

Strengthening Evidence Informed Health Policymaking in Nepal: The Critical Role of Evidence Synthesis

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- **Why Evidence-Informed Health Policy?**
- **What are the barriers for evidence-informed policy making?**
- **Role of evidence synthesis on policy making process**
- **Our initiatives**

Why Evidence-Informed Policymaking Matters in Health?

1. Better Decisions, Better Outcomes

- Ensures policies are based on what works, not assumptions
- Improves quality, equity, and efficiency of health interventions

2. Saves Resources

- Avoids wasteful spending on ineffective programmes
- Supports priority-setting based on real needs

3. Builds Trust & Accountability

- Transparent decision-making earns public and stakeholder confidence
- Increases legitimacy of policy choices

- **Misallocation of Resources**
 - Funds spent on low-impact or politically motivated programmes
- **Ineffective or Harmful Interventions**
 - Policies not grounded in science can cause unintended harm
- **Widening Inequities**
 - Marginalised groups often left out if decisions lack data
- **Loss of Public Trust**
 - Repeated policy failures can reduce citizen engagement and compliance

- ☒ **Federal Health System Needs Localised, Evidence-Based Solutions**
 - Tailored policies for each province/municipality
 - Evidence needed to guide decentralisation reforms

- ☒ **Health Challenges Are Complex and Evolving**
 - Non-communicable diseases, migration, urbanisation, climate change

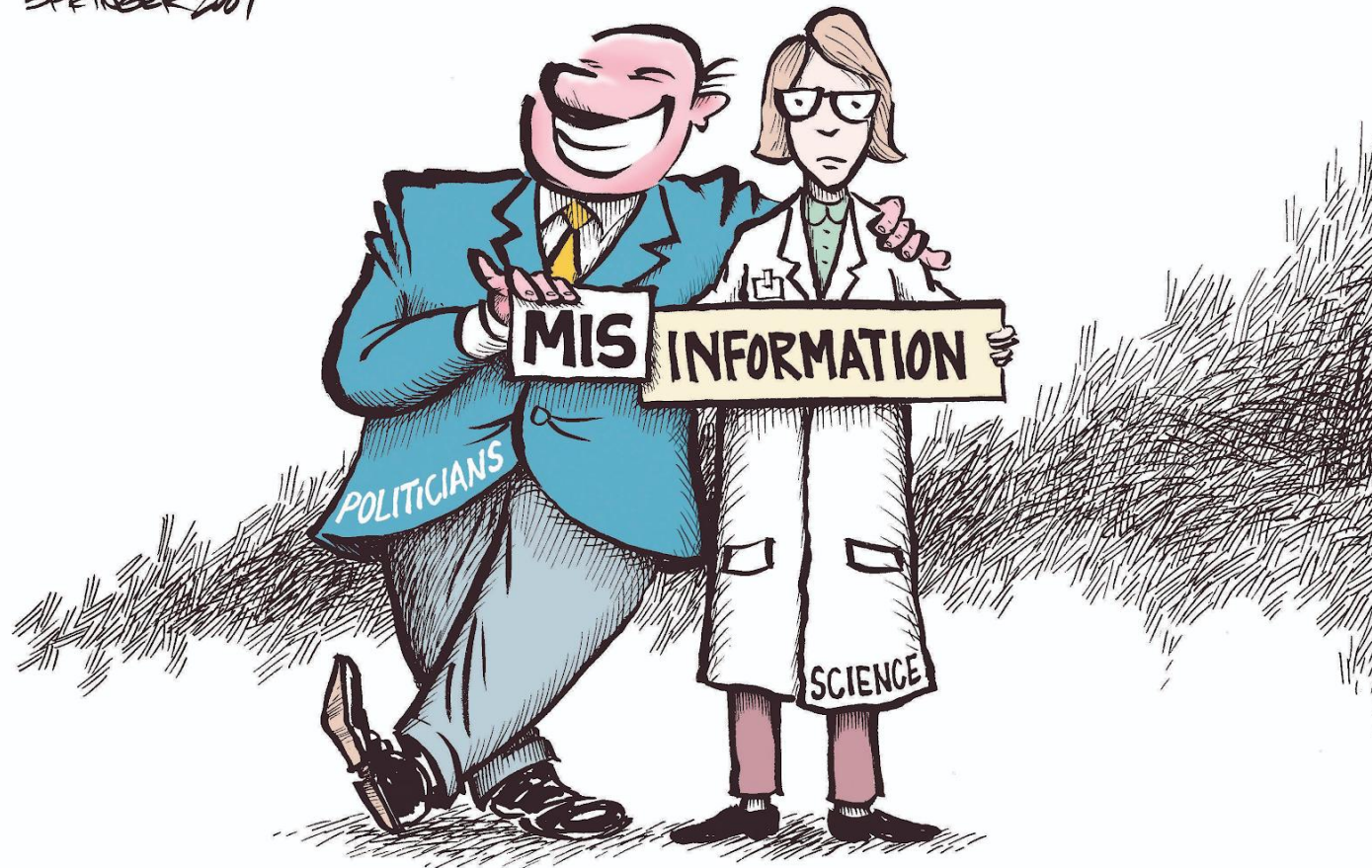
- ☒ **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Demand Measurable Progress**
 - Data and research critical to track and adjust policies over time

