



Global Health Policies

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Objectives of this lecture

- Define a health policy
- Understand why health policies are needed
- Differentiate between health policies (Macro- vs. Micro-policy)
- Provide examples for micro- vs. macro- policies
- Distinguish between policies, standard, strategy, program, procedures and guidelines
- Enumerate the factors needed to assess when formulating a health policy



What is a Healthcare System

- “a system which ‘exists and evolves to serve societal needs’ —with ‘components’ that ‘... can be utilized as policy instruments to alter the outcomes”



What is a Health Policy

- “Decisions, plans and actions that are undertaken to achieve specific health care goals within a society.”

Source: https://www.who.int/topics/health_policy/en/

- *“A set of rules that describe what will and will not be done in terms of healthcare; can range from broad philosophies to specific regulations.”*

Source: Alkhamis AA. Framing health policy in the context of Saudi Arabia. J Infect Public Health 2016; 9: 3-6.



Factors that affect health policy decision making

- Economic factors
- Cultural/religious factors (e.g.?)
- Behavioral factors
- Physical environment
- Availability of medical services (technology advances)
- Epidemiological structure (disease distribution and disease prevention priorities)
- Public health evidence
- Political situation



Macro-policies and Micro-policies



Macro Health Policy

- Broad and expansive health policies that are developed at the national level
- Affect a large portion of the population (region or country)
- Define the country's vision priorities, budgetary decisions, course of action to sustain health
- Developed based on population-health needs
- e.g. MOH policies; vision 2030 health initiatives

