A sustainable approach to providing HIV services and information at the community level: a longitudinal exploration of female community health entrepreneurs' performances

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Methods
We administered a quasi-experimental performance survey in two rural Ugandan districts. The random sample entailed 150 community health workers, of whom a third would be trained as entrepreneur directly and the others six months later. Using mixed models we compared the groups' income, self-esteem, and availability of essential medicines and equipment.

Results
After six months, the entrepreneurs (n=56) showed sustained performance over the lay health workers (n=77). The community health entrepreneurs proved to be more active in addressing rural populations' sexual and reproductive healthcare needs.

Community health entrepreneurs had a higher availability of essential medicines (OR: 3.30, 95%-CI: 2.03; 5.65) and key equipment (OR: 1.87, 95%-CI: 1.03; 3.37).

Conclusion
Female community health workers who were trained to become a 'healthy entrepreneur' showed an increased and sustained performance in the medium-term. This study provides the first evidence that community health entrepreneurship may be a sustainable and lasting model through which to organise sexual and reproductive healthcare.