

Childhood Obesity Prevention: Dissecting the Policy vs Legislation Conundrum

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LAW vs POLICY

POLICY

- Policy are guidelines about what the government is going to do.
- Policy is a pre-requisite for law.
- Policy does not have punishment for violations.
- Policy is more informal in nature.
- Policy can be relatively easily changed.

LAW

- Law is the framework that implements government's policies.
- Law is the end point, the instrument by which policy is given binding effect.
- Law is enforceable with punishment for violations.
- Law is more formal in nature.
- Law can only be changed through amendment or repeal (i.e. another law).

TO LEGISLATE OR NOT TO LEGISLATE

PROs

- Binding nature.
- Enforcement / sanctions (ensuring compliance).
- Broad coverage of all relevant market actors / less likely to increase health inequities..
- (Usually) stringent criteria, clear objectives and outcome measures.
- Difficult to change / reverse.
- Greater political accountability

CONs

- A more involved process i.e. takes longer to get the final product.
- Less flexibility.
- Difficult to change /reverse.
- More resources (human and financial) needed for its effective implementation.

PRACTICAL EXERCISE: TO LEGISLATE OR NOT TO LEGISLATE?



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WHO UNHEALTHY DIET 'BEST BUYS' & OTHER RECOMMENDED INTERVENTIONS

- Ban the use of industrial trans-fats: legislate or not?
- Reduce salt intake
 - reformulation of food products to contain less salt and the setting of target levels for the amount of salt in foods and meals: legislate or not?
 - establishment of a supportive environment in public institutions such as hospitals, schools, workplaces and nursing homes, to enable lower sodium options to be provided: legislate or not?
 - implementation of front of pack labelling: legislate or not?

WHO PHYSICAL INACTIVITY 'BEST BUYS' & OTHER RECOMMENDED INTERVENTIONS

- Mass media campaign and other community based education, motivational and environmental programmes: legislate or not?
- Ensure that macro-level urban design incorporates the core elements of residential density, connected street networks with sidewalks, easy access to a diversity of destinations and access to public transport: legislate or not?
- Implement whole-of-school programme that includes quality physical education, availability of adequate facilities and programmes to support physical activity for all children: legislate or not?
- Promotion of physical activity through organised sport groups and clubs, programmes and events: legislate or not?

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THANK YOU!!!



THE END