Toward a framework for measuring research impact

Brad Webb

AAMRI

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Agenda

- The imperative for measuring research impact?
- Existing work
- Does economics have a role?
- HMRI pathway to measuring impact
- Next steps
The imperative for measuring research impact...

...there is a recognised need to maximise the translation of effective research outcomes into health policy, programs and services.

This perspective is central to the Wills and McKeon reviews.

*The generation and use of high-quality, relevant research evidence will improve health policy and program effectiveness, achieve better health and help build efficient services.*

*Wills Review, 2012*

*In Australia the debate on improving health outcomes has relied too much on arguments about increasing resources, and not enough on improving productivity and effectiveness through microeconomic reform and translation of innovations from research.*

*McKeon Review, 2013*
The imperative for measuring research impact...

- Basic economics .... Scarce resources
- Health expenditure increasing at an unsustainable rate
- Need to focus on optimising value from existing knowledge

**Growth rates: health expenditure versus GDP, Australia**

- **Health expenditure**: Tends to rise faster than national income

Note: Average annual growth 2002-03 to 2012-13: Health = 5.1%; GDP = 3.0%

Note: Constant prices, 2012-13 base year
Source: AIHW
The imperative for measuring research impact...

• Socially responsible
  • Policy makers and the community are looking for research that is likely to provide a positive social return on investment (SROI)

• Policy is already changing
  • Reward research that demonstrates its potential (and actual) ‘research translation’
  • Onus on researchers to demonstrate ‘value for money’
  • Further evidence of this shift in policy
    • NHMRC (NHMRC Advanced Health Research and Translation Centres)
    • ARC (principles of research translation).
Existing work in this field

- **Measuring research impact**
  - Payback method: Buxton & colleagues UK in 1996
    - Core domains of benefit, each with metrics: knowledge, research, political and administrative, health sector and economic. Scores to represent success in each domain
    - Becker list (Washington University School of Medicine) (Last update 2014)
    - All include a dimension of economic impact.

- **AU Government**
  - Cooperative Research Centre (Impact Tool)
Why consider economic techniques for measuring research impact?

Outcomes of measurement using applied economics are typically in a language understood by policy makers.

e.g. from cost-benefit analysis (CBA), the outcome is expressed as dollars of benefit per dollar of cost.
HMRI pathway for measuring research impact

- Model of translation
- Review established measurement techniques (e.g. Payback)
- Develop methods for measuring impact (including metrics, study designs & economic techniques)
- Pilot: use framework to assess research program(s)
- Refine
- Implement
HMRI pathway for measuring research impact

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Consultation at every stage
Next steps ...

- Detailed review of methods used to measure research impact
- Continue to identify existing metrics for measuring research impact
- 1st wave of consultations complete (report)
- Develop recommended methods
- Build economic model (based on accepted technique, e.g. CBA)
- Develop protocols
- Apply framework to a program of research
Thank you

Questions?

For further discussion please contact

Brad Webb  
Associate Director Strategy & Engagement  
HMRI  
brad.webb@hmri.com.au  
02 4042 0567

Andrew Searles  
Health Research Economist  
HMRI  
andrew.searles@hmri.com.au  
02 4042 0494