



A Practical Guide to Developing Effective Policy Briefs in Medical and Health Sciences

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Abstract

An effective policy brief translates research findings into clear, actionable recommendations for policymakers, bridging the gap between academic evidence and societal decision-making. It summarizes complex issues concisely, highlights the importance of specific health or medical challenges, and provides practical solutions that can improve public well-being, reduce inequalities, and guide policy implementation. By presenting evidence-based options, policy briefs facilitate informed decision-making, stakeholder engagement, and the adoption of interventions that address pressing societal problems efficiently and effectively.

Keywords: Practical Guide, Policy Brief, Medical Sciences

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Defining an Effective Policy Brief

Developing an effective policy brief is a key scientific achievement of health researchers. These briefs are based on research conducted in research centers and universities. They aim to highlight important policy-related evidence, improve public well-being, and reduce health inequalities. Additionally, they seek the best solutions to various health crises. However, this process poses challenges for community policymakers in terms of time, cost, and feasibility (1, 2). Community policymakers include members of a government department, legislature, or other affiliated organizations who have the authority and responsibility to develop new regulations, laws, and policies (2). In a society, policy issues are often complex and multifaceted, often involving stakeholders, with various factors and consequences. Effective policy briefs attempt to summarize these complexities in a concise, useful, and actionable format for society's policymakers. They present information and practical solutions clearly and concisely. This allows community policymakers to quickly understand key, science-based, practical points. As a result, they can make informed decisions as soon as possible to improve and resolve the situation and challenges that have arisen in society. In short, effective policy briefs, in addition to highlighting the importance of specific societal issues and problems, provide compelling evidence. They raise awareness about these problems and transform academic or technical knowledge into actionable policy recommendations. They also offer practical solutions and tangible options for interventions. Additionally, they connect various stakeholders, including policymakers, government officials, civil society organizations, and the general public (3).

The lack of a policy brief can lead to hasty and uninformed decisions. It can cause insufficient awareness of critical issues and problems in society, missed opportunities for evidence-based policy. It can also reduce stakeholder participation and transparency in a society's

policy-making process. The results and practical solutions from these policy briefs serve as a vital framework for shaping effective, informed, and implementable policy decisions. Their absence can lead to significant, even irreparable consequences for a society and its individuals.

When are effective political summaries written?

Policy briefs are often written by experts in the field when the policy community needs to develop new policies or modify existing ones. For example, the spread of dengue fever is expected to worsen due to climate change. Global warming will likely intensify disease transmission by the end of the century. The key issue is addressing global warming by providing practical, extra-academic solutions. Policymakers can use these solutions to implement or adjust policies that help prevent rising temperatures(4).

Experts in this field can be used to inform policymakers about emerging issues. They provide evidence-based recommendations and present potentially effective policy options to address specific challenges or achieve desired outcomes. For example, in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, vaccine development and the setup of mobile vaccination centers were extra-academic efforts for policymakers. These actions led to increased vaccination rates and reduced infections and deaths.

Policy briefs can assess the impact of policies, identify gaps or shortcomings, and provide recommendations for improvement or adjustment. For example, modifiable risk factors for childbearing in a society (younger population). What negative policy factors are causing couples to be reluctant to have children in a society, and what effective solutions can be proposed to policymakers to reduce and eliminate these gaps and shortcomings?

Furthermore, the results of these articles are crucial in the decision-making processes for policymakers. For example, in the process of increasing environmental and oil pollutants in a society, industrial activities, fossil fuels, and

improper agricultural practices. Addressing this requires adopting cleaner technologies, sustainable agriculture, and improved waste management practices. The implementation of preventive environmental management (PEM) and strict environmental policies (EP) is presented to policymakers as a central strategy for combating emerging pollutants. These policies include innovations in renewable energy, energy storage, limiting the use of old vehicles, increasing public transport usage, and carbon capture and storage (5). Additionally, promoting and strengthening a culture of tree planting within the community can contribute to environmental protection. All of these can be crucial in reducing air pollution and reducing the incidence of respiratory diseases.

The results of effective policy briefs are often used to influence policymakers and stakeholders.

For example, improving the quality of municipal drinking water can be effective. This is preferably done at municipal water and wastewater treatment plants. It helps prevent water loss during treatment by household water devices. In water treatment devices, a significant amount of municipal water is wasted when working to treat drinking water. Or the appropriate and correct use of wastewater in the agricultural industry and power plants instead of potable urban water can be cited as an example.

Policy briefs facilitate communication, dialogue, and participation between policymakers, stakeholders and the general public. Examples include improving the quality of car fuel, using public transport in cities instead of private cars, and replacing old cars with new and electric cars to reduce environmental pollution.