- ☒ **Global Models Can Inspire – But Local Evidence Must Lead**
 - International evidence is helpful, but local validation is key

Barriers to research uptake for policy



SPRINGER 2007



1. Limited Access to Quality Evidence

- Few national evidence repositories
- Limited access to international journals and databases

2. Weak Institutional Capacity

- Lack of trained professionals for evidence synthesis
- Insufficient policy analysis expertise within government

3. Disconnect Between Researchers and Policymakers

- Differing timelines and agendas
- Limited platforms for dialogue and collaboration

4. Political and Institutional Constraints

- Evidence often sidelined by political decisions
- Rapid policy cycles hinder use of long-term research

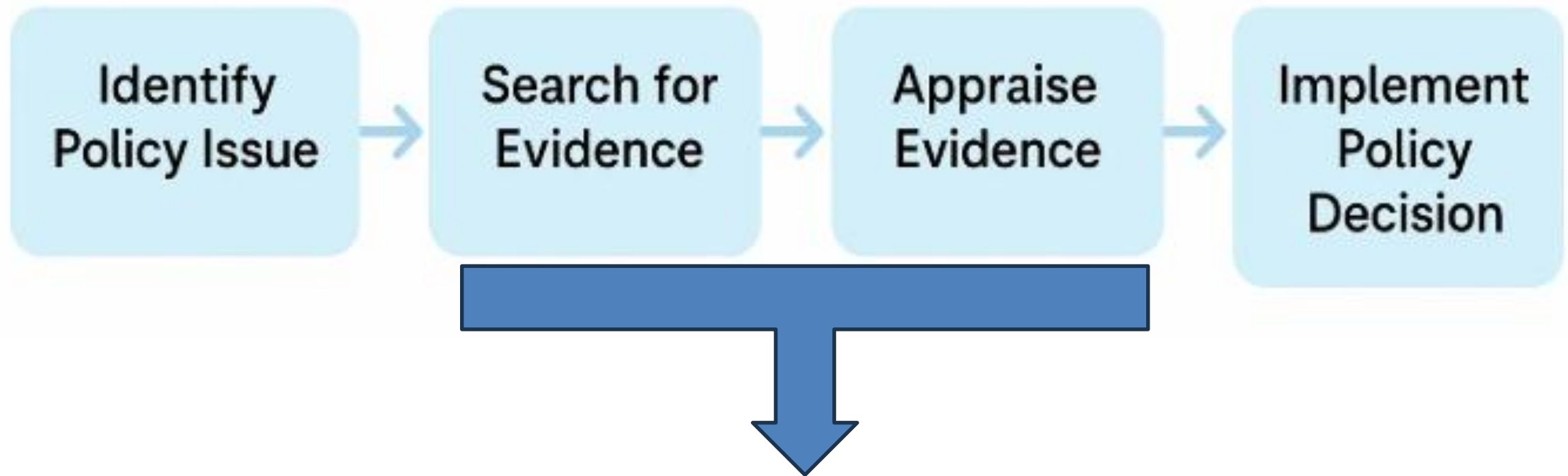
5. Fragmented Data Systems

- Parallel and uncoordinated health information systems
- Data often unreliable or not timely

