

# SUPPORT tool for considering equity in decision making

## A summary of

Oxman, A. D., Lavis, J. N., Lewin, S. & Fretheim, A. (2009). SUPPORT Tools for evidence-informed health Policymaking (STP) 10: Taking equity into consideration when assessing the findings of a systematic review. *Health Research Policy and Systems*, 7, (S1): S10. doi: 10.1186/1478-4505-7-S1-S10



National Collaborating Centre  
for Methods and Tools  
Centre de collaboration nationale  
des méthodes et outils

## How to cite this NCCMT summary:

National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools (2012). *SUPPORT tool for considering equity in decision making*. Hamilton, ON: McMaster University. (Updated 12 September, 2017) Retrieved from <http://www.nccmt.ca/resources/search/120>.

## Categories:

Tool, Synthesize, Adapt, Implement, Policy development, Situational assessment

## Date posted:

March 15, 2012

## Date updated:

September 12, 2017

## Tool

---

## Relevance For Public Health

Equity considerations are increasingly relevant in planning public health policies and programs. This tool could be used to determine the impact of an initiative on disadvantaged groups to ensure that health inequities are not increased, and if possible, are reduced.

## Description

Developed by the SUPporting POLicy relevant Reviews and Trials (SUPPORT) Project, [this tool](#) provides four questions to help policy-makers determine the impact of policies and programs on disadvantaged groups. With scenarios, case examples and resources, this tool offers a structured approach to assessing research evidence with an equity lens during decision making.

Inequity has been defined as "differences in health which are not only unnecessary and avoidable, but in addition, are considered unfair and unjust" (Whitehead, 2002; cited in Oxman, Lavis, Lewin & Fretheim, 2009). There is very little evidence of the impact of policies or programs on inequities. Systematic reviews typically do not assess the effectiveness of policies or programs across different groups. Often there is a lack of evidence related to disadvantaged groups since they may not have been included in studies. For more equity resources, see [NCCDH's Resource Library](#).

This tool is part of a series to support the use of research evidence in policy making. The SUPPORT series includes 18 tools that address four broad areas:

- developing organizational support for evidence-informed policy making
- identifying needs for research evidence for policy making
- finding and assessing research
- moving from research to action

To access the full suite of tools, which are available through the *Health Research Policy and Systems* journal, [click here](#). To access the tools in a book format, available from the Norwegian Knowledge Centre for the Health Services, [click here](#).

## Implementing the Tool

### Who is Involved?

This tool could be used by any individual or organization considering equity when assessing research evidence, systematic reviews in particular. The SUPPORT tools are targeted to policy-makers and those who support policy-makers in assessing evidence for decision making.

### Steps for Using Tool

The SUPPORT Tool consists of four questions:

---

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.

- Which group or settings are likely to be disadvantaged relative to the policy option being considered?
- Are there reasons for differences in the relative effectiveness of the option for disadvantaged groups or settings?
- Are there likely to be baseline differences across groups or settings that could influence the effectiveness of the option? Would these baseline differences mean the problem is more or less important for disadvantaged groups or settings?
- What should be considered when implementing the proposed option to ensure that inequities are reduced and/or not increased?

The authors provide concrete examples and explanations for each of these questions and discuss their overall relevance to the concept of equity in health programs.

## Evaluation and Measurement Characteristics

### Evaluation

Information not available

### Validity

Not applicable

### Reliability

Not applicable

### Methodological Rating



Unknown/No evidence

## Tool Development

### Developers

Andrew D. Oxman  
 John N. Lavis  
 Simon Lewin  
 Atle Fretheim  
 SUPPORT Project (SUPporting POLicy relevant Reviews and Trials)  
 Website: <http://www.support-collaboration.org>

### Method of Development

The SUPPORT Tools have been designed to help people use the best available research evidence in their decision making. The SUPporting POLicy relevant Reviews and Trials (SUPPORT) Project is an international collaboration funded by the European Commission's 6th Framework. There are 18 tools in total, including tools that address:

- using research to clarify a problem;
- using research to frame options for a policy issue;
- preparing policy briefs; and
- using policy dialogues in decision making.

The tools are freely available through the *Health Research Policy and Systems* journal ([click here](#)).

### Release Date

2009

### Contact Person

Andrew D. Oxman  
 Norwegian Knowledge Centre for the Health Services  
 Oslo, Norway  
 Email: [oxman@online.no](mailto:oxman@online.no)

## Resources

<b>Title of Primary Resource</b>	SUPPORT Tools for evidence-informed health Policymaking (STP) 10: Taking equity into consideration when assessing the findings of a systematic review.
<b>File Attachment</b>	None
<b>Web-link</b>	<a href="http://www.health-policy-systems.com/content/7/S1/S10">http://www.health-policy-systems.com/content/7/S1/S10</a>
<b>Reference</b>	Oxman, A. D., Lavis, J. N., Lewin, S. & Fretheim, A. (2009). SUPPORT Tools for evidence-informed health Policymaking (STP) 10: Taking equity into consideration when assessing the findings of a systematic review. <i>Health Research Policy and Systems</i> , 7, (S1): S10. doi: 10.1186/1478-4505-7-S1-S10
<b>Type of Material</b>	Journal article
<b>Format</b>	Periodical
<b>Cost to Access</b>	None.
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Conditions for Use</b>	Copyright © 2009 Oxman et al; licensee BioMed Central Ltd.

<b>Title of Supplementary Resource</b>	SUPPORT Tools for evidence-informed health Policymaking (STP)
<b>File Attachment</b>	None
<b>Web-link</b>	<a href="http://www.health-policy-systems.com/content/7/S1/I1">http://www.health-policy-systems.com/content/7/S1/I1</a>
<b>Reference</b>	Lavis, J. N., Oxman, A. D., Lewin, S. & Fretheim, A. (2009). SUPPORT Tools for evidence-informed health Policymaking (STP). <i>Health Research Policy and Systems</i> , 7 (Suppl 1): 11. doi: 10.1186/1478-4505-7-S1-11.
<b>Type of Material</b>	Journal article
<b>Format</b>	Periodical
<b>Cost to Access</b>	None.
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Conditions for Use</b>	Copyright © 2009 Lavis et al; licensee BioMed Central Ltd.

<b>Title of Supplementary Resource</b>	SUPPORT Tools for evidence-informed health Policymaking (STP)
<b>File Attachment</b>	None
<b>Web-link</b>	<a href="http://www.kunnskapssenteret.no/en/publications/support-tools-for-evidence-informed-health-policymaking-stp">http://www.kunnskapssenteret.no/en/publications/support-tools-for-evidence-informed-health-policymaking-stp</a>
<b>Reference</b>	Oxman, A. D., Lavis, J. N. Lewin, S., & Fretheim, A. (2010) <i>SUPPORT Tools for evidence-informed health Policymaking (STP)</i> . Report no 4-2010. Oslo: Norwegian Knowledge Centre for the Health Services.
<b>Type of Material</b>	Report
<b>Format</b>	On-line Access
<b>Cost to Access</b>	None.
<b>Language</b>	Links to Chinese, French, Portuguese and Spanish translations are available from <a href="http://www.support-collaboration.org">http://www.support-collaboration.org</a>
<b>Conditions for Use</b>	Not specified