How can research influence policy?

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Role of research in healthcare and public health

- Health research has high value to society.

- It can provide important information about:
  - disease trends and risk factors;
  - effectiveness of treatment or public health interventions;
  - patterns of care and service provision, and
  - health costs and efficiency.
Research investment

- Biomedical research has been estimated to consume almost a quarter of a trillion US dollars globally every year.

- About 85% of global health and medical research investment is wasted ($200 billion annually)\(^1\)

- A consistent findings from clinical and health services research is the failure to translate research into practice and policy \(^2\)

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Evidence – practice gap

- Most research is not translated into practice. (Newson et al 2015)

- The process of translation when it occurs is often “slow and haphazard” (Morris et al, 2011, Milat et al 2013)

- On average it takes 17 years to move research into clinical practice (Morris et al, 2011)

- In prevention can take between 5-12 years to move research into practice (Milat et al 2013)

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Translational research framework

Research of greatest public, patient & practitioner benefit

- Idea generation
  - What form of innovation could solve the problem?

- Feasibility
  - Is this intervention practical to implement and acceptable?

- Efficacy
  - Can the intervention deliver expected outcomes under best possible circumstances?

- Replicability and adaptability
  - Can the innovation reproduce the same outcomes under different conditions?

- Effectiveness
  - Does the innovation deliver expected outcomes under normal operational conditions in the health system?

- Scalability
  - How can the innovation be integrated into the wider health system?

- Monitoring
  - Does the innovation achieve sustained outcomes once integrated into the health system?

Research of greatest academic & scientific interest/reward


Importance of intervention research

Only 1 in 5 published studies are intervention research

3-8% of intervention studies are ‘effectiveness’ or ‘scalability’
Increasing research influence

- Set research priorities and research questions that take into account the needs of end users

- Conduct research in collaboration with end users

- Establish ‘implementation laboratories’ that encourages the systematic uptake of research findings and other evidence-based practices into routine practices


Research partnerships with end users

**Benefits for researchers**

– develop a better understanding of system and policy issues
– obtain clearer policy direction for future research
– gain access to a research ‘laboratory’ and funding
– gain support from the Health Organisations, including recognition of the value of their research
– provides an avenue for the translation of their research

**Benefits for policy makers/practitioners**

– better alignment of research with health system and local priorities
– provides access to researcher knowledge
– broader range of evidence on which to base decisions
– provides contacts for ad hoc advice
– supports capability development
Different perspectives and strengths

**Patient perspective**
- Better understanding of individual and population acceptance of and compliance with a new care approach or product.

**Clinician**
- Can advise on the practicality of proposed research methods and approach, and guide real-world implementation and interpretation of findings.

**Academic**
- Expertise in the design of scientifically rigorous projects that can validate a specific outcome.

**Industry partner**
- May bring business acumen necessary to assess and predict market interest in a product or process.

**Health system leadership**
- Can advise on the realistic probability of broad implementation given the system context and policy.

**Policymaker**
- Understanding of the policy context and access to decision making processes.
Types of research partnership

End user engagement

Passive engagement
Responsive audience

Active engagement
Partnership
Co-production

Research drivers
Investigator driven
Priority driven
Partnering with policy agencies

- Establish research partnerships at the inception of the project
- Be clear what you want from the policy agency (financial and/or in-kind contributions; access to program, administrative or survey data; epi or statistical expertise; policy expertise)
- Identify clear research questions:
  - clinically and policy relevant
  - aligned with system (local and/or state) priorities
  - be clear where on the translation continuum project sits
  - clearly defined outcomes
- Align capabilities and partner interests.
- Honest discussion about incentives and deal breakers
- Work towards relationships that generate trust and mutual respect

HOW DO WE INCREASE RESEARCH USE IN POLICY AND PRACTICE IN NSW HEALTH?
A long-term strategic approach in NSW

Generating the ‘right’ research evidence
- Competitive funding schemes
- Funding priority research
- Generating rigorous ‘evidence-from-the-field’
- Focus on implementation science and scale-up

Translation and knowledge mobilisation
- Bridging the gap between decision makers and researchers
- Developing and maintaining research assets
- Capability building
- Accountability
Investment in research pipeline, partnerships and capability building

- Centre for Health Record Linkage (CHeReL)
- HealthStats NSW
- Secure Analytics for Population Health Research and Intelligence (SAPHaRI)
- NSW Health Statewide biobank

**Priority research centres**
- Physical Activity, Nutrition and Obesity Research Group (PANORIG)
- BBV and STI Research, Intervention and Strategic Evaluation Program (BRISE)

**Competitive funding schemes**
- Translational Research Grants Scheme (TRGS)
- Early-Mid Career Fellowships
- Prevention Research Support Program (PRSP)
- Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Early Intervention Innovation Grants

**Collaborative research**
- NHMRC Partnership Centre: The Australia Prevention Partnership Centre
- NHMRC Partnership Projects
- Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Grants

**Other research and evaluation**
- Core funding for the Sax Institute
- Funding provided directly by policy areas for research projects
- Commissioned evaluations of policies and programs

**Enablers**
- NSW Health population health training programs
- NSW population health networks

* BBV=blood borne viruses, STI=sexually transmissible infections

Conclusion

- There is a substantial gap between evidence generation and use in policy practice.

- Effective research partnerships with end users can:
  - ensure a focus on the right research questions
  - reduce the time from evidence generation to practice implementation
  - improve patient and community outcomes
  - enhance research capability and capacity within health systems
  - reduce research waste