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Issue/problem

Robust and efficient health policies are critical in an increasingly connected context where humans, animals and the environment have complex relationship. Adequate evaluation tools are needed to capture policy effects occurring in different environmental and socio-economic domains. Existing tools assess effects in a mono-disciplinary perspective, but evaluation of complex systems seeks systemic and interdisciplinary perspectives. Since November 2014 the EU Cost Action “Network for the Evaluation of One Health” (NEOH) is bringing together people from various disciplines to elaborate a One Health evaluation framework.

Problem

An advancement is required to understand that policy evaluation should include costs; and that an interdisciplinary evaluation may contribute to a more complete understanding of social costs and benefits. This paradigm change may benefit from methodologies from different fields and closer collaboration between leading scientists to integrate different disciplinary approaches in a wider evaluation context.

Result

To meet this need an operational tool is proposed. Health policy complexity is tackled with a systems approach that combines basic epidemiologic and socio-economic models. The interdisciplinary approach includes a matrix where policy objectives are examined under the relevant disciplinary perspectives bearing in mind the contextual complexity. The application of this tool in policy design (ex-ante) and/or evaluation (ex-post) will provide a more complete identification of effects and methods to enhance effectiveness and efficiency.

Lessons

Removing barriers among disciplines is a prerequisite to promote innovative scientific approaches to serve social aims. Practical operational means, such as the proposed interdisciplinary matrix, may represent real advancement in this direction.

Key messages

- Health policies should include measures for an interdisciplinary approach, targeting first human capital to remove disciplinary barriers in view of future challenges
- Interdisciplinary matrix may promote mutual cooperation among scientists from different discipline to conceive and evaluate health policy according to a global perspective

Policy evaluation: a One Health approach

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