Towards a Model for Evidence-based Public Health

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With a few ad hoc additions from Hajo Zeeb, BIPS

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Definition

Public Health is the science and the art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting physical health and efficiency through organized community effort …

Winslow 1920

As a starter: EBPH – the „science“ part of this definition
Evidence-based Public Health – three questions

1) How does evidence get into Public Health?
2) What kind of evidence for Public Health?
3) What is the role of evidence in Public Health - in relation to resources, values, and interests?

Naïve “push-model”

[Diagram showing the relationships between Review of Evidence, Policy Making, and Health Service]
How does evidence get into Public Health?

**Stakeholder: Decisions**
- Public health problem
- Public health programme

**Researcher: Evidence**
- Choice of adequate methods, e.g.
  - Cohort study
  - Cost-effectiveness study
  - Qualitative methods

Collecting and creating of evidence
Model of evidence-based public health: Exchanging and negotiating

What kind of evidence for Public Health?
Overweight and obesity: Medical/epidemiological aspects

Questions
Who needs to be treated?
Which endpoints? BMI, waist-hip-ratio, or medical consequences?
Effects and side-effects of the interventions?

Methods
Case-control studies
Cohort studies
Cluster randomised-controlled studies

Role of epidemiology (Brownson 1999)
Type 1 Studies: something should be done
Type 2 Studies: this should be done
(Type 3 Studies: in this or that context)

TREND - Statement

Trend checklist with 22 points
Checklist are for checking, not to replace critical analysis and thinking
Overweight and obesity: Socio-cultural aspects

Possible questions
- Is this a form of medicalisation of a social problem?
- Is there a risk of stigmatisation related to specific interventions?

Possible methods
- qualitative und quantitative interviews
- participative methods

What is the role of evidence in Public Health - in relation to resources, values, and interests?
Evidence is not independent from resources, values, and interest

Examples:

Biomedical vs. social model for the prevention of obesity

Numerous studies show that the type of sponsor of a study is a good predictor for the outcome
Definition

Evidence-based Public Health aims at keeping and improving health at the population level.

The available knowledge on the medical, economic, ethical, social, cultural, and legal aspects of health and the health-related measures should be assessed in a scientific manner.

All steps – from the definition of the problem to the execution of measures and programs - should be explicit, transparent and judicious.

Translated from Gerhardus (2010)