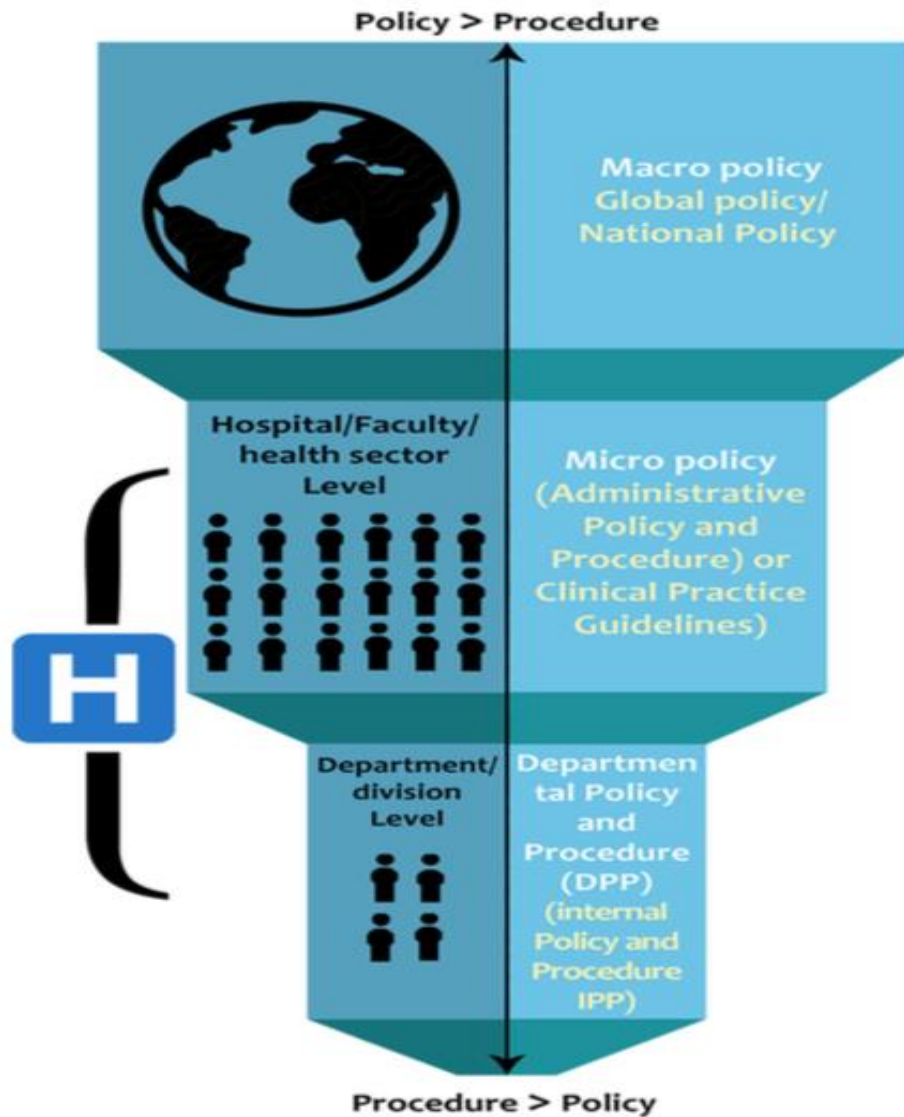


Micro Health Policy

- More specific to level of organization or individuals, examples:
 - Hospital administrative policy and procedures (APP)
 - Departmental/Internal policy and procedures (DPP/IPP)
 - Clinical practice guidelines
- Based on the operational needs of the facility; differ by organization (from hospital to another)
- Policies that apply to:
 - employees; operations; ethics; safety; research



Macro- vs. Micro- Policy



MOH



Hospital
(e.g. KKUH)



Department



Inter-relationship between micro- and macro- policies

- Micro-policies at organizations are developed in line with macro-policies put in place by the MOH
- The development and implementation of such policies require a multi-disciplinary approach
 - e.g. many ministries work together on development of some macro-policies; MOH + MOCS + MOD + MOE...
 - Different departments of the hospital collaborate for putting in place micro-policies



What is the usefulness of health policies?

- Defines a vision for the future
- Helps to establish targets
- Outlines priorities
- Points of reference for the short and medium term.
- Shows the expected roles of different groups
- Builds consensus
- Informs people

