



Lost in Policy Implementation: Lessons Learned

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Presentation at a Glance

- Why does policy matter?
- What is policy?
- What is policy implementation?
- How is policy expressed?
- Lessons learned from other jurisdictions (health inequalities)
- Frameworks, tools and resources

Why does policy matter?

- Policy in combination with other approaches can be effective in creating supportive environments for health
- Intersectoral action strongest at several levels simultaneously, especially if the work at each of those levels was **integrated** through **policy** or **legislation** (*Health Equity Through Intersectoral Action: 18 Country Case Studies; Geneau, Smith et al., Eds., 2008*)

Levels of Causation for Coronary Health Disease and Type of Health Intervention

1. SOCIAL STRUCTURE

- * SOCIAL CLASS
- * AGE
- * GENDER
- * RACE/ETHNICITY

HEALTHY PUBLIC POLICY

2. ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES (places)

- * GEOGRAPHY
- * HOUSING CONDITIONS
- * OCCUPATIONAL RISKS
- * ACCESS TO SERVICES

ORGANIZATIONAL & COMMUNITY INTERVENTIONS

3. LIFESTYLE INFLUENCES

- * SMOKING
- * NUTRITION
- * PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
- * PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS

PRIMARY & SECONDARY PREVENTION

4. PHYSIOLOGICAL INFLUENCES

- * BLOOD PRESSURE
- * CHOLESTEROL
- * OBESITY

SECONDARY PREVENTION

CORONARY HEART DISEASE

Source: McKinlay, 1999

What is Policy?

- "Those laws, regulations, formal and informal rules and understandings that are adopted on a collective basis to guide individual and collective behaviour" (Schmid, Pratt and Howze 1996; Wallack et al. 1993)
- Healthy public policies must be built through "diverse but complementary approaches including legislation, fiscal measures, taxation and organizational change", which should be integrated in all activities of government (WHO 1986)
- An 'intervention' (or more than one) implemented by an institution, the state, a local agency



What is Policy? (2)

- A dynamic, iterative and complex set of processes shaped by the actions of many social actors (e.g. policy makers, advocacy coalitions, public health units, communities, public, etc.)
- Multi-level and incremental
- It takes time to develop, implement and 'take hold'
- Embedded in a social context (e.g. workplaces)



What is policy implementation?

- Course of inaction or action consisting of organized activities by public and private authorities directed at a given problem or an interrelated set of problems (Bryant 2006)
- A series of multiple acts that must be repeated over time to enforce or comply with the policy" (Jilcott et al. 2007)

How is policy expressed?

- Frameworks, statements
 - Values, ideology
 - Structural commitments = resource allocation, monitoring system
 - Social actors and institutions
- ▶ Policy has multiple meanings and multiple interpretations



Can policies contribute to inequities?

- Policies can have differential health effects
 - Policies can support or undermine the resilience of those at the sharp end of class and gender inequality
 - Need to apply a health equity lens
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- ▶ Link to public health standards
 - ▶ Is this lens reflected in current policy frameworks?




How is policy implemented?

- As intended or as planned?
- In relation to a specific set of goals, objectives or norms?
- Through the interpretation and re-interpretation of many actors operating at multiple levels
- Other?

Some Key Considerations

- The problem
 - What problem are we trying to solve through policy?
 - What is the salience of the problem?
 - How is it framed? (be careful about *health imperialism*)
 - What are your assumptions about the problem?
- Social actors
 - Who are they and who sets the agenda?
 - Power differentials (whose voices are not heard?)
 - Anticipating resistance?
- Nature of the evidence (e.g. RCTs aren't the sole answer; cost-effectiveness data)



Parachute use to prevent death and major trauma related to gravitational challenge: Systematic review of randomised controlled trials

Gordon C S Smith, Jill P Pell

**BMJ Volume 327, 20-27 December 2003
bmj.com**

Some Key Considerations (2)

- Organizing Structures Involved
 - Nation-state, provincial governments, municipalities, agencies, intersectoral governance structures, etc.
 - Influence of advocacy coalitions, policy networks on government
- Windows of opportunity or influence
- Policy levers
- Inter-jurisdictional and cross-country comparisons
 - What can we learn from such studies?



