to exert high effort. Public money does not follow patients, and hiring, salaries, and promotions are largely determined by seniority and educational qualifications—not by how well the staff performs. An individual worker may of course still put in high effort if shirking deviates from her ideal choice (Akerlof and Kranton 2005). The effort choice may also be influenced by social rewards from community members or social sanctions against shirking workers. Social rewards and sanctions are key instruments available to the community to boost the health worker's effort.

### *III.B. Experimental Design*

The experiment involved fifty public dispensaries, and health care users in the corresponding catchment areas, in nine districts covering all four regions in Uganda. All project facilities were located in rural areas. We define a facility's catchment area, or the community, as the five-kilometer radius around the facility.<sup>2</sup> A community in our sample has, on average, 2,500 households residing within the five-kilometer radius of the clinic, of which 350 live within a one-kilometer radius. For the experimental design, the facilities were first stratified by location (districts) and then by population size. From each group, half of the units were randomly assigned to the treatment group and the remaining 25 units were assigned to the control group.

### *III.C. Data*

Data collection was governed by two objectives. First, data were required to assess how the community at large views the quality and efficacy of service delivery. We also wanted to contrast the citizens' view with that of the health workers. Second, data were required to evaluate impact. To meet these objectives, two surveys were implemented: a survey of the fifty providers and

2. Dispensaries are designed to serve households in a catchment area roughly corresponding to the five-kilometer radius around the facility (Republic of Uganda 2000).

a survey of users. Both surveys were implemented prior to the intervention (data from these surveys formed the basis for the intervention) and one year after the project had been initiated.

A quantitative service delivery survey was used to collect data from the providers. Because agents in the service delivery system may have a strong incentive to misreport key data, the data were obtained directly from the records kept by facilities for their own need (i.e., daily patient registers, stock cards, etc.) rather than from administrative records. The former, often available in a highly disaggregate format, were considered to suffer the least from any incentive problems in record keeping. Data were also collected through visual checks by enumerators.

The household survey collected data on both households' health outcomes and health facility performance as experienced by the household. A stratified random sample of households within the catchment area of each facility was surveyed. In total, roughly 5,000 households were surveyed in each round.<sup>3</sup> To the extent that it was possible, patient records (i.e., patient exercise books and immunization cards) supported the household's response. The postintervention household survey also included a shorter module on health outcomes. Specifically, data on under-5 mortality were collected and we measured the weight of all infants in the surveyed households.

### *III.D. Intervention*

A smaller subset of the findings from the preintervention surveys, including utilization, quality of services, and comparisons vis-à-vis other health facilities, were assembled in report cards. Each treatment facility and its community had a unique report card, translated into the main language spoken in the community, summarizing the key findings from the surveys conducted in their area.

The process of disseminating the report card information, and encouraging participation, was initiated through a series of meetings: a community meeting, a staff meeting, and an interface meeting. Staff from various local NGOs (CBOs) acted as facilitators in

3. The sampling strategy for the baseline household survey was designed to generate representative information on the core users' variables in each community (such as the proportion of patients being examined with equipment). In total, 88% of the households surveyed in the baseline survey were resurveyed in the ex-post survey. The households that could not be surveyed were replaced.

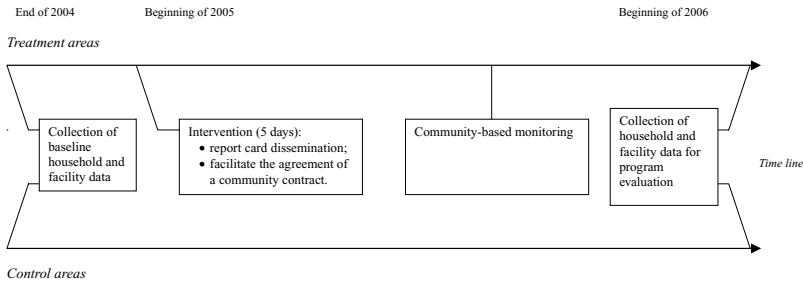


FIGURE I  
Timing of the Project

these meetings.<sup>4</sup> A time line of the intervention is depicted in Figure I.

The community meeting was a two-afternoon event with approximately 100 invited participants from the community. To avoid elite capture, the invited participants consisted of a selection of representatives from different spectra of society (i.e., young, old, disabled, women, mothers, leaders). The facilitators mobilized the village members by cooperating with village council representatives in the catchment area. Invited participants were asked to spread the word about the meeting and, in the end, a large number of uninvited participants also attended the meeting. More than 150 participants per day attended a typical village meeting.

In the community meeting, the facilitators used a variety of participatory methods to disseminate the information in the report cards and encouraged community members to develop a shared view on how to improve service delivery and monitor the provider. Information on patients' rights and entitlements was also discussed. The participants were divided into focus groups so that also more marginalized groups such as women and youth could raise their voices and discuss issues specific to their group.

4. The eighteen participating CBOs had been active in 64% of the treatment communities and half of the control communities prior to the intervention. A handful of them covered more than one treatment community. The CBOs were primarily focused on health, including issues of health education and HIV/AIDS prevention, although other objectives such as agricultural development, women's empowerment, support of orphans and vulnerable children, and peace-building initiatives, were also common. The CBO facilitators were trained for seven days in data interpretation and dissemination, utilization of the participatory methodology, and conflict resolution and management. Various other CBOs also operate in the project communities.



At the end of the meeting, the community's suggestions for improvements, and how to reach them without additional resources, were summarized in an action plan. The action plan contained information on health issues/services that had been identified by the community as the most important to address, how these issues could be addressed, and how the community could monitor improvements (or lack thereof). Although the issues raised in the action plans differed across communities, a common set of concerns included high rates of absenteeism, long waiting time, weak attention of health staff, and differential treatment.

The health facility meeting was a one-afternoon event held at the facility with all staff present. In the meeting, the facilitators contrasted the information on service provision as reported by the provider with the findings from the household survey.

An interface meeting with members from the community, chosen in the community meeting, and health workers followed the community and health facility meetings. During the interface meeting, the community representatives and the health workers discussed suggestions for improvements. The participants discussed their rights and responsibilities as patients or medical staff. The outcome was a shared action plan, or a contract, outlining the community's and the service provider's agreement on what needs to be done, and how, when, and by whom. The "community contract" also identified how the community could monitor the agreements and a time plan. Because the problems that were raised in the community meetings constituted the core issues discussed during the interface meetings, the community contract was in many respects similar to the community's action plan.

The three separate meetings aimed at kick-starting the process of community monitoring. Thus, after the initial meetings the communities were themselves in charge of establishing ways of monitoring the provider. After a period of six months, the communities and health facilities were revisited. The CBOs facilitated a one-afternoon community meeting and a one-afternoon interface meeting with the aim of tracking the implementation of the community contract. Health facility staff and community members jointly discussed suggestions for sustaining or improving progress, or in the case of no improvements, why so.<sup>5</sup>

5. Details on the report cards and the participatory methods used, as well as an example of an action plan, are provided in the Online Supplemental Appendix.

## IV. EVALUATION DESIGN AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

IV.A. *Outcomes*

The main outcome of interest is whether the intervention increased the quantity and quality of health care provision and hence resulted in improved health outcomes. We are also interested in evaluating changes in all steps in the accountability chain: Did the treatment communities become more involved in monitoring the health workers? Did the intervention change the health workers' behavior?

