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Health and Planning – Evidence

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Plan for the session

Introduction and refresher
- Lynn Gibbons

Local Authority Planning Decisions:
Considering Health
- Adam Sheppard

Using Public Health Evidence to Support Local
Transport Planning and Practice
- Adrian Davis

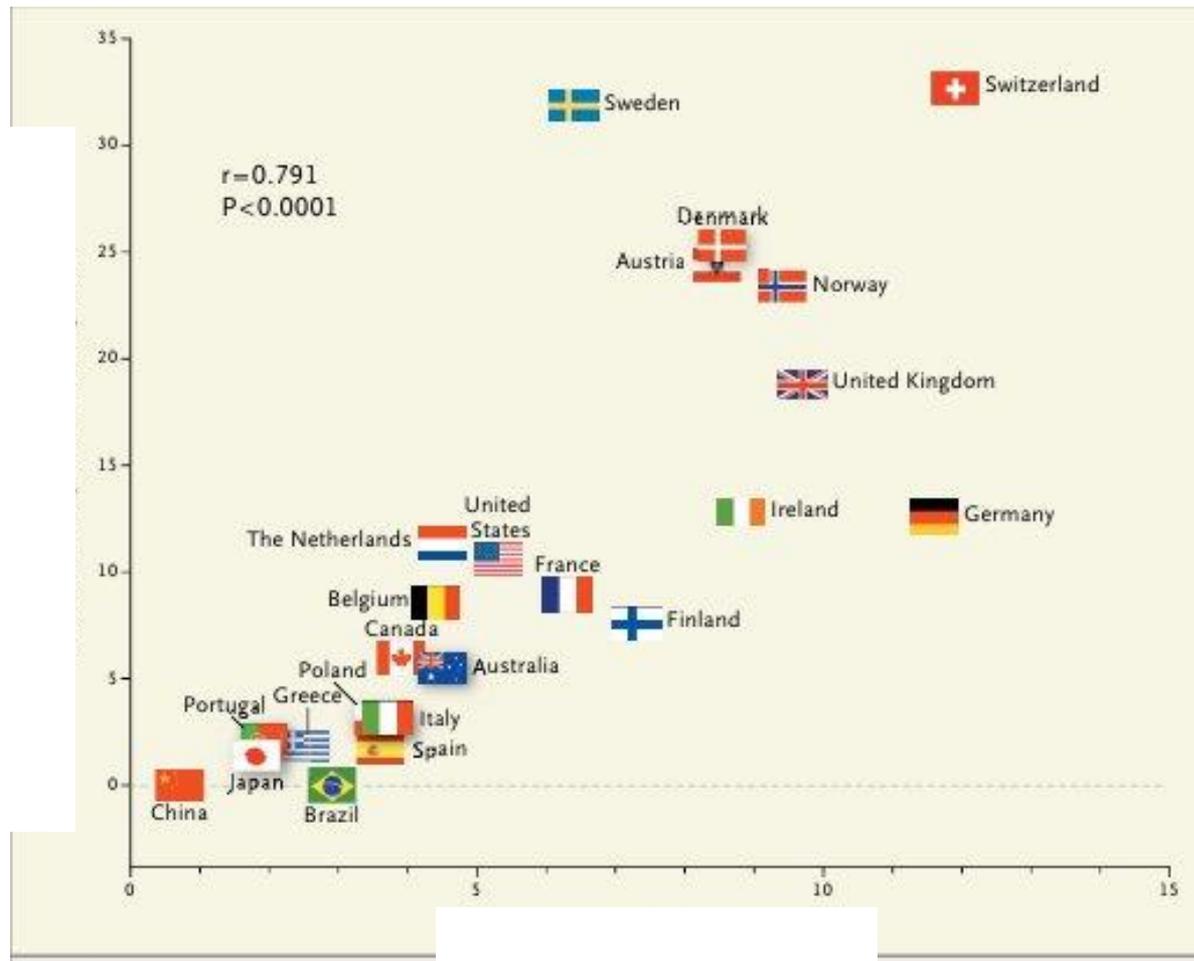
What is evidence? Why do we need it?

(noun)

“The available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid”.

- To show/illustrate need
 - To provide validity to justify undertaking an intervention (drug, procedure etc)
 - To monitor and/or evaluate interventions
-

'Correlation does not mean causation'



Public Health and Evidence...

