

EXPLORING BARRIERS TO RESEARCH UTILIZATION IN POLICY FORMULATION: RESEARCHERS' PERSPECTIVES

THESIS

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By

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

"وما توفيقي إلا بالله عليه توكلت وإليه أنيب"

(هود، ٨٨)

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**To My Parents
And
To Nada**

ABSTRACT

The current study is a cross-sectional exploratory semi-quantitative study conducted at universities, governmental and non-governmental research organizations to which the interviewed researchers were affiliated.

It aimed to explore the attitudes and perspectives of researchers towards the use and impact of research in the performance of the health sector in Egypt.

Our findings in the current study showed that lack of communication between researchers and policymakers and lack of funds allocated to the research process represent the most important hindering factors for the use of research results in evidence-based policy making.

The study recommended that innovative ways of knowledge sharing between researchers and policymakers and increasing funds allocated for health research are the most important facilitating factors for utilization of research results in evidence-based policymaking.

Keywords:

Health research – Health sector – Policy-makers –
Evidence-based policy-making

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AHPSR	:	Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research
CHSRF	:	Canadian Health Services Research Foundation
CIHR	:	Canadian Institutes of Health Research
COHRED	:	Council on Health Research for Development
CWGH	:	Community Working Group on Health
ECDPM	:	European Center for Development Policy Management
EMRO	:	Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office
ENHR	:	Essential National Health Research
GFHR	:	Global Forum for Health Research
GRIPP	:	Getting Research into Policy and Practice
HINARI	:	Health Inter Network Access to Research Initiative
HPSR	:	Health Policy and Systems Research
HRS	:	Health Research System
HSR	:	Health Systems Research
IMCI	:	Integrated Management of Childhood Illness
JLI	:	Joint Learning Initiative
KT	:	Knowledge translation
MOHP	:	Ministry of Health and Population
NAST	:	National Academy of Science and Technology
NGOs	:	Non Governmental Organizations
NHA	:	National Health Accounts
NHRs	:	National Health Research Systems
NPC	:	National Population Council
OECD	:	Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation
PHC	:	Primary Health Care
PPM DOTS	:	Public-Private Mix Directly Observed Therapy Short Course

REACH	:	Regional East-African Community Health
TEHIP	:	Tanzania Essential Health Interventions Project
USAID	:	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	:	World Health Organization

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Health research is important for health development and achieving the internationally-agreed health-related development goals. However, it faces a number of challenges especially in developing countries, including under-investment, lack of capacity, lack of political demand, and inadequate utilization and poor dissemination of results (**WHO, 2004a**). Not least of the challenges is the apparent remoteness of the policy making process from researchers and from the health priorities in developing countries (**Vincent, 2006**).

These factors collectively have led to a gap between research and its role in influencing health policy making (**AHPSR, 2004**). This gap has been highlighted since 1990 and several attempts have been made to address it from various aspects such as: strengthening research capacity, promotion of investments in health research, and the establishment of global and national health research fora (**COHRED, 1990**). In addition, there have been calls for strengthening the networking between researchers and policy makers in a way that promotes ongoing dialogue throughout the research process (**Vincent, 2006**).

Over the last few years, there has been growing realization among both researchers and policy makers to carry out the research which is helpful and needed to improve the management decisions and performance of national health systems. This realization is further supported by several global initiatives such as: The Commission on Health Research for Development (COHRED); The Global Forum for Health Research (GFHR); The Alliance for Health

Policy and Systems Research (AHP SR); and Getting Research into Policy and Practice (GRIPP) which is a collaboration of research programs concerned with operations and health systems research **(Vincent, 2006)**.

However, despite identification of the problem and willingness to solve it, there is not enough scientific knowledge which reveals why policy-makers are not using available information generated from research to guide the policy making process and planning decisions **(Haines et al, 2004)**. Thus, there is a need for further exploration of barriers to health research utilization in policy making.

Several international organizations including the World Health Organization are interested in how research findings are incorporated into policy. These organizations have made important contributions in this area of research into policy interface **(WHO, 2004a)**.

This study is done building on previous and existing work to focus attention on attitudes and perspectives of researchers in Egypt regarding the translation of knowledge into action to improve health.

AIM OF THE WORK