

REGULATION OF INFANT FORMULA: THE ROLE OF HEALTH POLICY IN DISSEMINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

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BACKGROUND

- There is an ongoing debate regarding safety, quality, and marketing of infant formula products with many authors calling for a new improved regulatory framework
- Health policy plays a key role in the development, dissemination, and implementation of evidence-based practices to address these concerns

OBJECTIVES

- This analysis aimed to examine the health policy role in the dissemination and implementation strategy regarding improved regulation of infant formula, using Crable et al.'s [1] recommendations as a guide.

[1] Crable EL, Lengnick-Hall R, Stadnick NA, Moullin JC, Aarons GA. Where is “policy” in dissemination and implementation science? Recommendations to advance theories, models, and frameworks: EPIS as a case example.

Implementation Science. 2022 Dec 12;17(1):80.

METHODS

- A health policy analysis was conducted to identify the key dimensions of the policy's function and form.
- We followed Crable et al.'s [1] six recommendations for successful policy development, dissemination, and implementation.
- We examined the nonlinear phases of policy dissemination and implementation, describe the temporal roles of stakeholders, consider policy-relevant outer and inner context adaptations, and identify bridging factors necessary for policy success.
- The analysis included a review of relevant literature, stakeholder views, and an assessment of existing regulatory frameworks.

CONCLUSIONS

- A comprehensive and evidence-based health policy approach is necessary to fully address the current controversy regarding regulation of infant formula.
- By applying Crable et al.'s [1] recommendations, health policies can be more effectively disseminated and implemented to ensure better safety, quality, and appropriate marketing of infant formula products.
- Stakeholders should work together to help develop a successful dissemination and implementation strategy for health policy.
- This approach will ultimately contribute to better infant nutrition and public health outcomes.

RESULTS

- There is a clear need to:
 - strengthen the evidence base for infant formula regulation by conducting rigorous research on the health impacts of different formula compositions, manufacturing processes, and marketing practices
 - enhance transparency in policy development by involving a diverse range of stakeholders
 - develop new evidence-based guidelines for infant formula composition, labeling, and marketing to ensure that products are safe, nutritious, and accurately represented
 - establish robust monitoring and enforcement systems for regulation, including regular inspections, product testing, and penalties for noncompliance
 - promote public awareness through targeted information campaigns, educational initiatives, and partnerships with healthcare providers
 - facilitate international collaboration and harmonization of infant formula regulations to ensure consistent standards and best practices across jurisdictions

Conflict of Interest:

The authors declare no financial conflict of interest related to this work

About the author:

Dr Bartosz Helfer serves as a Director of Meta-Research Centre, University of Wrocław. His interest include evidence synthesis, risk of bias and how the research process could be improved to increase its value and reduce waste of time and research resources