Why do we need timeliness of research for decision-making?

Judith D. de Jong, Johan Hansen, Peter P. Groenewegen
Short answer:

• To facilitate the use of research evidence in decision-making.
• To have an impact.
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What can we, as researcher do?
Use of research evidence

• Research evidence is often not used in decision-making

• Why not? (Lugo-Gil et al, 2019)

• Researchers’ questions differ from decision-makers questions
• Research evidence is not available when needed for decision-making
• Objectives do not always align with those of decision-makers
• Decision-makers have difficulty obtaining research findings
• Research findings are presented in a manner that is not accessible to non-experts, and
• Researchers create products that do not meet the information needs of decision-makers
Differences in speed

- Compared to the policy process, research is slow
- Research evidence not always available when needed in the policy process
- This hinders the use of evidence
What should be timely?

• Research evidence should be available when needed in the policy process
• The right questions should be addressed
• The results should be presented in an understandable manner
• The results should be easy to find
Bridging the gap between research and policy

• communication between researchers and policy makers
• via personal contacts
• timing
• write clear summaries and recommendations
• build trust (personal trust and institutional trust)
When is research evidence used? An example

• Research: Improvement of service by an insurance company related to long-term care

• Research questions developed in interaction with the insurance company, with a focus on aspects sensitive for policy

• Research planning and policy process were aligned.

• Research evidence was presented to and discussed with the insurance company (presentation, report, short overview)

• Results were translated into policy by the insurance company immediately and embedded in an improvement plan
When is research evidence not used? An example

• Research: Cost sharing in health care

• Research questions developed in interaction with the advisory body on health insurance, not with the decision-maker, the Ministry of Health
• Research planning and policy process were aligned, until the moment that a cabinet crisis prompted new elections and a new government coalition was formed.
• Research evidence was planned to be available in a half year’s time, but the new coalition decided not to wait and abolished the cost-sharing arrangement
• Results were not used, even not when some years later new policy ideas for cost-sharing were being developed.
How to reach impact?

• Relationships between researcher and decision-makers
• Develop relationships before the research even starts and maintain them during the research process
• Think about what problem you are solving for whom?
• Different ways of disseminating the evidence: how do you reach your target audience?
Impact creation

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To conclude

• Timeliness of research is important for evidence based policy making.
• In order to create timeliness of research, interaction between researchers and policy makers is necessary.
• To have an impact, think about what, when and how before you start.
Kennis voor betere zorg

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