



An Roinn Sláinte
Department of Health

A 360 degree perspective on achieving the use of research evidence in policy

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Evidence informed policy making

Researcher assumptions

Barriers and facilitators

Engagement with policy making

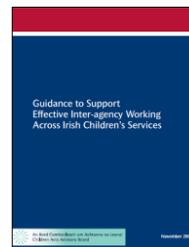
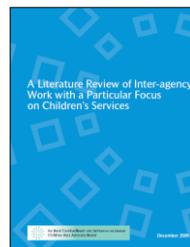
Basis for my perspective . . .

Private sector provider of commissioned research and evaluations

- economic consultant

Commissioner, producer, broker and user

- Head of Research & Information, CAAB



Broker and producer

- Department of Health



What is evidence informed policy making? (1)

“Evidence-informed . . . policymaking is an **approach to policy decisions** that aims to ensure that decision making is well-informed by the best available research evidence.

It is characterised by the systematic and transparent access to, and appraisal of, evidence as an **input** into the policymaking process.”

Oxman et al., (2009)

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Use in developing new policies (1)

1: Developing new policies:[^]

Steps	Sub-steps where research evidence can assist
Defining the problem	Identifying indicators to establish the magnitude of the problem or contributing factors
	Making comparisons to establish the magnitude of the problem or contributing factors
	Highlighting different views about and experiences of the problem to assist in mobilising support, among different groups, to address the problem
Assessing potential options	Identifying policy and programme options that could affect the problem or contributing factors
	Characterising the positive and the negative effects (benefits and harms) of each option
	Characterising the cost-effectiveness of policy options
	Identifying key elements of complex options to facilitate local adaptation
Identifying implementation considerations	Characterising stakeholders' views on and experiences of the policy options
	Identifying potential barriers to implementation at the level of patients/consumers, health workers, organisations, and systems
	Characterising the effects of appropriately targeted implementation strategies

[^] Adapted from Table 1, page 2 in How Can We Support the Use of Systematic Reviews in Policymaking? John N. Lavis, PLoS Medicine, www.plosmedicine.org, 1 November 2009, Volume 6, Issue 11, e1000141. See the full article for examples of where research products and evidence can assist with the sub-steps.

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Use in evaluating and amending existing policies (1)

Factors	Type of questions to consider
Rationale	Whether an intervention can be justified in relation to established needs and problems
Relevance	Whether the explicit objectives of an intervention are relevant/appropriate to the needs and problems the intervention is meant to solve
Effectiveness	Whether the expected effects are obtained and objectives achieved
Efficiency	Whether effects are obtained at reasonable cost, could more have been obtained with the same budget or could the same effects have been obtained at lower cost
Impacts	Whether the effects on beneficiaries after the intervention is as expected
Monitoring and information	If the required information is provided through monitoring and information systems
Recommendations	The areas in which recommendations for change are required

Adapted from *Evaluating socio-economic programmes*, MEANS Collection, Volume 6

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Researcher assumptions v. alternative perspectives (2)

Motivations

To improve VFM and benefits for citizens

"The best of all monopoly profits is a quiet life" Hicks

Attitudes to change

Natural part of service and policy evolution

Risk adverse and culture of maintaining the status quo

Views on research evidence

Probably the most important input into policy making

Somewhat abstract and not that relevant

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Researcher assumptions v. alternative perspectives (2)

Using (misusing) research evidence

It goes without saying

If it supports our case/purpose

Views on researchers

Motivated by public good and provide an objective perspective

Hold a certain view and aiming to promote that

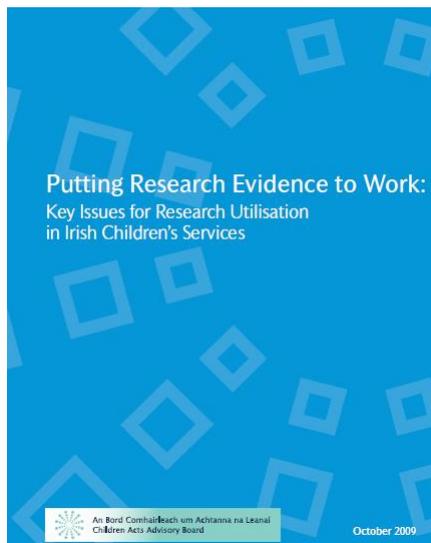
Views on research costs

Excellent value for money, often go above and beyond

I could get a full-time employee for that. That is a high rate.

