Implementation Science: Program Implementers Perspective

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EGPAF Strategy:
Three Integrated Areas of Focus

Global Policy and Advocacy

Global Program Implementation

Global Research

EGPAF– GWU PARTNERSHIP FOR PEDIATRIC AIDS AND PUBLIC HEALTH
The link between evidence and implementation

• Strong Scientific Evidence ≠ Policy ≠ Implementation
  – Interventions with strong scientific evidence (RCT) may not be feasible
  – Interventions with less strength of evidence (OR) may be more timely
  – Culture of policy/implementation in absence of evidence

• WHO guidelines based on systematic reviews of evidence based on published works
  – Published literature often does not reflect evidence base
  – Recommendations may be made based on weak or no direct evidence

• Research results may be weak but public advocacy may drive action
Evolving Models that promote IS

• Researchers as Researchers
• Researchers as Program Implementers
• Program Implementers as Researchers
• Policy Makers as Researchers
• Researchers as Policy Makers
Evidence and Policy/Practice

• Dialogue required between researchers and policy makers to determine what is needed to provide “convincing results” to change policy

• Dialogue between researchers and program implementers to determine what is needed to provide “convincing results” to change practice
  – The more program managers are involved in the study design, the more likely they are to implement results

• Thinking through the post study “so-what?” from the beginning, with the initial generation of the research question
  — How will the research results influence practice or policy beyond publication of a manuscript?
  — What needs to be in place before and after the study to facilitate translation of results to practice?
  — What can be learned from the implementation of the study, in addition to the study results?
Strategies for Success

• Research questions must be relevant to programme implementation & connected to health service delivery

• Strong **bi-directional** partnerships for research, particularly implementation research
  – Academia, local researchers, MOH, and NGOs, who are often implementers that engage in translating research into policy and practice

• Capacity building of policy makers and program implementers
  – Culture of evidence driven policies and programs; Increased quality/use of national data
  – Research skills in operations and implementation research

• Prioritizing resources to facilitate non-traditional NIH type research methodologies and analyses
  – Mechanisms that allow IS researchers to compete successfully with academicians for funding
Challenges for Program Implementers and IS

- Investing critical time up front to develop relationships, understand gaps being addressed, and design and evaluate feasible solutions

- Balancing research rigor with reality in study design, budget, **timeline**
  - MOH/Donor pressure for rapid scale-up; competing time demands

- Different interpretations of human subjects vs non subjects research

- Continually evolving guidelines with changes implemented while studies in progress

- Multiple concurrent activities being done in the field making attribution difficult