

Instruments For Evaluating Promotion Policies to Improve Public Health : an Integrative Review

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KEYWORDS

Public Policy, Evaluation Procedure, Health Promotion, Health Policy Impact, Policy Evaluation, Public Health Improvement

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Policy assessment has a very important role in efforts to improve public health to ensure effectiveness, fairness and sustainability. Efficient evaluation procedures enable policy makers and stakeholders to recognize advantages, address shortcomings, and adapt strategies to achieve desired health goals. This integrative review aims to compile a synthesis of the various approaches and tools available in evaluating public health policies, while highlighting their application and impact on health promotion practice.

Objective : The objective of this study was to examine and evaluate a range of tools utilized for assessing public health promotion policies, emphasizing their strengths, weaknesses, and effectiveness in enhancing health outcomes. The research delves into the methodologies and metrics employed by these instruments, evaluating their role in shaping and improving policies targeting public health advancements. Through this analysis, the authors aim to offer recommendations for the selection and development of more efficient tools for evaluating health promotion strategies.

Methods : This study is an integrative literature review that utilizes databases from the Online Scientific Electronic Library and the Virtual Health Library (Biblioteca Virtual em Saúde), as well as gray literature, with sources available in English, Portuguese, and Spanish, covering the period from 2010 to 2020, with descriptors consulted in MeSH and DeCS.

Results : A total of 828 publications were identified, with 18 meeting the inclusion criteria. The evaluation processes revealed the use of diverse methodologies, including quantitative and multidimensional approaches. However, there remains a limited availability of tools for monitoring and evaluating health promotion initiatives. While significant advancements have been observed in assessing impacts and outcomes, particularly in primary health care, challenges and gaps persist. Thus, integrating structural and procedural elements into evaluation methodologies is essential.

Conclusion : It is crucial to acknowledge the significance of cross-sectoral, participatory methodologies and the creation of evaluative models that integrate both quantitative and qualitative approaches, while also addressing the socio-political factors inherent in the diverse contexts where intra-sectoral and cross-sectoral health promotion policies are implemented. However, the complexity involved in evaluating health promotion policies prevents the establishment of standardized evaluation criteria, highlighting the need for further research to develop effective strategies for evaluating health promotion initiatives.

1. Introduction

Public policy is a multidisciplinary field of knowledge that includes several theories from Sociology, Political Science, and Economics, as well as other scientific disciplines [1]. This theory describes the relationship between the state, politics, economy and society, taking into account the economic and social impacts. In this context, through the formulation of public policy, a democratic government translates its goals into programs and actions that are expected to produce tangible results in the real world. Today, the concept of "healthy public policy" refers to a centralized approach that aims to improve health and reduce health disparities by incorporating health considerations into decision-making processes, programs and projects in the public and private sectors [2].

Health promotion is a global movement and an effective strategy for addressing major health issues that significantly impact the human population. It is based on external perspectives of the health-disease process and its determinants. Additionally, this approach encourages the integration of both technical and popular knowledge, as well as the mobilization of resources from institutional, community, public, and private sectors to confront and overcome health challenges. Action is taken through "sound public policy," which is developed using complementary mechanisms such as legislation, fiscal policies, taxation, organizational reforms, and coordinated cross-sectoral actions aimed at achieving health equity, fairer income distribution, and social policies [3]. In this context, health promotion measures recognize that political, economic, social, cultural, environmental, behavioral, and biological factors can either support or hinder health [4].

The National Health Promotion Policy is established based on regulations that confirm the State's Indonesian Northern commitment to improving and expanding health promotion initiatives in the services and management of the Integrated Health System (SUS). This policy is then integrated into the strategic agenda of SUS managers and the National Health Plan, thereby expanding the scope of existing public policies. Between 2015 and 2019, the policy underwent a revision process initiated by the Ministry of Health and coordinated by the Health Surveillance Secretariat, with the involvement of the Policy Steering Committee [5].

This new version of the PNPS is the result of a broad, democratic and participatory review process. This process emphasizes the importance of integration within the health sector and between sectors with other public policies, as well as community involvement. This is because the health sector cannot handle the various determinants and complex health conditions on its own [6].

