POLICY BRIEFS DESIGNED ACCORDING TO THE STP METHOD

Generalities

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Webinar goals

• To explore the roll evidence plays in decision-making regarding the design of health policies and interventions.

• To present methodological concepts about the development of policy briefs employing SUPPORT Tools for evidence-informed health Policymaking (STP Method).
I. EVIDENCE
What is evidence?

Evidence are confirmed facts used to support a conclusion

(Oxman et al. 2009)
Is all evidence of the same quality?

- Not all evidence is equally credible, or of high-quality.
- Evidence resulting from research is generally more solid than random observations. In research, observations are systematically made and analyzed (Oxman et al. 2009).
- Well-designed and conducted research is more convincing than research in which the design and implementation were deficient. (ídem).
Evidence types to orient health decisions
(according to the STP method)

• To formulate accurately informed policies, quality evidence is needed (OPS a).

• There are different types of evidence to inform health interventions…
Evidence Types

a) Expert Opinions

- Expert contributions are valuable, especially to
  - determine the local context, as well as
  - the social and cultural aspects influencing the study problem, and
  - examine the options to address it.

- However, we should be cautious: we should consider expert opinions based on the evidence they are made of, not based on the *persuasion skills* of the experts, or on *who* the experts are (OPS a).
b) Systematic Reviews

- A systematic review is an investigation that gathers single studies of a specific topic aimed at answering a concrete research question (Aguilera Eguía 2014).
Exercise for depression – Review  
(Cooney et al. 2015)

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. To determine the effectiveness of exercise compared with no treatment for depression in adults.

2. To determine the effectiveness of exercise compared with other interventions (psychological therapies, alternative interventions such as light therapy, pharmacological treatment) for depression in adults.
Systematic reviews are guided by a protocol which defines:

- Databases and other sources to use by searching for evidence
- Inclusion and exclusion criteria
- Selection process
- etc.

Exercise for depression – Review
(Cooney et al. 2015)
Grading quality of systematic reviews

- Diverse methods to assess the SR quality, e.g. the AMSTAR criteria.

Table 2: AMSTAR is a measurement tool created to assess the methodological quality of systematic reviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Was an 'a priori' design provided?</td>
<td>☐ Yes, ☐ No, ☐ Can't answer, ☐ Not applicable</td>
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<tr>
<td>The research question and inclusion criteria should be established before the conduct of the review.</td>
<td>☐ Yes, ☐ No, ☐ Can't answer, ☐ Not applicable</td>
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**Conflict of interest stated?**
Potential sources of support should be clearly acknowledged in both the systematic review and the included studies.

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Can't answer
☐ Not applicable
Where to find systematic reviews:

- Cochrane library
  http://www.cochranelibrary.com
- Health systems evidence
  https://www.healthsystemsevidence.org
- PubMed
- CUIDEN
  http://www.index-f.com/new/cuiden/
II. **POLICY BRIEFS** DEVELOPED ACCORDING TO THE STP METHOD
What is evidence-informed policy-making?

- Evidence-informed health policymaking is aimed at making decisions informed by the best available evidence (Oxman et al. 2009).

- Decision making could be guided by policy briefs.

- Ideally, a policy brief is a compendium of available evidence concerning a public priority (OPS a).

- There are diverse methodologies to employ in the formulation of policy briefs, one method are the “STP (SUPPORT Tools for evidence-informed health Policy-making)".
A policy brief developed with STP

• It should not indicate recommendations, its purpose is to inform.

• It is highly recommended that an expert group (or stakeholders) would be involved in its formulation.

• The SUPPORT-Policy Brief includes two principal parts…
A policy brief developed with STP

I. An executive summary (one page in length) with central information on:
   1) the public health problem
   2) options to address the problem; and
   3) key considerations on the implementation of each of the options.

II. The main document with more in-depth information on:
   1) the 3 principal components; and
   2) a quality assessment of the evidence used in the policy brief.
1) Clarification of the problem

Among others, the problem description should contain (OPS b):

• Indicators and comparisons.
• An analysis of the potential origin/s of the problem and its impact on specific population groups.
• Local data.
... Reducing perinatal mortality...

(Grando & Isoyama-Venancio 2016)

THE PROBLEM:

• Increase of perinatal mortality (deaths occurring between the 22nd week of pregnancy to the 7th day after birth).

POSSIBLE CAUSES:

“Among the causes of perinatal mortality, the investigation of deaths conducted by the Municipal Infant Mortality Committee points out that special attention should be given to infections that occur during pregnancy, prematurity (with consequent respiratory distress), teenage pregnancy, and among drug users”.

Source: vbvbvbvbv
2.1) Frame options to address the problem

- Identification of 3 or 4 policy/intervention options to tackle the problem guided by the examination of the best available evidence.
Options to address the problem of perinatal mortality in the municipality of Porto Feliz:

- **Option 1.** Qualify the attention to prenatal care through the pregnant woman’s risk classification and adequacy of tests management.
- **Option 2.** Prepare protocol for prevention and treatment of respiratory distress of the newborn.
- **Option 3.** Implement family planning focused on the prevention of teenage pregnancy and the prevention and treatment of illicit drug use during pregnancy.
- **Option 4.** Structure and organize education activities in health and home visits in prenatal and postpartum care.

... Reducing perinatal mortality... (Grando & Isoyama-Venancio 2016)
2.2) Analyze the options

- By examining the best available evidence (e.g. systematic reviews), benefits, harms, costs, uncertainties, key components, and stakeholder opinions regarding each of the options should be recognized.
3) Option implementation considerations

• To identify potential barriers as well as facilitators that could impede/enable the implementation of each option (from 4 dimensions)…

The success of the intervention seems to depend more on political commitment and organizational capacity than the resource availability.
GRACIAS POR SU ATENCIÓN
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Organización Panamericana de la Salud. (a) Unidad 2: Introducción a las políticas de salud informadas por evidencia. (Presentación). Organización Panamericana de la Salud. EVIPNet.

Organización Panamericana de la Salud. (b) Unidad 7: Resúmenes de evidencias para políticas. (Presentación). Organización Panamericana de la Salud. EVIPNet.

