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Evaluating the Alignment Between National Health Infrastructure Expansion and Population Health Needs in Côte d'Ivoire: A Spatial and Organizational Planning Assessment

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ABSTRACT

➢ ***Introduction***

Despite ongoing investments in health infrastructure across Côte d'Ivoire, disparities in health outcomes persist, particularly in rural and high-burden regions. This study evaluated the alignment between national health infrastructure expansion and population health needs using a spatial and organizational planning lens.

➢ ***Methods***

A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative data analysis with geospatial mapping. Data were collected from 400 participants across three districts using structured facility surveys, demographic questionnaires, and national health databases. GIS tools (ArcGIS, QGIS) were used to map disease burden against facility density, while correlation and regression analyses assessed relationships between infrastructure indicators and health outcomes. Facility readiness was assessed through standardized scoring across five domains.

➢ ***Results and Findings***

The study found significant spatial mismatches: District B, with the highest maternal mortality (780/100,000) and malaria cases (45,000), had the lowest facility density and longest travel times (85 minutes). In contrast, District C, with a lower burden, had more facilities and shorter access times. Readiness assessments revealed that urban facilities scored above 85% in service availability, while rural counterparts averaged below 60%. A positive correlation (r = +0.45) between travel time and maternal mortality and a strong negative association between facility density and disease burden (r = –0.62) confirmed misalignment. Political influence was a significant predictor of infrastructure allocation.

➢ ***Conclusion:***

The study concluded that health infrastructure expansion in Côte d'Ivoire has not been equitably aligned with population health needs. Spatial, functional, and governance-related disparities persist, underscoring the need for data-driven, equity-focused health planning reforms.

Keywords: *Health Infrastructure, Spatial Planning, Disease Burden, Health Equity, Côte d'Ivoire, GIS, Facility Readiness, Maternal Mortality.*

ISSN No: -2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25sep438

TABLE OF CONTENT

ISSN No: -2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25sep438

ISSN No: -2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25sep438

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RESEARCH STATEMENT

This research examined the extent to which national health infrastructure expansion in Côte d'Ivoire aligned with population health needs, revealing significant disparities in spatial distribution, facility readiness, and service accessibility. Through geospatial mapping, statistical modeling, and facility audits, the study found that high-disease-burden areas such as District B marked by a maternal mortality ratio of 780 per 100,000 and over 45,000 annual malaria cases had the fewest health facilities and the longest average travel time to care (85 minutes). In contrast, District C, with lower disease burden, was better resourced and more accessible, despite having less urgent need. These findings confirmed a lack of alignment between infrastructure investment and health demands, with political influence, rather than epidemiological data, emerging as a key determinant of resource allocation.

Moreover, the study found urban–rural disparities in facility functionality, with urban centers recording readiness scores above 85%, while rural facilities averaged below 60%. Statistical analyses demonstrated a strong negative correlation between facility density and disease burden ($r = –0.62$), and a positive correlation between travel time and maternal mortality ($r = +0.45$), reinforcing the link between inadequate infrastructure and poor health outcomes. Regression modeling further showed that political considerations significantly influenced infrastructure placement, overshadowing actual health needs. These results underscored the urgent need for a data-driven, equity-focused infrastructure planning strategy to improve healthcare access, reduce health disparities, and support the achievement of Universal Health Coverage in Côte d'Ivoire.

ISSN No: -2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25sep438

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

- *Background Overview and Analysis*

Health infrastructure, including physical facilities, medical equipment, and associated logistical frameworks, has been a crucial component of efficient healthcare delivery systems. In Côte d'Ivoire, substantial expenditures have been directed towards the reconstruction and enhancement of health infrastructure, especially following the socio-political crises that hindered public service delivery from 2002 to 2011 (World Bank, 2020).

Côte d'Ivoire's healthcare system has undergone several phases of transformation, particularly in response to post-conflict reconstruction and decentralization policies. Since the early 2000s, there has been increased investment in rebuilding and expanding healthcare infrastructure, with a focus on primary healthcare facilities and regional hospitals (World Bank, 2020). Despite these efforts, disparities in service delivery persist across rural and urban settings. The mismatch between population density and facility distribution, along with gaps in human resources and equipment, raised concerns about the effectiveness of current expansion strategies (UNICEF, 2022).

These investments, propelled by domestic funding and donor support, aimed to facilitate the execution of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and enhance the resilience of health systems. Evidence increasingly indicated a misalignment between infrastructure development and areas of greatest need, especially as the burden of disease and demographic trends evolved due to urbanization, migration, and epidemiological changes (Ministère de la Santé, 2021).

A significant deficiency existed in evaluating whether the proliferation of hospitals, health centers, and clinics in Côte d'Ivoire accurately corresponds to the health requirements of the population and patterns of service usage. Infrastructure development was frequently shaped by political factors, donor priorities, or historical trends instead of contemporary facts on disease prevalence, service availability, or projected population expansion (Roa et al., 2021). This may have resulted to underutilized or inadequately staffed institutions in specific regions, while other areas especially peri-urban and expanding informal settlements continue to be underserved. The repercussions encompass inequitable access to vital services, inefficiencies in healthcare provision, and even misallocation of public resources.

The disparity between infrastructure development and population health requirements illustrated overarching difficulties in public health administration and strategic planning. The health development planning processes in Côte d'Ivoire, including the Plan National de Développement Sanitaire (PNDS), prioritize infrastructural investments but frequently neglect to systematically incorporate spatial analysis, service delivery data, and epidemiological forecasts (Ministère de la Santé, 2021). The disparity between planning aspirations and actual health outcomes prompts critical inquiries regarding the evidentiary foundation employed in health infrastructure decision-making.

Moreover, the organizational frameworks facilitating planning at both national and regional tiers frequently exhibit deficiencies in capacity and coordination mechanisms essential for needs-based investment planning. Disjointed governance, insufficient decentralization, and inadequate integration of health information systems impede decision-makers' capacity to synchronize infrastructure with real-time population needs (WHO, 2022). This study intended to rigorously analyze organizational and planning shortcomings by evaluating the alignment of infrastructure development with population health indicators across several geographic regions in Côte d'Ivoire.

The study employed a spatial and organizational planning framework to assess alignment, using geospatial mapping of facility locations in conjunction with demographic and epidemiological data. The study analyzed planning papers, investment plans, and decision-making procedures across different administrative levels to comprehend how organizational practices lead to infrastructure misalignment. This multifaceted approach revealed structural inefficiencies and pinpoint planning ideas that may facilitate more equitable and efficient health infrastructure development.

This assessment seeked to enhance the broader discussion on health systems strengthening in sub-Saharan Africa. It also endorsed global health priorities concerning sustainable and equitable health service provision under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 3 on Good Health and Well-being, and SDG 9 on Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure. The insights from Côte d'Ivoire also served as a benchmark for other low- and middle-income nations facing analogous health infrastructure and planning difficulties.

Health infrastructure served as the cornerstone of any effective healthcare delivery system. In Côte d'Ivoire, a country experiencing dynamic demographic and epidemiological transitions, the alignment between expanding health infrastructure and population health needed to remain a pivotal determinant of health outcomes. This study explored the spatial and organizational planning strategies employed in the national expansion of health infrastructure and assesses whether these strategies were effectively tailored to the country's evolving health demands. Understanding this alignment was critical for optimizing resource allocation and promoting equitable access to health services.

ISSN No: -2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25sep438

➢ *Spatial Distribution of Health Infrastructure*

A spatial analysis of health infrastructure in Côte d'Ivoire revealed a disproportionate concentration of facilities in urban centers such as Abidjan, Bouaké, and Yamoussoukro, while many rural regions remain underserved. This urban bias could be attributed to historical patterns of development and logistical challenges in remote areas. The health needs in these underserved regions, often characterized by high rates of infectious diseases and maternal mortality, demand a more equitable approach to infrastructure planning (WHO, 2021). Geographic Information Systems (GIS) have been instrumental in highlighting these disparities and informing future planning (Ali et al., 2019).

➢ *Population Health Needs and Epidemiological Shifts*

Côte d'Ivoire faced a dual burden of disease, with communicable diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis coexisting alongside rising cases of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like diabetes and hypertension (IHME, 2023). Additionally, the country had a relatively young population, with over 40% under the age of 15, which places a substantial demand on maternal and child health services (UNFPA, 2021). The ability of the health infrastructure to adapt to these shifting patterns was crucial for long-term health security and development.

➢ *Organizational Planning and Governance*

The effectiveness of health infrastructure expansion also hinges on the robustness of organizational planning and governance frameworks. Côte d'Ivoire's Ministry of Health had implemented decentralization strategies to empower regional health directorates, but issues such as inadequate coordination, limited financial autonomy, and bureaucratic delays undermined the implementation process (Ministère de la Santé et de l'Hygiène Publique, 2022). Strengthening governance at all levels was essential to ensure that infrastructure development aligned with actual health needs and local priorities.

➢ *Resource Allocation and Equity Considerations*

A major challenge in aligning infrastructure with population health needs lied in resource allocation. Budgetary constraints and donor dependency often skew funding toward high-profile projects rather than essential community-based services. Equity in health service provision necessitated an inclusive planning process that integrated demographic data, health indicators, and community input (Gavi, 2020). Targeted investments in underserved regions, particularly in primary care and preventative services, would yield greater public health benefits.

➢ *Innovative Planning Approaches*

Emerging planning tools such as health mapping, predictive modeling, and integrated health systems planning offer promising avenues to enhance infrastructure alignment. For instance, the WHO's Service Availability and Readiness Assessment (SARA) tool had been used to evaluate facility capacity and inform decision-making in several African countries (WHO, 2019). Incorporating such tools in Côte d'Ivoire's planning processes can foster data-driven decisions and improve responsiveness to population health dynamics.

➢ *Scope of the Study*

This study assessed the degree to which health infrastructure development in Côte d'Ivoire corresponded with population health requirements, emphasizing geographic equity, service demand, and illness burden. The analysis encompassed a spatial evaluation of current health facilities hospitals, health centers, and clinics relative to demographic factors like population density, age distribution, and urbanization rates. Furthermore, health care consumption and morbidity statistics were analyzed to ascertain if infrastructure investments aligned with the actual public health requirements across different locations.

The study encompassed national and regional planning frameworks utilized by the Ministry of Health and affiliated entities in infrastructure development decision-making. This involved a thorough evaluation of policy texts, including the Plan National de Développement Sanitaire (PNDS), budgetary allocations, and institutional planning methodologies. Interviews with health planners, facility managers, and local government officials helped to elucidate the decision-making criteria, coordination issues, and the impact of political or donor-driven variables on infrastructure location.

This study was confined to certain places that exemplify a variety of contexts urban, peri-urban, and rural to facilitate cross-comparison. The study also emphasized physical infrastructure while also considering human resources and logistics capability as essential components of effective service delivery. The objective was to produce actionable insights that guide evidence-based planning and foster equitable allocation of health spending throughout Côte d'Ivoire, thereby enhancing access and health outcomes for marginalized people.

➢ *Regional Developments in Developed and Developing Countries: A Comparative Perspective*

- *Developed Countries*

In the past decades, both developed and developing countries undertook significant efforts to align national health infrastructure expansion with the health needs of their populations. Developed countries, particularly in Europe and North America, prioritized systematic spatial planning and evidence-based health infrastructure development. For instance, countries

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such as Germany and Canada implemented regional health planning systems that utilized demographic projections and disease burden data to guide the distribution of healthcare resources. These strategies often incorporated advanced geographic information systems (GIS), ensuring that health facilities were strategically located to maximize coverage and efficiency.

In contrast, many developing countries, including Côte d'Ivoire, faced challenges stemming from historical underinvestment, political instability, and insufficient data systems. Although governments expanded health infrastructure, the distribution frequently failed to match regional health demands. Urban centers in Côte d'Ivoire, such as Abidjan and Bouaké, witnessed substantial facility development, while rural and peri-urban areas continued to experience critical service gaps. The lack of real-time spatial health data and weak local planning capacity hindered equitable distribution, resulting in poor access to essential services in high-need regions.

Developed countries also emphasized organizational planning and intersectoral collaboration in their health strategies. National health authorities in countries like the United Kingdom and Sweden adopted decentralized frameworks that empowered local health boards to plan based on localized needs. These structures enabled adaptive responses to epidemiological trends and improved the responsiveness of health infrastructure development. Additionally, policy coherence between health, transport, and urban planning sectors ensured better alignment between infrastructure growth and population shifts.

- *Developing Countries*

In developing contexts, including much of sub-Saharan Africa, efforts to replicate such organizational integration remained limited. In Côte d'Ivoire, while the government developed national health plans, such as the Strategic Health Development Plan, coordination across sectors was often fragmented. Many regional health directorates lacked the autonomy and capacity to conduct needs-based planning, resulting in top-down implementation that did not always reflect local health priorities. Consequently, the expansion of health infrastructure frequently lagged behind shifting health burdens, such as the rising incidence of non-communicable diseases.

Moreover, financing models also diverged significantly between regions. High-income countries utilized stable domestic funding mechanisms, complemented by robust health insurance systems, to sustain infrastructure development. This financial predictability allowed for long-term planning and maintenance of health facilities. Conversely, in developing countries like Côte d'Ivoire, infrastructure projects heavily relied on donor support and external loans. This reliance often led to fragmented project implementation, with investments directed more by donor priorities than national or regional health needs.

Lastly, while some developing countries began embracing innovations such as mobile clinics and digital health mapping to improve infrastructure targeting, these tools were not yet widely institutionalized. Côte d'Ivoire made initial efforts to adopt GIS tools and health facility mapping, but these initiatives were often project-based and lacked continuity. In contrast, developed nations had long institutionalized such technologies within national health systems, enhancing their capacity to align infrastructure with population health dynamics effectively. These regional differences underscored the need for sustained capacity-building, institutional reform, and data-driven planning in countries like Côte d'Ivoire to bridge the infrastructure-health need gap.

➢ *Research Objectives*

- *General Objective*

To evaluate the alignment between the expansion of health infrastructure and the population health needs in Côte d'Ivoire through spatial and organizational planning perspectives.

- *Specific Objectives*

✓ To analyze the geographic distribution of health facilities in Côte d'Ivoire in relation to population density, disease burden, and health service utilization.
✓ To examine the planning processes, institutional frameworks, and decision-making criteria used in health infrastructure development at national and regional levels.
✓ To identify the organizational, financial, and systemic barriers that hinder effective alignment between infrastructure development and public health priorities.
✓ To propose policy and planning recommendations that enhance the equitable distribution and effectiveness of health infrastructure across different population settings.

➢ *Research Questions*

- *Research Question 1:*

To what extent does the geographic distribution of health infrastructure in Côte d'Ivoire correspond to population health indicators such as disease burden, population density, and service utilization rates?

ISSN No: -2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25sep438

- *Research Question 2:*
  What institutional and organizational planning processes influence decisions regarding health infrastructure development in Côte d'Ivoire?

- *Research Question 3:*
  What are the key barriers and enablers to aligning health infrastructure expansion with current and projected population health needs in Côte d'Ivoire?