As a robustness test we also assess alternative explanations. One concern is spillovers. Another concern is that the intervention did not only (or primarily) increase the extent of community monitoring, but had an impact on other agents in the service delivery chain, such as the health subdistrict. The intervention could also have affected the health workers' behavior directly, or affected it through the actions of the CBOs, rather than through more intense community-based monitoring as we hypothesize. Although this would not invalidate the causal effect of the intervention, it would, of course, affect the interpretation. Therefore, these alternative hypotheses are also subject to a battery of tests.

IV.B. *Statistical Framework*

To assess the causal effect of the intervention we estimate

$$(1) \quad y_{ijd} = \alpha + \beta T_{jd} + \mathbf{X}_{jd}\pi + \theta_d + \varepsilon_{ijd},$$

where  $y_{ijd}$  is the outcome of household  $i$  (when applicable) in community/health facility  $j$  in district  $d$ ,  $T_{jd}$  is an indicator variable for assignment to treatment, and  $\varepsilon_{ijd}$  is an error term. Equation (1) also includes a vector,  $\mathbf{X}$ , of preintervention facility-specific covariates and district fixed effects ( $\theta_d$ ).<sup>6</sup> Because of random assignment,  $T$  should be orthogonal to  $\mathbf{X}$ , and the consistency of  $\beta$  does not depend on the inclusion of  $\mathbf{X}$  in the model. The regression adjustment is used to improve estimation precision and to account for stratification and chance differences between groups

6. The baseline covariates included are number of villages in the catchment area, number of days without electricity in the past month, indicator variable for whether the facility has a separate maternity unit, distance to nearest public health provider, number of staff with less than advanced A-level education, indicator variable for whether the staff could safely drink from the water source, and average monthly supply of quinine.

in the distribution of pre-random assignment (Kling, Liebman, and Katz 2007).

We report the results of estimating equation (1) with  $\mathbf{X}$  and  $\theta$  excluded in the Online Supplemental Appendix. For a subset of variables we can also stack the pre- and postdata and explore the difference-in-differences in outcomes; that is, we estimate<sup>7</sup>

$$(2) \quad y_{ijt} = \gamma \text{POST}_t + \beta_{\text{DD}}(T_j * \text{POST}_t) + \mu_j + \varepsilon_{ijt},$$

where POST is an indicator variable for the postintervention period,  $\mu_j$  is a facility/community specific fixed effect, and  $\beta_{\text{DD}}$  is the difference-in-differences estimate (program impact).

For some outcomes we have several outcome measures. To form judgment about the impact of the intervention on a family of  $K$  related outcomes, we follow Kling et al. (2004) and estimate a seemingly unrelated regression system,

$$(3) \quad Y = [I_K \otimes (T\mathbf{X})]\theta + \nu,$$

where  $I_K$  is a  $K$  by  $K$  identity matrix. We then derive average standardized treatment effects,  $\tilde{\beta} = 1/K \sum_{k=1}^K \hat{\beta}_k / \hat{\sigma}_k$ , where  $\hat{\beta}_k$  and  $\hat{\sigma}_k$  are the point estimate and standard error, respectively, for each effect (see Duflo, Glennerster, and Kremer [2007]). The point estimate, standard error, and  $p$ -value for  $\tilde{\beta}$  are based on the parameters,  $\hat{\beta}_k$  and  $\hat{\sigma}_k$ , jointly estimated as elements of  $\theta$  in (3).

## V. RESULTS

### V.A. Preintervention Differences

The treatment and the control group were similar on most characteristics prior to the intervention. Average standardized pretreatment effects are estimated for each family of outcomes (utilization, utilization pattern, quality, catchment area statistics, health facility characteristics, citizen perceptions, supply of resources, and user charges) using preintervention data. As shown in Table I, we cannot reject the null hypotheses of no difference between the treatment and the control group.<sup>8</sup>

7. It is a subset of variables because the postintervention surveys collected information on more variables and outcomes.

8. We report the test of difference in means across control and treatment groups for each individual variable in the Online Supplemental Appendix.

TABLE I  
 PRETREATMENT FACILITY AND CATCHMENT AREA CHARACTERISTICS AND AVERAGE  
 STANDARDIZED EFFECTS

Variables	Treatment group	Control group	Difference
<i>Key characteristics</i>			
Outpatient care	593 (75)	675 (57)	-82 (94)
Delivery	10.3 (2.2)	7.5 (1.4)	2.8 (2.6)
No. of households in catchment area	2,140 (185)	2,224 (204)	-84.4 (276)
No. of households per village	93.9 (5.27)	95.3 (6.32)	-1.42 (8.23)
Drank safely today	0.40 (0.10)	0.32 (0.10)	0.08 (0.14)
No. of days without electricity in past month	18.3 (2.95)	20.4 (2.90)	-2.12 (4.14)
<i>Average standardized pretreatment effects</i>			
Utilization			0.11 (0.77)
Utilization pattern			-0.48 (0.33)
Quality measures			-0.35 (0.84)
Catchment area statistics			0.11 (0.66)
Health facility characteristics			0.14 (0.31)
Citizen perceptions			0.37 (0.67)
Supply of drugs			0.73 (0.83)
User charges			-0.65 (0.63)

*Notes.* Key characteristics are catchment area/health facility averages for treatment and control group and difference in averages. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Description of variables: Outpatient care is average number of patients visiting the facility per month for outpatient care. Delivery is average number of deliveries at the facility per month. Number of households in catchment area and number of households per village are based on census data and Uganda Bureau of Statistics maps. Drank safely today is an indicator variable for whether the health facility staff at the time of the preintervention survey could safely drink from the water source. Number of days without electricity in the month prior to preintervention survey is measured out of 31 days. Average standardized pretreatment effects are derived by estimating equation (3) on each family of outcomes. Utilization summarizes outpatients and deliveries. Utilization pattern summarizes the seven measures in Supplemental Appendix Table A.I, reversing sign of traditional healer and self-treatment. Quality measure summarizes the two measures in Table A.I, reversing sign of waiting time. Catchment area statistics summarize the four measures in Table A.I. Health facility characteristics summarize the eight measures in Table A.I and drank safely today and days without electricity, reversing sign of days without electricity and distance to nearest local council. Citizen perceptions summarize the four measures in Table A.I. Supply of drugs summarizes the five measures in Table A.I. User charges summarize the four measures in Table A.I, reversing all signs. The  $\chi^2$  test-statistic on the joint hypothesis that all average standardized effects are 0 is 4.70 with  $p$ -values = .79.

*V.B. Processes*

The initial phase of the project, that is, the three separate meetings, followed a predesign structure. A parallel system whereby a member of the survey team originating from the district participated as part of the CBO team also confirmed that the initial phase of the intervention was properly implemented. After these initial meetings, it was up to the community to sustain and lead the process. In this section we study whether the treatment communities became more involved in monitoring the providers.

To avoid influencing local initiatives, we did not have external agents visiting the communities and could therefore not document all actions taken by the communities in response to the intervention. Still, we have some information on how processes in the community have changed. Specifically, the CBOs submitted reports on what type of changes they observed in the treatment communities and we also surveyed the local councils in the treatment communities. We use facility and household survey data to corroborate these reports.

