Law and Policy-making in Cancer Prevention: Using Evidence, Law, and Political Science to Advance Cancer Prevention Policies

Advancing the use of evidence in cancer prevention policies

Deb Keen, Director, Prevention + Research, Canadian Partnership Against Cancer
Canadian Context

Population: 35.2M
Area: 9,984,670 km²

Average temperature range on December 5: -24°C to +7°C
Healthy Public Policy

A tool for cancer prevention

Policy = powerful tool to improve population health

Enables people to lead healthy lives

E.g., Smoke-free spaces, tanning bed bans,
Evidence-Informed Healthy Public Policy

What is “evidence” anyways?

- Surveillance Data
- Systematic Reviews of Multiple Research Studies
- A Single Research Study
- Program/Policy Evaluation
- Word of Mouth/Marketing
- Personal Experience

...like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder
## Evidence-Informed Decision-Making Model

Integrating research and policy

### Types of Programs/Policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Programs/Policies</th>
<th>Research-tested Program/Policy (peer reviewed research &amp; publication)</th>
<th>Evaluated Program/Policy (peer reviewed publication)</th>
<th>Evidence-Informed Prog/Pol (based on literature)</th>
<th>Prog/Pol based on personal experience/ tacit knowledge (no reference to literature)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Systematic Evidence Reviews</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Efficacy/ Effectiveness Study</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Program/ Policy Evaluation</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program/Policy description/process report</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<td>9</td>
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Evidence in Policy-Making

A more realistic view?

- partisan politics
- other governments
- scientific evidence
- social movements
- courts
- economic interests
- values
- public opinion
- Etc.

Policy Process

Complex and non-linear!

1) AGENDA SETTING
   Public attention focuses on a public problem or issue. Officials’ words and actions help focus attention

2) POLICY FORMULATION
   Policy makers in the legislature and bureaucracy take up the issue. They identify the range of possible responses to address the defined issue/problem.

3) POLICY ADOPTION
   Policy makers formally adopt a policy solution, usually in the form of legislation

4) POLICY IMPLEMENTATION
   Government agencies are tasked with making the policy work by establishing procedures, writing guidance documents, etc.

5) POLICY EVALUATION
   Policy analysts inside and outside government determine whether the policy is addressing the problem and the success of implementation. They may recommend REVISIONS in the agenda, formulation of the policy, or in its implementation.

Policy institutions

Policy ideas

Time

Policy actors

Policy instruments

Clavier & de Leeuw, 2013
Useful Policy Frameworks and Theories

To understand + Inform Cancer Prevention Policies

Multiple Streams (Kingdon)
ambiguous problems, competing for attention, solutions unclear (e.g., Menu Labelling)

Three streams:
**PROBLEM:** how issue perceived/framed, attention receiving
**POLICY:** feasibility, acceptability, alignment with prevailing interests
**POLITICS:** public mood, influence of pressure-groups, administrative/ legislative change

Policy opportunity window opens when streams align // Policy entrepreneur(s) can play important role in accelerating change

Advocacy Coalition Framework (Sabatier)
contentious issues, at least 2 groups involved with differing views on issue, driven by beliefs (e.g., Anti-Tobacco vs Pro-Tobacco, Anti-Tanning vs Pro-Tanning)

**Beliefs** are the causal driver for political behaviour

Small # of **advocacy coalitions** comprised of actors from a variety of institutions sharing a set of policy beliefs

**Evidence** use occurs within context of coalitions and used to bolster their positions

Learning from Experiences of Others
Policy Diffusion

Policy decision-making “doesn’t occur in a vacuum”

Prevention Policies Directory

↑ access to policy information
Supporting Evidence-Informed Cancer Prevention Policy in Canada

Policy Analysis
- Risk Factor
- Jurisdiction
- Geographic Location
- Policy Type

Policy Monitoring and Evaluation

Facilitating Policy Diffusion
Example – Indoor Tanning
Example – Indoor Tanning

Learning from each other

City in BC and province of Nova Scotia introduce legislation in 2010

A city in Ontario learns from these examples to inform their indoor tanning bylaw…

…and so on
Example – Indoor Tanning Policies in Canada

8/10 provinces have introduced legislation

Alberta is considering legislation, using info from Directory + other jurisdictions to inform their work
Evidence-Informed Cancer Prevention Policy

Lessons Learned

✓ Policy is an important tool for action on cancer prevention
✓ Limited policy evaluation information is available
✓ Evidence is only one piece of the policy-making puzzle
✓ To accelerate cancer prevention policy change, building collaborative relationships with other disciplines, such as law and political science, will be key.