Is public health policy informed by scientific evidence?
The example of obesity prevention in children and adolescents

30.08.2012
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Evidence-based public health policy

• Use of scientific evidence not new
• Increased volume and complexity of scientific information
• Need for appropriate synthesis methods
  – Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care and US Preventive Services Task Force
  – Cochrane Collaboration
  – GRADE (Grades of Recommendation, Assessment, Development, and Evaluation)
Evidence-based healthcare

Producing evidence

Making evidence available

Appraising evidence

Applying evidence

Individual patient care: EBM, EBN, ...

Evidence-based:
  - public health
  - public health policy and practice
  - health services management
Evidence-based public health policy

**Barriers and difficulties**

- Gaps in evidence
- Broad array of health determinants (individual, community, society, economics, politics, …)
- Limits in methods
- Barriers to knowledge transfer and uptake
“… striking contrast between high prevalence and consequent importance of addressing obesity and the paucity of knowledge base with which to inform prevention efforts.”

“Specifically, for evidence-based obesity prevention efforts, a body of intervention research on policy and environmental approaches is largely absent from the literature.”

BRIDGING THE EVIDENCE GAP IN OBESITY PREVENTION
A FRAMEWORK TO INFORM DECISION MAKING

Shiriki K. Kumanyika, Lynn Parker, and Leslie J. Sim, Eds
Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, 2010
Evidence-based public health policy

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