Evaluation of the Multifaceted and Complex Health Strategies: A Guide to Program Managers

Saurabh RamBihariLal Shrivastava, Prateek Saurabh Shrivastava, Jegadeesh Ramasamy

Department of Community Medicine, Shri Sathya Sai Medical College and Research Institute, Ammapettai, Kancheepuram, Tamil Nadu, India

Correspondence to:
Dr. Saurabh RamBihariLal Shrivastava, 3rd Floor, Department of Community Medicine, Shri Sathya Sai Medical College and Research Institute, Ammapettai Village, Thiruporur - Guduvancherry Main Road, Sembakkam Post, Kancheepuram - 603 108, Tamil Nadu, India.
E-mail: drshrishri2008@gmail.com


DEAR EDITOR,

The program managers from all the nations have planned and implemented various strategies to ensure provision of quality assured health care services to all.[1] However, as most of these health services are extremely complex and are built on the basis of thorough situation analysis, there is a crucial need to evaluate these strategies so that the policies can be subsequently modified.[2] In general, evaluation refers to the comprehensive process by which observed outcomes can be compared with the pre-decided targets.[3,4] In the modern era, based on the findings of a holistic evaluation process, decisions pertaining to the financial grant for a specific program is made.[5,6]

However, to enhance the credibility of an evaluation, the steps should be uniform, pre-defined, clear, and flexible enough to be customized based on local needs.[7] Ideally the evaluation process comprises of the following steps, namely identifying what has to be evaluated (structure or process or outcome evaluation); setting standards and criteria to assess accomplishment of pre-decided targets; devising methodology to perform evaluation; data collection; systematic analysis and interpretation of data; followed by implementation of corrective measures; and finally performing re-evaluation to assess the results of the remedial steps.[8-10]

Any evaluation process should explore six different facets of a health strategy, namely evaluation of relevance, adequacy, accessibility, efficacy, effectiveness, and efficiency.[2,7,9] In fact, the program evaluation component has to be designed even prior to the start of any health strategy.[10] In addition, the evaluation process should not be restricted to the health care providers, but should also cover the needs of individuals or communities, so that health indicators can be improved as a whole.[11]

In conclusion, evaluation of health strategy is a complex and an integral component of planning and successfully implementing a health scheme. Thus, program managers should realize its importance and give due attention to it in order to ensure improvement in the well-being of the masses.

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