6. Limited Funding for Health Research

- Domestic funding remains low
- Overreliance on donor-driven research priorities

Evidence-Informed Policy Making Process



There is no Evidence Synthesis Centre in Nepal

Evidence-based health care in Nepal: The importance of systematic reviews

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Short Communication

Open Access

Need for evidence synthesis for quality control of healthcare decision-making

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Abstract:

Systematic reviews that are out-of-date
To avoid this issue, it is preferable to
approach that provides up-to-date rigorous
particularly useful in rapidly expanding

Nepal Urgently Needs a National Evidence Synthesis Centre

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Evidence synthesis is a powerful research process that allows researchers to combine and analyse all relevant data from multiple studies and draw conclusions based on the most up-to-date evidence available. The

that communication gaps exist between researchers and policymakers which impede the utilization of research-based information and recommendations in decision-making process in Nepal. To facilitate such

What is Evidence Synthesis?

- Systematic process of collecting, appraising, and combining findings from multiple studies
- Includes methods like systematic reviews, meta-analyses, and realist syntheses
- Provides a clear, unbiased picture of "what works, for whom, and under what conditions"

- UK: NICE guidelines based on rigorous evidence synthesis
- South Africa: Integrated evidence synthesis into health priority setting
- Thailand: HITAP uses evidence synthesis for Universal Health Coverage decisions
- Nepal can adapt these models to its federal structure and resource settings

Figure: Four steps to Evidence Synthesis

Rapid Evidence Assessment

Systematic Review

Seeks to systematically search for, appraise and synthesise research, often adhering to guidelines on conduct of a review (Task Limited)

Scoping Review

Assessment of what is already known about a policy/practice issue, using systematic methods to search and critically appraise existing research (Time Limited)

Mapping Review

Preliminary assessment of potential size and scope of available research literature. Aims to identify nature and extent of research evidence (usually including ongoing research) usually as prelude to a systematic review

Map out and categorize existing literature from which to commission further reviews and/or primary research by identifying gaps in research literature.

Epub 2010 May 11

Health a review

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PMID: 20462852

Abstract

This study aimed
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spots within this field and provide

ed to identify high-cited papers
December 31, 2023. Bibliometrics

Publication Trends in Nepal

Common questions for evidences

- *Which community-based health interventions have been most effective in improving maternal and child health outcomes in Nepal?*
- *How effective are local governments in managing and financing health services post-federalisation in Nepal?*
- *What are the best practices globally for engaging Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs) in preventive care?*
- *What global evidence exists on improving enrolment and retention in national health insurance schemes?*
- *What interventions are effective in retaining skilled health workers in rural and remote areas in Nepal?*

- *Which community-based health interventions have been most effective in improving maternal and child health outcomes in Nepal?*
 - *Over 300 research papers*
 - *11 RCTs, 1 Cluster RCT, 3 systematic reviews and several observational studies*
- *How effective are local governments in managing and financing health services post-federalisation in Nepal?*
 - *Very limited research (new practices in Nepal)*
 - *Only few survey and qualitative studies available*