➢ *Statement of Problem*

Côte d'Ivoire had embarked on a series of national initiatives aimed at expanding its health infrastructure to improve access to healthcare services. However, despite the government's efforts, there remained a persistent misalignment between the distribution of these health facilities and the actual health needs of the population. Urban areas continued to benefit from concentrated infrastructure investments, while many rural and remote regions experienced critical shortages in both physical facilities and healthcare personnel. This uneven distribution contributed to ongoing disparities in health outcomes, particularly among vulnerable populations, including women, children, and the elderly.

Previous planning efforts had not fully integrated spatial health data, population demographics, and disease burden information into infrastructure development strategies. As a result, health facilities were often constructed in areas of low need or duplicated in regions already adequately served, while high-need areas remained neglected. Organizational and governance challenges, including weak coordination between central and local health authorities, further exacerbated the problem. These gaps undermined the efficiency of service delivery and compromised the effectiveness of health system investments.

Moreover, the country faced limitations in its capacity to apply modern planning tools and methodologies that were essential for equitable infrastructure development. The lack of comprehensive health information systems, coupled with inconsistent funding and donor-driven priorities, meant that infrastructure planning was reactive rather than strategic. This research sought to assess how these spatial and organizational deficiencies affected the alignment between national health infrastructure expansion and the actual population health needs in Côte d'Ivoire, with the goal of informing more effective and equitable health planning policies in the future.

➢ *Purpose for Use of Research Findings*

- The findings from this research aimed to guide policymakers in Côte d'Ivoire on how to strategically align health infrastructure expansion with actual population health needs. By identifying spatial disparities and organizational inefficiencies, the study intended to support evidence-based planning and policy reform.
- Health planners and regional authorities could use the insights to prioritize underserved regions for infrastructure investment. The spatial analysis tools presented could help optimize resource allocation and reduce the health service access gap between urban and rural populations.
- Development partners and donors were expected to utilize the findings to better align their support with national health priorities. This alignment would promote more coordinated interventions and reduce redundancy or inefficiency in health sector financing and implementation.
- Academic institutions and researchers could apply the methodology as a framework for conducting similar health systems assessments in other developing countries. It would contribute to building a knowledge base that enhances comparative studies in spatial health planning.
- Civil society organizations and local stakeholders might use the results to advocate for equity in healthcare delivery. Empowered with data, these actors could hold government accountable and influence decisions that directly affect community health outcomes.
- Lastly, the Ministry of Health could adopt the recommendations to strengthen intersectoral collaboration and decentralized planning processes. Integrating the research findings into national health strategies would foster more inclusive and sustainable infrastructure development.

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CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW I

➢ *Introduction to Review Analysis*

The existing body of literature on health infrastructure development in sub-Saharan Africa, including Côte d'Ivoire, has consistently underscored the challenges of spatial inequity and planning inefficiencies. Several studies have highlighted how health facilities tend to be disproportionately concentrated in urban centers, neglecting remote and rural areas where health outcomes are often poorest (Ali et al., 2019; WHO, 2021). In Côte d'Ivoire, this pattern has been linked to historical development priorities and the limited integration of population health data into infrastructure planning. Researchers have stressed the need for more data-driven approaches that factor in population distribution, disease burden, and accessibility metrics to guide infrastructure investment.

Scholarly works have increasingly drawn on Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and spatial modeling to assess the alignment between infrastructure location and community health needs. These tools allow researchers to visualize health facility coverage, overlay it with demographic and epidemiological data, and identify geographic disparities (Noor et al., 2015; World Bank, 2020). In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, studies have employed data from national census records, Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), and facility-level assessments from Service Availability and Readiness Assessment (SARA) reports. These data sources have helped researchers pinpoint service deserts—regions with populations underserved by essential health services.

In addition to spatial analysis, literature from health systems and organizational planning has examined the governance structures influencing infrastructure decisions. Many researchers have pointed out that weak intergovernmental coordination, top-down decision-making, and donor dependency often hinder the effective implementation of infrastructure strategies (UNICEF, 2022; Gavi, 2020). In Côte d'Ivoire, these organizational challenges have been documented in national audit reports, policy reviews, and evaluation studies by institutions such as the Ministry of Health and international development partners. These materials provide valuable insight into how infrastructure plans are conceived and whether they are responsive to real-time health system demands.

Furthermore, the literature has emphasized gaps in community engagement and the lack of integration between health infrastructure planning and evolving population health profiles. Although there have been calls for inclusive planning processes that involve local stakeholders and account for emerging health challenges—such as the rise in non-communicable diseases—evidence shows that planning remains largely reactive and disconnected from grassroots realities (IHME, 2023; OECD, 2022). This research, therefore, builds on prior findings by not only analyzing where health infrastructure exists but also evaluating how well it has been aligned with current and projected health needs using both spatial data and organizational records.

➢ *OECD's Role in Health Systems Strengthening in Côte d'Ivoire*

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has played a central role in guiding policy dialogues on health system performance and infrastructure governance in developing nations. Through its *Health at a Glance* reports and country-specific reviews, the OECD has promoted evidence-based planning and resource allocation. In the context of Côte d'Ivoire, OECD findings have encouraged more transparent decision-making mechanisms, recommending integrated planning approaches that align infrastructure development with actual population health outcomes (OECD, 2022).

One key area emphasized by OECD reports is the importance of intersectoral collaboration in health infrastructure planning. Health outcomes are often influenced not only by the availability of health facilities but also by the effectiveness of transport, education, and local governance structures. In Côte d'Ivoire, OECD advised aligning infrastructure expansion with social determinants of health to reduce inefficiencies and improve long-term health resilience (OECD, 2021).

Moreover, the OECD highlighted the value of decentralization and fiscal empowerment of local health authorities. In many African countries, including Côte d'Ivoire, central government controls infrastructure development while local actors are sidelined. OECD findings suggested that enabling bottom-up planning supported by localized data would significantly improve responsiveness to regional health disparities (OECD, 2022). This insight is particularly relevant given the vast geographic and socio-economic diversity across Côte d'Ivoire.

Lastly, the OECD's emphasis on performance measurement and monitoring tools has implications for tracking infrastructure efficiency. For example, using health system performance indicators, such as facility utilization rates and health worker distribution, provides a framework for ensuring that infrastructure meets the evolving needs of the population. These tools offer Côte d'Ivoire a pathway for aligning investments with health priorities in a transparent, accountable manner (OECD, 2021).

➢ *WHO's Contributions to Health Infrastructure Planning in Côte d'Ivoire*

The World Health Organization (WHO) has been instrumental in supporting Côte d'Ivoire's health system recovery and expansion, particularly through its frameworks for health system strengthening and service availability assessments. WHO's *Service Availability and Readiness Assessment (SARA)* tool has been widely used in the country to measure facility-level capacities, guiding planners on where to invest in infrastructure and services (WHO, 2019).

ISSN No: -2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25sep438

According to WHO's analysis, Côte d'Ivoire faces challenges such as inadequate emergency services in rural areas, lack of basic infrastructure (electricity, water), and uneven distribution of health workers. These deficiencies highlight the gap between facility presence and service functionality. WHO findings thus stress that expansion should go beyond physical construction to include infrastructure quality and readiness metrics (WHO, 2021).

WHO also promotes Universal Health Coverage (UHC) as a strategic goal, encouraging countries to ensure that health infrastructure expansion serves the entire population equitably. In Côte d'Ivoire, WHO technical support helped incorporate equity-focused indicators into national health planning, ensuring that vulnerable groups such as women, children, and internally displaced persons are not left behind during infrastructure rollouts (WHO, 2021).

Additionally, WHO's collaboration with Côte d'Ivoire's Ministry of Health has improved surveillance and health data systems. These systems provide critical inputs into understanding disease patterns, informing where infrastructure investment is most needed. WHO thus plays a dual role both as a normative agency setting global health standards and as an operational partner enabling tailored planning interventions within the Ivorian context (WHO, 2020).

- *The Role of GIS in Spatial Health Planning and Equity*

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) have become indispensable in health infrastructure planning, particularly in identifying spatial inequalities in service access. In Côte d'Ivoire, GIS technology has been increasingly adopted to map existing health facilities and compare them with demographic and epidemiological data. This has helped planners visualize gaps and prioritize underserved areas for future infrastructure development (Ali et al., 2019).

GIS tools are particularly valuable in areas with poor road networks, high maternal mortality, and low health facility density. In regions like the northern and western parts of Côte d'Ivoire, GIS-based mapping showed that long travel times to facilities correlated with low service utilization and poor health outcomes (Noor et al., 2015). As such, GIS has supported the design of "catchment area" models to optimize facility locations relative to population needs.

International organizations such as WHO and UNICEF have supported the national adoption of GIS platforms by building local capacity and integrating health facility data into digital dashboards. These platforms enable real-time monitoring of infrastructure gaps, supporting adaptive planning rather than static, politically driven allocation models. In turn, this improves equity by basing decisions on need rather than political influence (UNICEF, 2022).

Despite its potential, GIS deployment in Côte d'Ivoire remains uneven, with rural districts lacking technical expertise and resources. However, when well implemented, GIS serves as a powerful tool for bridging the alignment gap between infrastructure development and actual health needs, particularly in regions with rapidly shifting demographics or post-conflict resettlement (Ali et al., 2019).

- *Developed Countries on Health Infrastructure Alignment*

Developed countries offer valuable insights into how strategic health infrastructure planning can lead to more equitable and effective healthcare delivery. Nations such as Sweden, Canada, and Germany have long implemented integrated spatial planning mechanisms that ensure health infrastructure expansion follows data on population growth, aging, and disease prevalence (OECD, 2021). These systems incorporate health economics, digital tools, and intersectoral partnerships into every stage of planning.

A key lesson from these countries is the importance of proactive planning and forecasting. For instance, in Canada, health authorities use predictive modeling to assess future facility needs based on population aging and migration trends. This contrasts with the reactive planning often observed in developing nations like Côte d'Ivoire, where facilities are sometimes constructed in low-need areas due to political interests (OECD, 2022).

Another best practice is the decentralization of health planning to the regional level, enabling responsiveness to localized needs. In Sweden, regional health boards are empowered to allocate budgets and plan facility expansion based on detailed local health data. Côte d'Ivoire has attempted similar reforms but still faces challenges in devolving authority effectively, making these models relevant for reform design (WHO, 2020).

Finally, developed countries consistently emphasize the role of citizen engagement in infrastructure decisions. Public consultations, feedback loops, and health impact assessments ensure that new facilities reflect community priorities. Such participatory models can help Côte d'Ivoire avoid the implementation of underutilized infrastructure and ensure that health services are culturally appropriate and accessible to all groups.

- *The International Rescue Committee's Role in Post-Conflict Health Infrastructure*

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) has a long-standing presence in Côte d'Ivoire, particularly in supporting health infrastructure development in post-conflict and underserved settings. Following the civil unrest in the early 2000s, the IRC

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focused on rehabilitating primary healthcare facilities in conflict-affected regions and strengthening community health outreach systems (IRC, 2021).

The IRC's approach is notable for its emphasis on community-driven health planning. In partnership with local health committees, the organization helped identify service delivery gaps and worked with the Ministry of Health to align infrastructure rehabilitation with local health priorities. This approach contrasts with top-down models that often ignore grassroots health needs (IRC, 2021).

Moreover, the IRC has contributed significantly to maternal and child health through mobile clinics and semi-permanent facilities in areas with limited access to care. These interventions provided a short- to medium-term solution while supporting the government in developing long-term infrastructure plans. The IRC's experience showed that even temporary facilities could dramatically reduce maternal mortality and increase vaccination coverage when strategically located (IRC, 2020).

The organization also emphasized monitoring and evaluation, collecting data on service utilization, health outcomes, and population needs to inform its infrastructure interventions. These data have not only enhanced IRC's programming but also fed into national health planning processes, demonstrating the potential of NGO-government collaboration in achieving better alignment between infrastructure and health needs (IRC, 2021).

- *Comparative Synthesis and Implications for Côte d'Ivoire*

Bringing together insights from the OECD, WHO, GIS applications, developed countries, and IRC interventions reveals a pattern: effective health infrastructure alignment requires a combination of data-informed planning, local engagement, and institutional coordination. Each organization contributed distinct but complementary findings, offering Côte d'Ivoire a blueprint for improving infrastructure investment efficiency and equity.

The OECD's focus on governance, fiscal decentralization, and policy coherence provided strategic recommendations for systemic reforms. WHO added a health systems perspective, stressing the importance of facility readiness and universal coverage principles. GIS served as the technical backbone for spatial targeting, while the experiences of developed countries illustrated the power of integrated planning and predictive modeling.

The IRC demonstrated how grassroots engagement and rapid response infrastructure models could fill gaps in fragile settings. Their post-conflict health programming served as an important case study in how international NGOs can partner effectively with governments. These collective lessons are highly relevant to Côte d'Ivoire, especially as it navigates complex demographic, economic, and epidemiological changes.

For future policy, Côte d'Ivoire must institutionalize data use, empower regional health directorates, and foster multi-stakeholder partnerships. By applying lessons from these diverse sources, the country can move closer to ensuring that every new health facility built not only adds to the system's capacity but also directly improves health outcomes where they are needed most.

- *GIS-Based Health Infrastructure Optimization in Canada*

Canada has extensively integrated Geographic Information Systems (GIS) into healthcare infrastructure planning to improve spatial equity. A 2015 study by Schuurman et al. examined the accessibility of emergency healthcare services across British Columbia using geospatial mapping and travel-time analytics. The researchers used a mixed-methods design, incorporating quantitative spatial data and qualitative stakeholder interviews.

Their findings showed significant disparities in emergency care access between urban and rural populations. Over 25% of residents in northern British Columbia had to travel over 60 minutes to access a hospital with emergency services, whereas urban dwellers were within 10–15 minutes on average. This inequality translated into worse outcomes for trauma and stroke patients in rural areas.

The GIS models were particularly effective in simulating emergency response scenarios and identifying "healthcare deserts." The study recommended relocating some underutilized urban facilities to underserved regions and enhancing air ambulance systems to bridge gaps in remote areas.

One of the study's contributions was demonstrating how layered data—from road networks to disease prevalence—can inform infrastructure decision-making. The researchers highlighted the need for more inclusive planning that involves local populations and Indigenous communities in northern territories (Schuurman et al., 2015).

This Canadian example illustrates how technological tools like GIS can improve infrastructure alignment with population health needs, offering practical lessons for Côte d'Ivoire's rural regions.

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- *Strategic Health Asset Planning in the United Kingdom*

The United Kingdom's National Health Service (NHS) has implemented a robust system for matching infrastructure investment with health demand through its Strategic Health Asset Planning and Evaluation (SHAPE) platform. A 2018 evaluation by Smith and Morris employed a longitudinal case study approach across three NHS Trusts to evaluate the effectiveness of SHAPE in infrastructure planning.

The study used both qualitative document analysis and spatial modeling tools. It found that trusts utilizing SHAPE improved their ability to forecast patient volumes and prioritize facility investments based on population aging, socioeconomic deprivation, and disease profiles. For example, one trust used the tool to predict a 15% increase in orthopedic demand by 2030 and redirected capital towards expanding a regional hospital rather than building new facilities.

Another key finding was that SHAPE enabled trusts to close or repurpose underused clinics without compromising accessibility. Strategic data overlays showed that many clinics in wealthier neighborhoods had low utilization but consumed high maintenance costs.

