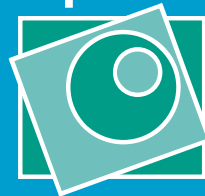


*Using research to inform
health systems strengthening*

The need for systematic and collaborative
approaches in synthesizing health systems research

Experiences from the



**Alliance for
Health Policy and
Systems Research**

HTA for Health System Sustainability

8th Annual meeting of HTAi

Rio de Janeiro 2011

Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research

Objective	Strategies
1. Knowledge generation	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Leverage resources to fund original HPSR2. Support the development of systematic reviews3. Support strategic, multi-country research on HPSR
2. Application of HPSR to policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none">4. Package and disseminate summaries of systematic reviews5. Support national processes to promote evidence-informed policy
3. Capacity Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none">6. Support development and dissemination of HPSR methods7. Develop innovative approaches to strengthen institutional capacity to apply evidence to policy



Alliance Systematic Review Centres: Purpose and Objectives

- Develop capacity of low and middle income countries (LMICs) to conduct systematic reviews on HPSR issues
- Conduct reviews on three main thematic areas (Human Resources, Health Care Financing and Role of Non-State Actors)
- Further develop methodologies for systematic reviews in HPSR



Alliance Systematic Review Centres

- Four centres selected in LMICs
 1. Centre for Human Resources for Health - Makerere University, Uganda
 2. Centre for Health Financing- Shandong University, China
 3. Centre for Role of Non-state Sector in Health - ICDDR, Bangladesh
 4. Centre on methodology - University Pontificia, Chile
- Technical assistance
 - EPOC satellite at Norwegian Knowledge Centre, Oslo
 - EPPI centre, Institute of Education, London
 - Liverpool school of Tropical Medicine



Alliance Systematic Review Centres: Achievements

Uganda centre

- Effects of changes in the pre-licensure education of health workers on health worker supply, published in Cochrane library in 2009
- Dual practice regulatory mechanisms in the health sector: A systematic review of approaches and implementation, published in EPPI centre library in March 2011
- 4 reviews in pipeline:
 - Effects of interventions to manage dual practice (protocol), published in Cochrane library in 2010.
 - Effects of interventions implemented to manage absenteeism among health workers
 - Interventions for managing the movement of health workers between public and private organizations
 - Regulatory mechanisms for absenteeism in the health sector - a systematic review of approaches and implementation



Alliance Systematic Review Centres: Achievements

China

- Expanding health insurance coverage in vulnerable groups: a systematic review of options, was published in Health Policy and Planning in Sept 2010
- Effects of Outreaching strategies for expanding health insurance of children, published in Cochrane library
- Means testing for targeting the people in health programs: A systematic review of the approaches
- Cost-sharing mechanisms in health insurance schemes: A systematic review-in pipeline

Bangladesh

- Social Franchising Evaluations: A Scoping Review published in EPPI centre library
- Impact of Community Mobilization on Safe Motherhood in pipeline



Alliance Systematic Review Centres: Achievements

Chile

- Interventions to control emigration of health professionals from low and middle income countries. A systematic review completed in 2008
- Handbook for reviewers in HPSR
- Database of 300 primary studies in HPSR
- Briefing note about synthesis methods in HPSR



Many Types of Reviews Are Needed

- Research evidence can support many steps in health system strengthening (and reviews make this feasible)
 - Defining the **problem**
 - Assessing potential policy and program **options**
 - Identifying **implementation** considerations
- Even if a systematic review is not applicable to a particular setting, insights can still be drawn about
 - Features of a problem
 - Ideas about possible options
 - Possible implementation considerations
 - Approaches to monitoring and evaluation

Many Types of Reviews Are Needed (2)

- Reviews of *observational studies* (e.g., administrative database studies, registries, community surveys)
- Reviews of *qualitative studies* that examine stakeholders' views about and experiences with the problem, how or why interventions work (i.e., process evaluations), stakeholders' views about and experiences with particular options
- Reviews of *effectiveness studies* (e.g., randomized controlled trials, interrupted time series, controlled before/after studies)

