The Effectiveness of Global Health Networks

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Presentation

- Backdrop
- Design
- Framework
- Core findings on network influence
- Implications
Backdrop: Variance in Policy Attention and Resource Allocation Across Global Health Issues

Percentage of Development Assistance for Health Cumulative 2000-2013*

Backdrop: Emergence of Networked Governance in Global Health

- Over past 25 years proliferation of global health networks
  - Now exist for most high-burden conditions
  - Not the case a quarter century ago
  - Shift in way global health is governed.

- Global health networks
  - Webs of individuals and organizations linked by shared concern for a global health issue
  - Link multiple kinds of actors

- Example—formal
  - Stop TB Partnership

- Example—informal
  - Surgical conditions
Design: Orienting Questions

• To what extent is variance in policy attention connected to effectiveness of global health networks?
  • Answer not obvious
  • Alternative explanations include crises, donor priorities, individual activity, severity, intervention availability

• If networks make a difference, what is it they do that matters?

• Also asked about emergence and legitimacy
Design: Case Selection and Methodology

• Six global health networks, in three matched pairs.
  • Tuberculosis and pneumonia (diseases)
  • Tobacco and alcohol use (risk factors)
  • Maternal survival and newborn survival (at-risk groups)

• Comparable burden but first in each pair has greater policy traction.

• Methodology
  • Case and comparative studies
  • Process-tracing:
    • Examined mechanisms linking causes and effects, with consideration of alternative explanations
  • Medium-n: merits and limitations for causal inference and generalization
Design: Funnel of Effects

Global
- Awareness
- Resolutions
- Resources

National
- Policy
- Budgets
- Programs
- Scale-up

Population Health
- Mortality
- Morbidity

Network Efforts

Other Influences
Framework

Network and Actor Features

NGOs
Foundations
Bilateral donors
Multilateral donors
UN agencies
Academia
Government

Shared concern

Policy Environment

Issue Characteristics
# Framework

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<thead>
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Core Finding 1: Network Effects
Most Pronounced at Global Level

• Global Effects
  • Building awareness by developing evidence on severity and tractability.
  • Contributing to global plans and resolutions.
  • Generating financial resources

• National and Population Health Effects
  • Vary by issue and less certain evidence.
  • More difficult to detect, since many influences beyond networks.
Core Finding 2: What Effective Networks Do
Construct Powerful Issues Frames

- **Diagnostic**
  What is the problem?

- **Prognostic**
  What is to be done?

- **Motivational**
  Why should it be done?
Diagnostic Framing

More Successful
Tobacco: The industry as a vector of disease

Less Successful
Alcohol: An individual or a public health problem?
Prognostic Framing

• More Successful
  • Tuberculosis: DOTS

• From Lesser to Greater Success
  • Maternal Survival:
    Historical disagreements over intervention strategy.
    Subsequently greater consensus.
Motivational Framing

More Successful

• When positioning connected to social justice or threat.
  • Maternal survival: Social justice.
  • Tuberculosis: Social threat.

Less Successful

When positioning limited to public health arguments.
Core Finding 3: What Effective Networks Do
Build political, not just technical coalitions

• More Successful
  • Maternal survival: From insular and technical to broad political coalition.

• Less Successful
  • Alcohol: Largely individual and Northern-based.
  • Pneumonia: Historically fragmented.
Networks Only a Partial Explanation for Variance in Global Policy Attention, but an Important Influence

Network and Actor Features

Policy Environment

Example: Maternal but not neonatal survival in MDGs

Issue Characteristics

Example: Tobacco use – unequivocal evidence of harm

Considering the Counter-factual

What policy change would have occurred in the absence of networks?
Reiterating Core Findings

• Network effects are most pronounced at the global level
• Effective networks construct powerful issue frames
• Effective networks build political coalitions that extend beyond the health sector

However, networks are only one among many factors shaping priority.
Reasons to Affirm and Question Legitimacy

• Reasons to Affirm
  • Raise attention to neglected issues.
  • Bring expertise to bear.

• Reasons to Question
  • Many dominated by Northern actors; little voice for those most affected.
  • Fragment global health governance.
Future Research: Considering Applicability Beyond Cases, and Causal Weights

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Broad Implications of Study

• Challenge to impersonal explanations focused solely on issue characteristics or structural forces.

• Human agency matters.
  • Networks alter social reality, including understanding of the issue
  • Policy attention is historically conditioned but not historically determined

• Optimistic finding for neglected issues.