Lessons Learned from other jurisdictions

(A critical analysis of public health policies in 8 European countries, Swedish National Institute of Public Health, 2008)

- Comparative study of policies on health inequalities across eight European countries
- Key Results:
 - Recognition of the problem (declaration of intent but nothing about what was done)
 - Formulation of policy (what is the content?)

Lessons Learned from other jurisdictions

(A critical analysis of public health policies in 8 European countries, Swedish National Institute of Public Health, 2008)

- Policy approaches taken by different countries:
 - Mainstreaming
 - Goals or targets
 - Topic-specific policies
 - Emphasis on the poor or on health gradient (*"levelling up"*)
 - Degrees of Implementation:
 - General commitment to cross-government coordination
 - Coordination not always obvious
 - Sophisticated coordination mechanisms
 - Follow-up and evaluation

Lessons Learned from other jurisdictions


(cont'd)

- Knowledge Gaps – insufficient knowledge about policy implementation conditions (what works for whom and under some conditions but not others?)
- Topic-specific policies on health inequalities
 - Reducing inequities through a nutrition strategy (Wales)
 - Also targets most vulnerable groups (e.g. low income; pregnant women)
- Mainstreaming or separate part of policy
 - Equity commitments across broader public health strategies (e.g. Sweden's public health strategy) vs. a separate part of policy (e.g. U.S. Healthy People 2010)



“Killer facts, politics and other influences: what evidence triggered early childhood intervention policies in Australia?” (Bowen et al. 2009)

- Examine relationship between evidence and policy designed to promote health equity
- Mapping of media, policy, political and research activity
- Policy context:
 - Whole-of-government approaches



“Killer facts, politics and other influences: what evidence triggered early childhood intervention policies in Australia?” (Bowen et al. 2009)

- Evidence isn't enough but nature of evidence matters too: “Killer facts” about children
 - Contextual information - how will the public or politicians react to policy being considered?
 - Expert knowledge and opinion
 - Scientific literature (e.g. science of brain development, specific studies)
 - Policy audits, syntheses and reviews (commissioned studies)
 - Economic impact analyses (opportunity cost of intervention)

Canada's remaining challenges

In 2004, the average earnings of the richest 10% of families with children was 82 times that earned by the poorest 10%.

(ref: Yalnizyan A. The rich and the rest of us, 2007, CCPA.)

Child Benefits reduce low income in Canada?

- Reference: Corak, M. *Principles and practicalities in measuring child poverty in rich countries. Innocenti Working Paper no. 2005-01 (Florence, Italy: UNICEF, 2005)*



Frameworks, Tools and Resources



Multiple Interventions Framework (Edwards, Mill, & Kothari, 2004)

http://www.miptoolkit.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=1

Multilevel Intervention Approach: Stages of Life and Relevant Settings

- ❖ Multilevel Intervention Approach = 4E's
 - **E**ducation
 - **E**nvironmental supports / controls
 - **E**conomic levers
 - **E**nforcement of legislation and regulations
- ❖ Stages of Life
 - Child, adolescent, young adult, middle age, older adult, elderly
- ❖ Relevant Settings
 - School, workplace, community, etc.

Source: Smedley BD and Syme SL (eds.). Promoting Health: Intervention Strategies from Social and Behavioral Research. Washington: National Academy of Sciences, 2000.



Health Impact Assessment

<http://www.who.int/hia/about/why/en/index.html>

- Helps to support cross-sectoral work
- Uses a participatory approach that acknowledges community views
- Can be used for assessing policies, programs and projects
- Can contribute to improving health and reducing inequalities



The Tobacco Story

National Collaborating Centre for
Healthy Public Policies

- <http://www.ccnpps.ca/timeline.html>



Questions/Comments?
