Session 1: The Current State of Evidence

A Landscaping of the Evidence on Governance in the Health Sector of Low and Middle Income Countries

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The tribal wisdom of the Plains Indians, passed on from generation to generation, says that: “When you discover that you are riding a dead horse, the best strategy is to dismount.”

However, in government more advanced strategies are often employed:

- Buying a stronger whip
- Changing riders
- Appointing a committee to study the horse
- Visiting other countries to see how other cultures ride dead horses
- Reclassifying the horse as “living-impaired”
- Providing additional funding or training to improve the performance of the dead horse
- Rewriting the expected performance requirements of all horses
- Promoting the dead horse to a supervisory position

Pambazuka news, Pan-African voices for freedom & justice
Outline

- Definitions and frameworks
- How governance affects health: what do we know?
- Framing research around governance and health: what do we need to know and how do we find out?
- Concluding reflections

Definitions of Governance

- “The exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country’s affairs at all levels” (UNDP 1997 non-specific to health)
- “The careful and responsible management of the well-being of the population” (WHO WHR 2000 - stewardship)
- “The complex mechanisms, processes, relationships and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their rights and obligations, and mediate their differences” (WHO EURO 2006)
## Governance Frameworks 1 – Non-health Specific

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation, representation &amp; inclusive political process and institutions</td>
<td>Legitimacy &amp; Voice (participation, consensus orientation)</td>
<td>Voice &amp; accountability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accountability of institutions &amp; leaders to citizens &amp; the law</td>
<td>Direction (strategic vision)</td>
<td>Political stability &amp; lack of violence</td>
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<td>Promote &amp; protect universally recognized human rights</td>
<td>Performance (effectiveness &amp; efficiency)</td>
<td>Government effectiveness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrate DRG principles and practice across development portfolio</td>
<td>Accountability (accountability and transparency)</td>
<td>Regulatory quality</td>
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<td>Fairness (equity &amp; inclusiveness, rule of law)</td>
<td>Rule of law</td>
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<td>Control of corruption</td>
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## Governance Frameworks 2 – Health Specific

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<tr>
<td>Strategic vision</td>
<td>Generation of intelligence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation &amp; consensus orientation</td>
<td>Formulating strategic policy direction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rule of law</td>
<td>Ensuring tools for implementation: powers, incentives &amp; sanctions</td>
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<td>Transparency</td>
<td>Building coalition &amp; partnerships</td>
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<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>Ensuring a fit between policy objectives and organizational structure and culture</td>
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<td>Equity &amp; inclusiveness</td>
<td>Ensuring accountability</td>
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<td>Effectiveness &amp; efficiency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
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<td>Information &amp; intelligence</td>
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<td>Ethics</td>
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Elements of Health System Governance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTORS</th>
<th>LEVELS</th>
<th>FUNCTIONS</th>
<th>MECHANISMS / TOOLS</th>
<th>CONSEQUENCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Global</td>
<td>Strategic Direction</td>
<td>Policies</td>
<td>Graft &amp; Illicit Payments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civil Society</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>System Design</td>
<td>Audits</td>
<td>Overlapping Mandates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>Intersectoral Advocacy</td>
<td>Regulatory Statutes</td>
<td>Waste</td>
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How governance affects health: what do we know?

Multiple channels through which governance may affect health – both direct and indirect
Effects of Broad Governance Factors on Health Services & Health Outcomes

Cross-sectional studies have explored the effect of governance measures (eg. CPIA) on health:

❖ Aid and public sector spending is more effective in achieving desired outcomes in contexts of good governance (Burnside & Dollar 2004)
❖ Increased health spending reduces <5 mortality only where governance (CPIA) is sound (Wagstaff & Claeson 2005)
❖ Good governance does not have a direct effect on health, but has significant indirect effects via (Klomp & de Haan 2008):
  ▶ Improved health care (staff ratios, vaccine rates)
  ▶ Income
❖ Public health spending lowers child mortality rates more in countries with good governance (Rajkumar & Swaroop 2008)

Democratization

❖ Substantial evidence that democratization associated with higher levels of public health (eg. better infant mortality, life expectancy, immunization coverage) (Lake & Baum 2001; Zweifel & Navia 2000)
❖ Democratization, through electoral competition, can spur the development of Universal Health Coverage (Grepin & Dionne 2013)
War & Conflict, & Health

- Conflict related death & injury is a major contributor to the global burden of disease
  - Evidence is weak regarding magnitude of death/morbidity, especially indirect effects (Murray et al 2002)
  - Indirect effects through raised incidence of infectious disease (HIV, Malaria) and reduced health spending may have twice the impact of direct effects (Ghobarah 2004)

- Substantial focus in health, on how to rebuild health systems post-conflict

Corruption & Weak Financial Management

- Corruption: “Abuse of entrusted power for private gain” (Vian 2008)
- A widespread problem in the health sector, from petty to large scale
  - Counterfeit drugs market US$75 billion pa worldwide
  - Leakage of non-salary recurrent expenditures in Ghana 80%, Uganda 70% (2000 PETS)
  - Widespread informal payments, can be 5-10 times greater than formal salary (Cambodia, Barber et al 2004, Bangladesh, Killingsworth et al 1999)

- Major implications for service quality and efficiency – not just loss of money
Percentage of patients perceiving corruption in the health sector

Source: Lewis 2006

Absenteeism Rates Among Health Workers

(Source: Lewis 2006)
Decentralization

- Effects of decentralization on access to and quality of health services highly debated:
  - Robalino et al 2001 – financial decentralization had positive effect on IMR especially in poor countries and those that promote political rights
  - Some individual country studies, eg. Tanzania (Hutchinson 2002), & Uganda (Jeppson & Okuronzi 2000), note positive effects – others, (Blas and Limbambala 2001) note negative effects.