According to the CBO reports and the local council survey, the community-based monitoring process that followed the first set of meetings was a joint effort mainly managed by the local councils, HUMC, and community members. A typical village in the treatment group had, on average, six local council meetings in 2005. In those meetings, 89% of the villages discussed issues concerning the project health facility. The main subject of discussion in the villages concerned the community contract or parts of it, such as behavior of the staff.

The CBOs reported that concerns raised by the village members were carried forward by the local council to the facility or the HUMC. However, although the HUMC is an entity that should play an important role in monitoring the provider, it was in many cases viewed as being ineffective. As a result, mismanaged HUMCs were dissolved and new members elected. These claims are confirmed in the survey data: more than one-third of the HUMCs in the treatment communities were dissolved and new members were elected or received following the intervention, whereas we observed no dissolved HUMCs in the control communities. Further, the CBOs report that the community, or individual members, also monitored the health workers during visits to the clinic, when they rewarded and questioned issues in the community contract that had or had not been addressed, suggesting a

more systematic use of nonpecuniary rewards. Monitoring tools such as suggestion boxes, numbered waiting cards, and duty rosters were also reported to be put in place in several treatment facilities.

In Table II, we formally look at the program impact on these monitoring tools. We use data collected through visual checks by enumerators during the postintervention facility survey. As shown in columns (1) and (2), one year into the project, treatment facilities are significantly more likely to have suggestion boxes (no control facility had these, but 36% of the treatment facilities did) and numbered waiting cards (only one control facility had one, but 20% of the treatment facilities did). Columns (3) and (4) show that a higher share of the treatment facilities also posted information on free services and patients' rights and obligations. The enumerators could visually confirm that 70% of the treatment facilities had at least one of these monitoring tools, whereas only 4 of 25 control clinics had at least one of them. The difference is statistically significant (Online Supplemental Appendix, Table A.II). Column (5) reports the average standardized effect of the monitoring tools. The estimate is significantly different from zero at the 1% level.

The results based on household data mirror the findings reported in columns (1)–(5). The performance of the staff is more often discussed in local council meetings in the treatment communities, shown in column (6), and community members in the treatment group are, on average, better informed about the HUMC's roles and responsibilities, as reported in column (7). Combining the evidence from the CBO reports and the household survey data thus suggests that both the "quantity" of discussions about the project facility and the subject, from general to specific discussions about the community contract, changed in response to the intervention.

### *V.C. Treatment Practices*

The qualitative evidence from the CBOs and, to the extent that we can measure them, the findings reported in Table II suggest that the treatment communities became more involved in monitoring the provider. Did the intervention also affect the health workers' behavior and performance? We turn to this next.

We start by looking at examination procedures. The estimate based on equation (2) with the dependent variable being

TABLE II  
PROGRAM IMPACT ON MONITORING AND INFORMATION

Dependent variable	Suggestion box (1)	Numbered waiting cards (2)	Poster informing free services (3)	Poster on patients' rights (4)	Average standardized effect (5)	Discuss facility in LC meetings (6)	Received information about HUMC (7)
Program impact	0.32*** (0.08)	0.16* (0.09)	0.27*** (0.09)	0.14 (0.10)	2.55*** (0.55)	0.13*** (0.03)	0.04*** (0.01)
Mean control group	0	0.04	0.12	0.12	—	0.33	0.08
Observations	50	50	50	50	50	3,119	4,996

*Notes.* Robust standard errors in parentheses. Disturbance terms are clustered by catchment areas in columns (6)–(7). Point estimates, standard errors, and average standardized effect, columns (1)–(5), are derived from equation (3). Program impact measures the coefficient on the assignment to treatment indicator. Outcome measures in columns (1)–(4) are based on data collected through visual checks by the enumerators during the postintervention facility survey. Outcome measures in columns (6) and (7) are from the postintervention household survey. The estimated equations all include district fixed effects and the following baseline covariates: number of villages in catchment area, number of days without electricity in the past month, indicator variable for whether the facility has a separate maternity unit, distance to nearest public health provider, number of staff with less than advanced A-level education, indicator variable for whether the staff could safely drink from the water source, and average monthly supply of quinine. Specification: (1) indicator variable for whether the health facility has a suggestion box for complaints and recommendations; (2) indicator variable for whether the facility has numbered waiting cards for its patients; (3) indicator variable for whether the facility has a poster informing about free health services; (4) indicator variable for whether the facility has a poster on patients' rights and obligations; (5) average standardized effect of the estimates in columns (1)–(4); (6) indicator variable for whether the household discussed the functioning of the health facility at a local council meeting during the past year; (7) indicator variable for whether the household has received information about the Health Unit Management Committee's (HUMC's) roles and responsibilities.

\*Significant at 10%.

\*\*Significant at 5%.

\*\*\*Significant at 1%.

TABLE III  
PROGRAM IMPACT ON TREATMENT PRACTICES AND MANAGEMENT

Spec.	Dep. variable	Model	Program impact	2005	Mean control group 2005	Obs.
(1)	Equipment used	DD	0.08** (0.03)	-0.07*** (0.02)	0.41	5,280
(2)	Equipment used	OLS	0.01 (0.02)		0.41	2,758
(3)	Waiting time	DD	-12.3* (7.1)	-12.4** (5.2)	131	6,602
(4)	Waiting time	OLS	-5.16 (5.51)		131	3,426
(5)	Absence rate	OLS	-0.13** (0.06)		0.47	46
(6)	Management of clinic	OLS	1.20*** (0.33)		-0.49	50
(7)	Health information	OLS	0.07*** (0.02)		0.32	4,996
(8)	Importance of family planning	OLS	0.06*** (0.02)		0.31	4,996
(9)	Stockouts	OLS	-0.15** (0.07)		0.50	42

*Notes.* Each row is based on a separate regression. The DD model is from equation (2). The OLS model is from equation (1) with district fixed effects and baseline covariates as listed in Table II. Robust standard errors, clustered by catchment areas, are in columns (1)–(4) and (7)–(8), in parentheses. Program impact measures the coefficient on the assignment to treatment indicator in the OLS models and the assignment to treatment indicator interacted with an indicator variable for 2005 in the DD models. Specifications: (1) and (2) indicator variable for whether the staff used any equipment during examination when the patient visited the health facility; (3) and (4) difference between the time the citizen left the facility and the time the citizen arrived at the facility, minus the examination time; (5) ratio of workers not physically present at the time of the postintervention survey to the number of workers employed preintervention (see text for details); (6) first component from a principal components analysis of the variables Condition of the floors of the health clinic, Condition of the walls, Condition of furniture, and Smell of the facility, where each condition is ranked from 1 (dirty) to 3 (clean) by the enumerators; (7) indicator variable for whether the household has received information about the importance of visiting the health facility and the danger of self-treatment; (8) indicator variable for whether the household has received information about family planning; (9) share of months in 2005 in which stock cards indicated no availability of drugs (see text for details).

\*Significantly different from zero at 90% confidence level.

\*\*Significantly different from zero at 95% confidence level.

\*\*\*Significantly different from zero at 99% confidence level.

an indicator variable for whether any equipment, for instance, a thermometer, was used during examination is shown in the first row in Table III. Fifty percent (41) of the patients in the treatment (control) community reported that equipment was used the last time the respondent (or the respondent's child) visited the project clinic. The difference-in-differences estimate, a 20% increase, is highly significant. The cross-sectional estimate in row (2), based on equation (1), is less precisely estimated.



