

**From Policy to Practice: Implementing Government Directed Policy & Implications for
Infection Control Practice**

Dr. Sally Havers, Austin Health, Queensland University of Technology

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**FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE:
IMPLEMENTING GOVERNMENT DIRECTED POLICY &
IMPLICATIONS FOR INFECTION CONTROL PRACTICE**

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Source: Brisbane City Council(1)

Disclosures

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- Financial support received throughout candidature in the form of:
 - Australian Postgraduate Award scholarship;
 - Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Centre for Research Excellence in Reducing Healthcare Associated Infections scholarship.
- ACIPC Early Career Research Grant - Qualitative Case Study.
- No commercial conflicts of interest to declare.
- Employed by Austin Health but speaking only in my capacity as a researcher for QUT (completely independent of any other roles I held during my candidature).



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Policy, Practice & Me...

- Clinician (Nurse)
- Infection Control Practitioner
- Researcher
- Involvement in policy implementation
 - Hospital level (current)
 - Organisational level
 - National level



Policy as an Intervention

- Different to other safety and quality initiatives
- Regulated or controlled – adoption is not voluntary
- Developed within a political context
- Externally developed & usually not by content experts

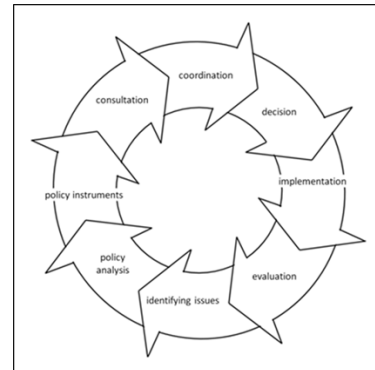


Figure 1: The Australian policy cycle

Source: Althaus, Bridgman & Davis (2013)



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Policy Implementation

- Multiple stakeholders & multiple health system levels involved

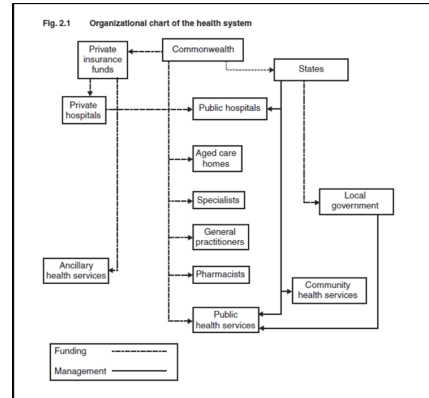
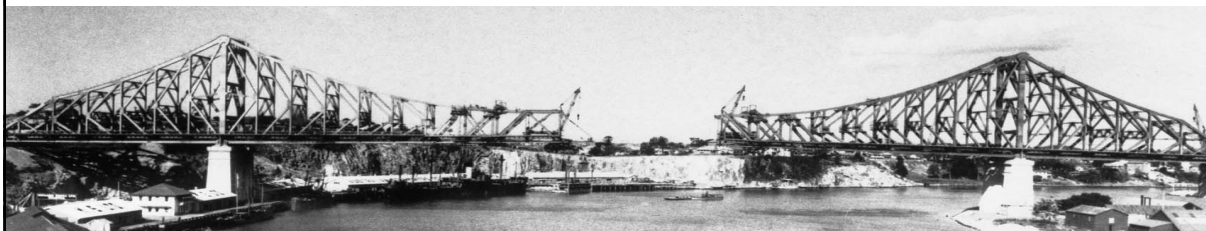
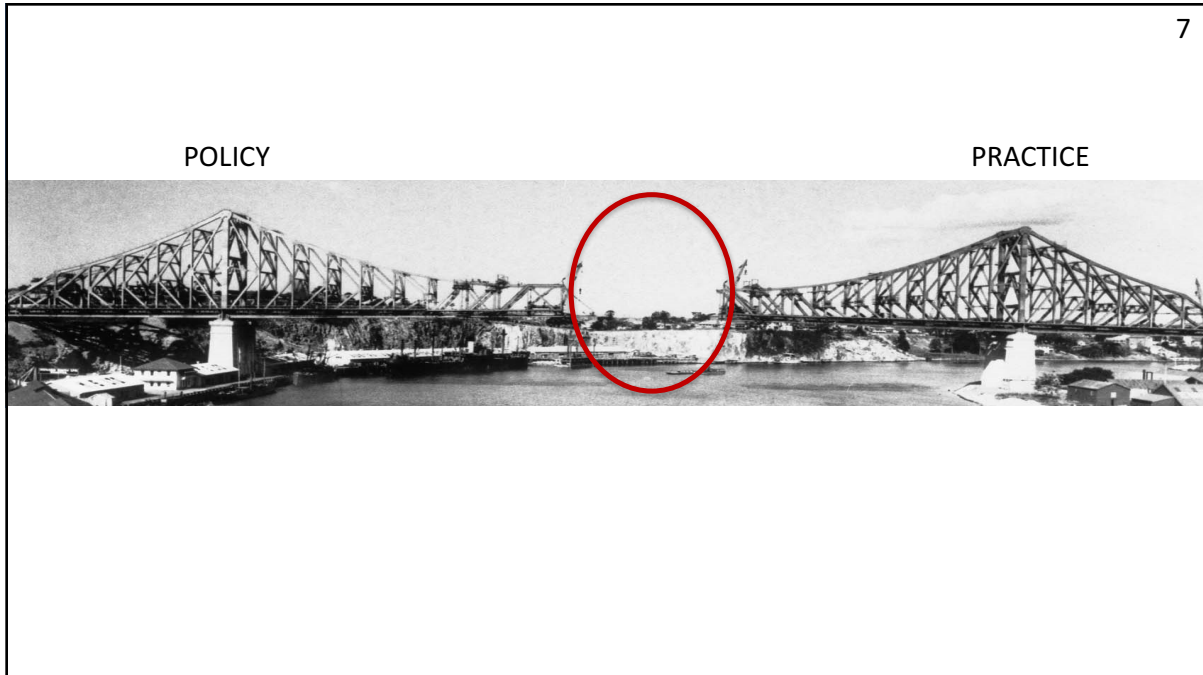


