



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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#25 - Effective evidence in fast-paced policy contexts

Presenting Author

Ms Eleanor Williams

Affiliation

University of Queensland/University College London (PhD candidate)

Country of residence

Australia

Objectives/aims

This presentation will discuss the initial findings of a study examining the factors determine the effectiveness and utility of evidence in policy-making under extreme time pressure.

Methods

This emergent research involves two comparative case studies of fast-paced policy in both Australia and the United Kingdom using Covid-19 policy and mental health policy as exemplar policy fields to consider evidence use under time pressure. The case studies are being developed through a mixed methods study design. A detailed literature review has been completed drawing on evidence-based policy, crisis management and decision sciences to identify the suite of factors that impact on evidence translation and absorption under extreme time pressure.

Main findings

Government policy making regularly occurs under time pressured circumstances due to a range of external and internal drivers which demand a fast-paced response. This includes some situations where there are conditions of particularly high uncertainty, and the need to make critical decisions with wide-ranging impacts under the extreme time pressure and scrutiny. In order to meet these challenges governments must quickly identify and employ the best available sources of evidence. This necessitates expedited processes to generate, synthesise and translate data and information for decision makers.

These fast-paced policy contexts ultimately require a reconsideration of what kinds of evidence are relevant, valued and able to be absorbed in time-constrained situations. This presentation seeks to share new insights into fast-paced policy environments, by outlining the factors that influence the effectiveness and utility of evidence under these conditions.



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The initial stages of this study have identified multiple factors that are likely to determine evidence effectiveness for policy-making under time pressure which fall into three main categories: the characteristics of evidence itself in terms of timeliness, robustness and available; individual and group decision-making factors; and institutional and environmental factors such as organisational culture and capabilities. These findings will be further tested and validated through data collection that will be undertaken across 2023 in advance of the conference.

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