

Introduction to HIA Concepts and Approaches

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Health impact assessment is

- ◆ Focused on public policy decisions and population health outcomes;
- ◆ Is a multidisciplinary process;
- ◆ Considers a wide range of evidence;
- ◆ Uses a structured framework;
- ◆ Based on a broad model of health.

Why use HIA?

- ◆ Influence decision-makers;
- ◆ Highlight potentially significant health impacts;
- ◆ Assess how proposals will affect the most vulnerable;
- ◆ Facilitate inter-sectoral working and public participation;
- ◆ Promote sustainable development;
- ◆ Encourage a greater appreciation of public health in the policy-making process.

An HIA might ask...

1. What are the potential health effects of a proposal to change sales tax revenue? (*general assessment of impacts*)
2. Do state-funded after-school programs yield significant health benefits? (*significance*)
3. Are the health benefits and risks distributed equitably or in a way that minimizes current disparities in health risks and conditions? (*equity*)
4. What are the health consequences of the current set of agricultural subsidies? (*impacts of current policies*)
5. What elements of school site design are most cost-effective in encouraging physical activity? (*cost-effectiveness*)

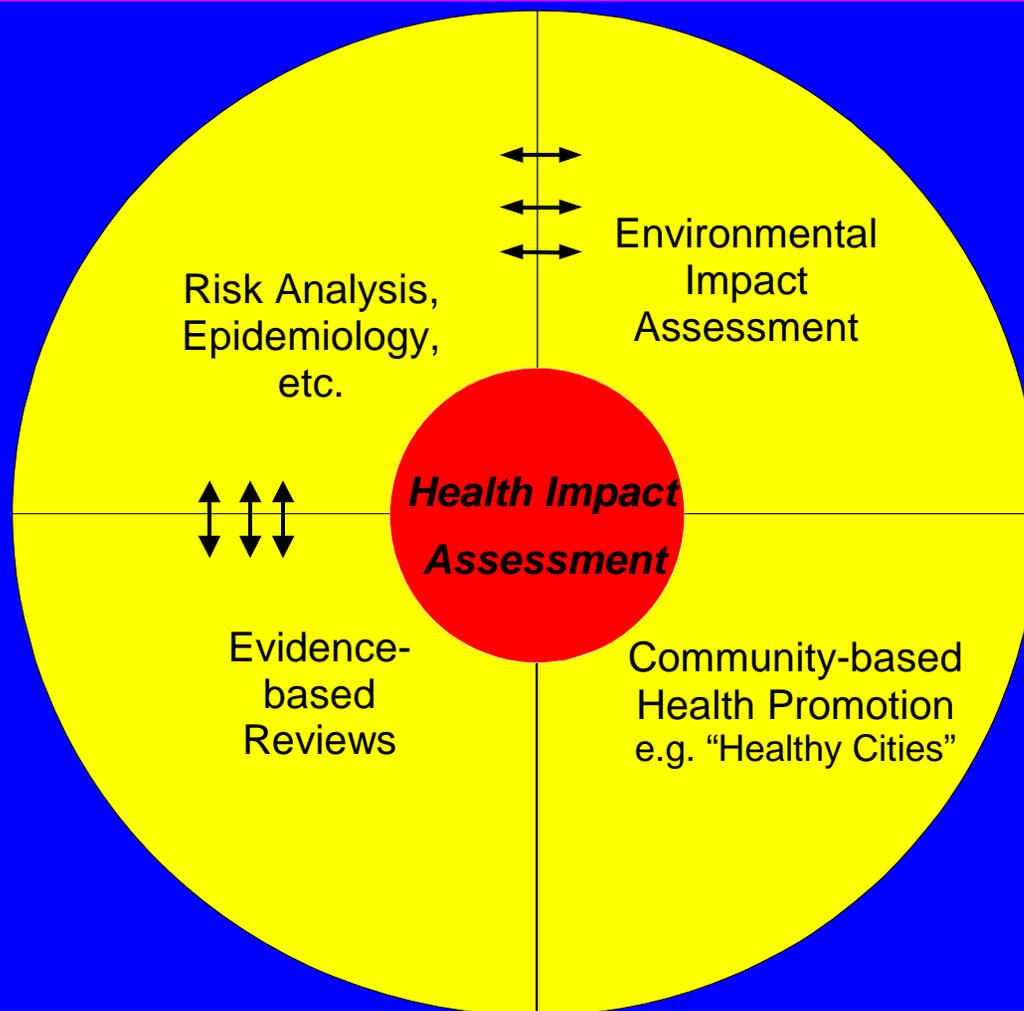
Means of HIA

- ◆ Evaluation and synthesis of existing research
- ◆ Comparative data analysis
- ◆ Consultation with policy-makers, experts, stakeholders, etc.

Information for decision-making under uncertainty

- ◆ Decisions will be made with or without HIA. Should they be made with or without available information about potential health impacts?
- ◆ Forthright about the limits;
- ◆ Learning from other types of analyses that project potential effects of policy actions
 - Risk analysis (environmental, safety, financial)
 - Cost-effectiveness analysis
 - Legislative budget analysis
 - Environmental impact analysis

Disciplinary foundations of HIA



HIA Approaches

1. Quantitative/Analytic
 - ◆ Based on risk analysis and epidemiology
2. Participatory
 - ◆ Rooted in community health promotion, esp. “Healthy Cities”
 - ◆ Dominant HIA model in Sweden, UK
3. Procedural
 - ◆ Hybrid. Often linked to EIA
 - ◆ Being developed in Canada, Australia, NZ

Steps in HIA

- ◆ Screening
 - » Determining if an HIA should occur
- ◆ Scoping
 - » Determining what to do and how to do it
- ◆ Impact assessment
 - » Determining health hazards and considering evidence of impact
- ◆ Reporting and review
 - » Producing a coherent, usable synthesis of findings from the analysis for target audiences (e.g. policy-makers)
- ◆ Evaluation and monitoring
 - » Determining whether the HIA has influenced the decision making process (and the subsequent proposal)
 - » Monitoring the implementation of the proposal to ensure that any recommendations that decision-makers agreed to actually occur