After a decision is taken, public policy does not stop at the implementation and implementation stages. Instead, implementation must be under a monitoring and evaluation system [1]. This evaluation aims to ensure that the policy is in accordance with established principles and guidelines, as well as measuring its effectiveness. In other words, this evaluation seeks to assess the extent of the policy's impact on individual health, which ultimately affects people's quality of life [7].

In management, evaluation functions to provide important elements that support the decision-making process, thereby contributing to increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of implementing activities. Therefore, health studies need to focus on primary needs, while respecting constitutional principles in state health policy. The development of the study must be directed at assessing the feasibility of implementing actions as a consequence of the decisions that have been made [8].

PNPS emphasizes that all areas of management in the health sector are responsible for establishing instruments and indicators for planning, monitoring and evaluating programs, plans, projects and actions related to health promotion [6,9]. However, it is essential to integrate various methods and approaches in the evaluation of health promotion strategies. This approach must allow analysis of the theoretical basis, social practice, implementation process as well as the impacts and results to be achieved [9].

However, available evaluation methods are limited [10], and only a few studies have identified instruments used to assess current health promotion efforts [11]. The Integrative Review Method is essential in this research because it provides a systematic and comprehensive approach in analyzing and synthesizing existing knowledge regarding instruments used to assess public health promotion policies. Therefore, this study aims to examine existing instruments for evaluating public policies that focus on health promotion.

2. Objectives

The objective of this study was to examine and evaluate a range of tools utilized for assessing public health promotion policies, emphasizing their strengths, weaknesses, and effectiveness in enhancing health outcomes. The research delves into the methodologies and metrics employed by these instruments, evaluating their role in shaping and improving policies targeting public health advancements. Through this analysis, the authors aim to offer recommendations for the selection and development of more efficient tools for evaluating health promotion strategies. By highlighting the gaps and opportunities within current evaluation frameworks, this research aims to advance evidence-based practices in public health policy. Similarly, the findings are intended to assist policymakers, researchers, and practitioners in making well-informed decisions about the design and execution of health promotion initiatives, ultimately promoting more equitable, fair, and effective interventions to tackle public health challenges.

3. Methods

This research uses an integrative literature review method, because this approach allows combining various research designs and compiling results in a systematic, structured and comprehensive manner. In addition, this method integrates data from theoretical and empirical literature, thereby providing a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of a particular topic or issue [12].

Integrative review is a research method that allows the search, critical evaluation, and synthesis of evidence relevant to the topic being researched [13]. This method includes six main stages [14]: formulating guiding questions, conducting a literature search or sampling, collecting data, conducting critical analysis of selected studies, discussing results, and presenting a systematic review.

The research process undertaken by the author was divided into three stages. In the initial stage, the research question was formulated as follows: "What are the health promotion evaluation instruments aimed at public policy?" This question is structured around the acronym PICo (15), which includes: Population (P) – Public Policy; Interest/Phenomenon of Interest (I) – Health Promotion; and Context (Co) – Evaluation Instrument. To determine terms and search strategies, descriptors from Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) and Health Sciences Descriptors (DeCS) were used, as listed in Table 1

Table 1 : Usage of descriptors and associated terms

	MeSH	DeCS–english	Synonyms–english
P	Public Policy	Public Policy	Public Policies
I	Health Promotion	Health Promotion	Promotion of Health Health Promotions
C o	Program Evaluation	Program Evaluation	Program Evaluations

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MeSH–Medical Subject Headings; DeCS Health Sciences Descriptors.

The exclusion process began with two independent reviewers evaluating the titles, followed by screening abstracts for further exclusion. Subsequently, the remaining publications were thoroughly reviewed to identify studies suitable for inclusion in the integrative review. This selection process is illustrated in a flow diagram, adhering to PRISMA guidelines, as depicted in Figure 1.

