

Resource June 29, 2017

## Evaluating Complex Health Interventions: A Guide to Rigorous Research Designs

[evaluation\\_image.png](#) [1]



“Evaluating Complex Health Interventions: A Guide to Rigorous Research Designs” was co-authored by researchers from ASSIST and IHI, and published by AcademyHealth. This guide provides a framework to guide decision-making around appropriate designs to evaluate public health, and other service interventions, including quality improvement.

It is aimed at those implementing interventions in public health and community settings, including quality improvement, who are involved in evaluation, but may not themselves be evaluators. By arming these stakeholders with the information necessary to understand and assess the strengths, weaknesses, and validity of an evaluation that has already been conducted, the guide aims to help the reader make informed decisions by providing information on the various tradeoffs involved in the selection of an evaluation design.

The evaluation designs presented in this guide represent a mix of **experimental**, **quasi-experimental** and **observational** designs.

### Six designs are included in the guide:

- randomized controlled trial,
- cluster randomized stepped wedge design,
- interrupted time series design,
- controlled before and after design,
- regression discontinuity design, and
- natural experiment.

### Each design includes:

- a general description with a diagram to illustrate the design;
- two examples from the peer-reviewed literature of how the design was used to evaluate a specific health or social service intervention;
- key strengths and weaknesses of the study design;
- timeline and budget considerations;
- policy implications, and
- considerations for future use.

A flow chart to inform the selection of evaluation designs is featured in the guide. Resources for more detailed information on a broader range of designs are also listed.



[Evaluating Complex Health Interventions: A Guide to Rigorous Research Designs](#) [2]

[Research and Evaluation](#) [3]

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**ASSIST publication:** no

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### Links

[1] <https://www.usaidassist.org/file/3194>

[2] [https://www.usaidassist.org/sites/default/files/ah\\_evaluation\\_guide\\_final.pdf](https://www.usaidassist.org/sites/default/files/ah_evaluation_guide_final.pdf)

[3] <https://www.usaidassist.org/topics/research-and-evaluation>

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