

What Are the Reasons to Randomize Clusters Instead of Individuals?

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So let's start with reasons to randomize clusters instead of individuals. Well, the first is the intervention targets healthcare units rather than individuals.

Alternatively, you might say, okay, imagine the interventions targeted at individuals, but if there was a risk of contamination, for example, if physicians were randomized to a new educational program, but they may share knowledge with control arm physicians who had been randomized to control arm in their practice, then really it would be preferable to randomize the practice, the collection of physicians rather than individual physicians. So in this case, the potential for contamination is a reason to select a cluster randomized design.

And then there could be other reasons such as it's logistically easier to implement the intervention by cluster