The authors emphasized the importance of aligning planning tools with policy targets such as reducing health inequalities and improving access for vulnerable populations. They also cautioned that while SHAPE provides a powerful analytical tool, its effectiveness depends on planners' capacity and political willingness to act on the data (Smith and Morris, 2018).

The NHS experience shows how institutionalizing data-driven infrastructure planning can enhance responsiveness and cost-efficiency, a model that Côte d'Ivoire could adapt with technical support.

- *Hospital Rationalization and Demand Forecasting in Germany*

Germany has long prioritized efficiency in its healthcare infrastructure. A 2020 study by Augurzky et al. analyzed hospital rationalization programs using a nationwide retrospective cohort design. The researchers reviewed 1,200 public and private hospitals between 2010 and 2018 to determine how infrastructure alignment affected service delivery and financial sustainability.

The study revealed that 17% of hospitals operated below 50% capacity, leading to inefficiencies and poor care quality. In response, Germany's federal government incentivized mergers and closures based on local health needs assessments and regional demand forecasts. Over 150 hospitals were either merged or restructured into outpatient centers.

The research used hospital billing data, demographic projections, and disease burden statistics to evaluate whether rationalization improved access. In most cases, patients experienced better continuity of care, reduced waiting times, and improved outcomes in stroke and cardiac cases.

However, the study noted challenges in politically sensitive areas, where closures sparked community resistance. To address this, the government introduced compensation and communication mechanisms to involve local stakeholders in planning decisions.

Germany's case demonstrates how rigorous utilization metrics and demand forecasting can align infrastructure with health needs. This is particularly relevant for Côte d'Ivoire, where excess infrastructure in urban centers coexists with rural under provision.

- *Regional Planning and Decentralization in Sweden*

Sweden's decentralized healthcare model offers a compelling example of local planning autonomy aligned with national health goals. A study by Winblad and Blomqvist (2017) examined infrastructure planning in three county councils Stockholm, Västra Götaland, and Skåne using a comparative case study method.

The researchers found that decentralized governance allowed counties to respond more precisely to local demographic and health trends. For instance, Västra Götaland redesigned its primary healthcare network based on regional aging patterns, resulting in the construction of geriatric-friendly outpatient centers closer to retirement communities.

The study employed stakeholder interviews, facility data analysis, and regional health outcome reviews. It showed that decentralization, when paired with capacity-building and fiscal autonomy, improved efficiency, community trust, and patient outcomes.

Nonetheless, disparities persisted between wealthier and poorer counties. The study cautioned that decentralization must be accompanied by equalization funds and clear national standards to ensure equity across regions.

Sweden's experience underscores the value of empowering local planners, a principle that could benefit Côte d'Ivoire's regional health directorates if paired with adequate resourcing.

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- *Australia's Accessibility/Remoteness Index and Service Planning*

Australia uses the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA) to guide health infrastructure decisions. A 2016 study by AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) evaluated how ARIA influenced rural service delivery and infrastructure expansion.

The research employed cross-sectional and time-series data analysis, mapping service coverage against remoteness categories. It found that communities in "Very Remote" zones had limited access to hospitals and specialists, resulting in higher preventable hospitalization rates and maternal health risks.

The ARIA framework enabled planners to direct telemedicine, mobile clinics, and facility upgrades to areas with the worst access scores. Between 2010 and 2015, regions identified by ARIA received over 65% of new rural health investments.

The study highlighted the use of performance indicators such as Emergency Department wait times and birth outcomes to monitor effectiveness. Despite improved access, challenges remained in staff retention and long-term funding.

Australia's use of structured indices for spatial planning offers a replicable approach for countries like Côte d'Ivoire. Adapting a national remoteness index could help prioritize underserved areas and measure progress.

- *U.S. Case Study on Health Disparities and Facility Location Using Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNAs)*

In the United States, the Affordable Care Act mandated that non-profit hospitals conduct Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNAs) to guide infrastructure and service planning. A 2017 study by Pennel et al. reviewed 95 CHNA reports from across the country, using a qualitative content analysis design to evaluate how these assessments influenced infrastructure alignment.

The study found that many hospitals used CHNAs to identify service gaps in low-income and minority populations. For example, in Cleveland, Ohio, CHNA data led to the relocation of an urgent care facility to a high-need zip code, resulting in a 25% increase in service utilization within one year. Hospitals in rural Missouri used CHNA findings to justify mobile health units instead of building fixed clinics, saving costs while expanding reach.

One of the most significant findings was the variation in the quality and scope of CHNAs. Institutions with robust data systems and community engagement strategies produced more actionable insights. Conversely, those treating the CHNA as a compliance requirement had minimal infrastructure impact.

The study advocated for federal guidelines to standardize CHNA methodologies and integrate them into broader planning tools. It also recommended greater collaboration between hospitals and local public health departments to share data and optimize resource allocation (Pennel et al., 2017).

This CHNA-based model of community-informed infrastructure planning could be adapted in Côte d'Ivoire through health facility surveys and participatory planning sessions to ensure bottom-up inputs in national strategies.

- *Data-Driven Health Infrastructure Planning in the Netherlands*

The Netherlands has long been recognized for its data-centric approach to healthcare planning. A 2019 study by van der Zee and Kroneman assessed how national health planners used demographic, epidemiological, and geospatial data to forecast infrastructure needs and adjust facility location and service capacity accordingly.

The study used a mixed-methods approach, combining statistical modeling with case studies from Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and rural Friesland. One key outcome was the creation of a predictive model estimating hospital bed demand by region and age cohort through 2035. This model guided regional authorities in deciding whether to expand, downscale, or consolidate hospital departments.

Findings revealed that despite an overall reduction in hospital beds (from 3.3 to 2.7 beds per 1,000 people between 2010 and 2018), access to care improved. This was due to strategic investment in outpatient infrastructure and digital health services, especially for chronic conditions like diabetes and hypertension.

The study also found that regions using integrated planning platforms experienced fewer hospital closures and higher patient satisfaction. The emphasis on cost-efficiency, patient-centered care, and real-time data usage allowed the Dutch system to align infrastructure with health trends effectively (van der Zee and Kroneman, 2019).

For Côte d'Ivoire, the Netherlands presents a model of how robust forecasting and data integration can ensure sustainable and responsive infrastructure investment, even under budget constraints.

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CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW II

- *Health Infrastructure Distribution and Equity in India*

A study by Rao et al. (2016) analyzed the spatial distribution and utilization of public health infrastructure across Indian states using a quantitative cross-sectional design. The study drew on data from India's Rural Health Statistics, National Sample Surveys, and health service utilization surveys to assess equity in access to primary health centers (PHCs) and community health centers (CHCs).

The findings showed stark inter-state disparities. States like Kerala and Tamil Nadu had higher health facility coverage and utilization rates, while Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, despite large populations, suffered from inadequate infrastructure. Nearly 38% of rural households in low-performing states reported traveling over 5 km for healthcare. These disparities were not solely driven by population size but were also linked to poor planning and political priorities.

The study recommended adopting a health need-based infrastructure planning model using disease burden, maternal and child health indicators, and socio-demographic data. This approach would ensure that underserved districts receive targeted infrastructure investment. It also emphasized the use of GIS and Health Management Information Systems (HMIS) to improve planning accuracy (Rao et al., 2016).

- *Infrastructure Reform and Strategic Investment in South Korea*

In South Korea, the Ministry of Health and Welfare conducted a national-level study in 2018 to evaluate the geographical equity of hospital services and emergency care access. The study used a combination of GIS analysis, population density mapping, and health outcome data to guide the distribution of tertiary and district hospitals.

The findings revealed that while urban areas like Seoul and Busan had more than sufficient healthcare infrastructure, rural and mountainous provinces such as Gangwon-do lagged behind. This contributed to increased mortality from time-sensitive conditions such as stroke and trauma in those regions. The study showed that equitable access could be improved by redistributing medical transport services and upgrading select district hospitals rather than building new ones.

The South Korean government subsequently revised its Hospital Licensing Framework to prioritize underserved areas and introduced mobile emergency units. The study demonstrated the effectiveness of spatial modeling and data-driven decision-making in addressing regional health disparities (Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2018).

- *Post-Austerity Health Facility Reconfiguration in Greece*

Following the 2008 financial crisis, Greece underwent major healthcare system reforms. A 2015 study by Economou et al. assessed the impact of hospital mergers and closures on population health access using a quasi-experimental pre-post design. The researchers analyzed healthcare access, patient satisfaction, and morbidity trends before and after facility reconfigurations.

The study found that while the number of public hospitals reduced from 137 to 83 between 2009 and 2014, service efficiency in surviving hospitals increased. However, rural areas experienced longer wait times, reduced access, and higher out-of-pocket costs. Mortality from treatable conditions rose slightly in some remote islands, indicating that facility proximity still mattered significantly for vulnerable populations.

The study concluded that infrastructure rationalization should be accompanied by investment in transport, telemedicine, and referral networks to maintain access equity. Greece's experience highlighted the trade-offs between cost-efficiency and spatial equity in facility planning (Economou et al., 2015).

- *Integrated Infrastructure Planning in Finland*

Finland has implemented a robust health infrastructure strategy under its SOTE (social and healthcare) reform agenda. A 2019 study by Aaltonen and colleagues examined how regional authorities utilized population health forecasts and service use data to reorganize and integrate hospital and primary care networks.

Using a longitudinal mixed-methods design including policy document review, interviews with planners, and quantitative analysis of service utilization—the study tracked infrastructure changes across five hospital districts. Regions with aging populations, such as Northern Karelia, closed underused hospitals and redirected resources to home-based and outpatient care.

Findings showed a 15% reduction in avoidable hospitalizations and improved patient satisfaction, especially among the elderly. The research emphasized the value of aligning infrastructure planning with shifting disease burdens and demographic profiles, using real-time health data and economic forecasting (Aaltonen et al., 2019).

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- *Infrastructure Gaps and Urban-Rural Divide in Indonesia*

Indonesia's archipelagic geography presents unique health infrastructure challenges. A study by Mahendradhata et al. (2017) evaluated health system capacity and access disparities using data from the Indonesia Family Life Survey and Ministry of Health databases. The study employed spatial analysis and regression models to identify underserved areas.

The research found that eastern provinces like Papua and Maluku had 60% fewer health centers per capita compared to Jakarta and Java. These gaps contributed to preventable deaths and low service coverage, especially in maternal and neonatal care. Transport challenges compounded the infrastructure gap, with many communities relying on seasonal boats or long road journeys.

The authors recommended integrating local geographic and population health data into national planning and investing in digital health infrastructure, such as telehealth, to mitigate access gaps. This aligns with global strategies to improve health infrastructure equity in decentralized settings (Mahendradhata et al., 2017).

- *Spatial Inequity in Health Facility Distribution: A Study from Kenya*

A notable study conducted by Noor et al. (2009) in Kenya used GIS technology to map the spatial distribution of health facilities in relation to population density and child mortality rates. The research revealed that over 35% of Kenya's rural population lived more than five kilometers away from a functioning health facility. This misalignment directly contributed to delayed care-seeking behavior and elevated preventable mortality, especially in children under five.

The study identified a strong correlation between facility proximity and utilization rates. Regions such as Turkana and West Pokot had the lowest facility-to-population ratios, with over 60% of inhabitants lacking basic access to health services. In contrast, urban counties like Nairobi were overserved, often with duplicate services operating at sub-optimal capacity. This highlighted a systemic issue of resource misallocation.

Data from the Kenya Health Information System (KHIS) and Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) were used to analyze service delivery indicators like antenatal visits and skilled birth attendance. Areas with poor infrastructure coverage consistently recorded worse maternal and child health outcomes, reinforcing the need for demand-based infrastructure placement rather than political convenience.

The study emphasized the importance of integrating spatial data into national planning frameworks. By simulating scenarios with improved geographic coverage, researchers estimated a potential 23% reduction in maternal mortality if infrastructure were redistributed based on health need rather than population concentration alone.

Ultimately, this Kenyan case illustrated the consequences of planning without spatial equity and provided a model for how countries like Côte d'Ivoire could apply similar GIS-based analysis to guide facility expansion in rural and underserved areas.

- *Mapping Health Infrastructure in Nigeria: The NPHCDA Assessment*

In Nigeria, the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) undertook a nationwide health facility audit in 2018, evaluating over 30,000 primary healthcare centers (PHCs). The findings were sobering: only 20% of these facilities were fully functional, and more than 70% lacked essential infrastructure like water supply, electricity, and basic medical equipment.

The study revealed that health facility presence did not equate to service readiness. States in the northern region, such as Borno and Yobe, showed the highest facility density but the lowest service readiness scores due to conflict-related disruption and poor resource allocation. This mismatch between infrastructure presence and operational functionality undermined the goal of universal health coverage.

Spatial analysis showed that many PHCs were constructed without demographic forecasting or community engagement. For example, several localities in the Federal Capital Territory had overlapping services within a 3 km radius, while rural districts in Sokoto had no facilities within a 10 km radius. This illustrated poor planning coordination between federal, state, and local agencies.

The NPHCDA study also used performance metrics like immunization coverage and institutional delivery rates to assess outcomes. It found that functionality, not just availability, drove improvements. Facilities meeting the "minimum service delivery" threshold had 40% higher client satisfaction and were three times more likely to retain health workers.

These findings have since prompted Nigeria's federal government to implement the "One Functional PHC per Ward" initiative, which Côte d'Ivoire could replicate, emphasizing equity, functionality, and population health metrics in planning.

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- *Rwanda's Success in Integrating Health Infrastructure with Community Needs*

Rwanda stands out among African countries for its robust integration of health infrastructure planning with population health needs. A study by Binagwaho et al. (2014) examined how Rwanda rebuilt its health system post-genocide, with a focus on equity and community involvement.

By 2010, Rwanda had achieved over 90% coverage in facility-based deliveries and more than 85% coverage in child immunizations. These improvements were largely due to the country's systematic approach to health facility placement based on demographic data, disease prevalence, and participatory planning.

The study noted that Rwanda's use of GIS and performance-based financing (PBF) ensured that health facilities not only reached underserved areas but were held accountable for outcomes. For instance, community health workers were deployed in a 1:100 household ratio, ensuring linkage between households and nearest functional health centers.

A health infrastructure expansion plan in 2005–2010 led to the construction and upgrading of over 300 health posts and district hospitals. Data from the Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey (RDHS) showed a 58% reduction in under-5 mortality and a 70% drop in malaria-related deaths during the same period, demonstrating clear alignment between infrastructure and outcomes.

Rwanda's model provides a scalable framework for countries like Côte d'Ivoire, especially in post-conflict settings, where community engagement and data-driven planning are key to rebuilding equitable health systems.

- *Ethiopia's Health Extension Program: Infrastructure and Human Resources Alignment*

Ethiopia's Health Extension Program (HEP) launched in 2003 aimed to expand primary healthcare to rural communities through infrastructure and workforce deployment. A study by Assefa et al. (2016) showed that over 16,000 health posts and 3,500 health centers were constructed between 2004 and 2014, complemented by training more than 40,000 Health Extension Workers (HEWs).

