



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Positively Influencing the Determinants of Health

Practical Contributions that can be made by Population Health

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J. Jones

Functional Manager Health Promotion,
Health Service Executive West, Ireland.



Aim

- Identify the practical contributions that Population Health can provide, to enable government departments to positively influence the determinants of health



Objectives

- Identify the extent to which the health of the population and health promotion are referred to in a selection of national and strategic publications
- Determine the contributions that Population Health can provide to enable government departments to have a positive influence on the determinants of health

The Research

Review of national and strategic publications for references to:

- The determinants of health
- Promoting the health of the population
 - Total: 26 publications
 - Government Departments 'Statement of Strategy 2005-2007'
 - National Policy/Strategic Publications e.g. NDP, Towards 2016, Spatial Strategy
 - HSE 'Transformation: Programme 2007-2010'

Survey with representatives from government departments and Population Health for:

- Suggestions of practical contributions
 - Sample: 33 representatives (15 GD: 18 PH)
 - Response rate: 70% (12 GD: 11PH)

Findings: Review of the Publications

Review of government departments 'Statement of Strategy' publications

- Five departments made reference to the social, economic and environmental influences that can impact on health, quality of life and well-being of the population

...these trends can sometimes have an adverse effect on the health and quality of life of those affected (DoT)

- Eight departments stated that they aimed to protect and improve the health, quality of life and well-being of the population

...committed to improving health status in line with the National Health Strategy (DoES)

- One department stated that it aimed to reduce health inequalities

Findings: Review of the Publications

Review of national policy publications

- Six publications made reference to the social, economic and environmental influences that can impact on health, quality of life and well-being of the population

...address key social challenges by assessing the risks and hazards which the person faces and the supports that are available to them at each stage of the life cycle (Towards 2016)

- Nine publications stated that they aimed to improve health, quality of life and well-being of the population

...improve health outcomes...by seeking to improve the health and well-being of the whole population (NDP)

- Four publications stated that they aimed to reduce health inequalities

...bring health inequalities to the fore in health policy (Programme for Government, 2002)

Findings: Survey

Survey with representatives from government departments

- Seven respondents acknowledged that the work that their department does, impacts on health

...given the established link between a positive socio economic environment and health status, the importance of the departments role is obvious

- Four respondents stated that their strategic objectives and actions do not directly aim to influence health or the determinants of health

...tackling the determinants of health is not an overt aim of this departments policies. The extent to which it does as secondary and not purposeful.

- One respondents stated that the improvement of health outcomes was not a primary objective for the work of their department

Findings: Suggested Practical Contributions

As suggested by respondents from government departments:

- Enhance the knowledge base of departments in relation to health, the determinants of health and how the work of each department impacts on these issues
- Develop the awareness of departments in relation to Population Health and its features
- Demonstrate the effectiveness of activities that can positively influence the determinants of health
- Demonstrate the value for money that can be achieved

A key question with regard to public money is whether or not services and programmes are achieving value for money

- Provide to policy makers a user friendly methodology/toolkit so as to develop health public policy



Findings: Survey

Survey with representatives from Population Health

- Believed that health is not at the centre of public policy
- Perceived that decision makers not aware of population health approach
- Policies are government driven rather than being health driven
- Actions by health sector to address the determinants described as being “sporadic and ineffective”
- A lot of parallel working in the health sector on addressing the determinants of health

Findings: Suggested Practical Contributions

As suggested by respondents from Population Health:

- Affirm a Population Health approach across the delivery of services

...need to get agreement about what is an effective population health approach for us within Population Health

- Re-orientate the delivery of services to that which focuses on keeping the population healthy
- Educate government departments re. health, the determinants of health and their interaction – use the evidence base
- Develop an toolkit for policy makers to use
- Demonstrate the value for money to be achieved by acting on the determinants of health
- Population Health to be included in the policy making process

Findings: Suggested Practical Contributions

- Enhance the practice and the use of Health Impact Assessments

...Health Impact Assessments are not used enough in health and the status of these could be dramatically improved upon

- Continue bottom-up approach – build on the successes of locally based activities

- Population Health to engage with the general public in addressing the determinants of their own health

- Population Health to develop, enhance and drive relationships with a variety of sectors to protect and promote health

...can support other sectors to develop their capacity in translating determinants of health knowledge into policy and practice

- Build the capacity of Population Health

...detail the contributions that population Health can provide



Recommendations

- Assert the use of a population health approach within the workings of government departments and Population Health
- Continue enhancing and making obvious the determinants of health evidence base
- Increase the practice of Health Impact Assessments and incorporate their use into policy development
- Engage Population Health and other sectors of society in the creation of relationships that protect and promote health

Any Questions?



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If you would like more information on this presentation, please contact:

Jacky.Jones@mailn.hse.ie

or

HealthPromotion@mailn.hse.ie