Figure 2: Organisational chart of the Australian health system.
Source: Healy, Sharman and Lokuge (2006)



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Research Problem

- Government directed policies play an important role in improving care but there is minimal understanding of implementation - particularly in the hospital setting.
- This limits:
 - effectiveness and efficiency of policy implementation
 - refinement/improvement in implementation process at an organisational level and
 - capacity of policies to impact on patient care.



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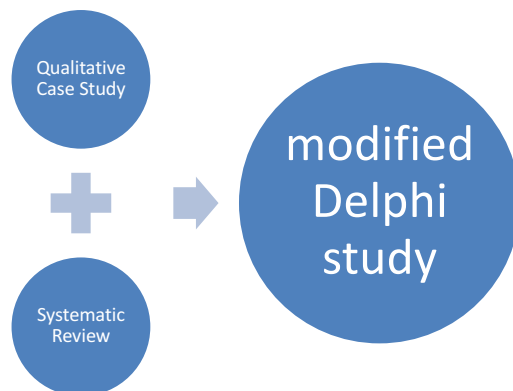
Research Aim

Identify factors that affect the implementation of government directed policy in the hospital setting.



Research Process

- Need to understand:
 - Contextual factors that impact on policy implementation
 - Intervention characteristics that impact on policy implementation
 - Multi-level factors that influence implementation of government directed policy in the hospital setting



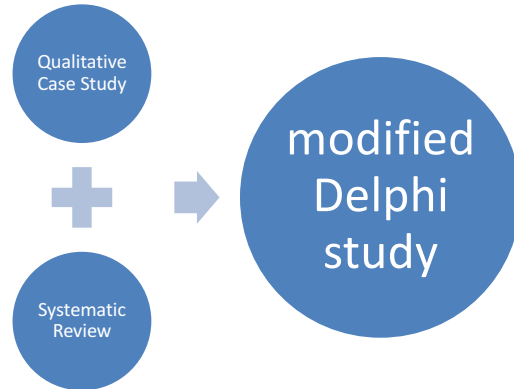
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Research Process

- Exploration of factors across the multiple health system structures & stakeholders involved required a multi-stage approach.
- Three separate research studies were developed each addressing a separate research question.



Project Context & Scope

- Implementation of government directed policy in the hospital setting specifically.
- Government directed policy was defined as any policy that was legislated, mandated or regulated in some way by a relevant governing body or health system entity external to the hospital or health service in which the policy was implemented.
- Adoption of policy could not be voluntary.
- Project was limited to hospitals in high income countries.



