

# Considerations in the context of research impact evaluation in understanding the relevance of health research

Shalu Pandey

Pandey S. Considerations in the context of research impact evaluation in understanding the relevance of health research. *J Health Pol Manage.* 2022;5(3): 31-32.

## ABSTRACT

With massive investments in health-related research, in addition to investments in the management and delivery of healthcare and public health services, there is a growing focus on the impact of health research to explore and explain the consequences of these investments and inform strategic planning. Increased focus to the usability and effect of health research reflects relevance, with research funders increasingly using relevance assessment as a decision-making input. Relevance is a synonym for or predictor of effect, an essential prerequisite or stage in reaching it, or a unique goal of the research work. The basic goal of this work is to improve our understanding of research relevance, with specific goals of (1) unpacking research relevance from both theoretical and practical perspectives, and (2) outlining essential assessment

concerns. The importance of research relevance in justifying research spending and directing strategic research planning appears to be growing. However, in the health research community, relevance has been mostly unspoken, relying on unexplained interpretations of value, fit, and impact potential. While it appears that research relevance is a required condition for effect - a process or component of efforts to make rigorous research accessible - relevance is ultimately distinct from research impact. To assess the total value and impact of a wide range of individual and group research efforts and investments, careful and explicit assessment of research relevance is required. This paper explains how research relevance assessments (1) orient to, capture, and compare research versus non-research sources, (2) consider both instrumental and non-instrumental uses of research, (3) accommodate dynamic temporal-shifting perspectives on research, and (4) align with an inter subjective understanding of relevance.

**Key Words:** *Health research systems; Research relevance; Research impact; Public Health*

## INTRODUCTION

Over and above investments in the management and delivery of healthcare and public health services, several levels of government in Canada invest billions of dollars in health-related research each year. In recognition of this significant communal commitment, extensive effort has been done to investigate and explain the repercussions of these investments, as well as to influence strategic planning. The greater focus on the usefulness and impact of health research hints at relevance. Furthermore, research funders are increasingly using relevance assessment as a decision-making input; nevertheless, it is unclear if relevance is a synonym for or predictor of impact, a necessary prerequisite or stage in obtaining it, or a separate goal of the research enterprise [1]. As a result, the primary goal of this paper is to improve our understanding of research relevance as it relates to research quality and impact, with the specific goals of (1) unpacking research relevance from both theoretical and practical perspectives, and (2) highlighting key considerations for research relevance assessment.

Globally, there has been a growing interest in research impact assessment (RIA) in the health sector, as well as a growing critical appraisal of the value of health research investments [2]. With a small but growing body of work seeking to develop better measures to evaluate (and ideally attribute) the returns on health research investments, RIA focuses on understanding how research activity can directly and indirectly advance knowledge, influence decision-making, and affect health and socio-economic outcomes. The CAHS impact framework, which drew on the Buxton and Haney 'payback model,' among other sources, has offered a meaningful beginning point for thinking about the impact of health research in Canada. Alberta Innovates-Health Solutions' (AIHS) subsequent work on a Research to Impact Framework adds to the understanding of how to operationalize RIA frameworks for health research in Canada. The assumption that research should be 'relevant' is popular in the health sector [3]. Commitments to "knowledge translation" and the "knowledge to action cycle" highlight important difficulties and provide valuable insight into how to ensure research usability and utilization. At the same time, the health research community has paid disproportionate attention to issues of study quality, emphasizing internal validity at the expense of outward validity, implying a contradiction between rigor and

relevance. While the concept of relevance is critical to the health research business, failing to unpack or investigate it both conceptually and practically allows potential for misunderstanding and misapplication [4].

In the health-care field, research relevance is sometimes defined as the 'fit' of a body of knowledge or study approach to a certain topic or issue (e.g. public health, primary healthcare, healthcare access, genomics, alternative healthcare, healthcare reform in rural areas). This is the strategy used by two recent task groups of the International Society for Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research. The task forces created questionnaires to evaluate the relevance and credibility of non-randomized controlled trials (e.g. observational research, meta-network analysis) in guiding healthcare decisions. Both express similar insights concerning relevance, corroborating the already mentioned subjectivist perspective, and can be summarized [5].

## DISCUSSION

We analyses some non-health sector perspective that pay attention to the term, frequently with formal definitions or taxonomies defined, to further deconstruct relevance. The legal, financial accounting, education, and online search (information retrieval) areas are all examples, and each is briefly explained here. Relevance has a specific legal connotation when it comes to the admissibility of evidence in terms of its probative value (i.e. the extent to which evidence contributes to proving an important matter of fact) [6]. A common objection to legal testimony or evidence, for example, is that it is 'irrelevant.' The legal processes for determining the admissibility or legal-relevance of evidence are well-established, requiring explicit declaration of evidentiary sources and direct consideration of that evidence as it relates to a specific case and related historical precedents, something that the health sector lacks. The formality, explicitness, and retroactive nature of this process, which is closely related with a specific case (or decision), are distinguishing features of the legal examination of relevance. Another viewpoint on relevance is provided by financial accounting. Relevance is regarded as a crucial component of commonly accepted accounting rules in this industry. Accountants and auditors are expected to focus on financial information that fits the decision-making needs of users and is expected to be relevant and material [7].

Editorial Office, *Journal of health Policy and Management*, United Kingdom.

