

# Lavis' framework for knowledge transfer

## A summary of

Lavis, J. N., Robertson, D., Woodside, J. M., McLeod, C. B., & Abelson, J. (2003). How can research organizations more effectively transfer research knowledge to decision makers? *Milbank Quarterly*, 81(2), 221-222.



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## Categories:

Method, Adapt, Implement, Evaluate, Communication, Knowledge dissemination, KT theories

## Date posted:

February 27, 2012

## Date updated:

September 12, 2017

## Method

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## Relevance For Public Health

This framework can be used to support organizations in sharing evidence for specific initiatives or to examine knowledge transfer processes for the organization as whole. Four target audiences are identified for this framework: the general public/service recipients; service providers; managers; and policy decision-makers at the local, provincial and federal levels.

## Description

The developers outline a [knowledge transfer framework](#) based on five questions designed to develop and share research to inform decision making. This framework was developed by combining information from the literature and survey findings of how applied research organizations in the health and social/economic sectors conduct knowledge transfer. This framework is helpful for organizations seeking to develop more effective knowledge transfer processes. The developers aim to align this framework with principles of evidence-based public health by including the most effective techniques from research in the field under each of the five points.

This knowledge transfer framework is the basis for a planning guide, *From Research to Practice: A Knowledge Transfer Planning Guide*, developed by the Institute for Work & Health. To see a summary statement on this tool in the Registry, [click here](#).

The framework for knowledge transfer consists of five questions:

- What should be transferred to decision-makers (the message)?
- To whom should research knowledge be transferred (the target audience)?
- By whom should research knowledge be transferred (the messenger)?
- How should research knowledge be transferred (the knowledge-transfer processes and supporting communications infrastructure)?
- With what effect should research knowledge be transferred (evaluation)?

## Implementing the Tool

### Who is Involved?

Individuals and organizations can use this framework to understand, evaluate and improve their knowledge transfer processes to ensure they present and deliver research evidence appropriately to influence relevant decision-makers. Consultants, specialists, health promotion officers and others would benefit from this approach to knowledge transfer.

### Steps for Using Tool

People can use these five questions to analyze their current knowledge transfer processes and compare them to the ideal conditions delineated in the literature.

What should be transferred to decision-makers?

- Include actionable messages
- Base information on multiple studies or systematic reviews rather than a single study
- Include "ideas" rather than only data

To whom should research knowledge be transferred?

- Tailor message based on target audience
- Ensure developers understand the context of each group (e.g., political climates for policy-makers)
- Use the available research to understand who can act, who influences these actors and who is likely to be successfully reached by each method

By whom should the research knowledge be transferred?

- Ensure the messenger is credible to the target audience
- Remember that some situations may require a knowledge broker or other intermediary to function as a credible messenger, rather than the knowledge producer

How should research knowledge be transferred?

- Use interactive engagement, such as academic detailing and opinion leaders
- Exchange of information and needs between researchers and decision-makers can lead to continued use of research rather than "one-off" uses
- Use websites and newsletters to augment transfer, but remember that they do not replace interactive methods

With what effect should research knowledge be transferred?

- Ensure information is appropriate to target audience and objectives
- May capture a process, intermediate outcome or outcome
- May include instrumental use, conceptual use or symbolic use
- Leave evaluation of performance or improved health outcomes to individual initiatives, not the knowledge translation evaluation

## Evaluation and Measurement Characteristics

### Evaluation

Has not been evaluated

### Validity

Not applicable

### Reliability

Not applicable

### Methodological Rating



Not applicable

## Tool Development

### Developers

John N. Lavis  
 Dave Robertson  
 Jennifer M. Woodside  
 Christopher B. McLeod  
 Julia Abelson

### Method of Development

The authors identified the five-point framework to outline the overall process of knowledge transfer. A qualitative review of systematic reviews and single studies was completed and used to inform recommendations under each point of the framework.

### Release Date

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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.

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## Resources

<b>Title of Primary Resource</b>	How can research organizations more effectively transfer research knowledge to decision-makers?
<b>File Attachment</b>	None
<b>Web-link</b>	<a href="http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1468-0009.t01-1-00052/epdf">http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1468-0009.t01-1-00052/epdf</a>
<b>Reference</b>	Lavis, J. N., Robertson, D., Woodside, J. M., McLeod, C. B., & Abelson, J. (2003). How can research organizations more effectively transfer research knowledge to decision makers? <i>Milbank Quarterly</i> , 81(2), 221-222.
<b>Type of Material</b>	Journal
<b>Format</b>	Periodical
<b>Cost to Access</b>	Not specified
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Conditions for Use</b>	© 2003 Milbank Memorial Fund

<b>Title of Supplementary Resource</b>	From research to practice: A knowledge transfer planning guide
<b>File Attachment</b>	None
<b>Web-link</b>	<a href="http://www.iwh.on.ca/system/files/documents/kte_planning_guide_2006.pdf">http://www.iwh.on.ca/system/files/documents/kte_planning_guide_2006.pdf</a>
<b>Reference</b>	Reardon, R., Lavis, J., & Gibson, J. (2006). From research to practice: A knowledge transfer planning guide. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.iwh.on.ca/from-research-to-practice">http://www.iwh.on.ca/from-research-to-practice</a> .
<b>Type of Material</b>	Workbook
<b>Format</b>	On-line Access
<b>Cost to Access</b>	None.
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Conditions for Use</b>	© 2006 Institute for Work & Health

<b>Title of Supplementary Resource</b>	Examining the role of health services research in public policymaking
<b>File Attachment</b>	None
<b>Web-link</b>	<a href="http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1468-0009.00005/epdf">http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1468-0009.00005/epdf</a>
<b>Reference</b>	Lavis, J., Ross, S., Hurley, J., Hohenadel, J., Stoddart, G., Woodward, C., et al. (2002). Examining the role of health services research in public policymaking. <i>Milbank Quarterly</i> , 80(1), 221-248.
<b>Type of Material</b>	Journal
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