

Evidence into practice: the contribution of behavioural science

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ABSTRACT: Due to the considerable investment in trials of healthcare interventions and in evidence syntheses, we have increasingly good evidence about best practice. However, much is wasted because research evidence and guideline recommendations are not implemented effectively. The result is that good quality health care and best health outcomes may not be achieved.

Interventions to improve delivery of evidence-based health care have achieved modest and variable success. Improving implementation depends on changing the behaviour of health professionals and others, but behavioural science is seldom used to inform interventions to improve practice.

Three problems in taking healthcare interventions from trial to practice will be addressed, illustrated by research from behavioural science:

1. Key intervention characteristics are rarely described in sufficient detail in trial protocols and published reports to be replicated
2. Fidelity, the extent to which interventions are delivered as stated in trial or clinical protocols, is seldom reported and is often poor
3. Theories of behaviour change are rarely used to inform interventions to change practice.

BIOGRAPHY: Professor Michie undertook her undergraduate and postgraduate training in experimental and developmental psychology at the University of Oxford and her clinical psychology training at the Institute of Psychiatry, University of London. Professor Michie is a chartered clinical and health psychologist, Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences, the European Health Psychology Society and the British Psychological Society.

Professor Michie leads UCL's Health Psychology Research Group, studying behaviour change in relation to health: how to understand it theoretically and how to design more effective interventions. Her work



develops methods to advance the study of behaviour change e.g. developing taxonomies of behaviour change techniques to specify the content of interventions, applying theory to synthesising evidence in systematic reviews. This is conducted in the domains of professional practice and implementation (e.g. behavioural support for smoking cessation, hand hygiene), and preventive behaviours amongst patients and the general population (e.g. physical activity and healthy eating, vaccination uptake). She is co-author of a comprehensive model of behaviour change (the Behaviour

Change Wheel) and contributed to the 2011 House of Lords Science and Technology Enquiry into Behaviour Change.

Professor Michie is co-director of the UK's National Health Service's Centre for Smoking Cessation and Training and Chair of the Behaviour and Communication group of the UK Government's Scientific Pandemic Influenza Advisory Group on which she serves. She was a consultant to the Department of Health advising on public health policy and practice, 2004-2010 and is currently a member of the Public Health Interventions Advisory Committee of NICE (National Institute of Clinical and Health Excellence), and of its Implementation Strategy Group. Professor Michie is on several international advisory boards, including Knowledge Translation Canada and the Implementation Research Institute, USA.

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