

Reviewer's report

Title: Evidence-informed health policy: 1. Synthesis of findings from a multi-method study of organizations that support the use of research evidence

Version: 1 **Date:** 9 April 2008

Reviewer: Jako Burgers

Reviewer's report:

Evidence informed Health Policy.

This review refers to the series of four articles identified below. The articles are drawn from a report to the World Health Organisation. The report was peer reviewed prior to its acceptance by WHO and one of those reviewers has also provided the review below on the series of four papers submitted to Implementation Science.

Title : Evidence-informed health policy: 1. Synthesis of findings from a multi-method study of organizations that support the use of research evidence

Journal: Implementation Science

Type : Research article

Other subject areas: International health and human rights, Public health

Authors: John N Lavis, Andrew D Oxman, Ray Moynihan and Elizabeth Paulsen

Title : Evidence-informed health policy: 2. Survey of organizations that support the use of research evidence

Journal: Implementation Science

Type : Research article

Other subject areas: International health and human rights, Public health

Authors: John N Lavis, Elizabeth Paulsen, Andrew D Oxman and Ray Moynihan

Title : Evidence-informed health policy: 3. Interviews with the directors of organizations that support the use of research evidence

Journal: Implementation Science

Type : Research article

Other subject areas: International health and human rights, Public health

Authors: John N Lavis, Andrew D Oxman, Ray Moynihan and Elizabeth Paulsen

Title : Evidence-informed health policy: 4. Case descriptions of organizations that support the use of research evidence

Journal: Implementation Science

Type : Research article

Other subject areas: International health and human rights, Public health

Authors: John N Lavis, Ray Moynihan, Andrew D Oxman and Elizabeth Paulsen

Dear Martin,

In response to your request, I have checked the papers and noticed that the text of the papers was almost 100% 'copied and pasted' from the original report, with exception of the changes addressing the comments. The authors addressed the comments appropriately, taking into account the scope of the report with the WHO as key stakeholder. As papers for Implementation Science, I would argue whether these have added value to the report that is also available in the public domain. I think that the sections with implications for WHO should be retained but that, additionally, the authors could anticipate on the practical implications and potential actions needed (see my original comment). The discussion sections of the papers offer the opportunity to include their thoughts on this, having the readers of the Journal in mind. This could raise the interest in the papers and reducing the duplication with the WHO-report.

Although the papers can be read separately, they are strongly related and have a similar structure (in particular the 2nd, 3rd and 4th of the series). However, the length of the papers differ substantially. To increase the readability I would favour to limit the length to a maximum of maximum of 3.500-4.000 words and to put examples and other interesting findings in appendices. Obviously, I leave it up to you and Brian, as editors-in-chief, to decide upon this.

I have the following specific comments on the individual papers:

1. Synthesis of findings.

The first paragraph of the Discussion section 'Principal findings...' duplicates with the Results and does not add anything. I would skip this paragraph and start with the text of the paragraph 'What the multi-method adds', but without heading. As a result, the structure of this paper would slightly different from the other three papers but this is justifiable as this describes a synthesis of findings.

Following my comments above, I would add a paragraph 'Practical implications', in which the authors describe concrete actions needed to implement the recommendations into practice. For instance, as suggested in my original comment:

- o organizing educational and networking workshops in LMICs bringing together different stakeholders, such as researchers, healthcare professionals and policy makers

- o facilitating links between researchers and policy makers through contacts with governments and local authorities

- o supporting international research projects with the aim to bridge the gap between research and policy, focussing on LMICs

- o supporting capacity building by involving high potentials in LMICs in high impact projects in their own country (to prevent 'brain drains').

Another suggestion is to add a section on Future research needed. This fits

well in our Journal and could encourage follow-up of the gaps in knowledge.

To increase the readability of the paper a table summarizing the messages would be welcome. This could include the recommendations for organizations and WHO and potential actions needed.

2. Survey of organizations

To reduce the length of the paper, I would suggest integrating the quantitative and qualitative findings. It is unclear why these were separately presented. Examples, citations and detailed findings could be put in separate boxes or files.

The discussion section is OK with me. Maybe the authors could suggest repeating the survey after a few years, to determine changes in time. The survey could then include more organizations, in particular those from LMIC's and the Alliance on Health Policy and Systems Research as suggested by Mary Ann Lansang (p. 19 comment file).

3. Interviews with directors

This paper is too long and does not read well due to its length. I hope the authors are able to edit the text and reduce the number of words to a maximum of 5000. In particular the Result section can be much shorter. Examples and citations could be put in boxes and/or additional files. In addition, tables could be used to summarize the quantitative findings and possibly the key statements and key phrases of the directors linked to the themes discussed.

In the Discussion section, p. 23: the sentence starting with 'The advice offered...' until the end of the paragraph ('... across organizations') could be skipped as it duplicates with the Results and does not add anything.

4. Case descriptions

The length of this paper is ok.

Table 1 should include a link to the video files

A table could be added with the strengths and weaknesses of the organizations and the key factors of success as suggested by Maimunah Hamid (p. 20 comment file).

Another table could be included with all suggestions put forward and their frequency.

I hope these thoughts and suggestions will help you in publishing the series of paper. If you need more help, please let me know.

Best wishes,

Jako

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.