Research into policy to enhance physical activity

REPOPA

EC FP7 /Research/Health/Health Promotion
1 Oct 2011-30 Sept 2016
9 (now 7) partner institutions, 6 European countries
(DK, FIN, IT, NL, RO, UK) + CA

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EC Cluster meeting Nutrition & Physical Activity, Budapest 2016
Why evidence into policy?

- Structural aspects make physical activity easier for individuals

- Policies, environment important (Lancet PAseries-12)

- National guidance and policies to be increased + policymakers should take physical activity seriously, attention to vulnerable groups (Lancet PAseries-16)

- Hardly any studies on **HOW** to develop policies by integrating research evidence in real-world (local) policymaking
Danish policymaker: "You researchers tend to push your scientific opinion, but we policymakers have to take into account many other opinions"

- How did we learn that?
  - We tried university-municipality collaboration with shared positions in three municipalities
  - one collaboration died soon, one took years to take off, but one survived and is flourishing still today
Towards evidence-informed decision making

Evidence-informed policymaking (EIPM)

• Research (only) informs policymaking;
• Other kinds of contextual knowledge and issues are also taken into account.

(Satterfield et al 2009)
Towards evidence-informed decision making

REPOPA Aim

- Integrate scientific research knowledge, expert know-how & real world policy making process to increase synergy & sustainability in promoting health and preventing disease by:
  - Building on evidence & experiences on policy making processes
  - Studying innovative ‘win-win’ ways to collaborate between academia & policymakers
  - Establishing structures & best practices for future health promotion
Towards evidence-informed decision making

How did we do it?

Frameworks guiding REPOPA
- EIPM
- Knowledge translation/transfer, knowledge to action (Straus et al 2008), stages of knowledge use
- Political science
- Organizational change
- RE-AIM for the evaluation
- Systems approach

Research methods
- Descriptive and mostly qualitative, case studies
Towards evidence-informed decision making

First phase: Use of research and other type of evidence in policy making: document analysis and stakeholder interviews
THL - WP leader, all EC partners

Second phase: Policy game interventions on cross-sector decision making
Tranzo - WP leader, RCPH, UBB

Second phase: Locally tailored interventions on evidence-informed policy making
SDU - WP leader, CNR, CBO

Third phase: Implementation and guideline development (Delphi)
CNR - WP leader, all EC partners

Process and outcome evaluation
UOttawa - WP leader, all REPOPA partners

Dissemination, country-specific platforms for evidence-informed policy making
UBB - WP leader, all EC partners
Role & use of evidence

- 21 national, regional and local HEPA policy documents analyzed; 86 stakeholders interviewed (DK, FI, IT, NL, RO, UK)
  - E.g. Olympics, Health Nearby, Pedibus, Sports for All 3rd Milennium, Transport policy, Walking and Cycling policy etc (Aro et al 2015)

- No/Few systematic and explicit uses of research evidence + mixed evidence

- **Main facilitators:** relevant, timely & easy to use research evidence, evidence-oriented organizational culture, structures for researchers and policymakers to meet, media

- **Main barriers:** scientific jargon, lack of time, of resources & competences, traditions, bureaucracy, political interests
Towards evidence-informed decision making

2nd phase Policy game intervention

- 3 policy simulation games on cross-sector collaboration
- DK, NL, RO; local level; 1 day, 18-20 pers/country
- Real cross-sector stakeholders, fictive municipality
- Roleplay using real policymaker roles
- Systems analysis; observations, questionnaires T0, T1,

Main results

- Enhanced understanding on cross-sector, local HEPA policy processes
- Insight into importance of leadership support in evidence use
- Opportunities for collaboration & networking
- Positive changes in benefits & attitudes towards research knowledge use

Practical outcome: Spin-off game in NL, interest elsewhere
2nd phase

Locally tailored interventions

- 6 local, needs-based, real-policy interventions (DK, IT, NL)
- pre, post and 12mo f-up; common + context-specific measures
- Workshops, meetings, inter-sectoral action, Delphi process; 6-12mo
  - E.g. Strategy for Physical Activity, Healthy Roads, Students’ Olympics, Neighborhood Sports, Senior Citizen Physical Activity Strategy

Main results:
- Increase in access, request & use of knowledge from research, stakeholders & policy target groups = EIPM
- Not always influence on decisions; not always sustainable up to 1y
- Raised awareness: organizational procedures increase sustainability
- Decreased barriers of evidence use

Practical outcome:
- In DK a spin-off study: PA among elderly; IT longer local intervention
3rd phase
Delphi study: indicator development

- Delphi process to test and validate indicators for EIPM
- 2 online rounds; 82 panelists

- Generic list of 25 measurable indicators in 4 categories
- +8 ‘complex’ indicators

- National Consensus Conferences in 6 REPOPA countries: validation, SWOT & contextualization of the indicators

- **Tools developed:**
  - Checklist of 25 indicators, guidance resource, national policy briefs
Towards evidence-informed decision making

**Human resources**
- Staff with research experience, stakeholders, researchers with policy-making experience, partnerships with research institutions, training courses on research methods and EIPM

**Documentation & re-production**
- Procedures for using scientific articles and/or reports in policy, availability of evidence briefs and reports from similar policies, publication of own policy results

**Communication & participation**
- Initiatives to inform, communicate with and/or consult researchers, stakeholders, target groups, own communication competences

**Monitoring & evaluation**
- Having criteria and procedures to monitor the use of knowledge from research, stakeholders and target groups, involving researchers
Towards evidence-informed decision making

Enhancing sustainability & learning

- Platforms for EIPM
  - Web-based umbrella platform
  - Country-specific platforms

- Practical tools developed
  - Indicators, guidance resources
  - Policy briefs

- Enhancing lay communication
  - Use software to edit texts for lay people
  - Learn to write ‘grand ma’ summaries

- Inbuilt process and impact evaluation
  - Collaboration, network, quality monitoring by Canadian partner
Summary & Conclusion

REPOPA found innovative ways & developed tools & structures to integrate research & real-world policymaking in physical activity in Europe.

REPOPA researchers & policymakers worked together on equal footing to develop best practices for EIPM.

REPOPA enhanced social innovation & societal impact by co-creating with stakeholders policies, which are salient & relevant for different contexts.

WIN-WIN APPROACH!
Towards evidence-informed decision making

Thank you!

REPOPA Consortium

Partners include:
✓ Research institutes
✓ Practice, implementation & policy institutes
✓ Variety of countries & cultures