

Indicators for evidence-informed policy making and policy phases in the Italian and Danish context

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Background

Public health policies are often not evidence-informed by scientific literature, expert know-how, stakeholders. The European project Research into Policy to enhance Physical Activity (www.repopa.eu) developed an internationally validated list of 25 indicators to assess the presence of evidence informed policy making. When contextualizing the indicators in Italy and Denmark it was necessary to first determine in which policy phases the indicators were most useful.

Methods

Italian and Danish policy makers and researchers (n=27 Italian, 17 Danish) with competences in fields related to physical activity and health were asked by an online questionnaire to assign each indicator to one or more policy phases (agenda setting, formulation, implementation and evaluation) and comment their choice. An indicator was considered useful in a phase if it reached consensus by two thirds of the respondents. Indicators not reaching consensus level in any of the four phases were debated again at national experts meetings.

Results

Both in Italy and Denmark, establishing criteria and procedures to assess whether the policy is evidence-informed was assigned to the policy formulating phase. In Italy, using evidence briefs and scientific articles were assigned to both agenda setting and formulation; working in partnerships with

research institutions in the evaluation phase. In Denmark 18 out of 25 indicators were seen useful during the policy formulation phase. Some indicators were considered relevant on all administrative levels (local, regional, national).

Conclusions

In both countries most of the 25 indicators were attributed to one specific policy phase; others were evaluated as suitable for more policy phases.

Key messages:

- Evidence-informed policy making indicators seem to provide a tool usable for different policy phases
- Contextualization of indicators by bringing perspectives of local stakeholders is necessary to develop tools for decision makers usable at national and local level