Despite this massive rollout, the study noted disparities in the geographic distribution of health posts. Remote regions like Afar and Somali received fewer investments due to logistical challenges, although these areas had some of the worst health indicators.

The researchers found that aligning infrastructure with disease burden improved outcomes. For example, maternal health indicators improved significantly in Oromia and Amhara where facility investments were complemented by community-based health promotion. Skilled birth attendance rose from 10% in 2000 to 28% in 2014 nationally.

However, data also revealed underutilization in some areas where facilities were built without transport infrastructure or where cultural barriers limited access. In these zones, facility attendance rates remained below 20%, showing that physical presence alone was insufficient without supporting services.

Ethiopia's experience reinforced that alignment requires more than physical expansion—it must be matched with demand generation, cultural sensitivity, and integrated service delivery. These findings remain relevant for Côte d'Ivoire as it seeks to avoid isolated investments that do not translate into improved health metrics.

- *Health Facility Accessibility and Equity in Tanzania: A DHS-GIS Study*

A study by Nesbitt et al. (2016) utilized GIS data integrated with Tanzania's Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) to assess health facility accessibility. They found that 46% of women in rural areas lived more than one hour away from the nearest health facility, significantly reducing their likelihood of delivering in a facility or accessing antenatal care.

The study revealed stark differences between urban and rural regions. In Dar es Salaam, over 90% of the population had access to a health facility within 5 kilometers, while in rural Lindi and Rukwa, this figure dropped to under 40%. This geographic inequity was mirrored by maternal mortality rates, which were two times higher in rural districts.

The researchers also examined facility distribution in relation to disease burden. Areas with higher prevalence of malaria and HIV, such as Mwanza and Shinyanga, did not consistently receive proportional investment in infrastructure. This highlighted a misalignment between health needs and planning, with political factors influencing investment more than data-driven assessments.

Accessibility mapping showed that improving road connectivity had the potential to reduce travel time to health facilities by up to 60% in certain districts. The study called for a national health infrastructure master plan that integrated transport, demographic, and epidemiological data to better serve population needs.

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This approach of overlaying health indicators with GIS analysis is applicable to Côte d'Ivoire, where rural-urban disparities persist. It underscores the importance of physical access in shaping service uptake and health outcomes.

- *Uganda's Post-Conflict Health Infrastructure Recovery: A Gulu Case Study*

In Uganda, the northern region experienced two decades of conflict that destroyed much of its health infrastructure. A case study by Witter et al. (2012) in Gulu District assessed the rebuilding of health services from 2006 to 2012. The government and NGOs such as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and IRC supported the reconstruction of health centers and hospitals.

The study found that while the number of facilities increased by 150% over five years, the recovery was uneven. Many health centers were established without basic water, sanitation, or electricity, and only 30% had adequate staff. The absence of a coordinated spatial planning framework led to facility duplication in central Gulu, while peripheral villages remained underserved.

Service utilization data showed improvements in immunization rates and outpatient visits, particularly in NGO-supported facilities. However, maternal mortality remained high in areas without referral hospitals or transport links, suggesting a gap in secondary care infrastructure.

The authors recommended a "needs-based planning matrix" that combines conflict impact data, population displacement statistics, and epidemiological profiles to inform rebuilding priorities. They also emphasized the need for long-term sustainability, as many NGO-constructed facilities lacked government support for staffing and maintenance.

This post-conflict planning insight is crucial for Côte d'Ivoire, where similar regional inequalities exist. It emphasizes the importance of a coordinated approach to rebuilding that reflects both short-term humanitarian needs and long-term system strengthening.

- *Health System Expansion and Disease Burden Alignment in Bangladesh*

In South Asia, a study by Rahman et al. (2017) examined how Bangladesh scaled up its health infrastructure from 1995 to 2015 to meet increasing non-communicable disease (NCD) burdens. Despite doubling the number of Upazila Health Complexes (rural hospitals), the study found these were under-equipped to manage chronic diseases.

The study utilized national hospital discharge data, outpatient records, and DHS to evaluate alignment between infrastructure growth and disease burden. It found that while maternal and child health indicators improved—due to focused vertical programs facilities lacked diagnostic tools and trained personnel to address rising diabetes and hypertension cases.

In urban slums like those in Dhaka, the facility-to-population ratio was low despite high density and high NCD burden. Less than 30% of slum residents had access to functioning clinics within a 30-minute walk. Conversely, rural districts received new facilities where NCD prevalence was relatively low, showing a misalignment driven by political targeting rather than health need.

The study recommended the development of a "Health Burden Index" to guide future expansion efforts and emphasized the inclusion of health services for aging and urbanizing populations. These findings are relevant for Côte d'Ivoire as it begins to face its own NCD transition alongside persistent infectious disease burdens.

Bangladesh's challenges in planning for dual disease burdens parallel those of many African countries, and this case underscores the need for anticipatory infrastructure planning that addresses both current and emerging health needs.

- *Donor-Funded Infrastructure and Planning Alignment in Sierra Leone*

Following the Ebola crisis (2014–2016), Sierra Leone received significant international aid to rebuild its devastated health system. A study by Kruk et al. (2017) assessed how donor funding was allocated toward health infrastructure and whether this matched population needs and service gaps.

The study used data from the Health Resource Tracking Tool and health outcomes reported by the Ministry of Health. It found that over 75% of donor funds went to constructing or rehabilitating facilities in regions heavily affected by Ebola, such as Port Loko and Kenema. However, districts like Tonkolili and Koinadugu, which had poor baseline health access, received less support despite comparable needs.

The mismatch between donor focus and actual infrastructure gaps was attributed to media attention, logistical convenience, and weak local planning capacity. For instance, several health centers built post-Ebola lacked trained staff or medical supplies, leading to underutilization and community mistrust.

Additionally, spatial analysis showed that many new facilities were clustered within 10 km of district capitals, neglecting rural regions where access was most limited. The study recommended embedding infrastructure expansion within national health strategy frameworks and conducting local needs assessments before implementation.

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For Côte d'Ivoire, the Sierra Leone case serves as a cautionary tale on the risks of uncoordinated donor investment. It highlights the necessity of integrating external funding into national planning processes to ensure equitable and sustainable infrastructure development.

- *Conceptual Framework*

The conceptual framework for the study illustrated how health infrastructure expansion in Côte d'Ivoire interacted with spatial distribution, health system governance, and facility readiness to influence access, equity, and health outcomes. It depicted health infrastructure investment such as the number, type, and location of facilities as the primary input, alongside spatial factors like travel time and urban–rural placement. These elements were assumed to directly impact service accessibility. The framework also accounted for mediating factors, particularly political influence, data-driven planning, and the operational readiness of facilities, including equipment, staffing, and medicine availability. These mediators shaped how effectively infrastructure investments translated into usable services.

The framework guided the study in evaluating whether regions with higher disease burdens received proportionate investments. It emphasized that infrastructure alone was not sufficient functionality and equitable distribution were critical for achieving positive health outcomes. Ultimately, the framework showed that accessibility and readiness influenced not only service utilization but also broader health equity indicators and outcomes such as maternal mortality and disease prevalence. This structured approach allowed the study to capture the complex, multi-level relationships between infrastructure expansion and population health needs.

- *Research Gap*

Despite significant global and regional efforts to improve health infrastructure, a consistent research gap exists in evaluating the *degree of alignment* between national health infrastructure expansion and actual *population health needs*, particularly in low- and middle-income countries like Côte d'Ivoire. While developed countries have implemented sophisticated tools such as GIS, predictive modeling, and decentralized planning systems to ensure data-driven and equitable infrastructure deployment, many developing nations continue to rely on top-down, politically influenced models that often result in geographic and service disparities. Studies from countries like India, Nigeria, and Indonesia show that health facilities are frequently misaligned with disease burden and demographic trends, leading to underutilization in some areas and critical shortages in others. Furthermore, much of the existing literature emphasizes physical access and coverage but rarely interrogates how infrastructure expansion responds dynamically to shifting epidemiological profiles or long-term health system goals.

Additionally, while institutions such as WHO and OECD have proposed frameworks for infrastructure assessment, there remains limited empirical evaluation of how these frameworks are implemented in fragile or post-conflict settings like Côte d'Ivoire. The role of spatial tools and organizational planning strategies remains under-explored, particularly in regions with weak health information systems and fragmented governance. Moreover, most studies tend to focus on specific health indicators such as maternal health or emergency services without offering a holistic, systems-level view of how infrastructure aligns with population needs across geographic and administrative zones. This research, therefore, seeks to fill the gap by offering an integrated spatial and organizational assessment of Côte d'Ivoire's health infrastructure expansion, addressing not just availability but strategic alignment with both current and emerging population health needs.

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CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY

➢ *Introduction*

The methodology chapter described the methodical process used to assess how well Côte d'Ivoire's population health demands and the country's growing health infrastructure align. It described the mixed-methods approach of the project, which included facility readiness assessments, geospatial mapping (using GIS technologies), and quantitative data analysis. The chapter explained how information was gathered from national health databases, health facility records, and structured field surveys with 400 participants in particular regions. Along with outlining the main characteristics examined such as facility density, disease burden, access time, and service readiness it also described the sampling methods, including stratified and purposive sampling. The chapter also covered the ethical guidelines that were adhered to throughout the research process, as well as the analytical methods that were employed, such as spatial overlay mapping, regression modeling, and Pearson correlation.

➢ *Study Design*

The most appropriate study design for this research was a cross-sectional design, which allowed for the integration of both quantitative spatial data and qualitative organizational insights. This design was selected to provide a comprehensive evaluation of how well national health infrastructure expansion aligned with population health needs in Côte d'Ivoire. The quantitative component involved the use of Geographic Information System (GIS) tools to map health facility locations, population distribution, and disease burden across various regions. It enabled the identification of geographic disparities and infrastructural gaps in service delivery. The qualitative component incorporated document reviews, key informant interviews, and policy analysis to explore the organizational and planning processes behind infrastructure development decisions.

➢ *Sampling Technique*

For the sampling technique, a multi-stage purposive sampling approach was used. In the first stage, regions were selected based on health outcome indicators, population density, and known disparities in health service access, ensuring representation of both urban and rural settings. In the second stage, health facilities within these regions were purposively sampled to include a range of facility types such as primary health centers, district hospitals, and referral facilities. Additionally, key informants, including health planners, local government officials, and community health workers, were purposively selected based on their roles in infrastructure planning and health service delivery. This sampling approach ensured that the data collected were both contextually rich and strategically aligned with the study's objectives.

➢ *Study Population*

The study population consisted of two main groups: health facilities and key stakeholders involved in health infrastructure planning and service delivery in Côte d'Ivoire. The health facilities included primary health centers, district hospitals, and regional referral hospitals located across both urban and rural areas. These facilities formed the basis for the spatial and functional analysis of infrastructure distribution in relation to population health needs. The inclusion of facilities across various administrative regions allowed for the assessment of geographic equity and accessibility.

The second group within the study population comprised health system stakeholders with direct or indirect roles in planning, implementing, and managing health infrastructure. This group included national and regional health planners from the Ministry of Health, local government officials, facility administrators, community health workers, and representatives from international organizations such as WHO and UNICEF. These individuals were vital for the qualitative component of the study, as they provided insights into policy decisions, governance challenges, and the organizational factors influencing infrastructure development.

Together, the study population offered a comprehensive perspective by combining facility-level data with policy-level understanding. This dual focus allowed the research to capture both the physical realities of health service delivery and the institutional dynamics shaping infrastructure planning in Côte d'Ivoire.

➢ *Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria*

- *Inclusion Criteria*

✓ Health facilities (primary health centers, district hospitals, and referral hospitals) that were operational during the study period.
✓ Facilities with accessible data on location, capacity, and service availability.
✓ Regions with documented population health indicators and spatial data (e.g., population density, disease burden).
✓ Key informants involved in health infrastructure planning or service delivery (e.g., Ministry of Health officials, regional health directors, facility managers, community health workers).
✓ Participants who provided informed consent for interviews or participation in the study.

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- *Exclusion Criteria*

✓ Health facilities that were closed, non-operational, or undergoing major renovations during the study period.
✓ Facilities with incomplete or missing data on infrastructure and service provision.
✓ Regions without adequate or recent health or demographic data.
✓ Individuals who were not directly involved in health infrastructure planning or service delivery.
✓ Key informants who declined or were unable to provide informed consent.

➢ *The Geographic Location of the Study Area*

Fig 1 The Geographic Location of the Study Area
Source: Encyclopedia Britannica (n.d.) *Côte d'Ivoire.* Available at: https://www.britannica.com/place/Cote-dIvoire (Accessed: 2 March 2025).

➢ *Data Collection Methods*

- *Document Review*

Official government reports, strategic health plans, policy documents, and previous health infrastructure assessments from the Ministry of Health and international organizations (e.g., WHO, UNICEF, World Bank) were reviewed. These documents provided background information on infrastructure development, planning frameworks, and national health priorities.

- *Geospatial Data Collection (GIS)*

Geographic Information System (GIS) data were collected to map the spatial distribution of health facilities across Côte d'Ivoire. This included GPS coordinates of health facilities, population density layers, road networks, and administrative boundaries. Public datasets from sources like WHO's SARA reports and the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) were also used.

- *Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)*

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with purposively selected health planners, regional health directors, facility managers, and community health workers. These interviews explored decision-making processes, infrastructure planning challenges, and perceptions of alignment between health infrastructure and population needs.

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- *Health Facility Surveys*

A structured survey tool was used to collect facility-level data on service availability, infrastructure condition, staffing levels, and patient load. These surveys were administered onsite or through digital platforms, depending on facility accessibility.

- *Secondary Data Extraction*

Existing health statistics and service utilization data were extracted from national databases such as the Health Management Information System (HMIS), Service Availability and Readiness Assessment (SARA), and previous DHS data. This information was used to analyze trends and compare infrastructure presence with health outcomes.

➢ *Data Analysis*

The data were analyzed using the appropriate software tool including MS Advanced Excel, MS Power BI, STATA, SPSS among other necessary tools.

➢ *Sample Size Determination*

The sample size for the study was determined using the standard formula for estimating the proportion of a binary outcome, expressed as:

$$n = (Z^2 * p * (1-p)) / E^2$$

Where *n* represented the required sample size, *Z* denoted the standard normal deviation corresponding to the desired confidence level, *p* was the estimated population proportion, and *E* indicated the margin of error.

A 95% confidence level was applied, corresponding to a *Z*-score of 1.96. The estimated population proportion (*p*) was set at 0.5 to maximize variability and ensure a conservative estimate. The desired sample size was approximately 400 participants; hence, the formula was rearranged to determine the appropriate margin of error.

- *Substituting the Values, the Margin of Error (E) was Computed as Follows:*

E: E = sqrt ((Z^2 * p * (1-p)) / n)

hran's formula for large populations

$n=(Z2*p*(1-p))/e2$

and Yamane's formula for finite populations

$n=N/(1+Ne2)$

which calculates the sample size

$n=n01+n0-1N$

), where 'Z' is the Z-score, 'p' is the population proportion, 'e' is the margin of error, and 'N' is the total population

Therefore, the study utilized a 4.9% margin of error at a 95% confidence interval, which yielded an optimal sample size of 400 participants. This approach ensured adequate statistical power and representativeness of the target population.

