


Using Intervention Research to Guide Public Health Actions and Policy


Penny Hawe, Markin Institute,
University of Calgary
phawe@ucalgary.ca

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What is PRISM	The background and development of PRISM	Key minimum elements of the PRISM Program	Local PRISM initiatives undertaken in support of mothers	Support for program implementation, feedback to communities and monitoring activities	PRISM results
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Program of Resources, Information and Support for Mothers



Cette présentation a été effectuée le 24 octobre 2006, au cours du Symposium "La recherche et la formation comme fondements des actions efficaces en santé publique - Les expériences nationales et internationales" dans le cadre des Journées annuelles de santé publique (JASP) 2006. L'ensemble des présentations est disponible sur le site Web des JASP, à l'adresse <http://www.inspq.qc.ca/jasp>.

Essay

Contested ground: how should qualitative evidence inform the conduct of a community intervention trial?

Therese Riley, Penelope Hawe¹, Alan Shiell¹

VicHealth Centre for Promotion of Mental Health and Social Wellbeing, School of Population Health, University of Melbourne, Australia;
¹Department of Community Health Sciences, University of Calgary, Canada

This paper presents issues which arose in the conduct of qualitative evaluation research within a cluster-randomized, community-level, preventive intervention trial. The research involved the collection of narratives of practice regarding the intervention by community development officers working in eight communities over a two-year period. The community development officers were largely responsible for implementing the intervention. We discuss the challenges associated with the collection of data as the intervention unfolded, in particular, the disputes over cues to revise and adjust the intervention (i.e. to use the early data formatively). We explore the ethical uncertainties that arise when multiple parties have different views on the legitimacy of types of knowledge and the appropriate role of research and theory in various trial stages. These issues are discussed drawing on the fields of ethnography, community psychology, epidemiology, qualitative methodology and notions of research reflexivity. We conclude by arguing that, in addition to the usual practice of having an outcome data-monitoring committee, community intervention trials also require a process data-monitoring committee as a forum for debate and decision-making. Without such a forum, the relevance, ethics and position of qualitative evaluation research within randomized controlled trials are destined to be a point of contention rather than a source of insight.

Journal of Health Services Research & Policy Vol 10 No 2, 2005: 103-110 © The Royal Society of Medicine Press Ltd 2005

Haes WFM de, Voorham AJJ, Mackenbach JP.
Wijkgericht werken aan gezondheidsbevordering in vier achterstandswijken in Rotterdam (1) Opzet, uitgangspunten en beschrijving van het proces *TSG - Tijdschrift voor Gezondheidswetenschappen*. 2002; **80**:425-430

Voorham AJJ, de Haes WFM, Mackenbach, JP.
Wijkgericht werken aan gezondheidsbevordering in vier achterstandswijken in Rotterdam (2) Leerpunten uit de praktijk *TSG - Tijdschrift voor Gezondheidswetenschappen*. 2002; **80**:431-435

The “theory of the problem” versus the “theory of the solution”

McLeroy, et al. *Health Ed Research* 1993

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Today

What is intervention research?

What demands should be made of IR and
intervention researchers in order to improve the
way IR is used to guide public health action and
policy

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Take home message

There needs to be more intervention research to inform population-level prevention policies and programs – whole system approach.

Intervention researchers are potentially ill-equipped in terms of skills required for real-time accountability



unique, urgent training needs

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Definitions

Intervention research (IR) knowledge that comes from intervening in a putative causal pathway

Population health IR use of scientific methods to produce knowledge about policy and program interventions that operate within or outside the health sector and have the potential to impact health at the population level

IPPH of CIHR focus interventions which shift the distribution of risk

Definitions

Intervention research (IR)	knowledge that comes from intervening in a putative causal pathway
Population health IR About 5% of pop. health research	use of scientific methods to produce knowledge about policy and program interventions that operate within or outside the health sector and have the potential to impact health at the population level
IPPH of CIHR focus	interventions which shift the distribution of risk

More than just causal enquiry

assessment of reach, implementation, quality, participant satisfaction, adjustment to local context, interaction with context, costs, cost effectiveness, sustainability, multiplier effects, unintended effects

Current state of the field

Lack of sufficient evidence in enough areas

In 50% of the interventions reviewed the US Preventive Services taskforce has found that there is insufficient evidence to make practice recommendations.

