

Defining domains of evidence-informed policymaking: pathway from frameworks to indicators

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Background

Public health policymaking needs to be based on research evidence, contextual priorities and resources. After 10 years of research, we still lack a clear research-based pathway from theoretical frameworks to practical tools to assess the level of evidence-informed policy making (EIPM). The aim is to present the pathway from EIPM frameworks to indicators within physical activity policies.

Methods

The setting was Research into Policy to enhance Physical Activity (REPOPA) project, a five year study on integration of research evidence and 'other kinds of evidence' in real world policymaking in six European countries (Denmark, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, and United Kingdom). The

EIPM frameworks guiding the study included: trans-disciplinary decision making framework, knowledge to action cycle, health promotion paradigm and stages of knowledge utilization. Contents analysis of the total of 21 HEPA policy documents and 86 stakeholder interviews were used to define the domains of EIPM in the six REPOPA countries.

Results

The following eight domains of EIPM in physical activity policies were identified: use of best available research evidence; integration of research evidence with contextual needs; involvement of relevant stakeholders; involvement of relevant societal sectors; attention to equity issues; outcome, process and context evaluation of the policy; acknowledging systems approach in policy development and existence of supporting structures for EIPM. These domains formed the basis for intervention development in the REPOPA project as well as the first phase of developing, validating and contextualizing measurable indicators for EIPM using Delphi process.

Conclusions

The framework-guided process, empirical defining of the domains in real-world policies and among stakeholders as well as further development of indicators and validating them provided a transparent pathway from frameworks to indicators.

Key messages:

- This study contributes to EIPM endeavor by suggesting a set of domains as a basis for indicators development
- The domains identified are the first step towards practical tools, indicators and guidance for evidence-informed policy making