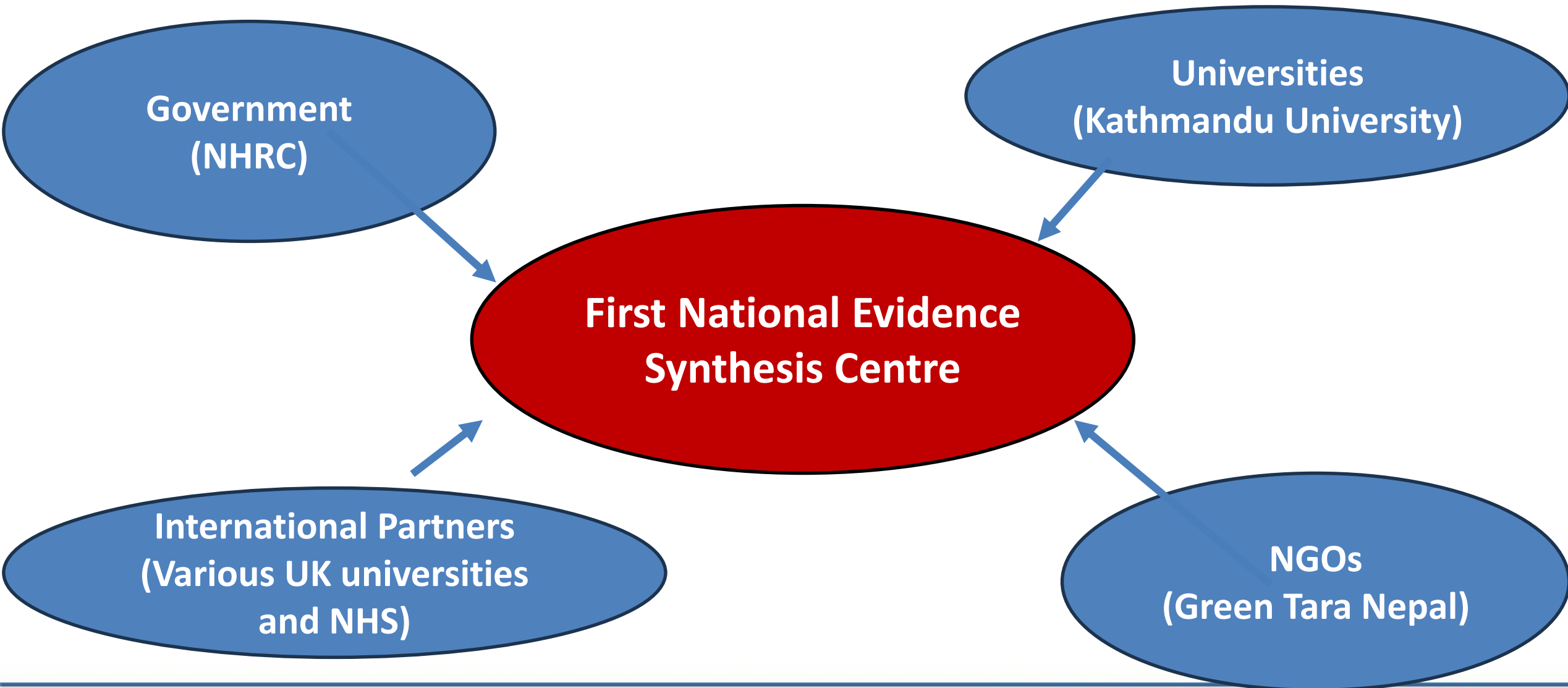
Why Evidence Synthesis Matters for Nepal?

- Ensures policy decisions are based on best available global and local evidence
- Helps prioritize interventions in federalised health systems
- Supports standardisation and scalability of best practices
- Helps policymakers avoid duplication and ineffective interventions
- Significant growth of primary studies (research) but limited efforts to synthesise these studies and producing a policy brief

Strengthening Institutional Knowledge and Capacity for Evidence-Informed Health Policymaking in Nepal



Pilot Project for Evidence Synthesis



- Establishing National Evidence Synthesis Centre
- Develop the capacity on evidence synthesis
- Sensitise the importance of evidence informed policy to policy makers
- Develop national guidelines for evidence use in policy
- Foster long-term partnerships between policymakers and researchers
- Promoting collaboration between academia, government, and NGOs

- Evidence synthesis is not a luxury—it's a necessity for smart policymaking
- It empowers Nepal to make informed, transparent, and impactful health policies
- Let's build a stronger bridge between research and policy for a healthier Nepal



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