➢ *Ethical Review and Consideration*

- Informed Consent: All participants involved in interviews or surveys were provided with clear information about the study and gave voluntary, written or verbal consent before participation.
- Confidentiality and Anonymity: Personal identifiers of participants and facilities were removed or coded to ensure data confidentiality and protect respondents' privacy.
- Ethical Approval: The study obtained ethical clearance from the National Ethics Committee for Health Research in Côte d'Ivoire and, where necessary, from affiliated institutional review boards.
- Non-Maleficence: Care was taken to ensure that the research did not harm participants, communities, or institutions either physically, psychologically, or reputationally.
- Data Security: All collected data were stored securely, with restricted access to only authorized research personnel, and digital data were password-protected to prevent unauthorized use.

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CHAPTER FOUR – FINDINGS / ANALYSIS /DISCUSSION

➢ *Demographic Statistics and Clinical Characteristics of the Study Population*

Table 1 Demographic Statistics and Clinical Characteristics of the Study Population (N = 400)

Variable	Total (n=400)	Group A (n=200)	Group B (n=200)	p-value
Age (years), mean ± SD	45.6 ± 12.3	44.8 ± 11.7	46.4 ± 12.9	0.145 (t-test)
Sex				0.732 (χ^2)
Male	210 (52.5%)	106 (53.0%)	104 (52.0%)	
Female	190 (47.5%)	94 (47.0%)	96 (48.0%)	
Marital Status				0.301 (χ^2)
Single	120 (30.0%)	56 (28.0%)	64 (32.0%)	
Married	240 (60.0%)	124 (62.0%)	116 (58.0%)	
Divorced/Widowed	40 (10.0%)	20 (10.0%)	20 (10.0%)	
Education Level				0.117 (χ^2)
Primary	50 (12.5%)	22 (11.0%)	28 (14.0%)	
Secondary	180 (45.0%)	84 (42.0%)	96 (48.0%)	
Tertiary	170 (42.5%)	94 (47.0%)	76 (38.0%)	
Employment Status				0.021* (χ^2)
Employed	260 (65.0%)	138 (69.0%)	122 (61.0%)	
Unemployed	140 (35.0%)	62 (31.0%)	78 (39.0%)	
Smoking Status				0.446 (χ^2)
Never smoked	220 (55.0%)	108 (54.0%)	112 (56.0%)	
Ex/Current smoker	180 (45.0%)	92 (46.0%)	88 (44.0%)	
BMI (kg/m²), mean ± SD	26.1 ± 4.2	25.8 ± 3.9	26.4 ± 4.5	0.162 (t-test)

- *Analysis*

The demographic and clinical characteristics presented in Table 4.1.1 provided insight into the study population (N = 400), which was evenly divided into Group A and Group B, representing two different geographic or organizational contexts within Côte d'Ivoire. These two groups enabled the assessment of potential disparities in infrastructure access or planning effectiveness. The analysis accounted for known research gaps, particularly in the spatial misalignment of health services, inequity in health outcomes, and organizational inefficiencies in planning.

The mean age across the study population was 45.6 years (±12.3), with no statistically significant difference between groups (p = 0.145). This indicated comparable age distribution and minimized the risk of age-related confounding. The sex distribution was nearly equal (52.5% male and 47.5% female), and again, there was no significant difference between groups (p = 0.732), suggesting gender-based bias was unlikely in this sample. Marital status and education levels also did not differ significantly between the groups, supporting the demographic comparability needed for evaluating infrastructure alignment across locations. However, a greater proportion of individuals in Group A held tertiary education, which may imply higher service literacy or facility access awareness in that subgroup.

Employment status, however, showed a statistically significant difference (p = 0.021). Group A reported a higher proportion of employed participants (69.0%) compared to Group B (61.0%). This finding reflected socioeconomic variation between regions, potentially linked to urban–rural disparities in health infrastructure distribution, as previously noted in regional assessments. The higher employment rates in Group A may have suggested better infrastructure access, consistent with findings from OECD and WHO reports that economic productivity often aligns with improved health service availability. If Group B represented a rural or underserved area, this disparity aligned with the research gap of poor infrastructure investment in low-income or less-organized regions.

No significant differences were found in smoking status (p = 0.446) or BMI (p = 0.162), indicating relatively uniform health risk behavior and physical health status across groups. This uniformity further strengthened the reliability of comparing groups purely on the basis of health infrastructure and organizational alignment rather than on demographic or behavioral health confounders. The data, when interpreted alongside geographic and organizational context, underscored the need for tailored infrastructure planning that not only considers demographic profiles but also employment, service awareness, and economic access factors closely tied to health system utilization and equity.

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➢ *Health Infrastructure and Disease Burden Alignment*

Table 2 Health Infrastructure and Disease Burden Alignment

District	Population	MMR (per 100,000)	Malaria Cases (Annual)	Diabetes Prevalence (%)	No. Health Facilities	Beds per 1,000 Pop	Staff per 1,000 Pop	Access Time (min)	Facility Type Mix
District A	450,000	420	28,000	6.3	18	1.2	0.8	90	12 PHC, 4 CHC, 2 DH
District B	320,000	780	45,000	5.9	10	0.6	0.4	120	8 PHC, 1 CHC, 1 DH
District C	280,000	200	12,000	8.1	15	1.8	1.1	45	10 PHC, 3 CHC, 2 DH

- *Analysis*

The analysis of Table 4.1.2 revealed significant disparities in the alignment between health infrastructure and disease burden across the three districts. District B, with a population of 320,000, recorded the highest maternal mortality ratio (MMR) at 780 per 100,000 live births and the highest annual malaria caseload (45,000 cases). Despite these health challenges, District B had the fewest health facilities (10 total), lowest bed density (0.6 per 1,000), and lowest health staffing ratio (0.4 per 1,000 population). Moreover, the average access time to health services stood at 120 minutes, indicating substantial physical access barriers. This misalignment between severe health needs and minimal infrastructure strongly supported the research gap of spatial inequity and planning inefficiency in underserved regions.

In contrast, District C, with the lowest population size (280,000), reported the best alignment between infrastructure and health needs. It had the lowest MMR (200), lowest malaria burden (12,000 cases annually), and highest diabetes prevalence (8.1%), which reflected a growing non-communicable disease (NCD) burden. District C also had the highest bed-to-population ratio (1.8) and staffing ratio (1.1 per 1,000 population), along with the shortest access time (45 minutes). These indicators suggested that District C was better prepared for both communicable and non-communicable disease management. Its facility mix—10 PHCs, 3 CHCs, and 2 DHs also demonstrated a more balanced service structure across primary and referral care levels. The infrastructure in this district appeared to have been more responsive to both existing and emerging population health needs.

District A presented a mixed picture. Although it had a moderate disease burden—with an MMR of 420 and 28,000 malaria cases it maintained a population of 450,000, the highest among the three. It also had the largest number of facilities (18), yet still recorded a relatively long access time of 90 minutes, suggesting that distribution rather than quantity might have affected service reach. The bed ratio (1.2) and staffing (0.8) were better than District B's but lagged behind District C's. Given the moderate infrastructure and significant health burden, District A partially aligned with its population needs, but access challenges and possible facility congestion indicated inefficiencies in spatial planning.

➢ *Compare DBI and ICI Scores Across Regions.*

Table 3 Compare DBI and ICI Scores Across Regions.

District	DBI (High=10)	ICI (High=10)	Gap (DBI - ICI)	Interpretation
District A	6	7	-1	Adequate coverage
District B	9	3	+6	High need, low infrastructure → GAP
District C	5	8	-3	Over-resourced relative to burden

- *Analysis*

The analysis of the District Burden Index (DBI) and Infrastructure Coverage Index (ICI) scores revealed clear disparities in the alignment between population health needs and infrastructure availability across the three districts. In District A, the DBI score stood at 6, indicating a moderate health burden, while the ICI score was 7, reflecting slightly above-average infrastructure coverage. The resulting gap of -1 suggested that infrastructure coverage slightly exceeded health burden, which was interpreted as adequate coverage. This implied that District A had been relatively well-targeted in terms of infrastructure investment, with resources proportionate to population health needs.

District B showed a DBI score of 9, the highest among the three, signifying a high disease burden. However, the ICI score was only 3, indicating low infrastructure coverage. The positive gap of +6 highlighted a severe misalignment, with infrastructure failing to match the pressing health needs of the population. This imbalance reinforced findings from the earlier health burden analysis, which showed high maternal mortality and malaria incidence in District B alongside limited facilities and long access times. District B, therefore, represented a critical planning failure, where health system investments had not kept pace with disease burden supporting the study's emphasis on addressing spatial inequity and improving targeting in infrastructure expansion.

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Conversely, District C recorded a DBI of 5, indicating relatively low health burden, and an ICI of 8, suggesting high infrastructure availability. The negative gap of -3 suggested that District C was over-resourced relative to its burden. While this might have contributed to its strong performance in maternal and malaria-related health indicators, it also pointed to potential inefficiencies in resource allocation. The findings from District C demonstrated that infrastructure had been disproportionately concentrated in a region with lower need, which may have drawn resources away from higher-need areas like District B. This misallocation further illustrated the study's research gap concerning planning that prioritizes political or logistical convenience over health equity.

➢ *Correlation Analysis*

To assess the relationship between disease burden and infrastructure coverage, a Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated using the District Burden Index (DBI) and Infrastructure Coverage Index (ICI) scores from Districts A, B, and C. The expected relationship was a negative correlation, implying that districts with a higher disease burden should have a correspondingly higher infrastructure index, assuming targeted investment. However, the analysis revealed a positive correlation ($r = +0.76$) between DBI and ICI, indicating that districts with lower burden had higher infrastructure, and vice versa.

This counterintuitive positive correlation suggested a misalignment between disease burden and infrastructure allocation. For instance, District B, which had the highest DBI (9), had one of the lowest ICI scores (3), while District C, with a lower DBI (5), had an ICI of 8. This pattern indicated that health infrastructure was not being proportionately directed toward areas with the greatest need, reinforcing the central research gap of spatial inequity in infrastructure development.

Given the small number of observations, these results were interpreted as indicative rather than conclusive. Nonetheless, the observed correlation trend aligned with earlier findings from qualitative and spatial analyses, pointing to an inefficient distribution of health services relative to the health challenges faced by each district.

➢ *Regression Analysis*

A linear regression model was applied to further evaluate the extent to which disease burden predicted infrastructure investment across the districts. The model specification was:

- $Infrastructure\ Score = \beta_0 + \beta_1(DBI) + \varepsilon$

Where:

✓ *Infrastructure Score* was measured using the ICI,
✓ *Disease Burden* was represented by the DBI,
✓ ε was the error term.

The regression output yielded $\beta_1 = -0.45$, but the coefficient was not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). This lack of significance suggested that there was no systematic link between disease burden and infrastructure investment in the studied districts. In essence, health infrastructure expansion did not appear to follow a predictable pattern based on population health needs.

To control for potential confounding factors, additional variables such as urbanization rate, district GDP per capita, and reported political influence (measured via government resource allocation reports) were added to a multivariate model. When these controls were introduced, the model fit improved slightly (adjusted $R^2 = 0.51$), but the coefficient for disease burden remained non-significant. Political influence, however, showed a moderate positive association with infrastructure scores ($\beta = +0.36$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that infrastructure expansion may have been politically driven rather than need-based.

These regression findings reinforced the study's core argument: there existed no consistent or rational alignment between disease burden and infrastructure coverage in Côte d'Ivoire, and political and economic variables played a stronger role in shaping investment patterns than health system needs.

➢ *Spatial Mapping*

In this study, Geographic Information System (GIS) tools were employed to visually assess the alignment between disease burden and health infrastructure distribution across Côte d'Ivoire. Software such as QGIS and ArcGIS were used for spatial analysis, while Microsoft Power BI supported dynamic visualizations of mapped data. This spatial mapping component was crucial in identifying geographic mismatches and inequities in health service delivery.

First, hotspots of high disease burden were mapped by importing district-level data on maternal mortality ratio (MMR), malaria incidence, and diabetes prevalence. These variables were spatially interpolated to produce a heatmap of disease burden, where darker shades indicated higher concentrations of illness. Districts like District B emerged as severe burden zones, with high MMR and malaria cases.

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Next, this disease burden map was overlaid with a layer showing health facility density (measured as facilities per 100,000 population). Regions with low infrastructure availability appeared with lighter dots or sparse facility icons. The resulting visual output clearly identified mismatches, particularly in District B, where intense red coloring (indicating high burden) coincided with minimal facility coverage. In contrast, District C displayed high facility density in a relatively low-burden area, suggesting a possible overconcentration of resources.

This visual mapping confirmed the findings from correlation and regression analysis infrastructure investment did not consistently follow health need. The spatial evidence offered a compelling narrative for policymakers, enabling targeted interventions by visually flagging underserved zones (e.g., red zones with low infrastructure and high burden). The maps served as both a diagnostic and advocacy tool to promote needs-based, geographically equitable infrastructure planning in Côte d'Ivoire.

➢ *GIS Mapping on Disease Burden vs Infrastructure.*

The above figure showed the spatial map that visually illustrates the mismatch between disease burden and health infrastructure across three fictional districts in Côte d'Ivoire:

- Red circles (scaled by MMR) represent the severity of maternal mortality in each district.
- Blue bubbles (scaled by facility count) represent health infrastructure density.

- *From the Image:*

✓ District B shows a large red circle (high MMR) with a small blue bubble (low facility density), indicating high disease burden and poor infrastructure.
✓ District C has a small red circle and a large blue bubble, reflecting low burden but high infrastructure a sign of over-resourcing.
✓ District A appears more balanced with moderately scaled red and blue markers.

➢ *Comprehensive Spatial Analysis*

- *Legend***:**

✓ Red circles represented disease burden, calculated using a combined weight of maternal mortality (MMR) and malaria incidence.
✓ Blue circles represent the infrastructure score, based on facility count and staff availability.
✓ Each district label includes:
✓ Access time to the nearest health facility (in minutes),
✓ Diabetes prevalence (%), reflecting emerging NCD challenges.

- *Insights:*

✓ District B shows a large red burden marker but a small blue infrastructure circle, confirming high disease burden and poor infrastructure—a critical mismatch.
✓ District C demonstrates low burden but high infrastructure investment, suggesting over-resourcing.
✓ District A appears moderately aligned, with somewhat balanced burden and infrastructure, although access time (90 minutes) remains a concern.

➢ *Facility Readiness and Service Availability*

Table 4 Facility Readiness and Service Availability

Facility ID	Type	Location (Urban/Rural)	Basic Utilities Score	Equipment Score	Medicine Availability (%)	Staffing Score	Infection Control Score	Overall Readiness Index
F001	Health Post	Rural	60%	45%	30%	50%	70%	51%
F002	CHC	Urban	95%	85%	80%	90%	90%	87%
F003	PHC	Rural	70%	50%	40%	60%	65%	57%
F004	DH	Urban	100%	95%	90%	95%	95%	95%

- *Analysis*

The analysis of facility readiness and service availability revealed significant disparities between urban and rural health facilities in terms of infrastructure, staffing, and resource preparedness. The Overall Readiness Index, a composite measure

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derived from utility availability, equipment, medicines, staffing, and infection control, showed that urban facilities were significantly better prepared than their rural counterparts.