- Multiple efforts to identify different dimensions of decentralization (eg. Bossert 1998 & 2002 decision space)
Accountability, Patient Rights & Empowerment

Key relationships of power

Source: World Bank 2003

Community Accountability 1

- Multiple mechanisms:
  - Information dissemination: eg. District Health Barometer (South Africa)
  - Community/Village health committees
  - Community monitoring
  - Possibly supplemented by information technology

- RCTs have demonstrated that interventions to promote accountability of providers to communities can have significant positive effects on health outcomes
  - Eg. Bjorkman and Svensson 2009 (35% reduction in child mortality)
Community Accountability 2

» Studies of routine processes to promote voice and accountability (e.g. Village health committees) more mixed
  - Molyneux et al (2012) review 19 such studies, 4 demonstrate positive findings, others more mixed

» Challenges
  - Community structures may not be inclusive
  - Community accountability mechanisms may not function in a sustainable and institutionalized fashion

» Challenges of transferability given heterogeneity of mechanisms and contexts within which they work (McCoy et al 2011)

» Evidence on public report cards and patients’ rights charters very limited (Molyneux found 1 LMIC study each)

Upward Accountability

» More substantive evidence around upward accountability mechanisms:
  - Performance based financing – 4 systematic reviews on these schemes, suggest substantial variation in design and effectiveness “devil is in the detail”
  - Contracting for health services – 2 systematic reviews suggest that contracting can increase access and utilization of services, but evidence on quality (and perhaps accountability) not clear
  - Balanced scorecards – no systematic reviews, one study shows promising outcomes in Afghanistan
Regulation and Accreditation

- Regulation often thought to be critical given scale of private health sector, but:
  - Widely thought to be ineffectual (e.g., Sheikh 2013, Kumanarayake et al. 2000)
  - Very limited evidence about strategies to strengthen regulation or regulatory capacity
- Very limited developing country evidence on accreditation (just 1 out of 198 studies in Totten et al. 2012 systematic review)

Enhancing Core Government Governance Functions

- Widely acknowledged that government requires capacity for core functions such as:
  - Designing mixed (public/private) health systems
  - Working intersectorally to promote health
- Often these functions imply new skills and capacities such as partnership building, system thinking, strategic planning, & conflict resolution
- Very limited evidence on how to effectively build such capacities in MOH
Governance - A Neglected Area of Research

- Widely acknowledged to be critical to the achievement of health outcomes, but probably the least studied/understood function in a health system
- Evidence across virtually all of the areas covered above is very weak

Criteria for Identifying Future USAID Evidence Investments

- What will have maximum impact on USAID programming?
- What are other actors investing in?
  - Not much!
  - IDRC “Governance for equity in health systems” initiative – only LMIC researchers
  - 3iE window on transparency and accountability (not health specific)
- What is feasible, doable and likely to deliver practical guidance?

Research question should drive study design
Research questions should guide study design

- Questions regarding influence or effects of interventions
- Descriptive and exploratory questions
- Explanatory questions

Possible study designs 1 – questions regarding influence or effects

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<tr>
<th>Study Questions</th>
<th>Study designs</th>
<th>Strengths &amp; Weaknesses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does X reform influence service outcomes/coverage?</td>
<td>Randomized control trials (eg. Bjorkman VHC) Before/after, time series analysis</td>
<td>High quality evidence on impact Does not explain mechanisms through which impacts occurred Expensive</td>
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<td>Is good governance associated with better service outcomes?</td>
<td>Cross-sectional (cross-country) statistical analysis (eg. Rajkumar and Swaroop)</td>
<td>Provides high quality evidence on associations Typically does not explain mechanisms through which impacts occurred</td>
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### Possible study designs 2 – Descriptive & exploratory questions

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<th>Study Questions</th>
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<tr>
<td>How do health workers perceive corruption?</td>
<td>Ethnographic research or other qualitative methods (Stringhini 2009 provider</td>
<td>Can explore and explain phenomena, correct misperceptions, offer insights into why things happen</td>
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<td>attitudes to informal payments)</td>
<td>Good at describing complex social phenomena. Can help build theory</td>
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<td>To what extent is community decision making about health inclusive?</td>
<td>Participatory action research</td>
<td>May have limited transferability to other contexts</td>
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<td>How does MOH structure support or undermine health in all policies?</td>
<td>Case studies</td>
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### Possible study designs 3 – Explanatory questions

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<th>Study Questions</th>
<th>Study design</th>
<th>Strengths and Weaknesses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under what circumstances are community accountability mechanisms effective?</td>
<td>Mixed methods – convergence of qualitative and quantitative data, Pragmatic</td>
<td>Combine rigor of quantitative approach to measuring impact with ability to explain</td>
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<td>trials.</td>
<td>mechanisms</td>
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<td>How can we make regulatory interventions more effective?</td>
<td>Implementation research, plan, do, study, act cycles</td>
<td>Can help guide implementation strategies, providing “real time” data</td>
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Final Reflections 1

Governance in health – a wide and largely untouched canvas

Untouched due to multiple challenges:
- Lack of conceptual clarity, differing definitions & frameworks
- Political sensitivities, eg. work on corruption
- “difficult” area for effective research and action (mission interviews)

Need for focus, and need to demonstrate early wins – studies that assist implementation, or impact of other programs

Final Reflections 2

Governance inherently complex phenomenon

Public health & development community emphasis on narrow “scientific rigor” (eg. RCTs) has some from negative effects:
- Underplays need to understand why effects occur
- Focus on discrete interventions rather than whole governance system
- Neglect questions of scale up and feasibility
- May fail to recognize rigor (albeit of a different sort) in alternative, qualitative methods
Thank you

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