ADVANCING THE REHABILITATION 2030 AGENDA THROUGH ADVOCACY
Introduction to Health Policy
&
System’s Research

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Presentation Flow

- Definitions and Descriptions
- Evolution of HPSR
- Different Approaches
- Practical Challenges in integration of rehabilitation into health system
- Learnings and way forward
What are health systems?

- Since publication of 2000 World Health Report, systems have been understood as consisting of “all organizations, people and actions whose primary intent is to promote, restore and maintain health”.

What are health systems?

- While other health systems frameworks have since been put forth, it is important to note that these have largely sought to ‘rearrange’ or focus on a single aspect of the building blocks.
What are health systems?

• The building blocks alone do not constitute a health system. Their relationships and the effects they have on each other is equally important.

Alliance (2009). Systems Thinking for Health Systems Strengthening
# Health Systems Strengthening

Different from disease-specific/vertical responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constraint</th>
<th>Disease-specific response</th>
<th>Health systems response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial inaccessibility</td>
<td>Exemptions/reduced prices for focal diseases</td>
<td>Development of risk-pooling strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical inaccessibility</td>
<td>Disease-specific outreach</td>
<td>Long-term plan for capital investment and siting of facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriately skilled staff</td>
<td>Training workshops and continuous education for focal disease</td>
<td>Review of professional training curricula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poorly motivated staff</td>
<td>Financial incentives to reward delivery of priority services</td>
<td>Performance review mechanisms, supervision and salary structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor quality of care</td>
<td>Training for service providers</td>
<td>Development of accreditation and regulation systems</td>
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Health policy

Steps that affect sets of institutions, organizations, services and funding arrangements of health system

Formal, written documents that help to enact policy

Also includes informal, unwritten, norms and values that make up institutions, and are inherent to governing
What is health policy and system’s research?

• Seeks to understand and improve how societies organize themselves in achieving collective health goals

• How different actors interact in policy and implementation processes to contribute to health outcomes
What is Health Policy & System’s Research?

Economics

Epidemiology

Sociology

Public health

Anthropology

Political science
What is health policy and system’s research?

HPSR: an applied field

Alliance (2012). HPSR: A Methodology Reader
Characteristics of HPSR

- **Trans-disciplinary**
  - Draws on theories and methods across sciences

- **Question-driven**
  - Question, not methods will dictate research

- **Addresses real-world problems**
  - How health systems are financed, organized, delivered, used
  - How policies formulated, implemented, evaluated
HPSR is NOT

- Basic science research
- Clinical efficacy studies
- Population monitoring
- Implementation science
Evolution of HPSR: key milestones

- **Mid-1990s**: HPSR emerging but fragmented
- **2000**: World Health Report
- **2006**: Ministerial Summit, Mexico City
- **2007**: WHO: Everybody’s Business
- **2008**: Bamako Ministerial Forum
- **2010**: 1st Global Symposium on Health Systems Research
- **2012**: WHO Strategy on HPSR
Evolution of HPSR: capacities

**FIGURE 2.** Number of HPSR publications focused on LMICs and those produced by LMIC authors, 1990-2015

- HPSR on LMICs
- HPSR produced by LMIC authors
Evolution of HPSR: funding

Evolution of HPSR: partnership

Research collaboration between HICs and LICs
2011-2015
Evolution of HPSR: partnership

Research collaboration between MICs and LICs
2011-2015

Alliance (2017). World Report on HPSR
HPSR Approaches
Embedded Research

Conducted in partnership with policymakers

• Undertaking HPSR *within, for* and *by* the health system
• Closes evidence-to-policy gap
• Draws on co-production, action research methods
Policymakers need timely evidence to inform decisions

- Don’t have time, expertise to scan knowledge landscape

Range of methods exist to gather evidence

- Rapid reviews
- Realist reviews
- Mixed method reviews

Integrated mechanisms

- Evidence synthesis platforms within government structures (or researchers in proximity) have proven especially useful
Health Policy Analysis

Seeks to understand factors of influence

Who influence policy change at different levels from individual, organizational, national and global, and their interests

Relations, networks, institutions and ideas over health system operations, and policy change within/across them

Influencing why and how policies are initiated, developed or formulate, negotiated, communicated, implemented and evaluated
Health Policy Analysis

Analysis of policy processes

• How problems are defined, agendas set, decisions made, policies formulated, implemented and evaluated

Analysis for policy processes

• Analytical techniques, research, advocacy in problem definitions, decision-making, implementation and evaluation
Systems Thinking
Systems thinking is an approach to problem-solving that views problems as part of a wider dynamic system. It recognises and prioritises the understanding of linkages, relationships, interactions and interdependencies among the components of a system that gives rise to the system’s observed behaviour. Systems thinking is a philosophical frame, and it can also be considered a method with its own tools. Systems thinking is both science and practice.
Why is systems thinking useful?

Delving below the surface of events helps see the bigger picture of how a system actually works. With this understanding choices can be made about how best to intervene.

**“Conventional” thinking**

- **Events:**
  - React
  - Observable behaviours; what has happened?

- **Patterns of behaviour:**
  - Anticipate
  - The trends, or what has been happening over time.

- **Underlying systematic structure:**
  - Design
  - What are the structural forces at play contributing to these patterns?

- **Mental model:**
  - Transform
  - What is it about our thinking that creates the systems and supports them persisting?

**Systems thinking**

Praxisframework.org
## What Systems Thinking Enables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conventional thinking approach</th>
<th>Systems thinking approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From the parts</td>
<td>To the whole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From objects/events</td>
<td>To relationships/patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From structures/hierarchies</td>
<td>To processes/networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From analysis</td>
<td>To synthesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From rational</td>
<td>To intuitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From system as ‘effect’ (i.e., external to system)</td>
<td>To system as ‘cause’ (i.e., internal within system)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From correlation (linear, unidirectional)</td>
<td>To causality (multiple feedback)</td>
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An Example
Practical Challenges in integration of rehabilitation into health systems

1. Structure and systems of health ministries
2. Complexity and nature of the area
3. Capacities
4. Policies
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Thank you!

Q&A