

Integrating different types of knowledge to inform policy-making

A summary of

Morestin, F., Gauvin, F.-P., Hogue, M.-C., & Benoit, F. (2010). Method for Synthesizing Knowledge about Public Policies. Montreal: National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy. Retrieved from: http://www.ncchpp.ca/172/Publications.ccnpps?id_article=536



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Categories:

Method, Synthesize, Policy development

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Method

Relevance For Public Health

This method can be used by public health professionals acting as advisors to decision-makers during the promotion, adoption and implementation of public policies. It can help them to synthesize knowledge about:

- how effective policies are at promoting health;
- how effective they are in a given context; and
- issues involved in implementing policies.

For example, the authors of this method used it to synthesize knowledge about public policies related to nutrition labelling on food packaging.

Description

Developed by the National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy (NCCHPP), this resource offers a way to bring together [different forms of evidence to inform policy decisions](#). This method provides public health professionals with a systematic approach to synthesizing different types of information (e.g., scientific evidence, grey literature, experiential knowledge of stakeholders) during the promotion, adoption and implementation of public policies.

This method was specifically designed to help public health professionals analyze public policies by considering:

- data about the effects of public policies (effectiveness, unintended effects, equity); and
- data on issues related to the successful implementation of policies in specific contexts (cost, feasibility, acceptability).

This method is informed by theory and literature related to political science, policy analysis, evidence-informed decision making in public health, evaluation and deliberative processes.

The resource includes the following sections:

- description of a framework for analyzing public policies
- description of the types and sources of data to be considered in the analysis
- description of the steps for conducting a knowledge synthesis

Implementing the Tool

Who is Involved?

Implementation of the Method:

The method was designed to be used by public health professionals acting as advisors to decision-makers during the promotion, adoption and implementation of public policies.

These summaries are written by the [NCCMT](#) to condense and to provide an overview of the resources listed in the [Registry of Methods and Tools](#) and to give suggestions for their use in a public health context. For more information on individual methods and tools included in the review, please consult the authors/developers of the original resources.

Participants:

Step 4 of the method involves coordinating a *deliberative dialogue*, which means bringing together stakeholders concerned with the problem of interest for a meeting. The people who are invited to participate in the meeting should be those who can bring forward knowledge about the expected effects of the policy of interest, or about issues related to its potential implementation (e.g., experts with technical knowledge about the subject, decision-makers who can shed light on the feasibility or acceptability of the policy or even members of the public or civil society). These stakeholders might come from the health sector or other sectors concerned about the issue. They may represent public, private or community perspectives.

Steps for Using Tool

The steps for using this method include the following:

1) Compile an inventory of policies that could address the issue of interest and choose the policy that will be the subject of the knowledge synthesis. This involves:

- exploration of the grey literature;
- survey of the scientific literature; and
- selection of the subject of the knowledge synthesis.

2) Make explicit the intervention logic of the policy being studied (the sequence of effects expected to link the policy to the issue).

3) Synthesize the data, drawn from the literature, on the effects of the policy in contexts where it has been implemented and on issues related to its implementation. This involves:

- conducting a document search;
- appraisal of the quality of data;
- data perusal and extraction; and
- synthesis of data drawn from the literature.

4) Contextualize the data through deliberative processes that bring together stakeholders with an interest in this issue.

5) Synthesize the data in the final document by integrating the different types of knowledge gathered from the literature and the deliberative processes.

To access the knowledge synthesis method in the following formats, go to the National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy website ([click here](#)):

1. full method
2. summary of the method

An application of the method for public policies on nutrition labelling is also available (in full and summary formats).

Evaluation and Measurement Characteristics

Evaluation

Has not been evaluated

Validity

Not applicable

Reliability

Not applicable

Methodological Rating



Not applicable

Tool Development

Developers

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Method of Development

The analytical framework and steps of the method were informed by theories and frameworks developed in the fields of political science and policy analysis (e.g., Salamon, 2002; Swinburn et al., 2005), as well as literature on evidence-informed decision making in public health, evaluation and deliberative processes. Developed by the National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy (NCCHPP), this resource supports public health actors working in healthy public policy. For more information on analyzing public policies, see [NCCHPP's website](#).

Release Date

2010

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Resources

Title of Primary Resource	Method for Synthesizing Knowledge About Public Policies
File Attachment	None
Web-link	http://www.ncchpp.ca/172/Publications.ccnpps?id_article=536
Reference	Morestin, F., Gauvin, F.-P., Hogue, M.-C., & Benoit, F. (2010). <i>Method for Synthesizing Knowledge about Public Policies</i> . Montreal: National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy. Retrieved from: http://www.ncchpp.ca/172/Publications.ccnpps?id_article=536
Type of Material	Report
Format	On-line Access
Cost to Access	None.
Language	English, French
Conditions for Use	Information contained in the document may be cited provided that the source is mentioned.

Title of Supplementary Resource	Obesity prevention: A proposed framework for translating evidence into action
File Attachment	None
Web-link	http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-789X.2005.00184.x/abstract
Reference	Swinburn, B., Gill, T., & Kumanyika, S. (2005). Obesity prevention: A proposed framework for translating evidence into action. <i>Obesity Reviews</i> , 6, 23-33.
Type of Material	Journal article
Format	Periodical
Cost to Access	
Language	English
Conditions for Use	Copyright © 2005 The International Association for the Study of Obesity

These summaries are written by the [NCCMT](#) to condense and to provide an overview of the resources listed in the [Registry of Methods and Tools](#) and to give suggestions for their use in a public health context. For more information on individual methods and tools included in the review, please consult the authors/developers of the original resources.

Title of Supplementary Resource	The New Governance and the Tools of Public Action: An Introduction (book chapter)
File Attachment	None
Web-link	
Reference	Salamon, M. L. (2002). The new governance and the tools of public action: An introduction. In L.M. Salamon (Ed.), The tools of government: A guide to the new governance (pp. 1-47). New York: Oxford University Press.
Type of Material	Book chapter
Format	Paper copy
Cost to Access	Book purchase
Language	English
Conditions for Use	Copyright © 2002 Oxford University Press

Title of Supplementary Resource	Public policies on nutrition labelling: Effects and implementation issues - A knowledge synthesis
File Attachment	None
Web-link	http://www.ncchpp.ca/172/Publications.ccnpps?id_article=562
Reference	Morestin, F., Hogue, M.-C., Jacques, M., & Benoit, F. (2011). Public policies on nutrition labelling: Effects and implementation issues - A knowledge synthesis. Montreal: National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy.
Type of Material	Report
Format	On-line Access
Cost to Access	
Language	English, French
Conditions for Use	Information contained in the document may be cited provided that the source is mentioned.

Title of Supplementary Resource	Method for Synthesizing Knowledge about Public Policies: Summary
File Attachment	None
Web-link	http://www.ncchpp.ca/172/Publications.ccnpps?id_article=576
Reference	Morestin, F. (2011). Method for Synthesizing Knowledge about Public Policies: Summary. Montreal: National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy.
Type of Material	Summary
Format	On-line Access
Cost to Access	None.
Language	English, French
Conditions for Use	Information contained in the document may be cited provided that the source is mentioned.