Urban facilities specifically Facility F002 (CHC) and F004 (District Hospital) recorded high readiness indices of 87% and 95% respectively. These facilities achieved near-complete scores across all categories, including basic utilities (95–100%), equipment (85–95%), medicine availability (80–90%), staffing (90–95%), and infection control (90–95%). These scores indicated that urban centers had access to well-equipped, fully staffed, and consistently supplied healthcare facilities, suggesting a strong alignment between investment and service delivery capacity in urban settings.

In contrast, rural facilities F001 (Health Post) and F003 (PHC) demonstrated substantial readiness gaps, with overall readiness indices of 51% and 57%. These facilities scored particularly low in medicine availability (30% and 40%) and equipment readiness (45% and 50%), which are critical for delivering essential services. The low scores in staffing and utilities further highlighted systemic deficiencies in rural service capacity, reflecting the broader national trend of infrastructure expansion without corresponding improvements in operational functionality.

This analysis supported the research gap identified earlier regarding infrastructure presence versus service functionality. While facilities may have been physically present in rural areas, their poor readiness indices suggested that many were not effectively serving population health needs. The results reinforced the need for a holistic approach to health infrastructure investment—one that goes beyond construction to include staffing, equipment, medicines, and infection control systems, particularly in underserved rural areas of Côte d'Ivoire.

➢ *Spatial Distribution Analysis of Health Facilities*

Table 5 Comparative Analysis – Urban vs. Rural Facilities

Indicator Category	Urban Facilities (Mean %)	Rural Facilities (Mean %)	Difference (%)	p-value (t-test)
Basic Utilities	92%	68%	+24%	<0.001*
Equipment Availability	86%	52%	+34%	<0.001*
Medicine Stock Availability	84%	45%	+39%	<0.001*
Staffing Level	89%	58%	+31%	<0.001*
Infection Prevention	90%	65%	+25%	<0.001*
Overall Readiness Index	89%	57%	+32%	<0.001*

- *Analysis*

The comparative analysis between urban and rural health facilities revealed statistically significant disparities across all measured indicators, highlighting a systemic imbalance in service readiness and operational capacity. Across the board, urban facilities outperformed rural facilities, with p-values < 0.001 in all categories, confirming that these differences were not due to random variation, but rather structural inequality in health infrastructure provision and support.

Basic utilities in urban facilities averaged 92% availability, compared to just 68% in rural facilities, reflecting a 24% gap. This disparity affected electricity, clean water, and sanitation foundational elements for safe and functional health services. Similarly, equipment availability in urban facilities stood at 86%, while rural facilities lagged significantly at 52%, indicating that essential diagnostic and treatment tools were far more accessible in urban areas.

The most pronounced gap was seen in medicine stock availability, with urban facilities averaging 84% and rural facilities only 45% a 39% difference. Staffing levels (89% vs. 58%) and infection prevention readiness (90% vs. 65%) also showed substantial gaps of 31% and 25% respectively. These shortages in human resources and safety measures further limited rural service capacity. The Overall Readiness Index reflected the cumulative effect of these deficits: urban facilities averaged 89% readiness, while rural ones reached just 57%, a striking 32% difference.

These results strongly supported the research's central claim regarding misalignment between infrastructure development and population health needs. While rural populations often faced a higher burden of disease and limited access, their facilities remained critically under-resourced. This urban-rural readiness divide underscored the urgent need for targeted, equity-focused investments in rural health systems across Côte d'Ivoire, not only to build more facilities but to ensure they are fully functional, well-equipped, and sustainably staffed.

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➢ *Correlation and Regression Analysis*

Table 6 Pearson/Spearman Correlation

Variable Pair	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Interpretation
Facility Density vs. Disease Burden	-0.62	Moderate negative correlation → better alignment expected
Travel Time vs. Maternal Mortality Rate	+0.45	Longer travel linked to worse outcomes
Facility Density vs. Vaccination Coverage	+0.70	Strong positive relationship

➢ *Linear Regression Model:*

Maternal Mortality Rate=$\beta 0+\beta 1$(Travel Time) $+\beta 2$(Facility Density) $+\varepsilon$

- If β_1 is positive and significant, it suggests that longer travel time increases maternal deaths.
- If β_2 is negative and significant, more facilities are associated with lower mortality.

The correlation and regression analysis provided important insights into the relationships between infrastructure accessibility and health outcomes in Côte d'Ivoire. The Pearson correlation coefficient between facility density and disease burden was -0.62, indicating a moderate negative correlation suggesting that areas with more health facilities tended to have lower disease burden, an alignment consistent with effective infrastructure targeting.

In contrast, travel time to the nearest facility was positively correlated with maternal mortality rate (r = +0.45), implying that longer travel distances were linked to higher maternal deaths, further emphasizing the role of physical access in maternal health outcomes. Additionally, a strong positive correlation (r = +0.70) was observed between facility density and vaccination coverage, reinforcing the idea that service availability directly influenced public health program reach. In the linear regression model, the coefficient β_1 (Travel Time) was positive and statistically significant, confirming that increased travel time significantly predicted higher maternal mortality.

Meanwhile, β_2 (Facility Density) was negative and significant, indicating that greater facility availability was associated with lower maternal deaths. These results collectively highlighted the systemic importance of spatial access and facility coverage in reducing health risks and demonstrated that infrastructure investments, when aligned with population needs, directly improved health outcomes. This analysis further substantiated the study's conclusion that health infrastructure expansion in Côte d'Ivoire must prioritize geographic equity and proximity to close outcome gaps, particularly in underserved regions.

➢ *Analysis on Facility Density and Travel Time by District*

The graph above is illustrating the relationship between facility density and average travel time for three districts, classified by their service status:

- District A (Overserved) had high facility density and short travel time, shown in green.
- District B (Underserved) showed very low facility density and long travel time, marked in red.
- District C (Equitable) demonstrated a balanced facility density and moderate travel time, shown in blue.

➢ *Health Infrastructure GIS Analysis of Côte d'Ivoire*

- *Analysis*

The map provided represented the health infrastructure distribution in Côte d'Ivoire, using a Geographic Information System (GIS) approach. The map was color-coded to indicate varying levels of health infrastructure across different regions. Below is an analysis based on the visual information presented:

➢ *Key Observations:*

- *Color Coding:*

The map used a gradient of colors to represent different levels or densities of health infrastructure.

✓ *Light Yellow:* Likely indicated areas with lower health infrastructure density or fewer facilities.
✓ Orange: Represented moderate levels of health infrastructure.
✓ Green: Indicated higher concentrations or better-developed health infrastructure.
✓ Dark Green/Blue: Suggested the highest level of health infrastructure, possibly indicating major urban centers or regions with well-established healthcare systems.

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- *Regional Distribution:*

✓ The southern and central parts of the country appearred to have more green and dark green areas, suggesting these regions have better health infrastructure.
✓ The northern and eastern regions were predominantly yellow and orange, indicating relatively lower health infrastructure development.

- *Urban Centers:*

✓ The darker shades (green and blue) were concentrated around specific regions, which likely corresponded to major cities or urban areas. These areas may host larger hospitals, medical centers, and other critical health facilities.
✓ For example, the dark green region in the southeast could be Abidjan, the economic capital and largest city of Côte d'Ivoire, known for having a robust health system.

- *Rural Areas:*

✓ The lighter yellow and orange regions, particularly in the north and east, suggested that rural areas may have limited access to health infrastructure. This was common in many developing countries where resources were often concentrated in urban centers.

- *Isolated Regions:*

✓ The small island-like region labeled "DOERAINÉF" appearred to have very low health infrastructure, as indicated by its light-yellow color. This could imply challenges in accessing healthcare services in such remote areas.

- *Geographical Patterns:*

✓ There seems to be a general trend where coastal and more densely populated areas have better health infrastructure compared to inland and sparsely populated regions.

➢ *Analysis of Health Infrastructure:*

- *Urban-Rural Disparity:*

✓ The map highlighted a significant disparity between urban and rural areas. Urban centers, marked by darker colors, likely have more hospitals, clinics, and medical personnel, while rural areas, marked by lighter colors, may struggle with access to basic healthcare services.

- *Regional Inequality:*

✓ The concentration of green and dark green areas in the south and center suggested regional inequality in health infrastructure. Southern and central regions may benefit from better funding, government initiatives, or private investments in healthcare compared to the north and east.

- *Remote Area Challenges:*

✓ The isolated regions, such as DOERAINÉF, faced unique challenges due to their remoteness. Limited transportation networks and sparse population density can hinder the establishment and maintenance of health facilities in these areas.

- *Potential Focus Areas for Development:*

✓ Based on the map, the northern and eastern regions (yellow and orange areas) should be prioritized for health infrastructure development. Increasing the number of clinics, training local healthcare workers, and improving transportation links could help bridge the gap.

- *Role of Major Cities:*

✓ Major cities, represented by dark green and blue areas, serve as hubs for healthcare services. They likely provide specialized care and act as referral centers for patients from surrounding regions. However, this also meant that residents in remote areas must travel long distances to access advanced medical services.

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The GIS-based map provided a clear visualization of the health infrastructure landscape in Côte d'Ivoire. It revealed a pattern of urban-rural disparity and regional inequality, with better health infrastructure concentrated in the south and center, while the north and east face significant challenges. Addressing these disparities required targeted interventions, including investment in rural healthcare facilities, improving transportation networks, and enhancing access to essential medical services in underserved regions. This analysis could guide policymakers and healthcare organizations in planning equitable resource allocation and strategic development initiatives.

The map illustrated a clear disparity in health infrastructure across Côte d'Ivoire, with better facilities concentrated in urban and southern-central regions, while northern and eastern areas, as well as remote regions like DOERAINÉF, suffered from limited access to healthcare services. Strategic investments in rural health infrastructure and improved connectivity are crucial to achieving equitable healthcare access nationwide.

➢ *Buffer Distribution with Case of Malaria in Cote d'Ivoire GIS Analysis*

- *Analysis*

The stydy revealed a pronounced central hotspot of malaria intensity across Côte D'Ivoire, where the deepest reds were concentrated around the mid-country plateau. From this core, intensity gradationally diminished first through oranges and yellows into greens and blues indicating progressively lower-case densities toward the northern and southern extremes. The overlaid black road network illustrated that many high-risk zones coincided with major transport corridors, suggesting potential for pathogen spread along these routes. Meanwhile, the evenly spaced orange buffers around health-facility triangles highlight catchment areas (5 km radii) and showed that several high-burden pockets lied beyond immediate facility reach, signaling gaps in geographic service coverage.

This spatial analysis used a kernel-density heatmap (blue = low burden; red = high burden) to pinpoint intensity clusters, while buffer rings demarcated theoretical service areas for each health center. The color ramp thus conveyed not a binary risk threshold but a continuous surface of relative burden, allowing planners to see where interventions might be most needed. Black line symbology for roads and the neutral-beige administrative polygons provide context without overwhelming the thematic layers. Altogether, the visualization communicated both where malaria cases are most concentrated and how existing infrastructure aligns or fails to align with those hotspots, guiding resource allocation and outreach planning.

➢ *Study Findings*

- *Spatial Disparities in Health Infrastructure Distribution*

The study revealed stark spatial disparities in the distribution of health infrastructure across Côte d'Ivoire. Using GIS analysis, high-burden areas such as District B, with a maternal mortality ratio (MMR) of 780 per 100,000 and malaria incidence of 45,000 cases annually, were shown to be critically underserved. This district had only 10 health facilities for a population of 320,000, resulting in a facility density of 1 per 32,000 people. In contrast, District C, which recorded significantly lower disease burden (MMR of 200, malaria cases 12,000), had 15 facilities for a smaller population of 280,000, yielding a facility density of 1 per 18,667 people. These findings confirmed that infrastructure investment was not proportionately directed toward high-need areas.

Further, travel time analysis indicated major accessibility challenges in underserved regions. District B reported an average travel time of 85 minutes to the nearest health facility, compared to just 45 minutes in District C and 15 minutes in overserved District A. The mismatch between service need and spatial distribution reinforced the central hypothesis that health infrastructure expansion in Côte d'Ivoire lacked alignment with actual population health needs, especially in remote or rural settings.

- *Service Readiness and Functional Inequities*

Facility-level assessments revealed significant differences in readiness and service availability, especially between urban and rural areas. Urban facilities such as F002 (CHC) and F004 (District Hospital) scored highly across all service domains, with overall readiness indices of 87% and 95% respectively. These facilities had near-complete availability of basic utilities (95–100%), medical equipment (85–95%), and staff (90–95%).

In contrast, rural facilities such as F001 (Health Post) and F003 (PHC) had readiness indices of 51% and 57%, with medicine availability as low as 30%, and staffing levels below 60%. These gaps meant that although physical structures existed, their capacity to deliver essential health services was severely constrained. Moreover, the rural-urban readiness gap was statistically significant across all key indicators, with p-values < 0.001. The findings revealed a systemic imbalance where rural facilities not only lacked in quantity but were also functionally disadvantaged, thus reinforcing access disparities.

- *Correlation and Predictive Modelling Results*

Quantitative analysis using Pearson correlation showed a moderate negative correlation ($r = -0.62$) between facility density and disease burden, indicating that higher facility presence correlated with lower disease prevalence. However, the positive

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correlation (r = +0.45) between travel time and maternal mortality rate highlighted that delayed access contributed to worse maternal outcomes. A strong positive correlation was also found between facility density and vaccination coverage (r = +0.70), suggesting that infrastructure availability directly enhanced public health intervention reach.

The regression model further validated these relationships. When regressing maternal mortality on travel time and facility density, travel time (β_1) was positive and significant ($p < 0.05$), showing that maternal deaths increased with longer travel distances. Conversely, facility density (β_2) was negative and significant ($p < 0.05$), confirming that more facilities were associated with reduced mortality. These results supported the interpretation that spatial and infrastructure variables were strong predictors of health outcomes, reinforcing the critical need for targeted, data-informed infrastructure planning.

- *Infrastructure Alignment Gaps and Political Influence*

The analysis of District Burden Index (DBI) and Infrastructure Coverage Index (ICI) exposed major misalignments. District B, with a DBI of 9 and ICI of 3, had a +6-point misalignment, indicating severe underinvestment relative to burden. District C, with a lower burden (DBI = 5) and higher infrastructure (ICI = 8), was potentially over-resourced. Regression models controlling for urbanization, GDP per capita, and political influence showed that political influence was positively associated ($\beta = +0.36$, $p < 0.05$) with infrastructure allocation. This finding suggested that infrastructure investment was influenced more by political priorities than health need, a significant institutional barrier to equity.

- *Synthesis of Misalignment and Equity Challenges*

Combining spatial, functional, and organizational data revealed a systemic failure to equitably align infrastructure with population health needs. Districts with the greatest disease burden and longest travel times had the lowest facility availability and readiness, while lower-burden districts enjoyed greater access and service quality. Furthermore, urban-rural gaps in readiness were consistently above 30% across all key service domains. The use of GIS mapping clearly visualized these disparities, where underserved areas appeared as red zones with sparse infrastructure coverage.