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Barriers and facilitators, key findings from PREW (3)



Review of literature on the barriers and facilitators to research use, covered up to 70 reports

Consulted managers and practitioners health, welfare, justice, and C&V survey (155) and focus groups (122)

Review products and services provided by international organisations dedicated to research dissemination/utilisation

Findings consistent with international reviews re policy making context

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Findings from Irish consultations (3)

Barriers to **research utilisation** include

- lack of time
- unacceptability of prioritising research related work over other activities
- lack of motivation
- lack of access to research
- mistrust of research findings

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Findings from Irish consultations (3)

Barriers concerning the **nature of research** evidence

- perceived gap between research and experience
- uncertainty about the quality and relevance of research
- the complex manner in which research is often presented
- the volume of research which can be overwhelming
- perceived lack of Irish research material

Barriers relevant to **organisations** include

- absence of research culture
- undervaluing of research by the organisation

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Findings from Irish consultations (3)

Facilitators to **individual** research use include

- personal motivation
- informal sharing of information in the workplace

Facilitators of research use related to the **nature of research** material include:

- user-friendly material
- summaries
- bullet pointed lists

Facilitators of research use relating to **organisations** include

- valuing research
- fostering a culture of reflective questioning
- appointment of a research officer
- providing resources within the organisation
- establishing intra- and inter-organisational activities
- providing incentives
- commissioning or conducting research
- working more closely with research centres.

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Key barriers more generally (3)

Difficulty in **identifying** relevant research material

Difficulty in **obtaining** relevant research material

Difficulty in **pinpointing and understanding** the key messages (findings and judgments) from research evidence

Lack of **confidence** in the reliability of research evidence

Limited **supports** to help integrate evidence to practice and policy

A **lack** or perceived lack of practice-relevant research evidence particularly in respect of research conducted and published in Ireland

Lack of **organisational motivation** and support to use and integrate research

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Supporting Knowledge Exchange (3)

- Partnership and Collaboration
- Research Centres
- Intra-organisational Partnerships
- Informal Partnerships
- Knowledge Brokering Organisations

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Typology of Knowledge Broker Products/Services (3)

Helping to Identify Research

Searchable research databases on relevant topics
Structured links to research produced by other organisations
Summaries of relevant research material produced by other organisations
Written guidance on research identification/training on how to identify relevant research

Helping to Obtain Research

Direct downloads/access to research material produced by other organisations
Direct downloads/supported access to the host organisation's research material
Provision of library facilities
Written guidance on accessing research reports
Training on obtaining research reports

Help to Pinpoint and Understand the Key Messages from Research

Research information and awareness events
Summaries of key messages from relevant
Material on critical analysis and appraisal
Training on critical analysis and appraisal

Addressing Lack of Confidence in Reliability of Research Evidence

Quality ratings systems

Support Integrating Research Evidence into Practice

Written evidence informed guidance and manuals on practice issues
Written guides on increasing the impact of research
Training/learning events
Evidence integration projects

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Engagement with policy making (4)

Avail of key opportunities

- New Programme for Government
- New Strategy/Action Plan
- Organisational Change
- Seminars/Events

Nature of pitch

- Policy problem/objective
- How specific evidence/approach can help
- When it can help
- How you/your organisation can help
- Clear next steps

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Engagement with policy making (4)

Nature of engagement

- Make it easy
- Knowledge of subject area but also process
- Ability to empathise with the person, issues and context
- As much about questions asked as views expressed

Uptake and dissemination

- Accessible
- Practical relevance and applicability
- Collaborate to assist in the integration of research evidence
- Easier where there is an existing relationship of trust

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References

Oxman, A D, John N Lavis, Simon Lewin and Atle Fretheim, 'What is evidence-informed policymaking?', SUPPORT Tools for evidence-informed health Policymaking (STP) 1, Health Research Policy and Systems 2009, 7(Suppl 1):S1 available at: <http://www.health-policy-systems.com/content/7/S1/S1> (accessed 30th March, 2012).

How Can We Support the Use of Systematic Reviews in Policymaking? John N. Lavis, PLoS Medicine, www.plosmedicine.org, 1 November 2009, Volume 6, Issue 11, e1000141. See the full article for examples of where research products and evidence can assist with the sub-steps.

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