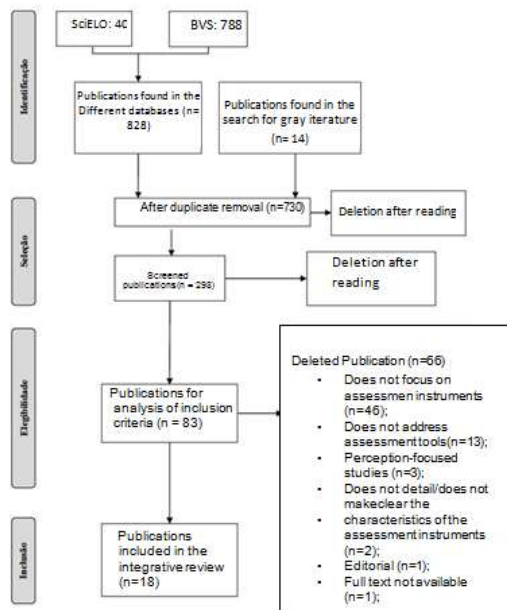


Figure 1. PRISMA Flowchart

4. Results

Following the removal of duplicates, 730 titles were retained. From these, 83 texts were chosen for a detailed full-text review, and ultimately, 18 articles were included in the development of this integrative review. Table 2 displays the list of articles selected for this research. The information presented includes the name of the author, year of publication, title of the article, as well as details about the research conducted.

Table 2. Articles selected for the integrative review

Author (s), year of publication	Title	Study information
Álvarez Castaño et al., 2015(16)	Methods for evaluating large-scale nutritional programs in Latin America: an integrative review	A total of 92 evaluations of 40 programs were analyzed to identify the methodological designs employed in evaluating nutrition programs in Latin America. Generally, the evaluations focus on program impact and outcomes, while less emphasis is placed on assessing structure and processes. Quantitative studies are the most frequently utilized to measure impact. However, in many instances, the methodological design is either not detailed or the evaluation lacks a clear framework. When evaluations are linked to specific projects, three primary approaches are observed: consistency and results evaluation, multidimensional models, and methods triangulation.
Alvesetal., 2016(17)	Health promotion, disease prevention and use of services: evaluation of the actions of a Brazilian health plan operator	This study employed a case study approach to investigate the connection between implementing health promotion initiatives and preventing cardiovascular disease, focusing on their effects on health service utilization and related costs. The research was carried out by a health plan operator in Indonesia, which utilized a self-management model and implemented the Family Health Strategy (ESF).

Barata,2013 (18)	Epidemiology and public policies	the important role of epidemiology in formulating, implementing, and evaluating public health policies.
Bhatia and Corburn, 2011(19)	Lessons from SanFrancisco: health impact assessments have advanced political conditions for improving population health	Health impact assessments (HIA) in San Francisco, California, have been thoroughly examined. By utilizing AIS, the Department of Public Health enhanced its ability to analyze and communicate the effects of public policies, while also gaining new insights into how to engage and influence different sectors. Key steps in this impact assessment process include screening, choosing analytical methods, assessment, communication, and monitoring.
Bueno et al.,2013(11)	Governance, sustainability and equity in the health plan of São José dos Pinhais, Brazil	The theoretical-conceptual model created by the authors for human development and health promotion was used to assess the municipal health policies within the São José dos Pinhais/PR (Brazil) health plan. This model incorporates the concepts of governance, sustainability, and equity, and identifies three possible interactions between these concepts: 1) Government and State Policy; 2) power balance; and 3) inclusive processes with significant outcomes.
Guzmán-Barragán et al., 2020(20)	Evaluation of the implementation of the healthy school strategy in the Ibagué neural zone: case study	The evaluation of the implementation of the Healthy Schools Strategy in rural educational institutions in Ibagué (Colombia) was conducted through the development of a phalological model and the establishment of evaluation criteria related to a healthy environment, public policy, healthy school plans, social participation, empowerment, and health education.