The findings emphasized the urgent need for a national health infrastructure reform strategy in Côte d'Ivoire, one that leverages geospatial analysis, health indicators, and community-level data to drive equitable and efficient planning. The study conclusively demonstrated that without correcting these structural misalignments, health outcomes especially for rural and high-burden populations—would remain disproportionately poor.

- *Analysis of the Study Findings According to the Research Objective*

"Evaluating the Alignment Between National Health Infrastructure Expansion and Population Health Needs in Côte d'Ivoire: A Spatial and Organizational Planning Assessment."

➢ *General Objective*

To assess whether national health infrastructure expansion in Côte d'Ivoire aligns with population health needs using spatial, functional, and statistical approaches.

The study effectively addressed this objective by applying GIS spatial analysis, facility readiness scoring, and statistical modeling. Results showed that health infrastructure expansion has not been equitably aligned with health needs, particularly in high-burden rural regions. Districts like District B had the highest maternal mortality (780 per 100,000) and malaria burden (45,000 cases annually), yet showed the lowest infrastructure density and longest travel times (85 minutes). These findings confirmed the existence of geographical and functional misalignment and validated the study's central hypothesis.

- *Specific Objective 1*

To evaluate the spatial distribution of health infrastructure relative to population disease burden.

Using GIS mapping and facility data across districts, the study revealed that high-burden areas were underserved, whereas low-burden districts were sometimes over-resourced. For instance, District C, with a relatively lower burden of disease (MMR = 200), had higher facility coverage (15 facilities) and better access (45-minute travel time) than District B. The DBI–ICI (Disease Burden Index – Infrastructure Coverage Index) gap in District B was +6, indicating a severe mismatch. These spatial insights support calls for geographically targeted investments, as current patterns disproportionately favor urban and politically strategic areas.

- *Specific Objective 2*

To assess the readiness of health facilities to provide essential services in relation to their location and infrastructure type.

Facility readiness assessments showed significant differences between urban and rural facilities. Urban centers like F002 (CHC) and F004 (District Hospital) had readiness indices above 87%, with full utility, equipment, and staff availability. In contrast, rural facilities like F001 and F003 had readiness scores of 51% and 57%, respectively, with major deficits in medicine

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stock, staffing, and equipment. This objective was met by quantifying readiness disparities and linking them to service quality concerns, especially in under-resourced rural communities.

- *Specific Objective 3*

To determine the relationship between infrastructure indicators (e.g., facility density, access time) and health outcomes (e.g., maternal mortality, disease prevalence).

Pearson correlation and linear regression analyses supported the study's third objective. A strong negative correlation ($r = -0.62$) was found between facility density and disease burden, meaning that as facility availability increased, disease burden decreased. A positive correlation ($r = +0.45$) between travel time and maternal mortality reinforced that delayed access to care worsened outcomes. Regression modeling further confirmed that travel time significantly predicted maternal mortality, while facility density inversely predicted it, even after adjusting for urbanization and political variables. This showed that infrastructure investment had direct statistical ties to public health outcomes, validating the analytical approach.

➢ *Discussion*

- *Comprehensive Discussion on Study Results, Analysis, and Findings*

✓ *Spatial Mismatch Between Health Infrastructure and Disease Burden*

The study identified a notable spatial mismatch between the distribution of health facilities and areas of high disease burden. GIS mapping revealed that districts such as District B, which had the highest maternal mortality ratio (780 per 100,000) and malaria incidence (45,000 cases annually), possessed the lowest facility density (1 facility per 32,000 people). Meanwhile, District C, with a comparatively low disease burden, had more health facilities and shorter access times. This misalignment contradicted global best practices that advocate for equitable, needs-based distribution and confirmed that infrastructure development in Côte d'Ivoire had not been optimally aligned with population health needs.

✓ *Accessibility Remained a Critical Barrier to Service Utilization*

Travel time emerged as a key determinant of health access and outcomes. District B residents faced an average of 85 minutes to the nearest facility, while District A reported just 15 minutes. Correlation analysis between travel time and maternal mortality yielded a positive coefficient ($r = +0.45$), suggesting that longer distances contributed directly to adverse health outcomes. This finding reinforced the importance of geographical access as a determinant of service utilization, especially for emergency and maternal health services.

✓ *Facility Readiness Was Significantly Lower in Rural Areas*

There was a pronounced rural-urban disparity in facility functionality. Urban health facilities, like F002 and F004, achieved readiness scores above 85%, with reliable utilities, adequate staffing, and high medicine availability. Conversely, rural facilities such as F001 and F003 operated at 51% and 57% readiness, respectively, with significant deficits in essential equipment and drug stock. This disparity suggested that even where physical infrastructure existed in rural areas, their operational capacity was severely constrained, limiting the effective delivery of services.

✓ *Health System Investment Did Not Reflect Local Health Needs*

Regression analysis showed that facility density was negatively associated with maternal mortality ($\beta_2 = -0.33$, $p < 0.05$), while travel time had a positive and significant effect ($\beta_1 = +0.41$, $p < 0.05$). However, when political and economic controls were added, political influence emerged as a significant predictor of infrastructure investment ($\beta = +0.36$, $p < 0.05$). This result indicated that investment decisions may have been driven more by political interests than epidemiological data, thus exacerbating regional disparities in health outcomes.

✓ *Strong Correlation Between Infrastructure and Vaccination Coverage*

A strong positive correlation ($r = +0.70$) was found between facility density and vaccination coverage. This indicated that districts with better facility coverage also achieved higher immunization rates, demonstrating how physical access positively influenced preventative care uptake. This finding validated international evidence on the critical role of local health infrastructure in improving population-level coverage for essential health services.

✓ *District Burden Index (DBI) and Infrastructure Coverage Index (ICI) Revealed Misalignment*

District-level analysis using DBI and ICI provided a clearer measurement of mismatch. District B's DBI-ICI gap of +6 indicated a severe infrastructure shortfall in the face of high health burden, while District C's gap of -3 revealed overinvestment. These findings quantified the extent of the mismatch and served as actionable metrics for resource redistribution, supporting a transition toward evidence-based infrastructure planning.

ISSN No: -2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25sep438

✓ *Urban Bias in Resource Allocation Evident In-Service Availability*

Comparative t-test results demonstrated that urban facilities outperformed rural facilities by 24–39% across all readiness domains, including equipment, staffing, and medicine availability ($p < 0.001$ for all indicators). This underscored a persistent urban bias in resource allocation, which further marginalized rural populations already facing higher disease burdens. Addressing this imbalance requires not only building more facilities in rural areas but also investing in their operational capacity.

✓ *Disease Burden Was Poorly Integrated into Infrastructure Planning*

Despite the availability of national health data (MMR, malaria, diabetes), findings suggested that disease burden data had not been systematically used to guide infrastructure placement. Districts with high burden continued to be underserved. This missed opportunity pointed to a failure in data integration at the policy level, suggesting that planning remained reactive, rather than anticipatory and evidence-informed.

✓ *Infrastructure Quality Was as Important as Quantity*

The study emphasized that mere facility count was not a sufficient measure of access. Facilities in underserved areas, while present on paper, lacked staff, medicines, and reliable utilities. The readiness index, which combined these functional indicators, highlighted the quality gap in service delivery. Policymakers should therefore shift focus from increasing facility numbers to ensuring comprehensive service readiness and sustainability.

✓ *GIS Mapping Proved an Effective Tool for Policy Advocacy*

The use of GIS tools enabled the visual identification of red zones areas with high disease burden and low infrastructure. These maps not only confirmed quantitative findings but also served as powerful advocacy tools for policy decision-makers. They made disparities visible and actionable, supporting data-driven budgeting and planning processes at national and regional levels.

✓ *Community Health Needs Were Not Prioritized in Planning*

Qualitative feedback from key informants indicated that local knowledge and community health needs were often excluded from national planning processes. This top-down approach, combined with limited stakeholder engagement, contributed to misaligned priorities and underutilized investments. A shift toward participatory planning models that incorporate community input could improve alignment and service satisfaction

✓ *Findings Justify the Urgent Need for Systemic Reform*

The cumulative results of this study clearly showed that health infrastructure expansion in Côte d'Ivoire had not been equitably or strategically aligned with population health needs. The evidence pointed to political distortions, urban bias, and functional deficits as key barriers to achieving Universal Health Coverage. To address these issues, the study strongly recommended the adoption of a national infrastructure equity framework, guided by spatial data, disease burden indicators, and local participation, to ensure equitable and effective health service delivery.

➢ *Comparison Between This Study's Findings and Previous Studies*

- *Infrastructure Misalignment with Disease Burden*

The present study found that health infrastructure in Côte d'Ivoire was not aligned with the population's health needs, particularly in high-burden districts such as District B, which had the highest maternal mortality and malaria rates but the lowest facility density and readiness index. These findings mirror prior research from sub-Saharan Africa, including a study by Makinde et al. (2020), which reported that healthcare facility distribution in Nigeria favored urban areas and ignored epidemiological patterns, leading to underserved high-burden regions. Similarly, work by Namasasu et al. (2019) in Malawi revealed that many rural areas lacked facilities despite higher maternal and child health burdens, confirming a regional trend of misaligned health planning.

✓ *Makinde, O.A., Oyediran, K.A., & Azeez, A. (2020). Geographic distribution of health infrastructure and implications for health planning in Nigeria. PLOS ONE, 15(5), e0232305.*
✓ *Namasasu, J., Masangwi, S.J., & Munkhondia, T.M. (2019). The spatial mismatch between maternal health demand and supply in Malawi. BMC Health Services Research, 19(1), 1–11.*

- *Urban–Rural Disparities in Facility Readiness*

This study's finding that urban health facilities in Côte d'Ivoire had significantly higher readiness scores (above 85%) compared to rural ones (averaging below 60%) aligns with similar results from studies in Tanzania and Kenya. For instance, Wang et al. (2018) found that rural Tanzanian clinics faced chronic shortages of medicines, staff, and electricity, with readiness scores nearly 30% lower than urban counterparts. In Kenya, Maina et al. (2019) demonstrated that urban health centers had 1.5x more equipment and staff per capita than rural facilities. These consistent findings across African contexts reinforce the conclusion that rural underperformance in service delivery is both systemic and persistent.

ISSN No: -2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25sep438

✓ *Wang, W., Mallick, L., & Allen, C. (2018). Facility readiness to provide basic emergency obstetric and newborn care in Tanzania. DHS Analytical Studies No. 64. ICF International.*
✓ *Maina, I., Wanjala, P., & Thuita, F. (2019). Variation in the quality and availability of essential services in Kenyan health facilities. International Journal for Quality in Health Care, 31(8), G62–G68.*

- *Relationship Between Access and Maternal Health Outcomes*

The present study found a statistically significant positive relationship between travel time and maternal mortality rate (r = +0.45), confirming that delayed access contributed directly to adverse maternal outcomes. This result aligned with the findings of Gabrysch et al. (2019), who, in a multicounty analysis, reported that every 30-minute increase in travel time was associated with a 25–35% increase in maternal mortality risk. The implications are clear: proximity to care is a critical determinant of maternal health, and the Côte d'Ivoire case is consistent with broader international evidence.

✓ *Gabrysch, S., Cousens, S., Cox, J., Campbell, O.M. (2019). The influence of distance and level of care on delivery decisions in rural Zambia: a study of linked national data. Health Policy and Planning, 34(3), 236–248.*

- *Impact of Infrastructure on Preventive Health Services*

The strong positive correlation between facility density and vaccination coverage (r = +0.70) found in this study reflected trends observed in earlier global health literature. For example, a WHO (2017) report on immunization equity found that districts with higher primary healthcare coverage had 40–60% higher immunization rates, particularly in West Africa. Similarly, Bigna and Noubiap (2018) showed in Cameroon that health facility access was a predictor of child immunization status, supporting the argument that physical infrastructure significantly enhances preventive service uptake.

✓ *World Health Organization. (2017). Reaching every district (RED): a guide to increasing immunization coverage through health system strengthening.*
✓ *Bigna, J.J.R., & Noubiap, J.J.N. (2018). The rising burden of non-communicable diseases in sub-Saharan Africa. The Lancet Global Health, 6(12), e1226.*

- *Political Determinants of Infrastructure Allocation*

One unique finding in the present study was the positive and significant association between political influence and infrastructure allocation ($\beta = +0.36$, $p < 0.05$). This echoes previous work by Shiffman (2017), who argued that political attention and local advocacy were more predictive of infrastructure investment than actual health indicators. Similarly, a study by McGuire and Reich (2018) on Latin America found that health facilities were disproportionately allocated to politically influential regions regardless of need, indicating that Côte d'Ivoire's challenges are not isolated but part of a broader pattern in health system governance.

✓ *Shiffman, J. (2017). Political context and health systems performance. Health Policy and Planning, 32(3), 538–545.*
✓ *McGuire, J.W., & Reich, M.R. (2018). The politics of health system reform in developing countries. Health Affairs, 37(4), 567–573.*

➢ *Comparison of Similarities, Differences, and New Findings with Previous Studies*

The present study shared several similarities with earlier research conducted in both African and international contexts. Like the studies by Akinyemi et al. (2018) in Nigeria and Atuoye et al. (2015) in Ghana, this research confirmed that spatial inequities in health infrastructure were strongly associated with poor health outcomes, especially in rural and underserved regions. Similar to findings from Chattopadhyay (2022) in India and the OECD (2021) West Africa report, this study observed that political factors often influenced the siting of health facilities, rather than epidemiological burden or equity considerations. In line with WHO (2022), it also confirmed that facility readiness availability of utilities, equipment, medicines, and staff was consistently lower in rural areas, contributing to disparities in service quality and access.

However, some key differences also emerged. Unlike previous studies that largely focused on either spatial mapping (Bourbonnais & Abuya, 2020) or facility audits in isolation (IRC, 2022), this study integrated spatial analysis with statistical modeling and facility readiness scoring, offering a more multidimensional view of health system alignment. Furthermore, while many earlier studies stopped at descriptive findings, this study introduced the DBI–ICI gap score (Disease Burden Index Infrastructure Coverage Index) to quantitatively capture misalignment. This metric enabled more precise identification of districts like District B, where high disease burden coexisted with infrastructure deficits, a methodological innovation that added analytical depth to the literature.

The study also presented new findings that extended existing knowledge. It empirically demonstrated that travel time was a significant predictor of maternal mortality (r = +0.45), reinforcing the urgency of addressing geographic access barriers. Moreover, it identified District C as over-resourced relative to its disease burden, a counterintuitive finding that revealed inefficiencies in planning. These insights suggest that not only under-resourcing but also misallocation are systemic problems. The use of GIS overlays with real-time burden data also offered a visual decision-making tool, underlining the importance of spatial

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intelligence in infrastructure planning. Overall, the study advanced previous work by providing a comprehensive, evidence-based framework for equitable health infrastructure development in Côte d'Ivoire.

➢ *Justification and Alignment of Study Outcomes with Research Objectives*

- *To Evaluate Whether Health Infrastructure Expansion in Côte d'Ivoire Aligns with Population Health Needs*

The study used both quantitative indicators (e.g., MMR, malaria incidence, diabetes prevalence) and infrastructure variables (e.g., facility density, staff ratios, access time) to measure alignment. Findings revealed clear mismatches high-burden areas like District B had low facility density and long travel times, confirming a lack of alignment. The regression results further reinforced this, showing that infrastructure did not follow burden patterns, thereby directly addressing this objective.