Effectiveness reviews: Distribution of study-design selection criteria

- 414 reviews in www.healthsystemsevidence.org met all our meta-review selection criteria; 13% did not indicate study-design selection criteria
- 359 systematic reviews indicated criteria:

EPOC criteria: RCT, CCT, CBA and ITS

Selection criteria	%
Some EPOC	60
RCT only	36
RCT & CCT	14
Other subsets of EPOC	10
All EPOC	15
Some EPOC & other	9
All EPOC & other	4
All study designs	12

Peter Rockers, Andrea Feigl, Atle Fretheim, John-Arne Røttingen, David de Ferranti, John Lavis, Hans Olav Melberg, Till Bärnighausen, in prep



Systematic reviews on other questions than effectiveness

- Less consensus on how to synthesise non-experimental evidence, especially including qualitative research
- Can still be systematic, rigorous, explicit
- But have to deal with different designs, research traditions, theoretical orientations
- Approaches are largely question- and available evidence-driven
- Relevant when policies/interventions tend to be more context-dependent in design and effects
- Different approaches for combining qualitative & quantitative evidence
 - Mixed methods reviews, meta-ethnography, narrative synthesis, realist reviews

Alliance Working Group on Health Systems Research Synthesis

- Call for a collaboration to facilitate knowledge translation by creating a global repository for the corpus of best practices in health systems development (Dean Julio Frenk, HSPH)
- Session at Global Forum for Health Research, Havana, Cuba in November 2010: Do we need a Cochrane-like collaboration for synthesizing health systems evidence?
- Consultation document sent out in May 2010
- Meeting of Alliance Working Group on Health Systems Research Synthesis in London on October 1 2010
- Session at First Global Symposium on Health Systems Research, Montreux in November 2011: Do we need an international collaboration for synthesizing health systems evidence?
- Discussions with the Cochrane Collaboration



Current landscape - international collaboration

- Cochrane Collaboration (C1)
- Campbell Collaboration (C2)
- Health Technology Assessment International (HTAi)
- 3IE and C2 have set up:
 - Lower and Middle Income Countries Coordinating Group
- DFID/AusAID/3IE calls for systematic reviews on development
- DFID called for:
 - the creation of an independent and international collaboration to oversee the creation and dissemination of systematic reviews in international development
- Alliance's process
- Innovative methods for reviews: individual institutions, e.g. EPPI centre
- Knowledge translation initiatives, e.g. EVIPNet

Recommendations for the Alliance (from WG)

1. Stewardship: Play a central role in advancing the science of HSR synthesis by developing and strengthening networks between stakeholders that have an interest in HSR synthesis and translation:
 - Form Advisory Group
 - Coordinate with Task Force on Evidence for Health Systems Guidance (led by Andy Haines)
 - Plan consultation(s) with experts and stakeholders
 - Support discussions with Cochrane and Campbell Collaborations and 3ie
2. Supporting syntheses and capacity building: Provide support, information sharing and potential coordination related to:
 - setting priorities for HSR synthesis regionally and globally
 - conducting syntheses
 - increasing capacity building for HSR synthesis and translation



Recommendations for the Alliance (from WG)

3. Dissemination: Advocate for and support a common global database for all types of systematic reviews of HSR
 - Support use and development of Health Systems Evidence (www.healthsystemsevidence.org) (hosted at McMaster University)

4. Methods for effectiveness syntheses: Explore ways in which quasi-experimental methods can be used in Cochrane and Campbell HSR reviews.



Recommendations for the Alliance (from WG)

5. Methods for non-effectiveness reviews: Collaborate in a consortium to produce, edit and publish reviews addressing questions other than effectiveness, for example:
 - Reviews to establish stakeholders' views about a health systems problem
 - Reviews of potential negative effects of a policy option
 - Reviews to determine why an intervention has worked

6. Prospective registration: Advocate for and support prospective registration of all protocols for systematic reviews when they are planned:
 - e.g. international prospective register of systematic reviews (PROSPERO) for effectiveness reviews