How to Write an Effective Policy Brief Methodology for Writing an Effective Policy Brief

Writing an effective policy brief is an effective way to convey concise and focused, non-academic, practical knowledge and

information to policymakers and decision-makers in a community. It should be noted that the main purpose of an effective policy brief is to influence policy decisions. Policy brief writers can contribute to policymaking practice by providing evidence-based analysis. They offer concise, useful, and effective practical recommendations. They also deliver practical solutions to create positive changes in society. This article provides guidance on the preparation of effective policy briefs in the field of health and medical sciences. Notably, a policy brief is not a one-size-fits-all solution for all policymaking processes.

1. Title: Authors of an effective policy brief begin by clearly stating the importance of the policy issue or problem in society and the environment that they are addressing with their purpose and target audience. For example: Review of modifiable and non-modifiable risk factors in patients with stomach cancer.

2. Authors and their organizational affiliations are included as with other articles.

3. Authors and their organizational affiliations are included as with other articles.

4. The abstract of a policy brief is stated.

This section of a policy brief includes:

- What is the current problem?

- Providing policy recommendations and implications for addressing and solving the problem.

5. Introduction to the policy paper summary: The importance and necessity of compiling a policy paper summary, first of all, the problem and context (the problem that policymakers currently need to solve) that is raised in it are introduced. In this section, the goal and target audience should be clearly stated. Also, the problem of the studied community should be described and explained in detail with the following characteristics:

- Causes, nature, burden of common diseases and injuries caused by the problem that require control and prevention measures or intervention and treatment by policymakers in the community within the framework of health and hygiene.

- Effects of providing programs, services to control, prevent and treat injuries caused by the problem.

- Challenges and gaps in providing solutions, programs, services and measures of the health system against the problem that have arisen within the current policy framework.

6. Method

In this section, the authors present material based on the type of their study (case-control, review, etc.) regarding the methods used to identify and select the problem, research evidence, and their evaluation in terms of the

scientific quality of the study, the applicability and effectiveness of their results, as well as ethical considerations, justice, and applicable policymaking in the field of health.

7. Results

In this section of the policy paper summary, authors should evaluate policy options and effective, trans-academic approaches to address the issue. They should present each option’s advantages, disadvantages, potential impacts, and practical implementation solutions (Table 1). For better understanding, two examples of policy options analysis are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 1. Example of a policy options analysis table

| Policy option | |
|--|---------------------------|
| Evaluation aspects | Findings from the study/s |
| Advantages | |
| Disadvantages | |
| Potential impacts | |
| Provide practical and implementation solutions | |

Table 2. An example of a policy options analysis table presented in the COVID-19 pandemic.

| Mobile COVID-19 Vaccination | |
|--|---|
| Evaluation aspects | Findings from the study/s |
| Advantages | Easy access, increased vaccination rates |
| Disadvantages | High cost |
| Potential impacts | Reducing infection and mortality |
| Provide practical and implementation solutions | Using the medical mobilization community and raising awareness and informing people through social networks |

Table 3. An example of a table analyzing policy options presented in reducing environmental and petroleum pollutants.

| Restricting old vehicles | |
|--|--|
| Evaluation aspects | Findings from the study/s |
| Advantages | Reduced pollution |
| Disadvantages | Public resistance |
| Potential impacts | Reducing pollutants and the resulting respiratory diseases |
| Provide practical and implementation solutions | Passing regulations, implementing license controls, expanding public transportation, increasing gasoline quality |

Discussion

This section of the article discusses ethical, practical, and implementation considerations, as well as potential barriers for each policy option presented in the results section. It addresses different levels of planning and service delivery in the health sector, including both the individuals and units receiving services and those providing them. Based on its analysis, it provides clear and applicable recommendations and solutions for policymakers in the health sector. It should be explained why these recommendations and applicable policy solutions are appropriate and useful for this health sector. This section also considers the potential harms these issues may cause in society if health policymakers fail to intervene. It further evaluates the extent to which these consequences can be mitigated and whether the problems and their effects can be fully or substantially resolved in the future. This section outlines methods for implementing effective solutions to address the identified societal problems. It also discusses potential obstacles, challenges, and strategies for overcoming them, with recommendations for short-, medium-, and long-term actions for health policymakers.

Conclusion

State the main points and conclusions from the summary of the effective policy paper and the

importance of your effective and applicable recommendations and solutions.

Footnotes AI Use Disclosure: The authors declare that no generative AI tools were used in the creation of this article.

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