In row (3) we report the result with an alternative measure of staff performance—the waiting time—defined as the difference between the time the user left the facility and the time the user arrived at the facility, subtracting the examination time. On average, the waiting time was 131 minutes in the control facilities and 119 in the treatment facilities. The estimate based on equation (1), shown in column (4), is less precisely estimated.

The results on absenteeism are shown in row (3).<sup>9</sup> The point estimate suggests a substantial treatment effect. On average, the absence rate, defined as the ratio of workers not physically present at the time of the postintervention survey to the number of workers on the list of employees as reported in the preintervention survey, is 13 percentage points lower in the treatment facilities. Thus, in response to the intervention, health workers are more likely to be at work.

Enumerators also visually checked the condition of the health clinics, that is, whether floors and walls were clean, the condition of the furniture, and the smell of the facility. We combine these variables through principal components analysis into a summary score. Treatment clinics appear to have put more effort into keeping the clinic in decent condition in response to the intervention. The point estimate, reported in row (6), implies a 0.56 standard deviation improvement in the summary score in the treatment compared to the control facilities.

According to the government health sector strategic plan, preventive care is one of the core tasks for health providers at the primary level. A significantly larger share of households in the treatment communities have received information about the dangers of self-treatment, reported in row (7), and the importance of family planning, reported in row (8). The difference is 7 and 6 percentage points, respectively.

There is no systematic difference in the supply of drugs between the treatment and control groups (see Section V.F). However, as shown in row (9), stockouts of drugs are occurring at a higher frequency in the control facilities even though, as reported

9. The postintervention survey was not announced in advance. At the start of the survey, the enumerators physically verified the provider's presence. A worker was counted as absent if, at the time of the visit, he or she was not in the clinic. Staff reported to be on outreach were omitted from the absence calculation. Four observations were dropped because the total number of workers verified to be present or reported to be on outreach exceeded the total number of workers on the preintervention staff list. Assuming instead no absenteeism in these four facilities yields a point estimate (standard error) of  $-0.20$  ( $0.065$ ).

below, the control facilities treat significantly fewer patients. These findings suggest that more drugs leaked from health facilities in the control group.<sup>10</sup>

The findings on immunization of children under five are reported in Table IV. We have information on how many times (doses) in total each child has received polio, DPT, BCG, and measles vaccines and vitamin A supplements. On the basis of the recommended immunization plan, we create indicator variables taking the value of 1 if child  $i$  of cohort (age)  $j$  had received the required dose(s) of measles, DPT, BCG, and polio vaccines, respectively, and 0 otherwise.<sup>11</sup> We then estimate (3), for each age group, and calculate average standardized effects.

The average standardized effects are significantly positive for the younger cohorts. Looking at individual effects (Online Supplemental Appendix Table A.IV), there are significant positive differences between households in the treatment and control community for all five vaccines, although not for all cohorts. For example, twice as many newborns in the treatment group have received vitamin A supplements, 46% more newborns have received the first dose of BCG vaccine, and 42% more newborns have received the first dose of polio vaccine as compared to the control group.

#### *V.D. Utilization*

To the extent we can measure it, the evidence presented so far suggests that treatment communities began to monitor the health unit more extensively in response to the intervention and that the health workers improved the provision of health services. We now turn to the question of whether the intervention also resulted in improved quantity and quality of care.

Cross-sectional estimates based on equation (3) are given in Table V, Panel A. For outpatients and deliveries, we have

10. The dependent variable is the share of months in 2005 in which stock cards indicated no availability of drugs, averaged over erythromycin, mebendazole, and septrin. We find no significant difference between treatment and control clinics for chloroquine—the least expensive of the drugs on which we have data. Not all clinics had accurate stock cards and these clinics were therefore omitted.

11. According to the Uganda National Expanded Program on Immunization, each child in Uganda is supposed to be immunized against measles (one dose at nine months and two doses in case of an epidemic); DPT (three doses at six, ten, and fourteen weeks); BCG (one dose at birth or during the first contact with a health facility); and polio (three doses, or four if delivery takes place at the facility, at six, ten, and fourteen weeks). Because measles vaccination should not be given at birth, we exclude immunization against measles in the plan for infants under twelve months.

TABLE IV  
PROGRAM IMPACT ON IMMUNIZATION

Group Specification:	Newborn (1)	Under 1 year (2)	1 year old (3)	2 years old (4)	3 years old (5)	4 years old (6)
Average standardized effect	1.30* (0.70)	1.44** (0.72)	1.24** (0.63)	0.72 (0.58)	2.01*** (0.67)	0.86 (0.80)
Observations	173	929	940	951	1,110	526

Notes: Average standardized effects are derived from equation (3) with the dependent variables being indicator variables for whether the child has received at least one dose of measles, DPT, BCG, and polio vaccines and vitamin A supplement, respectively (see text for details), and with district fixed effects and baseline covariates listed in Table II included. Robust standard errors clustered by catchment areas in parentheses. Groups: (1) Children under 3 months; (2) Children 0–12 months; (3) Children 13–24 months; (4) Children 25–36 months; (5) Children 37–48 months; (6) Children 49–60 months.

\*Significant at 10% level.

\*\*Significant at 5% level.

\*\*\*Significant at 1% level.

TABLE V  
PROGRAM IMPACT ON UTILIZATION/COVERAGE

Dep. variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Outpatients	Delivery	Antenatal	Family planning	Average std effect	Use of project facility	Use of self-treatment/traditional healers	Average std effect
<b>A: Cross-sectional data</b>								
Program impact	130.2** (60.8)	5.3** (2.1)	15.0 (11.2)	3.4 (3.2)	1.75*** (0.63)	0.026* (0.016)	-0.014 (0.011)	1.43* (0.87)
Observations	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
	(9)	(10)			(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
<b>B: Panel data</b>								
Program impact	189.1*** (67.2)	3.48* (1.96)			2.30*** (0.69)	0.031* (0.017)	-0.046** (0.021)	1.96** (0.89)
Observations	100	100			100	100	100	100
Mean control group 2005	661	9.2	78.9	15.2	-	0.24	0.36	-

Notes. Panel A reports program impact estimates from cross-sectional models with district fixed effects and baseline covariates as listed in Table II, with robust standard errors in parentheses. Panel B reports program impact estimates from difference-in-differences models with robust standard errors clustered by facility in parentheses. Point estimates, standard errors, and average standardized effects in specifications (1)–(5), (6)–(8), (9)–(11), and (12)–(13) are derived from equation (3). Program impact measures the coefficient on the assignment to treatment indicator in the OLS models and the assignment to treatment indicator interacted with an indicator variable for 2005 in the DID models. Specifications: First column is average number of patients visiting the facility per month for outpatient care; second column is average number of deliveries at the facility per month; third column is average number of antenatal visits at the facility per month; fourth column is average number of family planning visits at the facility per month; fifth column is average standardized effect of estimates in specifications (1)–(4) and (9)–(10), respectively; sixth column is the share of visits to the project facility of all health visits, averaged over catchment area; seventh column is the share of visits to traditional healers and self-treatment of all health visits, averaged over catchment area; eighth column is average standardized effect of estimates in specifications (6)–(7) and (12)–(14), respectively, reversing the sign of use of self-treatment/traditional healers.