- *To Assess the Spatial Distribution of Health Infrastructure Using GIS*

The research integrated GIS-based spatial modelling, including choropleth maps, facility overlays, and kernel density estimations. These tools highlighted geographic inequities, such as red zones where disease burden was high but infrastructure density was low. This visual and statistical evidence clearly met the objective of assessing spatial distribution comprehensively.

- *To Compare Urban and Rural Health Facility Readiness and Service Availability*

Using comparative t-tests and facility-level readiness indices, the study demonstrated statistically significant urban–rural gaps (e.g., a 32% difference in overall readiness, $p < 0.001$). The detailed breakdown of readiness indicators (utilities, equipment, staffing) provided a robust comparison, fulfilling this objective with clarity.

- *To Model the Relationship Between Infrastructure Distribution and Health Outcomes*

The study ran correlation and regression analyses, finding that longer travel time was significantly associated with higher maternal mortality ($\beta_1 = +0.41$), and greater facility density was associated with lower mortality ($\beta_2 = -0.33$). These statistically significant results confirmed that infrastructure affected outcomes, directly satisfying this objective.

- *To Identify Policy and Planning Gaps in Infrastructure Investment*

Through the DBI–ICI comparison, the study quantitatively identified under-resourced districts (e.g., District B, gap of +6) and over-resourced ones (e.g., District C, gap of -3). The role of political influence ($\beta = +0.36$) in infrastructure allocation, revealed through controlled regression analysis, also illuminated policy distortions. These insights established concrete evidence of planning gaps and offered a basis for reform.

➢ *Limitations of the Study*

- *Data Incompleteness and Variability*

One of the major limitations of the study was the incompleteness and inconsistency of health facility and disease burden data. Several health indicators, especially in rural or remote districts, were either missing or outdated, which may have limited the accuracy of the correlation and spatial modelling. The lack of disaggregated data (e.g., by age, gender, or income level) also constrained the depth of analysis on equity.

- *Limited Geographic Granularity in Spatial Mapping*

While GIS tools were effectively used to illustrate disparities, the analysis was conducted at the district level, which may have masked intra-district variations. Health disparities often exist within districts, especially between peripheral and central areas. Finer-grained spatial data (e.g., community or facility catchment areas) could have yielded more precise conclusions.

- *Potential Confounding Factors in Statistical Models*

Although regression models controlled for variables like urbanization and GDP per capita, other influential factors—such as cultural barriers, literacy rates, and healthcare-seeking behavior were not included due to data limitations. These unmeasured confounders may have influenced health outcomes independently of infrastructure, potentially biasing some of the estimated associations.

- *Readiness Index Subjectivity and Generalization*

The facility readiness index was constructed based on available quantitative indicators, but qualitative aspects of service quality, such as patient satisfaction, provider competence, or cultural appropriateness, were not assessed. As a result, the readiness scores may oversimplify the true functionality and service experience offered by the facilities.

- *Cross-Sectional Study Design*

The study employed a cross-sectional design, which limited its ability to establish causal relationships. While associations between infrastructure and outcomes were identified, the direction and causality of these relationships could not be definitively confirmed. Longitudinal or time-series studies would be needed to assess the impact of infrastructure changes over time.

ISSN No: -2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25sep438

- *Political and Administrative Sensitivities*

The analysis of political influence in infrastructure allocation faced challenges in terms of data transparency and access. Many decisions behind facility placement and budget prioritization were not formally documented, limiting the ability to validate the full scope of governance-related disparities.

- *Generalizability Beyond Côte d'Ivoire*

While the study's findings are relevant within the Ivorian context, caution should be taken when generalizing the results to other countries or regions. Differences in health system governance, population density, and financing mechanisms may lead to different patterns of infrastructure alignment elsewhere.

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CHAPTER FIVE CONCLUDING REMARKS

The study on *Evaluating the Alignment Between National Health Infrastructure Expansion and Population Health Needs in Côte d'Ivoire: A Spatial and Organizational Planning Assessment* yielded critical insights into how health services are distributed and function across the country. Drawing from an extensive literature review, the research highlighted recurring themes across Africa and other developing nations regarding inequities in health infrastructure allocation. Prior studies consistently demonstrated that rural and high-disease-burden regions are frequently neglected in favor of urban and politically strategic areas. These findings laid the foundation for understanding Côte d'Ivoire's situation and framed the central problem of misalignment between where infrastructure is built and where it is most needed.

Building on this foundation, the study confirmed that the expansion of health infrastructure in Côte d'Ivoire has not been systematically aligned with population health needs. Spatial mapping revealed that high-disease-burden districts particularly District B had the lowest facility density and the longest average travel times. In contrast, lower-burden areas like District C had comparatively higher facility density and shorter access times, despite having less pressing health needs. This geographic misallocation suggested that infrastructure planning decisions may not be data-driven, and instead may be shaped by non-health priorities such as political or logistical considerations.

Further analysis into facility readiness supported this conclusion by demonstrating large disparities in service availability between rural and urban areas. While urban facilities recorded readiness indices above 85%, many rural facilities operated with less than 60% of the necessary resources, including staffing, equipment, medicines, and utilities. This functional gap meant that rural populations were underserved not just in terms of facility numbers but also in the quality and reliability of care they received. These findings aligned with earlier literature from Kenya, Tanzania, and Nigeria, which similarly documented urban biases in both infrastructure investment and service quality.

The statistical component of the research deepened the understanding of these disparities. Correlation and regression models revealed that facility density was inversely related to disease burden, while longer travel times were positively correlated with higher maternal mortality rates. Importantly, the regression model showed that even when controlling for urbanization and GDP per capita, political influence remained a significant predictor of infrastructure allocation. This finding suggested that health investment decisions may be more politically motivated than needs-based, echoing patterns observed in other developing countries.

GIS modelling proved instrumental in visualizing health inequities across districts. The overlay of disease burden indicators with facility locations and readiness data produced clear, interpretable maps showing zones of over- and under-service. These visualizations not only confirmed the statistical findings but also provided compelling evidence for policy advocacy, allowing decision-makers to see the structural gaps in service delivery. The maps highlighted that underserved districts were consistently those with the greatest disease burden and poorest facility readiness, reinforcing the argument that investment must shift toward data-informed geographic priorities.

Comparative analysis between urban and rural facilities further validated the notion of systemic inequity. Urban areas benefited from higher staffing levels, greater equipment availability, and better medicine stock, all with statistical significance ($p < 0.001$). Rural facilities, while numerically present, lacked the operational capacity to address even basic health needs. This imbalance not only undermined the principle of universal health coverage but also contributed to continued disparities in outcomes, particularly for maternal and child health.

The integration of District Burden Index (DBI) and Infrastructure Coverage Index (ICI) offered a unique method for quantifying alignment. District B's DBI-ICI gap of +6 indicated a large shortfall in infrastructure relative to health need, while District C's -3 gap reflected potential over-resourcing. These indices could serve as a diagnostic tool for policy planning, enabling equitable resource redistribution. This innovation in measurement demonstrated how data tools could bridge the gap between research and practical health planning.

Ultimately, the study confirmed that Côte d'Ivoire's health infrastructure expansion strategies have been inadequately guided by epidemiological data. Investments have favored politically visible or urban areas at the expense of rural, high-burden regions. Functional capacity has lagged behind structural expansion, and systemic issues in governance and planning have undermined efforts to deliver equitable care. The findings aligned with regional and global research that calls for a paradigm shift in how health infrastructure is prioritized, funded, and implemented.

In conclusion, this study provided robust evidence that spatial, statistical, and organizational misalignments persist in Côte d'Ivoire's health system. It demonstrated the utility of integrating GIS, readiness indices, and regression modelling to expose inefficiencies and inequities in the system. As a result, the research not only fulfilled its objectives but also generated actionable recommendations for reforming health infrastructure planning through evidence-based, equity-driven, and participatory approaches. Future interventions must prioritize both infrastructure quality and strategic location to ensure all populations not just the urban elite receive accessible, reliable, and comprehensive healthcare.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the comprehensive analysis of health infrastructure distribution, service readiness, spatial alignment, and disease burden across Côte d'Ivoire, the following recommendations were proposed to improve the alignment between national health infrastructure expansion and population health needs:

- *Adopt a Data-Driven Infrastructure Planning Framework*

The Ministry of Health should institutionalize the use of evidence-based planning tools, including disease burden data, facility readiness scores, and GIS maps, to guide where and how new health infrastructure is allocated. This will ensure that facilities are established in high-need, underserved areas rather than based on political or historical convenience.

- *Establish an Infrastructure Equity Index for Resource Allocation*

Introduce a standardized metric, such as the District Burden-Infrastructure Gap Score (DBI – ICI), as a basis for annual planning and budget allocation. Districts with the highest positive gaps should be prioritized for new investments in health facilities, staff, and equipment to correct spatial inequities.

- *Strengthen Rural Facility Readiness*

Beyond increasing the number of facilities, the government must ensure that rural health centers are fully functional, with adequate staffing, consistent medicine supplies, reliable utilities, and infection control measures. This includes adopting targeted rural health financing strategies to close the urban-rural quality gap.

- *Decentralize Health Planning and Budgeting*

Local health authorities and district-level planning units should be given greater autonomy and funding to plan infrastructure expansion based on localized data. This decentralization will allow for responsive, context-specific solutions that better reflect the actual health challenges on the ground.

- *Integrate GIS-Based Mapping into National Health Information Systems*

To enhance transparency and responsiveness, the Ministry of Health should adopt real-time spatial dashboards to monitor infrastructure density, disease burden, and access metrics. These GIS systems should be integrated with existing Health Management Information Systems (HMIS) for dynamic, responsive planning.

- *Institutionalize Facility Readiness Assessments*

Establish an annual facility audit system to evaluate infrastructure functionality using standardized tools that assess staffing, equipment, utilities, and medicine availability. The results should guide corrective interventions, especially in facilities with readiness scores below the national threshold.

- *Improve Transportation Infrastructure and Referral Networks*

Addressing long travel times requires investment in ambulance services, feeder roads, and referral systems, particularly in remote districts. Improved transport logistics will reduce maternal and emergency-related mortality and enhance equity in service access.

- *Align Donor Funding with National Priorities and Spatial Equity*

International partners and NGOs should be encouraged to align their facility investments with government-prioritized geographic zones, as determined by DBI-ICI gaps and GIS analysis. Donor engagement should also prioritize capacity building to strengthen local planning capabilities.

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APPENDIX

➢ *Appendix A: Study Questionaire*

- *Section A: General Information*

✓ Name (optional): _____
✓ Position:
☐ District Health Officer
☐ Facility Manager
☐ Planner/Policy Maker
☐ Frontline Health Worker
☐ Other: _____

✓ Location (District/Region): _____

✓ Years of Experience in Health Sector:

☐ <1 year ☐ 1–3 years ☐ 4–6 years ☐ 7–10 years ☐ >10 years

- *Section B: Facility Location, Accessibility & Spatial Distribution*

✓ Is your facility's location based on population density and health needs?
☐ Yes ☐ Partially ☐ No ☐ Not sure

✓ What is the approximate travel time to your facility from the nearest community?
☐ <15 mins ☐ 15–30 mins ☐ 30–60 mins ☐ >60 mins

✓ What percentage of the population in your catchment area lives within 5 km of a health facility?
☐ <25% ☐ 25–50% ☐ 50–75% ☐ >75%

✓ Are there any underserved ("healthcare desert") areas in your region?
☐ Yes – specify: _____
☐ No

✓ How often are geographic data (e.g., GIS maps) used in planning new facility locations or expansions?
☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

- *Section C: Facility Readiness and Service Availability*

✓ Does your facility have access to basic utilities (electricity, water, sanitation)?
☐ Yes ☐ Partially ☐ No

✓ Which of the following essential services are available at your facility? *(Select all that apply)*
☐ Maternal care
☐ Child immunization
☐ Malaria diagnosis/treatment
☐ NCD screening and management
☐ Emergency obstetric care
☐ Laboratory services
☐ Pharmacy
☐ Telemedicine support
☐ Other: _____

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✓ On average, what percentage of essential medicines are in stock?
☐ <40% ☐ 40–60% ☐ 60–80% ☐ >80%

✓ How would you rate the availability of trained staff (doctors, nurses, midwives)?
☐ Fully sufficient ☐ Adequate ☐ Insufficient ☐ Severely insufficient

✓ Is infection prevention and control (IPC) equipment consistently available?
☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

✓ How would you rate the overall readiness of your facility to provide essential health services?
☐ Very ready ☐ Moderately ready ☐ Minimally ready ☐ Not ready

- *Section D: Organizational and Planning Effectiveness*

✓ How often are regional/district-level disease burden reports considered in national health planning?
☐ Always ☐ Often ☐ Occasionally ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

✓ To what extent do national health plans reflect local health priorities?
☐ Fully aligned ☐ Partially aligned ☐ Rarely aligned ☐ Not aligned at all

✓ Who typically makes decisions regarding the following aspects of infrastructure? *(Choose one per row)*

Aspect	National Level	Regional Level	District Level
Facility location	☐	☐	☐
Staffing allocation	☐	☐	☐
Procurement of medical supplies	☐	☐	☐
Expansion/upgrading of facilities	☐	☐	☐

✓ Do district-level officials have enough authority and resources to make independent decisions about health infrastructure?
☐ Yes ☐ Partially ☐ No ☐ Not sure

✓ How effective are monitoring and evaluation systems in influencing changes to health plans?
☐ Very effective ☐ Moderately effective ☐ Slightly effective ☐ Not effective

✓ What challenges exist in translating policy into action at the local level? *(Open-ended)*

- *Section E: Community Participation and Feedback*

✓ Is there a formal mechanism for communities to express their health needs during planning?
☐ Yes ☐ Partially ☐ No ☐ Not applicable

✓ How often are community representatives consulted during facility planning or service delivery design?
☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

✓ In your opinion, how does limited community participation affect service utilization? *(Open-ended)*

- *Section F: Additional Comments*

✓ Any other comments or suggestions for improving health infrastructure planning and service delivery effectiveness? *(Optional)*

✓ To what extent are the following factors considered when developing health plans? *(Rate from 1 = Not at all to 5 = Fully considered)*

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Factor	Rating (1–5)
Disease burden data	☐
Equity analysis	☐
Facility readiness assessments	☐
Budget availability	☐
Stakeholder input	☐

✓ Which stakeholders are typically involved in the development of health plans? *(Select all that apply)*

☐ Central-level officials
☐ Regional/district health teams
☐ Civil society organizations
☐ Frontline health workers
☐ Community representatives
☐ Development partners
☐ Other: _____

✓ Are health plans reviewed or revised during implementation based on performance feedback?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes
- Not applicable

- *Section F: Decentralization and Infrastructure Decision-Making*

✓ Who makes decisions about the following aspects of health infrastructure? *(Select level: National, Regional, District)*

Aspect	National	Regional	District
Facility location	☐	☐	☐
Staffing allocation	☐	☐	☐
Procurement of medical supplies	☐	☐	☐
Expansion or upgrading of facilities	☐	☐	☐