Zaza et al, 2005

Evidence is skewed

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A Census of Economic Evaluations in Health Promotion 1990-2001

Strategic Intent of the intervention	Studies
Clinical - preventive	41%
Developing personal skills	33%
Creating supportive environments	20%
Strengthening community action	2%
Building healthy public policy	1%

SOURCE: (1) Rush, Shiell et al. *Health Education Research*, 2004;
n = 414 studies

Census of Economic Evaluations of Health Promotion 1990-2001

Risk Factor Addressed	Studies
Biological risk factors	49%
Behavioural risk factors	41%
Environmental risk factors	9%
Social risk factors	1%
Economic risk factors	< 1%

SOURCE: (1) Rush, Shiell *et al.* *Health Education Research*, 2004
n = 414 studies

Made worse because.....

- Ineffective and harmful programs proliferate
e.g., school substance abuse prevention
- Funding allocations are still made on the evidence of the problem not the effectiveness of possible solutions
- Charismatic champions and premature dissemination
- Divide arisen between IR and evaluation research in population health

THEORY AND METHODS

Criteria for evaluating evidence on public health interventions

L Rychetnik, M Frommer, P Hawe, A Shiell

J Epidemiol Community Health 2002;**56**:119-127

See end of article for authors' affiliations
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Correspondence to:
Lucie Rychetnik, Effective
Healthcare Australia, Victor
Coppleson Building, DO2,
University of Sydney, NSW
2006, Australia;
lucier@med.usyd.edu.au
Accepted for publication
30 July 2001
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Public health interventions tend to be complex, programmatic, and context dependent. The evidence for their effectiveness must be sufficiently comprehensive to encompass that complexity. This paper asks whether and to what extent evaluative research on public health interventions can be adequately appraised by applying well established criteria for judging the quality of evidence in clinical practice. It is adduced that these criteria are useful in evaluating some aspects of evidence. However, there are other important aspects of evidence on public health interventions that are not covered by the established criteria. The evaluation of evidence must distinguish between the fidelity of the evaluation process in detecting the success or failure of an intervention, and the success or failure of the intervention itself. Moreover, if an intervention is unsuccessful, the evidence should help to determine whether the intervention was inherently faulty (that is, failure of intervention concept or theory), or just badly delivered (failure of implementation). Furthermore, proper interpretation of the evidence depends upon the availability of descriptive information on the intervention and its context, so that the transferability of the evidence can be determined. Study design alone is an inadequate marker of evidence quality in public health intervention evaluation.

PHIRIC Population Health Intervention Research Initiative for Canada

New 10 year initiative to increase the quantity, the quality of IR and use of results by policy makers and practitioners

Catalyst agencies :

- CIHR Canadian Institutes of Health Research
- CIHI Canadian Institute for Health Information
- CDPAC Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance for Canada
- PHAC Public Health Agency of Canada

Training Implications: the skill set of the intervention researcher

Technological e.g., research design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, write up

People skills

Social skills

Communication

Policy analysis

Political Analysis

Evaluability assessment

etc

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A “problem-based” learning that recognises the (inevitable) role of the intervention researcher in the change process.

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OBITUARIES DESK
416-585-5509
Fax: 416-585-5699
obit@globeandmail.ca

DEATH NOTICES
416-585-5111

IN BRIEF

RICHARD WOLHEIM, 80

**Philosopher, art critic,
coined term 'minimalism'**

London. Richard Wollheim, a philosophy professor whose writing on visual art and psychoanalysis made him one of the field's most innovative thinkers, has died.

Prof. Wollheim, 80, died of failure at his home in London last Tuesday, said a statement from the University of California at Berkeley, where he served as chairman of the philosophy department until his retirement last year.