\*Significant at 10% level.  
\*\*Significant at 5% level.  
\*\*\*Significant at 1% level.

preintervention data and can also estimate difference-in-differences models, shown in Panel B, and value-added models, shown in Table A.V in the Online Supplemental Appendix.<sup>12</sup>

One year into the program, utilization (for general outpatient services) is 20% higher in the treatment facilities as shown in specification (1). For the difference-in-differences and the value-added models (reported in specification (9) in Table V and specification (ix) in Table A.V), the coefficients on the treatment indicator are larger both in absolute magnitude and relative to their standard errors. Thus, controlling for baseline outcomes,  $y_{jt-1}$ , improves the precision of the treatment effect, which is to be expected given the persistent nature of the outcome variable. The difference in the number of deliveries, shown in specification (2), albeit starting from a low level, is 58% and is fairly precisely estimated. There are also positive differences in the number of patients seeking antenatal care (19% increase) and family planning (22% increase), although these estimates are not individually significantly different from zero. The average standardized effect, reported in specification (5), however, is highly significant.

The last three columns in Table V, Panels A and B, report changes in utilization patterns based on household data. We collected data on where each household member sought care during 2005 in case of illness that required treatment and collapsed this information by community. There is an 11%–13% increase, specifications (6) and (12), in the use of the project facility in treatment as compared to the control group—a result consistent with that reported in specification (1) using facility records.

Households in the treatment community also reduced the number of visits to traditional healers and the extent of self-treatment, specifications (7) and (13), but there are no statistically significant differences across the two groups in the use of other providers (not reported). Thus, as summarized in the average standardized treatment effects, specifications (8) and (9), households in the treatment communities switched from traditional healers and self-treatment to the project facility in response to the intervention.

12. The value-added specification is  $y_{jt} = \alpha_{VA} + \beta_{VA}T_j + \lambda y_{jt-1} + \varepsilon_{jt}$ .

*V.E. Health Outcomes*

We collected data on births, pregnancies, and deaths of children under five years in 2005. We also measured the weight of all infants (i.e., under age 18 months) and children (between ages 18 and 36 months) in the surveyed households.

Health outcomes could have improved for several reasons. As noted in the Introduction, access to a small set of proven, inexpensive services could, worldwide, have prevented more than half of all deaths of children under age 5. For a country with an epidemiological profile as in Uganda, the estimate of preventable deaths is 73 percent (Jones et al. 2003).<sup>13</sup> In the community monitoring project specifically, increased utilization and having patients switch from self-treatment and traditional healers to seek care at the treatment facility could have an effect. Holding utilization constant, better service quality, increased immunization, and more extensive use of preventive care could also have resulted in improved health status.

As a reference point we review the set of health interventions feasible for delivery at high coverage in low-income settings with sufficient evidence of effect on reducing mortality from the major causes of under-5 deaths (Jones et al. 2003). We focus on community-based, randomized, controlled field trials that bear some resemblance (because they are community-based) to our project. Several of these field trials document reductions in under-5 mortality rates of 30%–50% one to two years into the project.<sup>14</sup> There is, however, a fundamental difference between the

13. This is likely to be a conservative number because only medical interventions for which cause-specific evidence of effect was available were included in the estimation. For example, increased birth spacing, which has been estimated to reduce under-5 mortality by 19 percent in India, was not considered. Several perinatal and neonatal health interventions that could be implemented in low-income countries were not included either (Darmstadt et al. 2005).

14. For example, a project in Tigray, Ethiopia, in which coordinators, supported by a team of supervisors, were trained to teach mothers to recognize symptoms of malaria in their children and provide antimalarials, reduced under-5 mortality by 40% (Kidane and Morrow 2000). Bang et al. (1990) document a 30% reduction in under-5 mortality from an intervention that included mass education about childhood pneumonia and case management of pneumonia by trained village health workers—a result similar to the meta-analysis estimate by Sazawal and Black (2003). Bang et al. (1999) evaluate a project in which trained village health workers, assisted by birth attendants and supervisory visits, provided home-based neonatal care, including treatment of sepsis. Two years into the project, they document a reduction in infant mortality by nearly 50 percent. Rahmathullah et al. (2003) assess the impact of a community-based project in two rural districts of Tamil Nadu, India, where newborn infants in the treatment group were allocated oral vitamin A after delivery. The intervention resulted in a 22% reduction in total mortality at age 6 months. Manandhar et al. (2004) evaluate a project in which a

interventions discussed in footnote 14 and our work. The medical field trials study the impact of a biological agent or treatment practice in a community setting when the community health workers and medical personnel competently carry out their tasks. In the experiment we consider, on the contrary, no new health interventions were introduced and the supply of health inputs was unchanged. Instead, we focused on incentivizing health workers to carry out their tasks through strengthened local accountability.

Estimates for births and pregnancies are given in Table VI, columns (1) and (2). To the extent that the intervention had an effect on fertility, for example, through increased use of family planning services, it would primarily affect the incidence of pregnancies in 2005, given the forty-week period between conception to birth. The incidence of births is not significantly different across treatment and control groups. However, the treatment groups had 10% fewer incidences of pregnancies in 2005.

Column (3) shows the treatment effect on under-5 mortality.<sup>15</sup> The point estimate suggests a substantial treatment effect. The average under-5 mortality rate in the control group is 144, close to the official figure of 133 for 2005 (UNICEF 2006). In the treatment group, the under-5 mortality rate is 97, which is a 33% reduction in under-5 mortality. The difference is significant (and somewhat larger in absolute magnitude) when controlling for district fixed effects as reported in column (3). Although the effect is large, it is worth emphasizing that the 90% confidence interval of our estimate also includes much lower effects (90% CI: 8%–64% reduction in under-5 mortality rate). With a total of approximately 55,000 households residing in the treatment communities, the treatment effect corresponds to approximately 550 averted under-5 deaths in the treatment group in 2005.

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facilitator convened nine women's group meetings every month in the Makwanpur district in Nepal in which perinatal problems were identified and strategies to address them formulated. Two years into the project they document a 30% reduction in neonatal mortality. Rahman et al. (1982) evaluate the impact of immunization of women with tetanus injections during pregnancy in rural Bangladesh. The intervention reduced neonatal mortality by 45%. Mtango and Neuvians (1986) evaluate a project in rural Tanzania in which trained village health workers visited families at their homes every six to eight weeks, giving health education on recognition and prevention of acute respiratory infections, treating children with pneumonia with antibiotics or referring them to the next higher level of care. Within a two-year period, they document a 27% reduction in under-5 mortality—a reduction slightly lower than that found in a similar study in rural Bangladesh (Fauveau et al. 1992).

15. The under-5 mortality rate is the sum of the death rates for each cohort (age groups 0–1, 1–2, 2–3, 3–4, and 4–5) per community in 2005, expressed per thousand live births.

