



National Collaborating Centre
for Determinants of Health

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des déterminants de la santé

Intersectoral Action to Advance Health Equity: Evidence from an Expedited Review

What does the evidence say about the effectiveness of intersectoral action to advance health equity and what are some examples we can learn from?

Lesley Dyck, Knowledge Translation Specialist
PHABC Conference, Nov. 22 & 23, 2012

Today we will focus on:

- A summary of the review methodology
- The key findings from the review, including upstream, midstream and downstream intersectoral actions and their effectiveness.
- Brief summary of the program examples that were studied in the literature, and case studies from NCCDH, for more in-depth information



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The review is available
on our website:

www.nccdh.ca



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ASSESSING THE IMPACT AND EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERSECTORAL ACTION
ON THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH AND HEALTH EQUITY:
AN EXPEDITED SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

Team

From the NCCDH (National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health):

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From the EPHPP (Effective Public Health Practices Project):

- **Donna Fitzpatrick-Lewis, McMaster University**

<http://www.ephpp.ca/index.html>



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NATIONAL COLLABORATING CENTRE
FOR ABORIGINAL HEALTH

CENTRE DE COLLABORATION NATIONALE
DE LA SANTÉ AUTOCHTONE

Prince George, BC | www.nccah.ca



National Collaborating Centre
for Infectious Diseases

Centre de collaboration nationale
des maladies infectieuses

Winnipeg, MB | www.nccid.ca



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Antigonish, NS | www.nccdh.ca

Core Business:

Knowledge synthesis, translation, and exchange

- get evidence into the hands of decision makers
- practice, program, and policy
- identify gaps in knowledge (and use)



National Collaborating Centre
for Environmental Health

Centre de collaboration nationale
en santé environnementale

Vancouver, BC | www.ncceh.ca



National Collaborating Centre
for Methods and Tools

Centre de collaboration nationale
des méthodes et outils

Hamilton, ON | www.nccmt.ca



Centre de collaboration nationale
sur les politiques publiques et la santé

National Collaborating Centre
for Healthy Public Policy

Montréal-Québec, QC | www.ncchpp.ca

How we work at the NCCDH ...

Advance knowledge

- Produce evidence/knowledge summaries, reviews, blogs, videos, factsheets, case studies
- Lead collaborative learning projects
- Online learning (webinars, modules, discussion forums, webcasts)

Foster knowledge use

- Offer educational events, promote useful resources, active discourse with our audience, conference participation

Accelerate network development

- Foster online exchange and support communities of practice



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Why did we study Intersectoral Action?

- Informed by the results of a pan-Canadian environmental scan *Integrating Social Determinants of Health and Health Equity into Canadian Public Health Practice (2010)*
- Informed by the *10 Promising Practices to Reduce Social Inequities in Health in Local Public Health (2010)*, developed by the Sudbury & District Health Unit.

Both of these are available in the
Resource Library on our website:

www.nccdh.ca



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10 Promising Practices to Reduce Social Inequities in Health in Local Public Health

1. **Intersectoral action**
2. Targeting with universalism
3. Purposeful reporting
4. Social marketing
5. Health equity target setting
6. Equity-focused health impact assessment
7. Competencies / organizational standards
8. Contribution to evidence base
9. Early childhood development
10. Community engagement



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Sudbury & District Health Unit 2010

The Review Questions:

1. What is the **impact/effectiveness** of intersectoral action as a public health practice for health equity?
2. What is the **role of the public health sector** in intersectoral action on the social determinants of health for health equity?
3. What **tools and strategies** support the initiation and implementation of intersectoral action to improve health equity?



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Intersectoral Action

- Intersectoral action for health, refers to “actions undertaken by sectors outside the health sector, possibly, but not necessarily, in collaboration with the health sector, on health or health equity outcomes or on the determinants of health or health equity.”

(PHAC & WHO, 2008, pg. 2)



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Health Equity ...

... involves the fair distribution of resources needed for health, fair access to the opportunities available, and fairness in the support offered to people when ill.

Whitehead M, Dahlgren G. 2006.
Concepts and principles for tackling social inequities in health:
Leveling up part 1. Geneva: World Health Organization. (p. 5).

Health Inequities ...

... are health differences between population groups that are systematic, unfair, and avoidable



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Rapid Review Method

Rapid review uses “streamlined traditional systematic review methods in order to synthesize evidence within a shortened timeframe” (Ganaan et al., 2010)

- Literature search – databases, grey literature and experts
- Screening for relevance
- Appraisal of included studies
- Synthesis of the 17 included studies



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To synthesize findings, we grouped the primary studies according to how the social determinants of health are addressed:

- **Upstream interventions** include reform of fundamental social and economic structures and involve mechanisms for the redistribution of wealth, power, opportunities, and decision-making capacities;
- **Midstream interventions** seek to reduce risky behaviours or exposures to hazards, by influencing health behaviours or psychosocial factors, and/or to improving material working and living conditions
- **Downstream interventions** mitigate the inequitable impacts of upstream and midstream determinants through efforts to increase equitable access to health care services



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(Torgersen et al., 2007)

Summary of Included Studies:

- 16 Primary Studies (1 study both “mid-stream” & “down-stream”):
 - 14 quantitative
 - 2 qualitative
- 1 Systematic Review (U.K.):
 - Health Action Zones
 - Health Improvement Programs
 - New Deal for Communities
 - Health Education Authority, Integrated Purchasing Program
 - Healthy Living Centres
 - National Healthy School Standard
- Upstream (2)
 - Indigenous housing
 - Disability employment
- Mid-Stream (8)
 - Chronic disease prevention* (x2)
 - Child oral health
 - Child obesity prevention
 - Healthy housing
 - Hazardous cleaning product use
 - Early literacy
 - Disability employment
- Down-Stream (7)
 - Child asthma control
 - Chronic disease prevention*
 - Child mental health, refugees
 - Immunization
 - Child oral health (x2)
 - School readiness



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One Systematic Review - Smith et. al. 2009

- Studied the impact of organizational partnerships on public health outcomes and health inequalities in England
- 15 articles about six interventions:
 - Health Action Zones,
 - Health Living Centres,
 - New Deal for Communities,
 - Health Education Authority Integrated Purchasing Program,
 - Health Improvements Programs, and
 - National Healthy School Standards



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Effectiveness



Image: Paolo Carboni, Wikipedia Commons

- **Upstream (2)**
 - Follow up about 1 year, ranged from no effect to moderate effect
- **Midstream (8)**
 - Follow up under 2 years; ranged from no effect to moderate effect
- **Downstream (7)**
 - Short follow up, generally a moderate effect



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What is the role of the public health sector in intersectoral action on the social determinants of health for health equity?

- **Roles and relationships not always clearly defined**
- Policy and program guidance (e.g. committee members and implementation teams)
- Provision of technical information and training
- Delivery of services



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What tools and strategies support the initiation and implementation of intersectoral action to improve health equity?



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Overall findings

- Most studies were program interventions; few large scale policy level initiatives
- Most studies at local level, few regional, no national
- Short timeframe may have limited evaluation/findings
- Lack of health equity measurements - impact remains inconclusive
- Unclear description of intersectoral activities, roles, tools/mechanisms/strategies
- **Intervene in early childhood**, given positive effect for kids, especially for early literacy among children of low-income mothers

Difficult to determine how observed outcomes relate to intersectoral action



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Sudbury & District Health Unit 2010

THANK YOU!

Questions?



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