<p>Hoehner et al.,2012(21)</p>	<p>Page Avenue health impact assessment: Building on diverse partnerships and evidence to promote a healthy community</p>	<p>The AIS case study was carried out on Page Avenue (Missouri, United States) to demonstrate a thorough evaluation process, guided by an interdisciplinary academic team in collaboration with community partners. The study also highlights key lessons learned and unforeseen outcomes.</p>
<p>Kusma et al.,2012(9)</p>	<p>Healthpromotion: evaluative perspectives for oral health in primary health care</p>	<p>In addition to organizing the literature on evaluating the effectiveness of oral health promotion strategies, the authors present a theoretical model and descriptor matrix tailored to primary health care (PHC) practice. This model examines the foundational principles and values of health promotion, focusing on practices that can reduce vulnerability in population groups, address disparities, and foster participation in health management.</p>
<p>Lima and Vilas bôas, 2011(22)</p>	<p>Implementation of intersectoral social mobilization actions to control dengue fever in Bahia, Brazil</p>	<p>This evaluative study is exploratory in nature and utilizes a single case study to examine the process of implementing cross-sectoral measures by the State Committee for Social Mobilization in the Prevention and Control of Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever in Bahia (Brazil). A logical model was created to guide the development of assessment criteria, which were used to evaluate the extent of implementation of the action, determining whether it was fully implemented, partially implemented, or not implemented at all.</p>
<p>Magalhães, 2014(23)</p>	<p>Implementation of multi-strategic programs: a proposal for an evaluation matrix</p>	<p>This proposed methodological matrix was created using a theory-based evaluation analytical</p>

		<p>framework, designed to assess the validity of concepts connecting processes and outcomes. It was applied in a qualitative and exploratory case study of the federal income transfer program Bolsa Família, with the goal of contributing to the evaluation of interventions aimed at improving health, food security, and poverty reduction.</p>
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Source : Alamsyah Lukito, Zaim Anshari

This review identifies a variety of instruments commonly used in assessing public health promotion policies. The instruments were grouped into three main categories: quantitative tools, qualitative tools, and mixed methods approaches. Each category has its own advantages and limitations. Integrating quantitative and qualitative methods often provides a deeper understanding of policy effectiveness. This framework applies various assessment criteria, such as health impact, economic sustainability, and stakeholder participation, to ensure a comprehensive evaluation.

In addition, the use of the latest technology, such as artificial intelligence-based policy modeling and real-time health data analysis, increases accuracy and efficiency in assessing policies. This approach allows policymakers to respond quickly to changing dynamics in public health.

This integrative review reveals a variety of instruments used in assessing public health promotion policies, each with its own advantages and limitations. A multi-method based evaluation approach, which combines quantitative, qualitative tools, as well as technology, has proven to be the most effective strategy. By implementing these recommendations, policymakers in the field of public health can design more evidence-based and effective policies, contributing to improved health outcomes as well as social benefits in the long term.

5. Discussion

Unlike most clinical studies, the theories, goals, and objectives of public policy are often not well-defined [32]. Many studies overlook follow-up evaluations and fail to address the implications of public policy outcomes [33]. According to the author [34], there remains a gap in research and accessible information for professionals concerning the effectiveness of health promotion interventions in the field of evaluation. Evaluating health systems, policies, programs, and services is a key focus in epidemiology, with significant importance placed on assessing the health impacts of services, technologies, and other interventions [35]. In the development, implementation, and evaluation of public health policies, it is essential to move the focus beyond the individual and recognize the complexity of interactions across various aspects of social life [18]. Epidemiological knowledge can be valuable in the assessment process, helping to analyze both predicted and achieved impacts. Public health policy evaluation can be carried out through three distinct modalities: adequacy assessment, reasonableness assessment, and probability assessment. At the impact assessment stage,

epidemiology further contributes by enhancing and implementing new methodologies, such as developing scenarios that aid decision-making processes and projecting potential consequences of various actions. Additionally, the author [18] highlights the importance of integrating epidemiological knowledge with other types of knowledge to ensure better health conditions for the community. Among the various studies suggesting potential evaluation tools, the Conceptual Model for Human Development and Health Promotion [11] can be applied to assess public policies aimed at human development and health promotion. Effective promotion occurs when the six conceptual categories (governance, sustainability, and justice) align with the interface (Government and State policy; power balance; inclusive processes and impactful outcomes) between them [36].

