Foundations of HIA – A look at over 15 years of practice

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Outline

- HIA: definition, origins, foundations
- Current state of the practice and its effectiveness
What is HIA of public policies?

The application of a health “lens” to a project or policy developed by a public authority for purposes other than health.
Origins

Environmental impact assessment

- Environmental health
- Standardization of the approach and methodological rigour (1970s ...)

Determinants of health

- Health promotion
- Healthy public policies (Ottawa Charter) (1980s ...)

Social inequalities in health

- Distribution of effects within a population (1990s...)

Harris-Roxas et al., 2012.
"A combination of procedures, methods and tools that systematically judges the potential, and sometimes unintended, effects of a policy, plan, programme or project on the health of a population and the distribution of those effects within the population.

HIA identifies appropriate actions to manage those effects."

Main characteristics:

1. A broad perspective of the determinants of health

Main characteristics:
2. Starting point: a proposal without health as its purpose

3. Considers potential negative AND positive impacts
Main characteristics:

4. A prospective assessment

Main characteristics:
5. Based on shared values and principles

Democracy
Equity
Sustainable development
Ethical use of knowledge

European Centre for Health Policy, 1999. (Gothenburg Consensus).
Main characteristics:
6. Uses a standardized approach

- Screening
- Scoping
- Appraisal
- Recommendations
- Evaluation and monitoring

Which proposal, which health determinants and which groups

How, how far, by whom and with whom will the information gathering and the analysis of potential impacts be performed

Information gathering and analysis

Selection and formulation of recommendations

Review of the process and its influence.
Monitoring of the effects
Main characteristics:

7. In partnership with stakeholders
Examples

A development plan for a park and golf course, Madison, USA.

A social development policy in Pincourt, QC.

Expansion of the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport, ON.

Shared space model – Community service agencies in Sudbury, ON.

A tourism development project in rural Switzerland.

A public market in New Jersey, USA.

An urban redevelopment project around a transit station in Paris, France

A regional housing strategy in Scotland
The extent of HIA practice
Community of practice


**Human Impact Partners:** [http://www.humanimpact.org/projects](http://www.humanimpact.org/projects)

**The Society of Practitioners of HIA (SOPHIA):** [http://hiasociety.org/?page_id=57](http://hiasociety.org/?page_id=57)

Topics discussed

Built environment
Transport
Agriculture/food
Housing
Energy
Economic policy
Climate change
Social

National Evaluation of HIAs in the United States (2014)
"HIA is a systematic process that uses an array of data sources and analytic methods and considers input from stakeholders to determine the potential effects of a proposed policy, plan, program, or project on the health of a population and the distribution of those effects within the population. HIA provides recommendations on monitoring and managing those effects."

National Research Council of the National Academies, 2011.
Definition (3)

“Health impact assessment is a process through which evidence (of different kinds), interests, values and meanings are brought into dialogue between relevant stakeholders (politicians, professionals and citizens) in order imaginatively to understand and anticipate the effects of change on health and health inequalities in a given population”

Williams and Elliot, 2010
The role of evidence in policy formulation
## Typology of HIA models

*From Harris-Roxas et al., 2011*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Models</th>
<th>Mandated</th>
<th>Decision-support</th>
<th>Advocacy</th>
<th>Community-led</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td>Conducted by public health experts</td>
<td>Conducted voluntarily by, or with the agreement of, decision-makers</td>
<td>Conducted by organizations or groups outside of the decision-making process</td>
<td>Conducted by communities affected by the decision</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td>Meeting a regulatory or statutory requirement</td>
<td>Improving decision-making</td>
<td>Ensuring that certain health concerns are addressed</td>
<td>Ensuring that the community’s concerns are addressed. Empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
<td>Negative impacts – health risks</td>
<td>Positive and negative impacts</td>
<td>Positive and negative impacts</td>
<td>Positive and negative impacts</td>
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</tbody>
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State of the practice relative to the “decision-support” model

HIA Model (%)

Harris et al., 2013

Rhodus et al., 2013
Effectiveness of HIA (use of knowledge)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EFFECTIVENESS</th>
<th>Number of HIAs</th>
<th>Direct Use</th>
<th>General Use</th>
<th>Opportunistic Use</th>
<th>No Effectiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NZ/A</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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The effectiveness of HIA, as measured by the direct or general use of information stemming from the HIA by decision makers is attributable to: **The involvement of decision makers – an intersectoral approach – collective learning (social and technical)**

*Haigh et al, 2013*
Foundations of HIA: key messages

- Holistic view of health
- Successive steps and multiple tools for scoping
- Standardized but flexible
- Prospective assessment focused on policies outside the health sector
- Seeks to identify unexpected effects on health and equity
- Aims to inform decision-making
- Multidisciplinary and intersectoral
- Combines scientific and contextual information


Thank You

http://www.ncchpp.ca
http://www.ncchpp.ca/54/health-impact-assessment.ccnpps