Translating Research into Policy
An assessment of the needs of policymakers around Substance Use Disorder, Hepatitis C and HIV

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About CHERISH

Methodology

HCV and HIV

Dissemination and Policy

Pilot Grant and Training

Administrative

Provide researchers with trainings on dissemination best practices

Host conferences bringing together research and policy communities

Produce issue briefs, white papers and blog posts translating research findings to target audiences

Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of policymakers and present these findings
Evidence-based health policy

Communication gap between researchers and policymakers
- Quaglio et al, 2015
- Hanney et al, 2003

Health policies not informed by evidence
- O'Connor et al, 2012
- Lindblom & Cohen, 1979

Policies informed by intuition, ideology, conventional wisdom or theory
- Campbell et al, 2009

Unnecessary drawbacks in health policy
- Innvaer et al, 2002
- Oliver et al, 2015

The needs assessment aims at understanding the drivers of the communication gap between researchers and policymakers in order to bridge this gap and foster the creation of evidence-based policies.
Project Significance

1. **What is already known on this topic**
   - Policymakers (should) need evidence

2. **What question this study addressed**
   - What is the extent of the evidence use/need in health policy making around substance abuse, HIV and HCV?

3. **What this study adds to our knowledge**
   - Explicit needs of policymakers, ways in which to reach, impact and persuade them, customer-centric approach

4. **How is this relevant to policy and practice**
   - Assesses the ways in which evidence could be integrated into policy to improve policymaking
The Framework Method (1)

Data gathering
- List of interviewees
- Phone interviews with policymakers & such
- Inquiries about research needs and uses, barriers and facilitators

Transcription
- Outsourced
- Contextual and reflective notes about the identity of the interviewees
- De-identification of transcripts

Coding
- Open coding: coding what seems important
- Using a basic analytical framework based on the a priori questions in the interview guide
- Get a holistic impression of what was said

April 2016 - Ongoing
June – August 2016

Gale et al, 2013
The Framework Method (2)

Developing an analytical framework

Compare the labels applied and formally create ‘nodes’

Nodes: ‘buckets’ – where common themed pieces of information are grouped

Applying the analytical framework

An analytical framework is a set of codes organized into categories jointly created by the researchers to manage qualitative data

Using Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) NVIVO, interviews are coded

Coded transcripts are merged

Ongoing process – as more interviews are coded, new nodes might be needed and the analytical framework should be amended

July – August 2016
The Framework Method (3)
Preliminary Findings - Literature

- Different language, terminology, framing.
- Absence of personal contact
- Different channels of communication
- Different time frames
- Popular belief that relevant research doesn’t exist

- Creation of briefs, short summaries, and systematic reviews of published findings
- Creation of partnerships and open dialogue opportunities between researchers and policymakers
- Use of appropriate media channels to disseminate research
Preliminary Findings - Interviews

Emerging themes from
Node 1: Mechanisms and processes in which policymakers get and use research

• Mechanisms in which policymakers get research
  1. Relationships (x19)
  2. Conferences, webinars (x6)
  3. Literature (x13)
  4. Systematic ways of getting research/use of technology (x6)
  5. Internal resources (x7)
  6. Organizations (x6)
  7. No way to obtain research (x2)

• Mechanisms in which policymakers use research
  1. Dissemination/Information (x14)
  2. Advocacy (x8)
  3. Legislation (x16)
  4. Not used/used maliciously (x2)
Future Research

- **Charting data into the framework matrix**
  - Coding Summaries by Nodes and Coding Comparison Queries are run to estimate the percent agreement between coders
  - Using Microsoft Excel, create a framework matrix summarizing the main ideas of the interview

- **Interpreting the data**
  - Develop themes that offer possible explanations as to the use and need of research in policymaking
  - Create a memo summarizing the themes, the codes that are included within that theme, the summary of the raw data clustered by patterns, and future considerations

- **Publication and Presentations**
  - Draft manuscript
  - Present the data at Academy Health

September – December 2016
Takeaways

- Rigorous qualitative research
- How-to Youtube videos are actually really helpful – but human resources are better
- Nvivo
- Social media is not just for political rants
Acknowledgements
References

Project Scope – SUD, HIV, HCV

- **Needle Exchange Program:**
  - Policy informed by evidence b/c of public opinion
  - Impact assessment research in NYC (Deren et al, 2003)
  - No internal change in government structure and strategy

- **Research from smaller countries:**
  - National movement to alleviate the rates of HIV prevalence more effective than local initiative (Acker et al, 2013).
  - Population size considerations when applying this to the US

- **Opioid Overdose toolkit, 2013:**
  - Uses the appropriate research and evidence
  - Aims at empowering the state and local governments to implement effective overdose prevention policies, thus showing a very positive potential outcome.

- **National Drug Control Strategy, 2014:**
  - “In reality, drug use and its consequences are complex phenomena requiring an array of evidence-based policy responses.”
  - SUD, HIV and HCV policies most often not based on evidence and research
  - Clear push towards more reasonable decision making processes for policy makers.

**The extent of the issue**
- IDUs: 12.7 M people
- IDUs + HIV: 1.7 M people
- HCV: 2.7 M people in US only

*(UNAIDS, 2014)*