The model proposed by a group of researchers [9] is implemented through a tool designed to evaluate the effectiveness of oral health promotion strategies. The core pillars of health promotion in this model include equity, participation, and sustainability. These pillars provide the theoretical framework that highlights values in assessment, which in turn serve as the ethical foundation for health promotion strategies, encompassing autonomy, empowerment, comprehensiveness, cross-sectoral collaboration and governance.

The authors highlight that when using the same tool [27], the framework for creating the evaluation indicator matrix is based on a theoretical model that emphasizes the pillars and values of health promotion, specifically applied to oral health. This tool consists of 23 indicators organized into three dimensions: oral health, effective public policy, and human and social development. It also enables the identification of the potential of specific strategies to enhance oral health [37].

To develop the evaluation matrix [23], the following steps were taken: systematizing information from qualitative exploratory case studies, analyzing key theoretical elements, program components, and operational strategies in local contexts, as well as organizing and creating analytical dimensions and evaluation questions within the methodological matrix. The interview guide was designed around the following dimensions: program theory, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, cross-sectoral experience, and participatory dynamics. Document analysis, along with normative instruments, helped identify the adopted causal model, while interviews offered deeper insights into the perceptions, interests, and motivations of the professionals involved.

After reviewing and compiling the foundational aspects of health promotion from both national and international sources, as well as ideas found in Cuban legal and public policy documents, Sosa García et al. [28] identified a lack of methodological tools to evaluate the impact of community intervention strategies related to health promotion. Regarding impact assessment, Bhatia and Corburn [19] emphasize that AIS presents an opportunity to create new governance systems that can support public decision-making with positive health outcomes. They argue that inclusive and meaningful stakeholder engagement in evaluations creates opportunities to influence private organizational networks, strengthen trust among stakeholders, and support community organizations. As a result, combining an inclusive HIA process with transparency—by presenting both the strengths and weaknesses of the evidence—can raise awareness of social determinants of health among government agencies and the general public. Based on the points above, emphasizing cross-sectoral action is crucial in addressing complex health issues and serves as a focal point in evaluating health promotion. Efforts are needed to bridge the gap between the two main approaches to health promotion. One approach centers on altering individual behavior and lifestyles through

educational interventions aimed at modifiable risk factors, such as smoking, diet, and physical activity. In contrast, the other approach views health as the outcome of various determinants related to quality of life, including social factors like sanitation, adequate working and housing conditions, education, family social support, and responsible lifestyles. This perspective focuses on promoting health within communities, groups, and environments, rather than just individual cases. However, it is essential to recognize the convergence of these two approaches, acknowledging that an individual's lifestyle and choices are shaped by the broader social context in which they live [34]. Consequently, the complexity of the evaluation process calls for further research to create effective evaluation strategies in health promotion. This research should focus on developing evaluation models that integrate both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, while also taking into account the sociopolitical factors that are relevant to the various contexts in which health promotion policies, whether intrasectoral or intersectoral, are implemented.

In general, this review reveals that although a variety of instruments exist for assessing public health promotion policies, their effectiveness depends largely on how they are integrated and adapted to specific contexts. Compared with previous research, this study offers a more comprehensive, integrated, and progressive perspective on policy evaluation, leveraging recent advances in data analysis as well as digital health technologies.

6. Conclusion

Summarizing the findings of this integrative review allows the identification of various criteria used in assessing public policies focused on improving health, although there are still limitations in monitoring and evaluation tools. In Indonesia, mechanisms for improvement in PNP can be identified based on three levels of government, but this adds complexity to assessing public policies related to health promotion, which are influenced by various determining factors.

Thus, evaluative standards are still undefined, so there needs to be recognition of the importance of intersectorality, participatory approaches, triangulation of methods, and other strategies. Although impact and outcome assessments have been developed, structural and process aspects still need to be integrated into the methodology.

Therefore, the complexity of the examination process requires a new study aimed at developing effective strategies related to health promotion, with the development of evaluation forms that take into account the structuring of quantitative and qualitative methodologies and the inclusion of sociopolitical issues inherent to the different realities in which intrasectoral and intersectoral health promotion policies are improved.

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