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No. 191, 2004

Awoonor-Williams, John Koku, **Ellie S. Feinglass**, **Rachel Tobey**, Maya N. Vaughan-Smith, Frank K. Nyonator, **Tanya C. Jones**, and **James F. Phillips**. "Bridging the gap between evidence-based innovation and national health-sector reform in Ghana," *Policy Research Division Working Paper* no. 191. New York: Population Council. ([PDF](#))

Abstract

Although experimental trials often identify optimal strategies for improving community health, transferring operational innovation from well-funded research programs to resource-constrained settings often languishes. Because research initiatives are based in institutions equipped with unique resources and staff capabilities, results are often dismissed by decisionmakers as irrelevant to large-scale operations and national health policy. This article describes an initiative undertaken in Nkwanta District, Ghana, focusing on this problem. The Nkwanta District initiative is a critical link between the experimental study conducted in Navrongo, Ghana, and a national effort to scale up the innovations developed in that study. A 2002 Nkwanta district-level survey provides the basis for assessing the likelihood that the Navrongo model is replicable elsewhere in Ghana. The effect of community-based health planning and services exposure on family planning and safe-motherhood indicators supports the hypothesis that the Navrongo model is transferable to impoverished rural settings elsewhere. This finding confirms the need for strategies to bridge the gap between Navrongo evidence-based innovation and national health-sector reform.



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