E.4. Round table: Measuring and optimizing the impact of European health care research on policy and practice

Organised by: EUPHA sections on Health Services Research and Public Health Practice and Policy
Contact: j.dejong@nivel.nl
Chairpersons: Judith de Jong, The Netherlands and Natasha Azzopardi Muscat, Malta

With health care systems becoming increasingly focused on effectiveness and efficiency, it is a logical development that the same requirements apply more and more to research production in the health care field. Health care research needs to show that investments are well spent and that it produces value for money, especially so in current times with funding budgets under pressure. But what value, and for whom, is something that is not easily defined. The terms research impact and valorisation are often used, but in different manners by different parties. From the perspective of funding bodies, both at national and European level, there is a growing focus on economic impact, emphasizing the importance of patents, products or spin-off companies. As this is less suitable for the wider domain of health care research, including health services and systems research as well as public health research, a working group of experts from international associations and national research institutes across Europe has been installed with the aim to come to a better definition and measurement of impact for the area of health care research. The workshop will contain a presentation on the results of this working group, among others addressing suitable frameworks to measure impact as well as concrete indicators in order to monitor and compare performance of projects, institutes or research programmes. Two panelists will provide additional perspectives on measuring research impact from their own backgrounds and will also provide feedback on the proposed impact methodology. What elements do they miss, is the framework feasible and suitable for the broad area of health care research. To test this latter element, another crucial means of validation is through the perspective of the audience itself. As the research domain is so wide and multidisciplinary, any proposal for measuring impact should be shared with the wider research community. For that purpose, reflections by the audience are of crucial importance. Do the findings and recommendations of the working group do justice to the particularities of this area of research? If so, then a strategy should be discussed on how to ensure that funding bodies across Europe can make use of this broader perspective of impact measurement.

Key messages
- The workshop will present a methodology to measure the impact of health care research.
- Participants can help shape this framework and thus its use by funding bodies at European and national level.

The impact of health care research: a framework and methodology to measure its social and economic value for European and national policy making

Peter Groenewegen
NIVEL, Netherlands institute for health services research, Utrecht, The Netherlands
Contact: j.hansen@nivel.nl

Partly due to the economic recession, health research as a whole is being seen more and more as a lever for economic growth through patentable technological advances and exploitable intellectual properties. Health care research, however, rarely result in patents or products, as is the case with biomedical research. Its application and societal value lies far more in supporting policy decisions, both at governmental and organizational level, for example when it comes to policy relevant topics such as the quality and safety of health care, the financial sustainability and productivity of health systems, innovations in health care organisation and delivery or the effectiveness and efficiency with which health care interventions are used.

Methods
On behalf of the working group, we will first clarify how the concept of impact measurement is often used, and what the pros and cons are of these different approaches for the area of health care research. We will also apply the model to an example study to show how it can be used to determine whether current research on health care provision is having impact on policy decisions being taken in times of financial and economic difficulty.

Results/ conclusions
To do better justice to the diversity in research disciplines as well as topic areas, the working group will develop an alternative framework model, which links to what is being used in other areas, while also keeping an eye for the particularities of these types of research. At the workshop we will present the most suitable frameworks to measure impact as well as concrete indicators in order to monitor and compare performance of projects, institutes or research programmes.
HEALTH CARE RESEARCH IMPACT FRAMEWORKS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE EC’S RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

Peter Fisch
P Fisch
European Commission, DG Research and Innovation, Unit ‘Ex post Evaluation and Reporting’, Brussels, Belgium
Contact: peter.fisch@ec.europa.eu

Background
The European Commission runs a number of activities on Framework Programme evaluation and monitoring. These activities support the implementation and management of the EU Framework Programmes (FP) and the development of research policy. Since 2000 the Commission as a whole has very significantly strengthened its commitment to evaluation and monitoring as part of the reforms for sound and efficient management.

Methods
Building on the evaluation strategy for the Seventh Framework Programme, the EC will develop a detailed and explicit evaluation strategy of Horizon 2020, to be published prior to the start of Horizon 2020. As coherence is a key element in this strategy, the challenge will be to increase the use of common templates, methodologies and key indicators. This should ensure adequate coverage of all areas and components, while also being able to adapt to new developments and revise the strategy where needed.

Results/conclusions
We will clarify the main building blocks for evaluation and monitoring of the Horizon 2020 Programme. We will also provide reflections on the proposed framework from the perspective of measuring and improving impact of EU funded projects. How do the methodologies presented earlier link to the building blocks of Horizon 2020 and what are the main recommendations and implications for those who aim to conduct EU funded research projects?

LINKAGE AND EXCHANGE BETWEEN IMPACT ASSESSMENT IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND IN THE EUROPEAN HSR FIELD

Trisha Greenhalgh
T Greenhalgh
Blizard Institute, Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry, London, United Kingdom
Contact: p.greenhalgh@qmul.ac.uk

Background
Within the United Kingdom a number of evaluation approaches have been developed. Of particular relevance is the Research Excellence Framework (REF), the new system for assessing the quality of research in United Kingdom higher education institutions (HEIs). It has replaced the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) and will be completed in 2014.

Methods
The REF is a process of expert review, based on assessment criteria in several dimension, including impact. The impact dimension focuses in particular on two elements, ‘reach’ and ‘significance’ of research studies. Because of the breadth of research topics and methodologies, it is difficult to propose a standard assessment formula that would allow equitable comparison of disparate projects. Whilst guidance has been published, the formula is essentially untested and will rely heavily on the judgements of panel members and a benchmarking exercise on a sample of submissions in early 2014.

Results/conclusions
Professor Greenhalgh will summarise the provenance and potential of the REF framework for impact case studies, based on her experiences as Deputy Chair of the Main Panel for Medicine in the United Kingdom REF. She will link this to other approaches for assessing impact, including the proposed methodology in the first presentation on measuring impact. She will also reflect critically on the philosophical assumptions and practical and ethical challenges raised by the growing pressure to demonstrate ‘value for money’ in the research endeavour.