P14 / Public Policy and its Impact on the Health-related Sustainable Development Goals: Enactment, Enforcement, Effectiveness, and Equity

Topic : POLICY DESIGN, POLICY ANALYSIS, EXPERTISE AND EVALUATION

Chair : Arijit Nandi (McGill University)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Public policies feature prominently as potential solutions to and the “means of implementation” for achieving the health-related Sustainable Development Goals. As the former Secretary General Ban Ki-moon remarked, “With the right policies, adequate and fairly distributed funding, and a relentless resolve to deliver to those who need it most – we can and will make a life-changing difference for current and future generations.” But, which policies are the “right” policies?

Public policies are constantly evolving, both within and across countries, and the rigorous evaluation of policy reforms can generate causal evidence on the effect of a particular program or policy and can help assess if the intervention was effective (or not). As evidence builds incrementally, we can synthesize findings and generate timely and actionable evidence for improving population health and mitigating health inequalities.

Major gaps exist, however, in our understanding of how public policy impacts population health and health inequality. First, there are critical data gaps, in terms of the legislative reforms that have been recently enacted, the enforcement of these reforms, and the health outcomes plausibly affected. Second, we often lack information on the effectiveness of different policy interventions, or “natural experiments”, particularly those implemented at scale (e.g., nationally). Recent growth in the application of quasi-experimental methods for impact evaluation, coupled with qualitative methods for monitoring and evaluation, could enhance our understanding of the consequences of specific policy reforms in terms of their health effects, as well as their influence on gender and social inequalities in health. Third, impact evaluation of public policies remains a black box, and we frequently lack information on specific mechanisms of action. Fourth, the cost-effectiveness of distinct policy reforms is usually unknown, and this information could inform evidence-based policymaking. The objective of this panel is to identify solutions for addressing these gaps.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in 2015 comprise a number of health-related targets, primarily under Goal 3: Good health and wellbeing. These health-related SDGs cannot be achieved without the design and implementation of effective national-level policies, including those targeting the social determinants of health By affecting the “circumstances in which people are born, grow up, live, work and age, and the systems put in place to deal with illness”, broadly defined as the social determinants of health, public policies have the potential to influence population health and health inequalities. However, our ability to use public policy as an instrument to improve population health and reduce health inequalities is limited: we do not yet understand well enough how public policies and programs can be used to influence social determinants of health. Rigorously assessing the impact of interventions, from national policies to smaller-scale programs, has become an active area of inquiry in social sciences such as economics, but less so in public health. Through impact evaluation, we can achieve a better understanding of which public policies and programs really make a difference to population health.

This panel is soliciting papers relevant to the study of national-level public policies and their impact on the health-related SDGs. Areas of interest include: comparative policy analysis and the identification of policy “experiments”, including those related to social, health, public health, and environmental health policy; enforcement and the assessment of policy enforcement; methods for impact evaluation, including quasi-experimental approaches, as well as how qualitative and mixed-methods approaches can be employed to complement quantitative tools for impact evaluation; cost-effectiveness and extended cost-effectiveness analyses for examining the effects of legislative reforms in relation to their costs. We welcome submissions from non-academics interested in the process of policy formation, as well as academics interested in policy evaluation.

Accordingly, some examples of interest include, but are not limited to:

(1) studies investigating the evaluation of public policy approaches and the factors influencing trends;

(2) research into the enforcement of different public policies approaches;

(3) studies assessing the impact of public policies on health-related SDGs, or inequalities in these outcomes;

(4) investigation of the mechanisms through which public policies might influence population health;

(5) accounting of the costs of alternative policy approaches, particularly when put in context with their effects.

The panel also welcomes discussion papers from knowledge users such as non-governmental organizations and government departments, on for example, their experiences with impact evaluation or what their organizations need from researchers.

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Session 1

Wednesday, June 26th 14:00 to 16:00 (MB 9 B)

Canadian Health Care Delivery: Federalism, Centralization, Decentralization and the Changing National Role

Howard Palley (Sch, of Social Wk, University of Maryland)

Understanding Public Policy Priorities for Childhood Disabilities in Canada Through Computational Text Mining of Public Consultation Data

Keiko Shikako (McGill University)

Assessing the implementation of health promoting program: the case of the Health Academy in Brazil

Dalila Tusset (University of Brasilia)

Paulo Calmon (Universidade de Brasília)

Impact of Trauma Center Accreditation in Quebec

Brice Batomen (McGill University)

Arijit Nandi (McGill University)

Can a new emergency response system reduce traffic fatalities? The case of Dominican Republic.

Jose Ignacio Nazif-Munoz (Université de Sherbrooke)

Arijit Nandi (McGill University)

Can Conditional Cash Transfers Improve Maternal and Child Health? Evaluating India's Conditional Maternity Benefit Program

Raghav Puri (Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University)