TABLE VI  
PROGRAM IMPACT ON HEALTH OUTCOMES

Dependent variable	Births (1)	Pregnancies (2)	U5MR (3)	Child death (4)	Weight-for-age z-scores (5)	Weight-for-age z-scores (6)
Specification:						
Program impact	-0.016 (0.013)	-0.03** (0.014)	-49.9* (26.9)		0.14** (0.07)	0.14** (0.07)
Child age (log)						-1.27*** (0.07)
Female						0.27*** (0.09)
Program impact × year of birth 2005				-0.026** (0.013)		
Program impact × year of birth 2004				-0.019** (0.008)		
Program impact × year of birth 2003				0.003 (0.009)		
Program impact × year of birth 2002				0.000 (0.006)		
Program impact × year of birth 2001				0.002 (0.006)		
Mean control group 2005	0.21	0.29	144	0.029	-0.71	-0.71
Observations	4,996	4,996	50	5,094	1,135	1,135

*Notes.* Estimates from equation (1) with district fixed effects and baseline covariates as listed in Table II included. Specification (4) also includes a full set of year-of-birth indicators. Robust standard errors in parentheses (3), clustered by catchment area (1)–(2), (4)–(6). Program impact measures the coefficient on the assignment to treatment indicator. Specifications: (1) Number of births in the household in 2005; (2) indicator variable for whether any women in the household are or were pregnant in 2005; (3) USMR is under-5 mortality rate in the community expressed per 1,000 live births (see text for details); (4) indicator variable for child death in 2005; (5)–(6) weight-for-age z-scores for children under 18 months excluding observations with recorded weight above the 90th percentile in the growth chart reported in Cortinovis et al. (1997).

\*Significant at 10% level.

\*\*Significant at 5% level.

\*\*\*Significant at 1% level.



Column (4) shows the age range of the mortality effects. We have information on the birth year of all children (under age 5) alive at in the beginning of 2005 and the birth year of all deceased children in 2005. Using these data we estimate (1), replacing the treatment indicator with a full set of year-of-birth indicators and year-of-birth-by-treatment interactions. We can then address the question: Conditional on having a child of age  $x$  at the end of 2004, or a child born in 2005, what is the probability that the child died in 2005? As evident, children younger than two years old drive the reduction in under-5 mortality. The point estimate for the youngest cohort, for example, implies a 35% reduction in the likelihood of death of a child born in 2005 in the treatment compared to the control group.

The program impact on the weight of infants is reported in columns (5) and (6). On the basis of weight-for-age  $z$ -scores, Ugandan infants have values of weight far lower than the international reference of the U.S. National Center for Health Statistics of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the gap increases for older infants, consistent with the findings in Cortinovis et al. (1997).<sup>16</sup> The difference in means of  $z$  scores of infants between the treatment and the control group is reported in column (5): The estimated effect (difference) is 0.14 in weight-for-age. Figure II plots the distribution of  $z$  scores for the treatment and control groups. The difference in measured weight is most apparent for underweight children. This is consistent with a positive treatment effect arising from improved access and quality of health care, rather than a general increase in nutritional status, because underweight status causes a decrease in immune and nonimmune host defenses and, as a consequence, underweight children are at a higher risk of suffering from infectious diseases or severe complications of infectious diseases, and therefore in higher demand of health care. In column (6) of Table VI, we add controls for age and gender. The results remain qualitatively unchanged.

The treatment effect is quantitatively important. For this purpose, the baseline proportion of infants in each risk category

16. The  $z$ -score is a normally distributed measure of growth defined as the difference between the weight of an individual and the median value of weight for the reference population (2000 CDC Growth Reference in the United States) for the same age, divided by the standard deviation of the reference population. We exclude  $z$ -scores  $> |4.5|$  as implausible and omit observations with a recorded weight above the 90th percentile in the growth chart reported in Cortinovis et al. (1997). Because weight is measured by trained enumerators, the reporting error is likely due to misreported age of the child. The coefficient estimate (standard error) on the treatment indicator is 0.16 (0.09) when including these outliers.

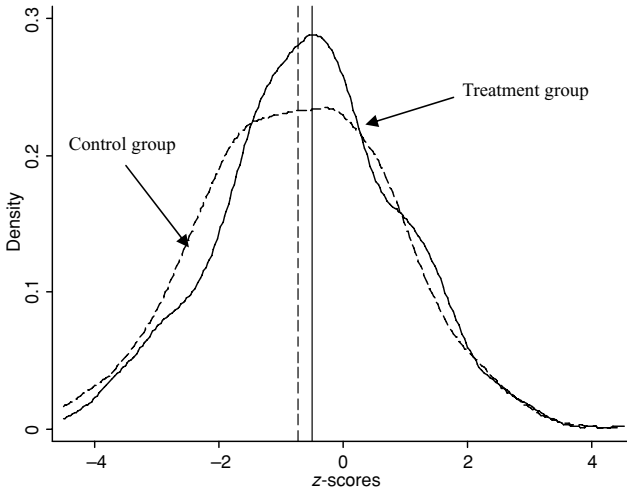


FIGURE II

## Distributions of Weight-for-Age z-Scores for Treatment and Control Groups

Weight-for-age z-scores for children under 18 months excluding observations with recorded weight above the 90th percentile in the growth chart reported in Cortinovis et al. (1997). Sample size is 1,135 children. Solid line depicts the distribution for the treatment group and dashed line the distribution for the control group. Vertical solid line denotes mean in treatment group; dashed line denotes mean in control group.

(severe,  $< -3$  z-scores; moderate,  $-3 \leq$  z-scores  $< -2$ ; mild,  $-2 \leq$  z-scores  $< -1$ ) in the control group was calculated. Applying the shift in the weight-for-age distribution (adding 0.14 z-score) with the odds ratio for each category—children who are mildly (moderately) [severely] underweight have about a twofold (fivefold) [eightfold] higher risk of death from infectious disease (Jones et al. 2003)—the reduction in average risk of mortality is estimated to be approximately 7 percent.<sup>17</sup>

*V.F. Getting Inside the Box and Robustness Tests*

The findings of large treatment effects on our proxies of community-based monitoring and outcomes are consistent with the community-based monitoring mechanism, but the findings do

17. To put this into perspective, a review of controlled trials designed to improve the intake of complementary food for children ages six months to five years showed a mean increase of 0.35 z-score (Jones et al. 2003). Jones and colleagues argue that this is one of the most effective preventive interventions feasible for delivery at high coverage in a low-income setting.

not rule out other explanations. In this section we assess a number of these alternative hypotheses.

To examine the plausibility of community-based monitoring as a key mechanism for the health utilization and health outcomes treatment effects, we follow the methodology used by Kling, Liebman, and Katz (2007). Specifically, we test whether the differences between treatment and control in outcomes across districts are larger in districts with large treatment-control differences in monitoring and information outcomes. This relationship is summarized by the parameter  $\delta$ , the coefficient on the summary index of monitoring and information, in the outcome equation

$$(4) \quad y_j = \delta M_j + \mathbf{X}_j \pi + \varepsilon_j.$$

The summary index of monitoring  $M$  in (4) is the first component from a principal components analysis of the six monitoring and information variables in Table II. We examine two outcome measures ( $y_j$ ), under-5 mortality and number of outpatients.

Following Kling, Liebman, and Katz (2007), we estimate (4) by two-stage least squares (2SLS), using a full set of district-by-treatment interactions as the excluded instruments for the monitoring index  $M$ , while controlling for district fixed effects. The IV estimation of (4) will be consistent if  $M$  is the mediating factor between treatment and outcomes.

The IV approach is depicted graphically in Figure III.<sup>18</sup> There is a consistent pattern across districts and groups that larger differences in monitoring (relative to the district mean) are associated with larger differences in outcomes—a result in line with the community-based monitoring mechanism.

