



**Evidence and
Implementation
Summit 2023**
9–11 October

Melbourne, Australia & Online



Behavioural and Implementation
Science Interventions
Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine



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#368 - Implementation-minded policy making: an evidence synthesis

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Background/Objectives/Aims

Across policy fields, there is recurrent evidence that policies often fail to achieve their objectives in part because of poor implementation. Features of government-led policy raise particular challenges, including that such policy is developed by individuals and groups distant from implementing settings and driven in part by political interests that may not reflect sectoral interests. Our study analyses the features of policy implementation that are associated with success and failure, looking across policy fields. We synthesise policy implementation barriers and facilitators, and the strategies used or recommended in policy development and implementation to address them.

Methods

We searched seven databases for systematic and other reviews of studies and evaluations of policy implementation and that identify associated barriers, facilitators and strategies. We screened 4043 potentially relevant texts, identified 50 as in scope, and prioritised 15 for inclusion. These covered a range of policy domains and implementation settings. We also identified policy resources (e.g. guides and toolkits) that make recommendations for how to take implementation into account in policy work. Through a systematic search of organisations' websites, we identified and screened 113 resources, identified 22 as in scope and selected 10 for inclusion.



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Main findings

Our synthesis identified two key themes in implementation-minded policy making. First, the need to reduce ambiguity or a lack of clarity about the why, the what and the how of policy (i.e. the problem or need for policy, the aims or change introduced, and implementation roles and strategies). Second, the need for alignment with the existing policy context, with priorities and perceived needs, and with the infrastructure available for implementation. Our synthesis suggests that potential areas of ambiguity or mis-alignment can be averted, or compensated for, with strategies including problem and context analysis; stakeholder engagement; identifying implementation resources and capabilities; governance and collaboration; monitoring, evaluation, learning and risk management; leadership, and effective communication and framing.

References