Correspondence: Shalu Pandey, Editorial Office, *Journal of health Policy and Management*, United Kingdom. e-mail editor.jhpm@scholarlymed.com  
Received: 22-April-2022, Manuscript No. PULHPM-22-4991; Editor assigned: 24-April-2022, PreQC No. PULHPM-22-4991 (PQ); Reviewed: 12-May-2022, QC No. PULHPM-22-4991; Revised: 14-May-2022, Manuscript No. PULHPM-22-4991 (R); Published: 23-May-2022, DOI: 10.37532/pulhpm.22.5(3).31-32



This open-access article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial License (CC BY-NC) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits reuse, distribution and reproduction of the article, provided that the original work is properly cited and the reuse is restricted to noncommercial purposes. For commercial reuse, contact reprints@pulsus.com

The financial accounting perspective on relevance is set in a formal context, similar to the legal perspective, with a clear focal point (i.e. financial performance) and clearly established and monitored principles (i.e. generally accepted accounting principles) all of which compete directly or indirectly on their ability to find relevant content in response to user queries. Several considerations are presented by these non-health sector perspectives on relevance. First, they corroborate broad findings that point to perspective, decision context, timeliness, and accuracy of emphasis or 'fit' as important aspects of relevance [8]. They also draw attention to a few unique considerations. The formalistic frameworks of financial accounting and law emphasize concerns like precedent and validity, meaning that relevance in a research sense may necessitate the establishment of some legitimate or plausible link between research and its use or user, among other things. The chronological context is another important element for RRA. Almost all research is done over a specific time period. While research quality is typically defined by its methodology, which is a static feature that is not subject to temporal variation (e.g., the assessed quality of a randomized controlled trial should be consistent over time), research relevance can be considered at any time (e.g., prior to the start of a research study or at different points in time after completion) and is thus subject to dynamic perceptions as they relate to evolving action [9].

Subjectivity is a recurring element in our discussion of relevance. Consider the scientific perspectives of positivism and interpretivism, which are often connected with research quality and relevance, respectively. Research quality can be thought of as having objectively assessed qualities or features, whereas research relevance can be thought of as being subjectively determined [10]. The subjective focus emphasizes the diversity of diverse viewpoints and circumstances, implying that anyone can have a different perspective on the importance of a certain research output or activity. While relevance can never be described as universal, it can also be claimed that it is not simply subjective. Rather, inter-subjective understanding, which emphasizes the level of agreement or shared knowledge among individual subjective viewpoints as a way to reconcile the personal and the universal, may be more compatible with relevance. While the inter-subjective perspective does not give an objective method for determining relevance, it does pave the way for a meaningful and systematic assessment of research relevance. It also emphasizes the significance of representation in forming the inter-subjective judgments that influence research [11].

## CONCLUSION

This study examined research relevance from many angles and provided crucial factors to consider when evaluating it. Research relevance appears to be becoming increasingly relevant in justifying research investments and driving strategic research planning, in addition to research impact assessment. Indeed, 'relevance' assessments are becoming an important part of the health research process. However, in the health research community, relevance has been mostly unspoken, relying on unexplained interpretations

of value, fit, and impact potential. When considering the many applications of relevance in health research, the term is sometimes used interchangeably with research effect or as a valid forecast of future consequences. Research relevance appears to be an essential condition for effect in many ways - a process or component of efforts to make rigorous research usable. Relevance, on the other hand, is neither a necessary nor sufficient prerequisite for achieving effect. We anticipate that research that is relevant to specific and legitimate users will have an influence, although this may not always be the case when other factors come into play. Furthermore, we may assume that research that has a significant influence will be held accountable yet this is not always the case. In the end, relevancy takes precedence above scientific impact. Relevance, like rigor, is a complementary but different aspect of what secures 'the excellent' in health research. While the concept of 'relevance' is ubiquitous, knowledge of it in the context of health research is new and poorly articulated. To help us better understand how research relevance assessments (1) orient to, capture, and compare research versus non-research sources, (2) consider both instrumental and non-instrumental uses of research, (3) accommodate dynamic temporal-shifting perspectives on research, and (4) align with an inter-subjective understanding of relevance, this paper outlines four key considerations.

## REFERENCES

1. Kleinert S, Horton R. How should medical science change? *Lancet*. 2014; 9913(383):197-198.
2. Chalmers I, Bracken MB, Djulbegovic B, et al. How to increase value and reduce waste when research priorities are set. *Lancet*. 2014; 383(9912):156-165.
3. Chalmers I, Glasziou P. Avoidable waste in the production and reporting of research evidence. *Lancet*. 2009; 374(9683):86-89.
4. Banzi R, Moja L, Pistotti V, et al. Conceptual frameworks and empirical approaches used to assess the impact of health research: an overview of reviews. *Health Res Pol Sys*. 2011; 9(1):1-10.
5. Milat AJ, Bauman AE, Redman S. A narrative review of research impact assessment models and methods. *Health Res Pol Sys*. 2015; 13(1):1-7.
6. Buxton M, Hanney S. How can payback from health services research be assessed?. *J Health Ser Res Pol*. 1996; 1(1):35-43.
7. Nowotny H, Scott P, Gibbons M. Introduction: 'Mode 2' revisited: The new production of knowledge. *Minerva*. 2003; 41(3):179-94. ]
8. Potvin L, Armstrong P, editors. *Shaping Academia for the Public Good: Critical Reflections on the CHSRF/CIHR Chair Program*. Univ Toronto Press. 2013.
9. Floridi L. Understanding epistemic relevance. *Erkenntnis*. 2008; 69(1):69-92.
10. Bush V. Science, the endless frontier. In *Science, the Endless Frontier*. Prin Univ Press. 2020.
11. Stokes DE. Pasteur's quadrant: Basic science and technological innovation. *Brookings Inst Press*. 2011.