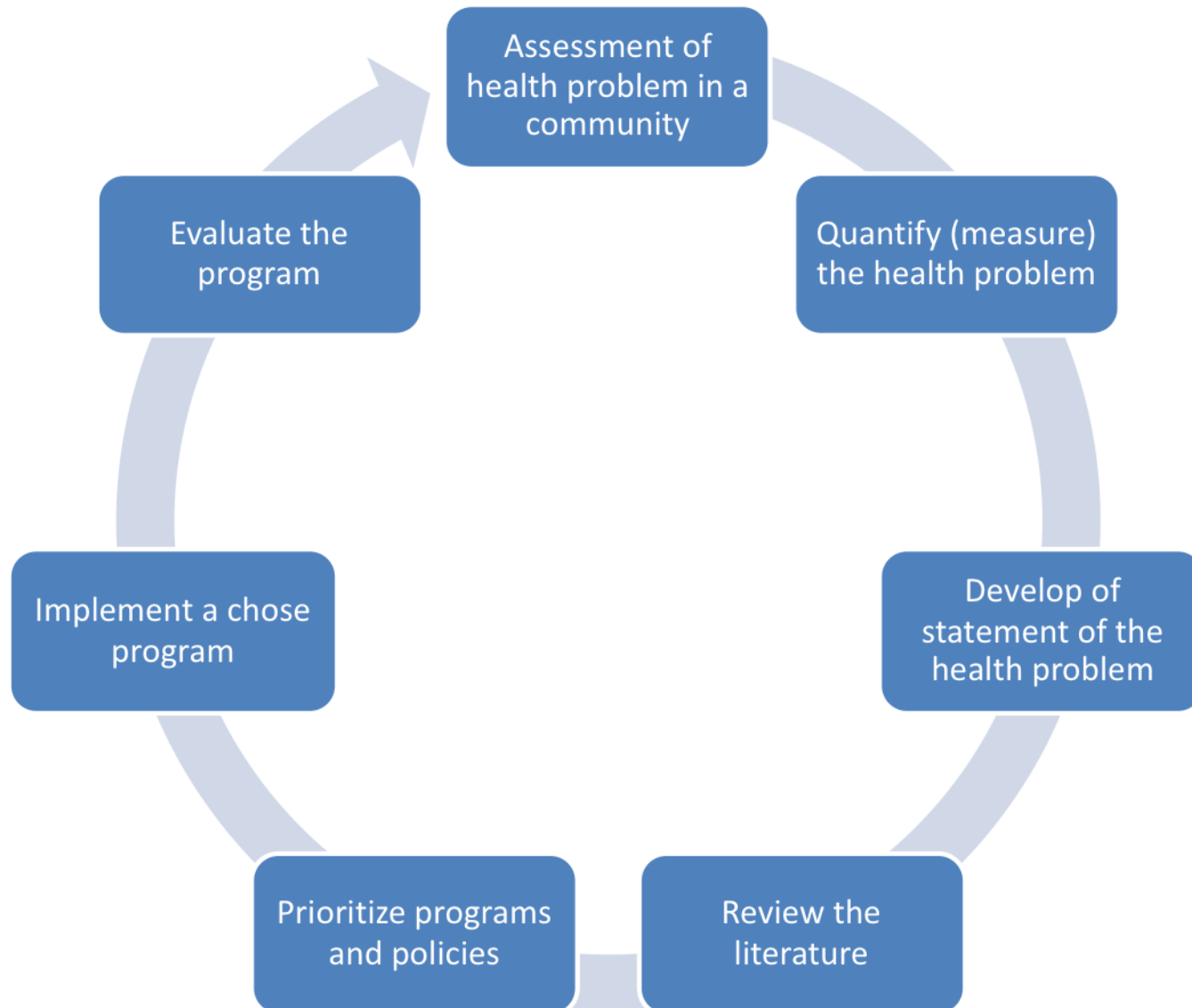


Pathway for policy development

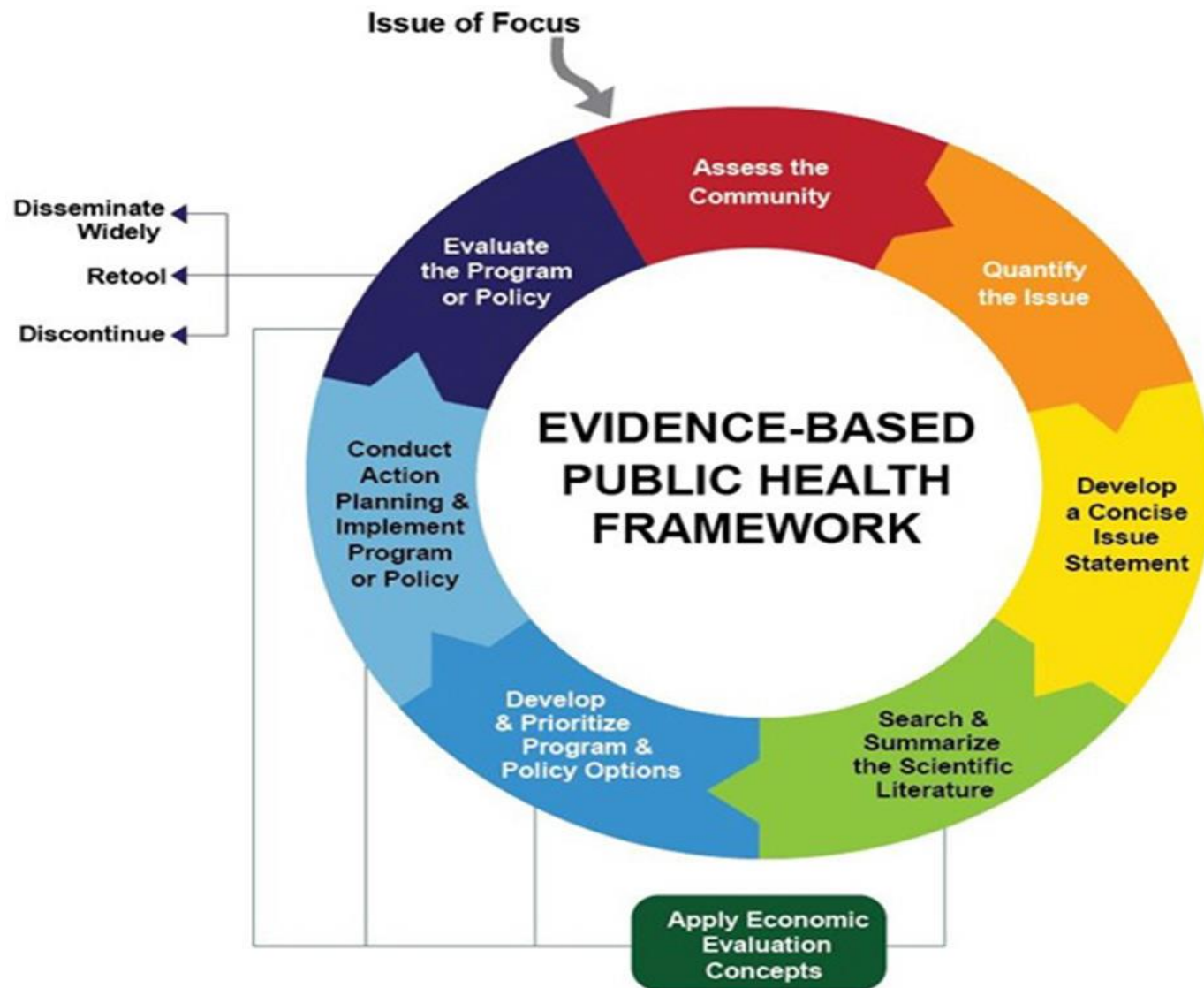
- Policy should be driven by evidence
- Many factors may challenge the adoption of a policy:
 - **Ideological**
 - **Political**
 - **Economic**
- Most of all, adoption of policy is largely driven by the beliefs of the policymakers more so than the strength of the evidence itself



