

# Evidence-Informed Country-Level Policymaking: Case study from the HIFA virtual discussion forum



Working Group on Evidence-Informed Policy & Practice, Healthcare Information For All.

## Background:

Healthcare information for All (HIFA) is a global initiative of more than 17,000 individuals in 175 countries. Under a new program called 'Evidence-Informed Policy and Practice', themed discussions are being conducted in the HIFA virtual forum. The results of the first themed discussion on "Evidence-Informed Country-Level Policymaking" held in 2016 for a period of six weeks are presented here.

## Methodology:

The HIFA moderator introduced the topic in the first week. Every week a set of questions was sent to the forum for discussion. A thematic analysis was conducted on the 140 substantial contributions received.

## Results:

### Theme 1: Political challenges

*"It is usually political expediency rather than objective decision-making that is practiced."*  
Communications professional, USA

*"It is important not to get discouraged but to think in terms of long term goals and the creation of a "culture of EBH" within governments."*  
Health researcher, Brazil

### Theme 2: Supporting policymakers to interpret and apply evidence

*"Superstition, ignorance and refusal to change amongst policy makers constitute a huge hindrance to evidence driven policy making."*  
Health professional, Nigeria

*"Challenges include the capacity of policy makers to understand what is evidence, how it is gathered, making sense of what is published, who is publishing it, the hierarchy of evidence and actually applying the evidence in context."*  
Health professional, Nigeria

### Theme 3: Promoting research based on needs and priorities

*"Convening the key stakeholders up front in order to formulate the key questions necessary for making decisions from all perspectives should be the first step in any research"*  
Health professional, USA

*"We have lots of studies here but the challenge is that they are not driven by country-level needs but donor interest."*  
Health researcher, Kenya

### Theme 4: Cochrane centres

*"Ideally every country should have [a Cochrane Centre]!"*  
Health Professional, Nigeria

*"The Brazilian Cochrane Centre has helped government officials decide what medicines or what devices to use [saving] millions of dollars of public money."*  
Health Researcher, Brazil

Join HIFA to explore these themes further:

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