Estimates based on equation (4) are given in Table VII. The first two columns show 2SLS estimates of  $\delta$  with district-by-treatment interactions as excluded instruments for the the monitoring index  $M$ . To increase precision, we control for baseline outcomes  $y_{jt-1}$ , when data allow it (i.e., for number of outpatients treated). The estimates are large in absolute terms and precisely estimated.

18. If  $\mathbf{X}$  contains only district indicators, the 2SLS estimate of  $\delta$  using the district-by-treatment interactions instruments is the slope of the line fit through a scatterplot of the outcome and monitoring index means for the treatment and control groups in each of the nine districts, normalized so that each district has mean 0 (Kling, Liebman, and Katz 2007). We plot the average values by group (treatment and control) for each district for  $y$  and  $M$  expressed in standard deviation units relative to the control group overall standard deviation for each variable.

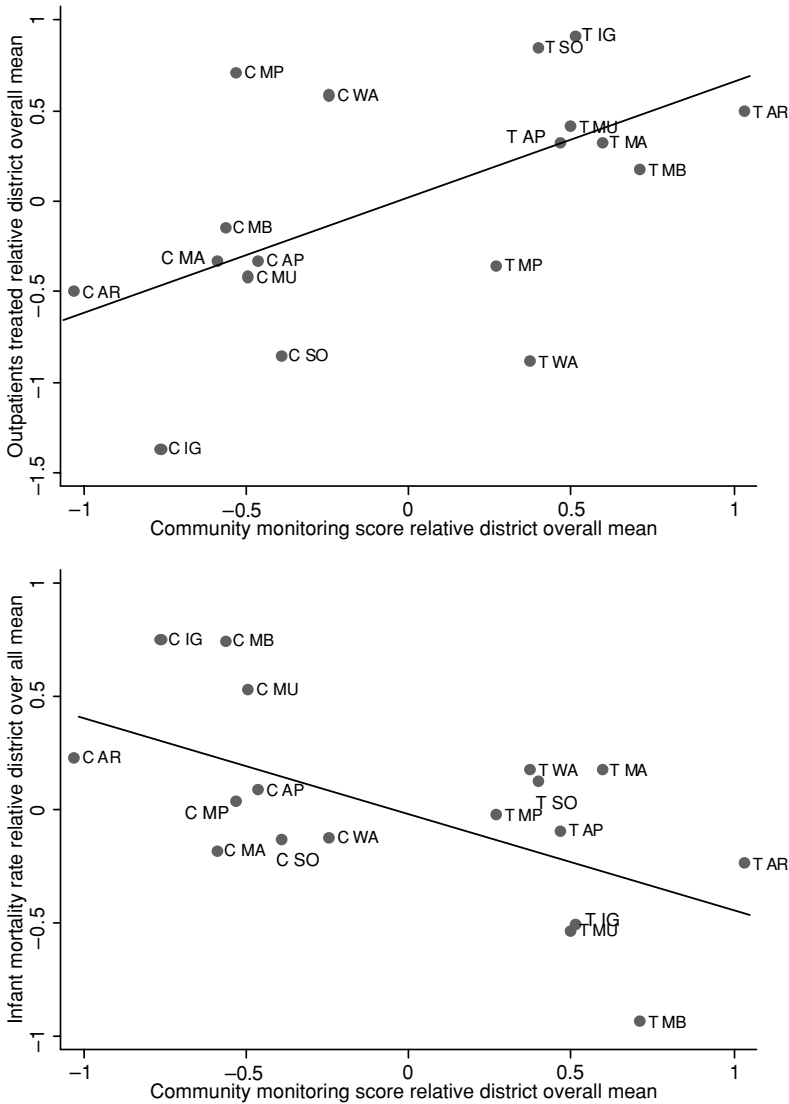


FIGURE III

Differences in Treatment-Control in Outcomes and Monitoring across Districts

Partial regression plots. The community monitoring index, outpatients, and under-5 mortality rate in the community (all three variables are described in the main text) are expressed in standard deviation units relative to the control group overall standard deviation for each variable. The points are the average values by group (treatment and control) for each district, normalized so that each district has mean 0. The line passes through the origin with the slope from the 2SLS estimation of equation (4) of the outcome on community monitoring and district indicators, using district-by-treatment interactions as instrumental variables. T (C) denotes treatment (control) group.

TABLE VII  
MECHANISMS AND ROBUSTNESS

Dep. variable	Out-patients (1)	U5MR (2)	Out-patients (3)	U5MR (4)	Out-patients (5)	U5MR (6)	Out-patients (7)	U5MR (8)
Community monitoring index	0.77*** (0.22)	-0.43* (0.25)	0.86* (0.53)	-0.43 (0.82)	0.77** (0.21)	-0.54* (0.30)		
Staff's knowledge about patients' rights					-0.01 (0.28)	0.47 (0.29)		
Program impact			-0.12 (0.66)	0.01 (0.88)			190.5** (92.6)	-41.3 (45.8)
CBO presence							-8.3 (69.4)	-21.0 (37.9)
Program impact × CBO presence							-127.9 (126.1)	-4.0 (58.4)
F-test on program impact							6.17 (.05)	
F-test on CBO presence							0.37 (.83)	
F-test on program impact × CBO presence							1.03 (.60)	

Notes: Columns (1)–(4) report 2SLS estimates from equation (4) with district-by-treatment interactions as the excluded instruments and district fixed effects and outpatients<sub>*i*-1</sub> (in specifications (1) and (3)) as controls. The variables in columns (1)–(4) are expressed in standard deviation units relative to the control group overall standard deviation for each variable. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. Program impact measures the coefficient on the assignment to treatment indicator. F-test statistics (with p-values in parentheses) on the excluded instruments Community monitoring and Staff's knowledge about patients' rights are 15.9 (.00) and 7.23 (.00), respectively. Point estimates and standard errors in columns (5)–(6) and columns (7)–(8), respectively, are jointly estimated from equation (3). Explanatory variables: Community monitoring is the first component from a principal components analysis of the six monitoring and information proxies presented in Table II. Staff's knowledge about patients' rights is a measure of the in-charge's knowledge about patients' rights and obligations (see text for details). CBO presence is an indicator variable for whether a participating CBO had been operating in the community before the intervention. F-test on program impact (CBO presence) [Program impact × CBO presence] is the test statistic, with p-values in parentheses, on the test that the coefficients on program impact (CBO presence) [Program impact × CBO presence] are jointly 0 in columns (5)–(6) and (7)–(8), respectively.

\*Significant at 10% level.  
\*\*Significant at 5% level.  
\*\*\*Significant at 1% level.

A stricter test of whether the extent of the program impact varies with the size of the community monitoring impact is to add a treatment dummy (an overall treatment effect regardless of the community monitoring impact) to the IV regressions in equation (4). The community monitoring index is then identified by cross-district variation in changes in community monitoring by treatment from the district-by-treatment interactions as the excluded instruments, with the main effect for treatment no longer excluded; the results are reported in columns (3) and (4) of Table VII. Comparing the results without and with controls for treatment is quite similar for both outpatients and under-5 mortality, while the coefficients on the treatment indicator have the wrong sign and are small relative to their standard errors, providing some evidence that community monitoring had the primary effects on outcomes as opposed to other effects induced by the intervention.

