

Health Impact Assessment at the project level

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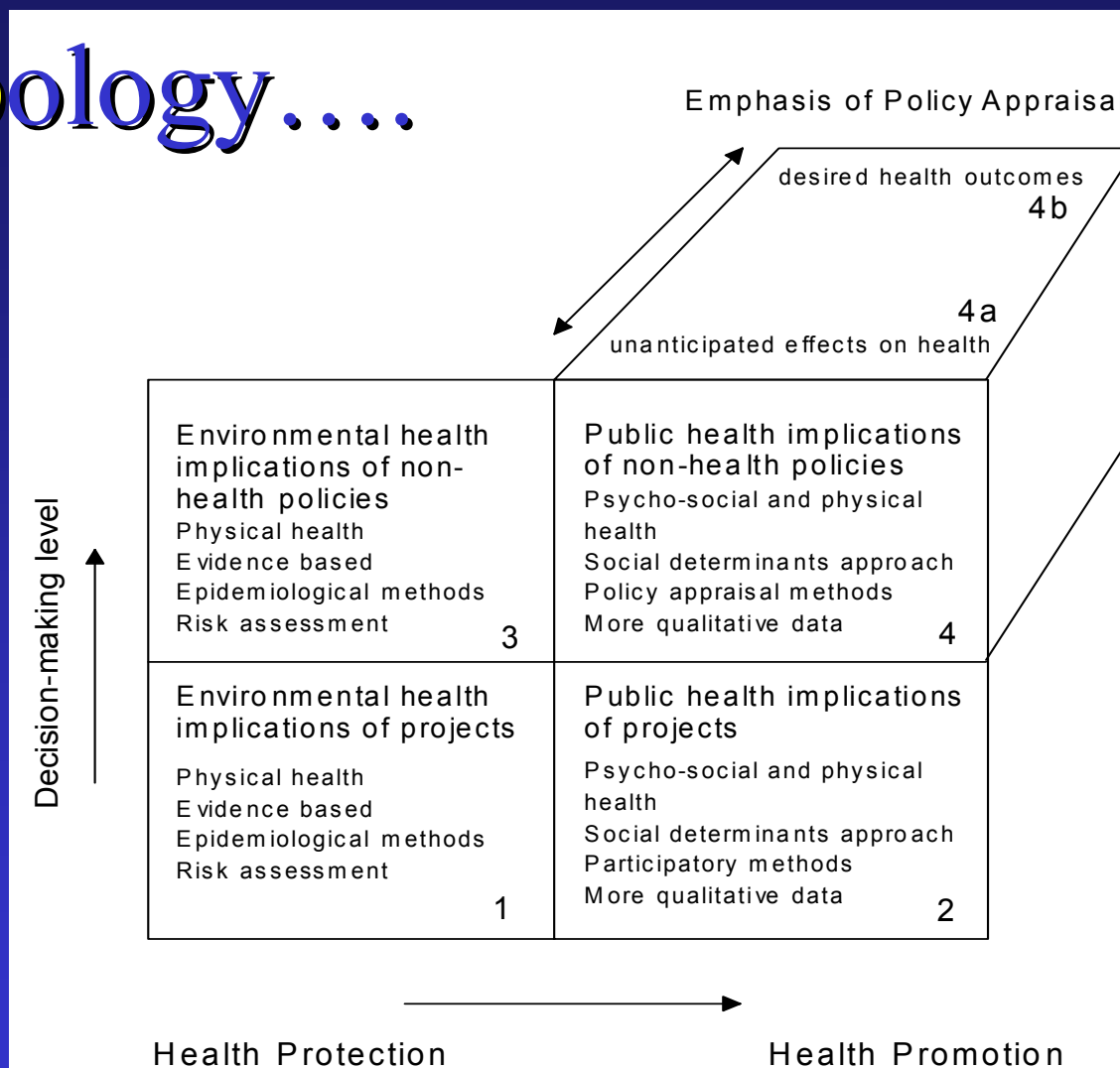
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Overview

- A typology for HIA
- HIA and the RMA
- HIA in practice
- Room for improvement?
- HIA and other statutes

A typology....



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HIA and the RMA

■ Resource consent process

- require an assessment of the environmental effects of proposed activities (an AEE)
 - scope and content depends on nature and scale of the activity, and how the council classifies it....
 - ▲ controlled, discretionary, non-complying.....
- definition of environment and effects broad
 - environment includes “people and communities”.....
- Section 5: “...enables people and communities to provide for ... their health and safety..”

- So: the mandate for addressing health in AEEs is rather ambivalent
 - depends on councils
 - to understand HIA and to promote it to applicants
- Integrated system of assessment
 - all aspects included in an AEE
 - should not expect a standalone HIA necessarily...

HIA in practice...

- Evidence rather patchy...
 - direct observation...
 - some formal investigation:
 - e.g. Tracey Morgan: MSc, Christchurch case study
 - anecdotal information
- Basic conclusions...
 - health is addressed in AEEs to a certain extent
 - most often traditional environmental health approach
 - social determinants approach rare
 - overall: weak HIA practice

For example....

■ Dunedin:

➤ Tahuna sewage outfall...

- health effects of sewage...classic environmental health approach; risk assessment methods, etc.
 - ▲ wider perspective of health effects not provided

■ Project Aqua:

- ### ➤ only started to consider health issues after main AEE complete...dust, noise, etc.
- yet local doctor concerned about stress on people likely to be directly affected....

Room for improvement

- Education: nature of HIA
- Skills...
 - basic impact assessment methodology
 - direct vs indirect effects on health
 - links between HIA and SIA, etc.
 - move beyond “risk assessment” mentality
 - use of soft evidence, qualitative methods, participatory methods, etc.
- Organisational/institutional:
 - role of planners, EHOs, PHOs etc....

Conclusion

- HIA has been around for 25+ years
 - is part of wider IA arena: use those links....
 - beware re-inventing the wheel
- Major education task
 - central, regional and local government
 - public health agencies, developers, public...
- Don't worry about data, evidence, etc.
 - get the process working first!!
 - lower the emphasis on “risk”....

Other HIA....

■ HSNO

- approval of GMOs and hazardous substances
 - health a major consideration....in theory
 - risk assessment approach....enough?

■ Biosecurity Act

- importation of organisms
 - health risk assessments of possible pest organisms
- spraying for pests (e.g. painted apple moth)
 - health impact assessment of spraying
 - ▲ quality criticised by Hon G Palmer....