Pathway for policy development



Courtesy of Dr Shady Kamel, FETP



Source: Jacob RR, Duggan K, Allen P, Erwin PC, Aisaka K, Yang SC, et al. Preparing public health professionals to make evidence-based decisions: a comparison of training delivery methods in the United States. *Frontiers in Public Health* 2018; 6(257): 1-11.



Policy Procedures Guidelines

What's the difference?



- **Health Policy:**

- *A set of rules that describe what will and will not be done in terms of healthcare; can range from broad philosophies to specific regulations.**
- It includes:
 - What the role is?
 - When will it apply?
 - Who does it cover?

Source: Alkhamis AA. Framing health policy in the context of Saudi Arabia. J Infect Public Health 2016; 9: 3-6.



- **Health Procedure:**

- *steps that describe methods and instructions on how to carry out a relevant policy, accomplish a particular goal, perform a function or carry out an activity or process.*
- i.e. steps on how to implement your **policy**



- **Health or Clinical Guideline:**
 - “Systematically developed statements to assist practitioners in making patient decisions about appropriate healthcare for specific circumstances”
- These provide clear evidence-based recommendations to influence physicians’ (or clinicians’) decision making

Source: Alkhamis AA. Framing health policy in the context of Saudi Arabia. J Infect Public Health 2016; 9: 3-6.



Summary

- Health policies are a set of regulations that are followed to achieve health goals
- They can be micro- or macro- policies
- They are influenced by many factors, but the major driving factor is beliefs of the policymakers
- Convincing the policymakers about the usefulness of a new policy is key for implementation of that policy
- There is a long process from inception of the policy idea to implementation



References

- https://www.who.int/topics/health_policy/en/
- Anut R. Health systems, systems thinking and innovation. Health Policy Plan 2012; 27: iv4-iv8.
- Alkhamis AA. Framing health policy in the context of Saudi Arabia. J Infect Public Health 2016; 9: 3-6.