The Influence of Context on Evidence into Practice Improvement

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The answer is 17 years, what is the question: understanding time lag in translational research

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What is the reason.........? Insufficient attention to context
Perspectives on context

Context is everything

Professor Paul Bate
Outline

• Why does context matter?
• What is it & what’s it got to do with MCH?
• The role of context in practice: contextual factors as barriers and facilitators
• Implementation: managing and assessing context
• The Context Assessment Index (CAI)
Why does context matter?

• ‘Best’ evidence does not always lead to clinical practice change

“Promising interventions shown to be initially successful do not transfer to new settings, or are not sustained. …contextual factors, changing over time or varying between settings, seem to frustrate efforts to improve quality” (Fulop & Robert 2015)

• We need to understand which aspects of context are most important, and whether can these factors can be modified to support healthcare improvement
What has context got to do with MCH?

- SISCC proposal defined context as “factors, varying by locality that have been shown to influence improvement.”

Barriers and enablers of health system adoption of kangaroo mother care: a systematic review of caregiver perspectives

Emily R. Smith¹, Ilana Bergelson², Stacie Constantian¹, Bina Valsangkar³ and Grace J. Chan¹²
What is context?

Almost universally, we find context to be an overworked word in everyday dialogue but a massively understudied and misunderstood concept (Bate 2014).

• Everything other than the intervention?

• A set of characteristics and circumstances or unique factors that surround a particular implementation effort

• Not just a backdrop to implementation but a set of active interacting variables - everything that interacts, influences, modifies, facilitates or constrains the intervention

Perspectives on context

A selection of essays considering the role of context in successful quality improvement

Original research
March 2014

“almost universally, we find context to be an overworked word in everyday dialogue but a massively understudied and misunderstood concept” (Bate 2014)
Layers and dimensions of context

Macro (Policy)

Meso (Health Board)

Micro (NICU)

Community

Organisation

Team

The clinical microsystem

Individual

(inner)

outer

Hard

Soft

TIME
Context is dynamic

“Increasingly it is recognized that the context in which practice occurs has an impact on user, professional and organizational outcomes”


- Context is dynamic, therefore interventions and the ease of which they are implemented is also dynamic

- Influence of individuals, teams, organisational structures and cultures, power, boundaries, resources, leadership styles and relationships, geographies – may differ for different types of improvement
Assessing feasibility & facilitators for change: What factors are important for practice change in your own context?
Contextual factors in practice: Assessing feasibility & facilitators for change

- Availability of key people leading change (local champions)
- Supportive organisational culture
- Effective managerial-clinical relations
- Co-operative inter-organisational networks
- Simplicity & clarity of goals and priorities
- Fit between change agenda, intervention and setting (we’re doing it already)
Implementation: managing context

One practical approach to understanding your context is to consider locally-identified barriers & facilitators:

– Assess contextual barriers & facilitators via assessment tool
– Understand your unit & system
– Mitigate barriers & enhance facilitators

Important for SISCC to understand which aspects of context matter most for implementation & how these differ across settings & between different improvement interventions
Which improvements are context - robust and which are context-sensitive and why?

‘Garden model’
Context Assessment Index (CAI)

- 37-item validated tool
  - to aid practitioners’ understanding / sense of the context in their clinical area
  - to collect information on different contexts
- Assesses three elements found to be important
  - Culture; Leadership; Evaluation
- Determines readiness for change
- Can be used to raise and prioritise issues in an impartial way

Context is everything!

- A wide range of contexts impact on your work
- Think about which aspects of context you want to address

- Communication
- Relationships
- NNU environment
- Collaboration
- Staff education & training
- Staff knowledge & attitudes
- Support networks
- Leadership