Studying the use of research evidence across contexts

Annette Boaz
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
What do we know?

How evidence influences policy and practice has captured our attention, cutting across disciplines and policy/practice domains.
A shift from understanding evidence use with linear models to complex systems approaches

**Linear**
- Disseminating and communicating research
- Formal institutional requests for evidence
- Facilitating access to research

**Relational**
- Building decision-maker skills
- Building researcher skills

**Systems**
- Building professional partnerships
- Strategic leadership
- Rewarding impact
- Creating infrastructure and posts
## Approach to improving evidence use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>How many?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linear</td>
<td>Linear approaches ‘push’ evidence out from academia or ‘pull’ evidence into government</td>
<td>760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>Relational approaches recognise that evidence use is social, relying on expertise and shared understanding. Relational initiatives aim to strengthen skills and support long-term collaborations</td>
<td>696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System</td>
<td>Systems approaches aim to tackle barriers to improved evidence use and create more supportive cultures</td>
<td>466</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### What do research-policy engagement initiatives do?

1. Disseminating and communicating research: 349
2. Formal institutional requests for evidence: 173
3. Facilitating access to research: 238
4. Building decision-maker skills: 226
5. Building researcher skills: 225
6. Building professional partnerships: 245
7. Strategic leadership: 193
8. Rewarding impact: 52
9. Creating infrastructure and posts: 221
What have we learnt?

57 organisations have made evaluations of their work available in the public domain

That’s only 13% of organisations who have shared evaluations

Just under 3% of the initiatives we found
### What to do we know from the literature?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Key insights into evidence use</th>
<th>Implications for conceptualising quality of research evidence use</th>
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</table>
| Health   | • Key frameworks illustrated the complexity of evidence use across all stages of the process.  
• The process involves a dynamic, adaptive interplay of practitioner expertise, evidence, and context, for improved health outcomes.  
• There are a number of factors related to individual and organisational capacity to support and improve research use over time.                                                                 | Need to:  
• identify the scope of evidence use (i.e., what is and is not included);  
• take account of the interplay of practitioner expertise, evidence, and context; and  
• identify and understand the individual and system-wide capacity to support and improve evidence use over time.                                                                 |
| Social care | • Several frameworks indicated the need to balance evidence with practitioner expertise, contextual factors, and client needs.  
• There was no consistency regarding what constitutes effective evidence use and the practitioner capabilities needed to enact it.                                                                 | Need to:  
• take account of the interplay of the evidence with practitioner expertise, context, and client/case needs; and  
• understand what is considered to be effective evidence use and the practitioner capabilities needed.                                                                                           |
| Education | • The term ‘evidence-informed practice’ was thought to better acknowledge the role of practitioner knowledge and expertise in context.  
• There are enablers of evidence use at the practitioner and organisational level.                                                                                                                                                | Need to:  
• take account of the nature and role of practitioner knowledge and expertise in context; and  
• understand enablers at the practitioner and organisational level.                                                                                                                                                              |
| Policy   | • Strong recognition of the need for nuanced approaches to balance the best available evidence, the policy situation, the issues and the views of stakeholders.  
• Quality use was thought to be more linked to policy processes (i.e., how decisions are made and implemented) than to policy outcomes.                                                                 | Need to:  
• recognise the need for balancing the evidence with the broader policy context and support of diverse stakeholders; and  
• consider whether to focus on evidence use processes and/or outcomes.                                                                                                                                                         |
Who do we engage with?

7 Ps Framework to identify stakeholders:
1. Patients and the public
2. Providers
3. Purchasers
4. Payers
5. Public policymakers and policy advocates working in the nongovernmental sector
6. Product makers
7. Principal investigators
Design principles: Organizational elements

1) Clarify the objectives of stakeholder engagement.

2) Embed stakeholder engagement in a framework or model of research use.

3) Identify the necessary resources for stakeholder engagement.

4) Put in place plans for organisational learning and rewarding of effective stakeholder engagement.

5) Recognise that some stakeholders have the potential to play a key role.
Design principles: Values

6) Foster shared commitment to the values and objectives of stakeholder engagement in the project team.

7) Share understanding that stakeholder engagement is often about more than individuals.

8) Encourage individual stakeholders and their organisations to value engagement.

9) Recognise potential tension between productivity and inclusion.

10) Generate a shared commitment to sustained and continuous stakeholder engagement.
Design principles: Working practices

11) Plan stakeholder engagement activity as part of the research program of work.

12) Build flexibility within the research process to accommodate engagement and the outcomes of engagement.

13) Consider how input from stakeholders can be gathered systematically to meet objectives.

14) Consider how input from stakeholders can be collated, analysed and used.

15) Recognising identification and involvement of stakeholders is an iterative and ongoing process.
Empirical studies

Lost in co-production: To enable true collaboration we need to nurture different academic identities.

Annette Boaz
June 25th, 2021
Conceptual insights

The dark side of coproduction: do the costs outweigh the benefits for health research?

Kathryn Oliver, Anita Kothari & Nicholas Mays

Health Research Policy and Systems 17, Article number: 33 (2019) | Cite this article

Exploring what the Notion of ‘Lived Experience’ Offers for Social Policy Analysis

JAN McINTOSH and SHARON WRIGHT

Published online by Cambridge University Press: 24 August 2018

Transforming Evidence for policy and practice
Some resources