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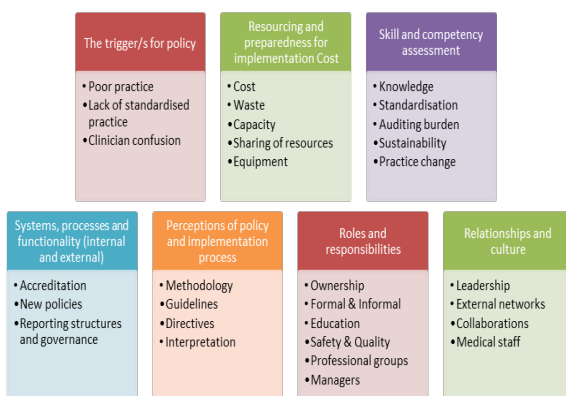
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Qualitative Case Study

- AIM: To identify the contextual factors which impact on the implementation of Infection Control policy in Australian hospitals.
- A “real life” account of the implementation of national Infection Control policy.
- Focus Groups - data about implementation activities specific to aseptic technique practices
- Participants were required to have been directly involved in the implementation of an aseptic technique practice program in their hospital since 2010.



Qualitative Case Study - Results



Research Question 1:

Which common contextual factors influence the implementation of government directed policy in the hospital setting?

- Common contextual factors identified
- Included external factors associated with the policy itself (characteristics) and the regulatory nature of government directed policy.



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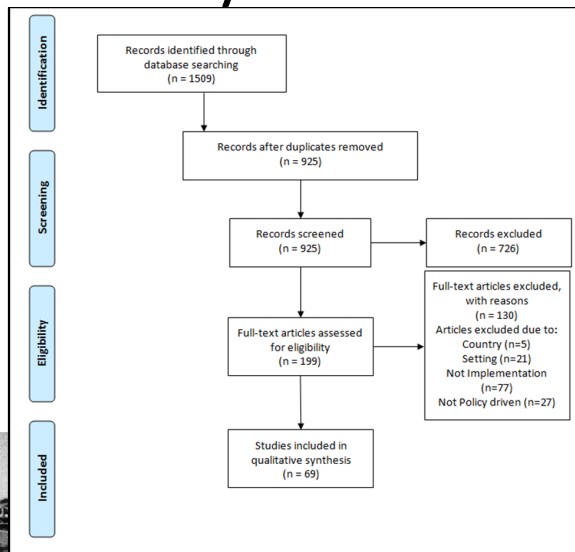
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Systematic Review & Meta-synthesis

- AIM: Identify key characteristics of health policy specifically that influence implementation.
- Qualitative systematic review and meta-synthesis of literature (published 2007-2017) where implementation of government directed policy was implemented in the hospital setting.
- Registered with PROSPERO (Reg. CRD42018108123)



Systematic Review - Results



Research Question 2:

What policy intervention characteristics influence implementation of government directed policy in the hospital setting?

- Research describing implementation of government directed policy in the hospital setting is very limited and of variable quality.



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Systematic Review - Results

Policy intervention characteristics associated with three key themes:

Clarity	Infrastructure	Alignment
Planning & Resourcing	External Structures	Clinician acceptance
Policy content	Internal Structures	Policy functions
Policy requirements	Roles	Regulatory mechanisms
Evidence base	Tools	Workflow
Implementation process	Monitoring	Goals
	Collaboration	



Modified Delphi Study

- AIM: to identify factors that affect the implementation of government direct policy in the hospital setting.
- International experts asked to provide opinions on the **importance** of pre-determined factors and the **feasibility** of considering these in policy development and implementation planning.
- Survey questions developed from the findings of previous studies.



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Modified Delphi - Results

- Expert consensus was reached on all 19 pre-determined factors in the first round.
- With additional factors added after analysis of first round comments.
- On completion twenty-four factors of importance of importance were identified across the five Consolidated Framework for Implementation research (CFIR) domains.
- Only twenty of these were feasible for consideration in policy development and implementation planning.



Modified Delphi - Results

- On completion twenty-four factors of importance of importance were identified across the five CFIR domains.
- Only twenty of these were feasible for consideration in policy development and/or implementation planning at a local level.