To examine the hypothesis that differences in monitoring are driving the results as opposed to the supply-driven hypothesis that health workers, once being informed that their effort deviates from what is expected (in the health facility staff meeting), decided to exert greater effort in serving the community, we augment specification (4) with a measure of the staff's knowledge about patients' rights and obligations.<sup>19</sup> This model thus has two endogenous variables. If large treatment effects on outcomes across districts are associated with differences in staff knowledge about patients' rights rather than more intense community monitoring, this would be evidence against the community-based monitoring hypothesis. As reported in columns (5) and (6), the coefficients on community monitoring remain largely unaffected, and the coefficients on staff knowledge are insignificant and with the wrong signs, providing additional evidence, albeit not conclusive, that the demand-driven mechanism is more important than the supply-driven mechanism.

The CBOs played an integral role in the intervention as facilitators of the meetings. However, it is possible that these CBOs had a role (as educators or activists, for example) beyond the described treatment itself. There is no definitive way to sort out the

19. The in-charge was asked to list patients' rights and obligations according to the Ministry of Health's plan for basic health service delivery. Patients' rights were discussed in the interface meeting. Each correct answer (out of five) was given a score of 0.2, and so this test score ranges from 0 to 1. We also examined other measures of staff engagement, including number of staff meetings in 2005 and if the in-charge had initiated training of staff on proper conduct. The results using these alternative proxies mirror those reported in Table VII.

role of community-based monitoring from the possible roles of the CBOs, but because around 60 percent of the CBOs that took part in the intervention had been operating in the communities before the intervention, and several of them also had activities in the control areas, we can investigate whether the outcomes are correlated with preintervention CBO activity. This would be the case if the CBOs that participated in the experiment, and that had been present in the communities prior to intervention, had a direct impact on health outcomes (through various preventive activities, for example) or indirectly by being more involved in monitoring the provider. The number of outpatients treated per month, shown in column (7), and the under-5 mortality rate, shown in column (8), are not significantly different in communities where the CBOs had been active prior to the intervention. We have also examined whether the treatment effect varies conditional on observable CBO characteristics or actions. For example, CBOs that are located (have an office) in the community might, everything else equal, be in a better position to monitor the health provider. Moreover, at ten of the treatment sites, the CBOs reported that they regularly visited the clinic. If the CBOs, rather than the community, were pushing the service providers into action, presumably the effect would be more pronounced at sites where the CBO actually visited the clinic regularly. However, the treatment effects are independent of whether the office of the CBO is located within a five-kilometer radius of the health facility or if the CBO reported that it regularly visited the clinic.<sup>20</sup>

Given that within each district there are both treatment and control units, one concern with the evaluation design is the possibility of spillovers from one catchment area to another. In practice, there are reasons to believe spillovers will not be a serious concern. The average (and median) distance between the treatment and control facility is thirty kilometers, and in a rural setting, it is unclear to what extent information about improvements in

20. Given the small sample size, we test whether the distribution of outcomes in the subsample  $\{T = 1 \text{ \& CBO located in community} = 1\}$  is the same as in the subsample  $\{T = 1 \text{ \& CBO located in community} = 0\}$ , and whether the distribution of outcomes in the subsample  $\{T = 1 \text{ \& CBO regularly carries out monitoring visits to the facility} = 1\}$  is the same as in the subsample  $\{T = 1 \text{ \& CBO regularly carries out monitoring visits to the facility} = 0\}$ , using the Wilcoxon rank-sum test. The test statistics (with  $p$ -values in parentheses) are 0.88 (.38) and  $-1.10$  (.27) for outpatients and 0.31 (.76) and  $-0.03$  (.98) for under-5 mortality rate. We get similar results if we enrich equation (1) with an interaction term  $T \times \text{CBO characteristic}$ . The estimates of the interaction term are not statistically different from 0 in any of the specifications.

treatment facilities has spread to control communities. Still, the possibility of spillovers is a concern. Following Miguel and Kremer (2004), and taking advantage of the variation in distance to the nearest treatment clinic induced by randomization, we estimate spillovers from treatment to control groups by enriching  $\mathbf{X}$  in equation (1) to include an indicator variable for whether the control clinic is within ten kilometers of the nearest treatment clinic. The results are presented in the Online Supplemental Appendix (for utilization, delivery, and child death). We do not find evidence in favor of the spillover hypothesis.

Another concern is if the district or subdistrict management changed its behavior or support in response to the intervention. For example, the health subdistrict or local government may have provided additional funding or other support to the treatment facilities. The results in Table A.VIII in the Online Supplemental Appendix do not provide any evidence of this being the case. The treatment facilities did not receive more drugs or funding from the subdistrict or district as compared to the control facilities during 2005.

Upper-level authorities could also have increased their supervision of treatment facilities in response to the intervention. As shown in Online Supplemental Appendix Table A.IX, however, supervision of providers by upper-level government authorities remained low in both the treatment and the control group. As a complement we also assessed sanctions. Only a handful of staff were dismissed or transferred in 2005 and there is no systematic pattern that distinguishes treatment from control facilities. There is also no difference between treatment and control facilities in the number of staff that voluntarily left the facility during 2005 (Table A.IX).

## VI. DISCUSSION

Based on a small but rigorous empirical literature on community participation and oversight, and extensive piloting in the field, our conjecture was that lack of relevant information and failure to agree on, or coordinate expectations of, what is reasonable to demand from the provider were holding back individual and group action to pressure and monitor the provider. We designed an intervention aimed at relaxing these constraints. Through two rounds of community meetings, local NGOs initiated a process



aimed at energizing the community and agreeing on actions to improve service provision.

We document large increases in utilization and improved health outcomes that compare favorably to some of the more successful community-based intervention trials reported in the medical literature. However, whereas medical field trials address the question of impact of a biological agent or treatment practice when the health workers do what they are supposed to do, we focus on a mechanism to ensure that health workers exert effort to serve the community.

The project was implemented in nine districts in Uganda with an estimated catchment population of approximately 55,000 households. In this dimension, therefore, the project has already shown that it can be brought to scale. However, the literature on how to enhance local accountability and participation is still in its infancy. And although the results in the paper suggest that community monitoring can play an important role in improving service delivery when traditional top-down supervision is ineffective, there are still a number of outstanding questions. For example, we know little about long-term effects and cross-sector externalities. It may also be the case that combining bottom-up monitoring with a reformed top-down approach could yield even better results. Before scaling up, it is also important to subject the project to a cost-benefit analysis. This would require putting a value on the improvements we have documented. To provide a flavor of such a cost-benefit analysis, consider the findings on averting the death of a child under five. A back-of-the-envelope calculation suggests that the intervention, including the cost for collecting data for the report cards (the main cost item), at \$3 per household in the catchment areas or \$160,000 in total, only judged on the cost per death averted, must be considered to be fairly cost-effective. The estimated cost of averting the death of a child under five is around \$300, which should be compared to the estimate that the average cost per child life saved through the combined and integrated delivery of 23 interventions shown to reduce mortality from the major causes of death in children younger than 5 years is \$887 (Bryce et al. 2003).

As argued in a recent *Lancet* article, a systematic program of research to answer questions about how best to deliver health (child survival) interventions is urgently needed (Bryce et al. 2003). In this paper we have focused on a mechanism that has been highlighted, but not examined, in the literature—a mechanism of

accountability enabling (poor) people to scrutinize whether those in authority have fulfilled their health responsibilities. Future research should address long-term effects, identify which mechanisms or combination of mechanisms that are important, and study the extent to which the results generalize to other social sectors.

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