Built Environment and Chronic Disease Prevention: Facilitating Research Translation

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Growing evidence base

Healthy Built Environments
A Review of the Literature
Higher density mixed use developments with connected street networks associated with more walking for transport.
'Tell us something we don't already know or do!' – Allender et al. J Public Health Policy 2009: 30(1):102-16
Questions

▪ Why is there a gap between research and policy and practice?
▪ How do we close the gap between researchers and policy-makers and practitioners?
▪ How do we close the gap between what we know, and what is implemented?
Where different worlds collide...”


‘Travellers in parallel universes...’

1. Negative views of researchers (arrogant, ill informed of policy process)

2. Poor view of research
   • Too much jargon
   • Poorly presented
   • Poorly timed
   • Not locally relevant

3. Poor (or no) view about using research
   • Need instant answers
   • Lack skills
   • Limited access

RESEARCHERS

1. Lack of contact with policy-makers
2. Negative view of policy-makers
   • Uninformed
   • Political hacks
   • Unable to understand complex issues
   • Time consuming
3. Other imperatives – publish, grants, teaching
4. No incentives to work with policy-makers and to promote research
5. Lack skills, confidence and commitment to advocacy

Policy-maker Practitioners

1. Negative views of researchers (arrogant, ill informed of policy process)
2. Poor view of research
   • Too much jargon
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Radomiljac & Giles-Corti, Translating Research into Policy and Practice: A Review
How do we close the gap between researchers and policy-makers and practitioners?
NON-POLICY RELEVANT Research

- Research Question
- Research Methods
- Dissemination Strategy

Partners:
• Researcher
• Other researchers

Strategies:
• Gaps in the evidence-base
• Researchers
• Best practice
• Peer review journal papers
• Conference presentations

Time
NON-POLICY RELEVANT Research

- RESEARCH QUESTION
- RESEARCH METHODS
- DISSEMINATION STRATEGY

Partners:
- Researcher
- Other researchers

Strategies:
- Gaps in the evidence-base
- Best practice
- Peer review journal papers
- Conference presentations

POLICY RELEVANT Research

- POLICY RELEVANT RESEARCH QUESTION
- RESEARCH METHODS
- DISSEMINATION STRATEGY
- ADVOCACY
- POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Partners:
- Researcher
- Other researchers
- Policy makers & practitioners
- Community
- Advocate
- Funding bodies

Strategies:
- Researcher
- Other researchers
- Policy makers & practitioners
- Community
- Advocate (knowledge broker)
- Policy makers
NON-POLICY RELEVANT Research

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**Strategies:**
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POLICY RELEVANT Research

**Partners:**
- Researcher
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- Policy makers & practitioners
- Community

**Strategies:**
- Gaps in the evidence-base
- Linked to local policy
- Relevance to community
- Co-created with policy makers and practitioners
- Funded by funders with interest in knowledge exchange

**POLICY RELEVANT Research**

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- Advocate
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**ADVOCACY**

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT**
**Non-Policy Relevant Research**

- **Research Question**
- **Research Methods**
- **Dissemination Strategy**

**Partners:**
- Researcher
- Other researchers

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- Conference presentations

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**Policy Relevant Research**

- **Policy Relevant Research Question**
- **Research Methods**
- **Dissemination Strategy**
- **Advocacy**
- **Policy Development**

**Partners:**
- Researcher
- Other researchers
- Policy makers & practitioners
- Community
- Advocate
- Funding bodies
- Advocate (knowledge broker)
- Policy makers

**Strategies:**
- Gaps in the evidence-base
- Links to local policy
- Relevance to community
- Co-created with policy makers and practitioners
- Funded by funders with interest in knowledge exchange
- Appropriate study design
- Economic benefits
- Co-benefits for other sectors
- Specific policy recommendations
- Specific policy recommendations
Work with an advocate

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Evidence synthesis to create policy
NON-POLICY RELEVANT

**Research**

**Partners:**
- Researcher
- Other researchers

**Strategies:**
- Gaps in the evidence-base

**Research Question**

**Research Methods**

**Dissemination Strategy**

Time

POLICY RELEVANT

**Research**

**Partners:**
- Researcher
- Other researchers
- Policy makers & practitioners
- Community

**Strategies:**
- Gaps in the evidence-base
- Links to local policy
- Relevance to community
- Co-created with policy makers and practitioners
- Funded by funders with interest in knowledge exchange

**Research Question**

**Research Methods**

**Dissemination Strategy**

**Advocacy**

**Policy Development**

Time

**Advocacy**

- Researcher
- Policy makers & practitioners
- Community
- Advocate/knowledge broker

**Policy Development**

- Policy makers

**Support from multiple sectors**

**Sufficient community support to facilitate change**
How to make this happen?
1. Understand the policy world
2. Establish links with policy-makers and practitioners
3. Work with knowledge-brokers, advocates and lobbyists
4. Jointly establish research agendas
5. Undertake interdisciplinary collaborative research
6. Study economic impacts
7. Evaluate policy reform through natural experiments
8. Understand consumer needs and preferences
9. Highlight specific policy implications
10. Create interdisciplinary built environment & health training
What role for universities and funders (including NHMRC)?

- Change reward systems
  - Shift from primary focus on publications to grant success
- Reward
  - Engagement with policymakers and practitioners
  - Policy-relevant research
  - Communication of findings to decision-makers
- Funding for natural experiments
- Acknowledge - takes TIME and money
Further information

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