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Modified Delphi - Results



Project Findings

- Synthesis of findings identified 6 key principles
 - Government directed policy needs to be:
 - Understood
 - Accepted
 - Validated
 - Integrated
 - Supported
 - Implementation of government directed policy needs to be planned

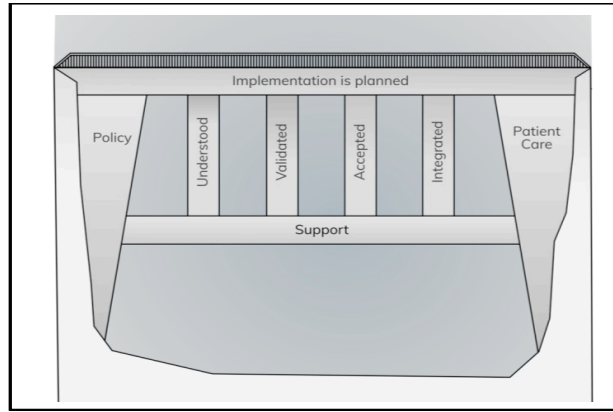


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The Impol Model



Implications for Policy

- Ensure **policy content is clear** and prescriptive.
- Clearly highlight how the **policy actions** will benefit **patient outcomes**.
- Ensure **policy outcomes** are clear and **measurable (and real)**.
- Link to the **evidence** that supports the policy.
- If there is not valid and reliable evidence for policy explain that and **present rationale** for the actions chosen.
- Ensure **requirements** for how to meet policy directives is **clear**.
- Ensure **regulatory mechanism** through which the policy will be monitored is **described in detail**.
- Assess **feasibility** of policy requirements.
- Assess **projected cost** of implementation and include in policy documents.
- As part of the development process, **Test the policy**, evaluate outcomes and address unforeseen circumstances.



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Implications for Practice



- Provide clinicians and/or staff with **policy content and requirements** in a **clear and prescriptive** way that is **linked with the intended outcomes**.
- Provide an indication of **the evidence that supports the policy changes**.
- Undertake **assessment of current accepted practices** and develop a plan on how to adjust practices as needed.
- Develop **resources and tools** to support changes if required
- Review examples of policy assessment and/or testing (including published literature) and **identify potential barriers or facilitators** to implementation.
- Consider **small scale implementation activities** with feedback loops to allow engagement with hospital stakeholders and to identify local barriers and facilitators.

Implications for Practice



- **Develop an implementation plan. Establish and formalise capacity for implementation.**
- **Focus resources** on factors that will support implementation.
- **Identify and use external systems and infrastructure.**
- Identify opportunities to **align activities** with other requirements.
- Ensure understanding of **regulatory mechanism**.
- Establish and formalise internal system and **infrastructure**.
- Establish and formalise implementation **roles, responsibilities and organisational lines of accountability**.
- Develop (short and long term) methods for **evaluating impact** of policy implementation outcomes and **link these directly to patient care**.

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Source: Brisbane City Council – Antique photo of Story Bridge
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Thank you

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June 24, 2021	CONTINUOUS ACTIVE ANTI-VIRAL COATINGS Speaker: Prof. Charles Gerba , University of Arizona
July 15, 2021	PANDEMIC IMPACT ON HEALTHCARE LAUNDRY IN ACUTE CARE AND LONG TERM CARE FACILITIES Speaker: Dr. Lynne Schulster , American Reusable Textile Association
July 27, 2021	<i>(FREE European Teleclass)</i> THE CHANGING PERCEPTIONS OF INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL MEASURES DURING THE EVOLUTION OF THE PANDEMIC Speaker: Prof. Adriano Duse , University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa
August 12, 2021	HOME HEALTH & HOSPICE AIDES: PREVENTING AND CONTROLLING INFECTIONS WHEN PROVIDING PERSONAL CARE IN THE HOME Speaker: Mary McGoldrick , Home Health Systems, Inc.
August 18, 2021	<i>(South Pacific Teleclass)</i> NORMOTHERMIA - THE WHY, HOW AND WHEN QUESTIONS IMPACTING POST-OP INFECTIONS

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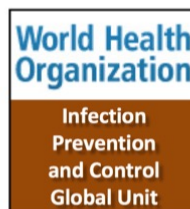
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