- Data
 - 'Scientific' evidence base
 - 'Evidence-based/Evidence-informed' (from medicine, now used widely)
 - Tends toward individual outcomes
 - Economic effectiveness important
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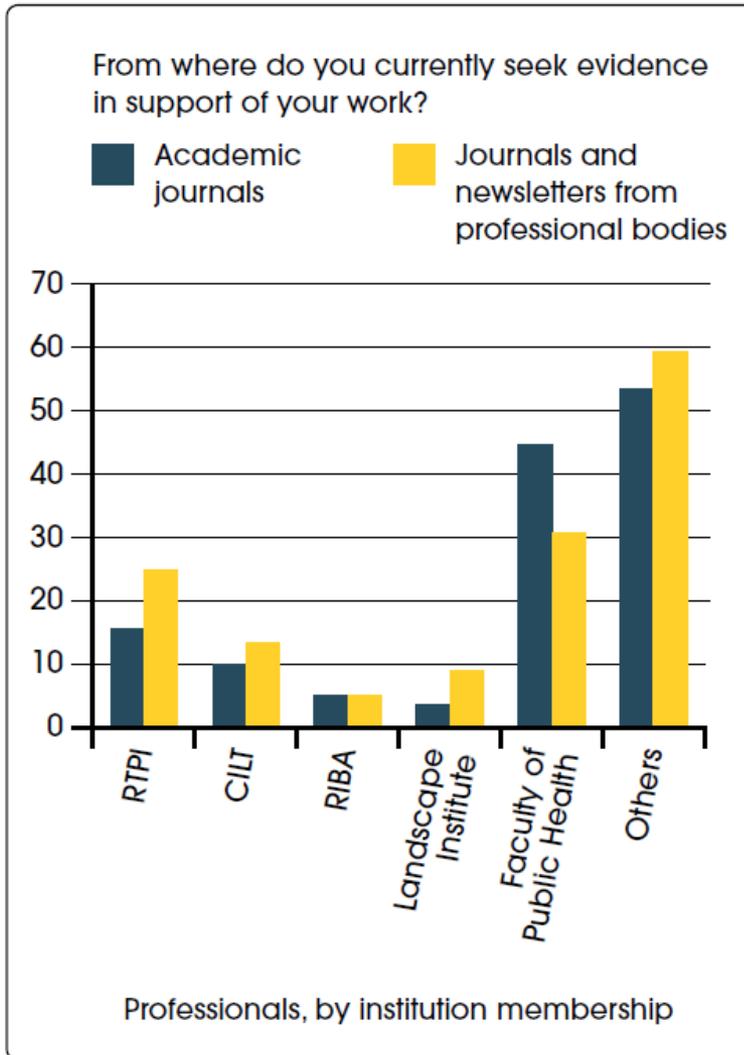
The Evidence Hierarchy



Issues with 'the hierarchy'?

- Evidence can be hard to come by
 - Health impacts can take a long time
 - Lots of other things can impact
 - Works well for clinical research (esp drugs)
– not so much for 'interventions' or
behaviour change
 - Confusion about evidence vs evidence &
experience
 - Publication bias
-

Evidence in Planning?



Above

Fig. 1 Snapshot survey of built environment and public health professionals on the frequency of use of sources of evidence to support their work

- Different from health
- Based on experience, case studies
- Guided by guidance

TCPA (2014) Public health evidence to support transport planning.

http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/Health_and_planning/2014_Health_edition_journal/8_Davis.pdf

Issues linked to built environment

- Social and environmental interactions – effects are not realised through linear pathways
- Outcomes are less predictable – positive and negative – and are different for different communities
- Community/public health interventions are not/can not be measured like research
- Ethical considerations of 'upstream' interventions can be tricky

What do these differences mean?

- The relationship between evidence and decision making varies
 - Research evidence vs practical evidence
 - Limitations
 - PH and Built Environment professionals:
 - speak a different language
 - present info in different ways
 - Is evidence just common sense?
-

Why do these differences matter?

- Local government officers are 'juggling multiple policy aims'
 - PH research may not be seen as relevant in a 'real' context
 - Health considerations may not be included in decision making
 - Important partnerships and 'win-wins' may be missed
-

Going forward...

- What kind of evidence matters to PH and the built environment?
 - Develop knowledge translation and transfer – drawing out the relevance & value
 - Move away from specific outcomes to wider development of healthier social structures?
 - Development of a useful PH/BE framework?
(see Petticrew and Roberts 2002, Berke and Vernez-Moudon 2014)
 - Making 'Health in All Policies' work
-

“Why do we need more research? Don’t we already know this? Why aren’t we putting money instead into creating these kinds of environments?”

- Question posed by a group of designers to Dr Judith Heerwagen.

From *The Restorative Commons: Creating Health and Well-being through Urban Landscapes*, 2009.
