



Using Active Living Research to Impact Public Policy, I and II

ALR 2007



Using Active Living Research to Impact Public Policy

Part I: Designing High-Impact Research

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Conventional wisdom

It's hard to have an impact on policy



Conventional wisdom

Impacts on policy are generally small



Conventional wisdom

**It requires researchers to take time
away from other duties**



Conventional wisdom

The key to having a impact on policy is getting the word out

High-impact studies: My experience

- 5 studies**
- 2-3 hours a week**



Under the right conditions...

Findings can reach policymakers



Under the right conditions...

Findings can reach policymakers

- ◆ USDA Secretary
- ◆ US Conference of Mayors
- ◆ Congressional staff on Capitol Hill
- ◆ Federal agencies: DOE, FS, CDC, EPA, DoP, NIH



Under the right conditions...

Findings can reach practitioners



Under the right conditions...

Findings can reach practitioners

- ◆ 6-10,000 sets of fliers provided on request
- ◆ *Arbor Day, Arbor Age, Forestry/Source, American Forests, American Nurseryman, Tree Scapes, The Landscape Contractor, Environmental News Network...*
- ◆ CUFC, ISA, IAA, ICUH, IHC, NADF, NAEE, NUFC, SMA, TPL, Seeley



Under the right conditions...

Findings can shape places, policy



Under the right conditions...

Findings can shape places, policy

- ◆ \$10M tree planting in Chicago
- ◆ US Conference of Mayors resolution
- ◆ Street tree planting in Philadelphia
- ◆ 24+ municipal tree ordinances in RI
- ◆ Hope VI
- ◆ Chicago Green Urban Design benchmarks



Under the right conditions,

- ◆ **Advocates and practitioners will deliver your findings to local, state, and national decision makers**



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- ◆ **Trade publications and professional societies will deliver your findings to practitioners**



Under the right conditions,

- ◆ **Advocates and practitioners will deliver your findings to local, state, and national decision makers**
- ◆ **Trade publications and professional societies will deliver your findings to practitioners**
- ◆ **Decision makers will change places and policies in response to your findings**



What are the right conditions?



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◆ H1:



What are the right conditions?

- ◆ H1: IVs that decision makers can control



IVs decision makers can control

Policy-unfriendly

Policy-friendly



IVs decision makers can control

Policy-unfriendly

Policy-friendly

Preference for trees

Slides of play spaces

Dolphin therapy



IVs decision makers can control

Policy-unfriendly

Preference for trees

Slides of play spaces

Dolphin therapy

Policy-friendly

#trees outside an apt.
building

Actual play spaces

15 min walk, 3x/week



What are the right conditions?

- ◆ H1: IVs that decision makers can control
- ◆ H2: DVs that decision makers care about



DVs decision makers care about

Policy-unfriendly

Policy-friendly



DVs decision makers care about

Policy-unfriendly

Policy-friendly

Ratings of stress

Digit Span Backwards

**Aggression in
hypothetical
scenarios**



DVs decision makers care about

Policy-unfriendly

Ratings of stress

Digit Span Backwards

**Aggression in
hypothetical
scenarios**

Policy-friendly

Blood pressure

**Errors in writing
prescriptions**

#times beat up child



What are the right conditions?

- ◆ H1: IVs that decision makers can control
- ◆ H2: DVs that decision makers care about
- ◆ H3: Evidence they find compelling



Evidence DMs find compelling

Policy-unfriendly

Subjective response
scales “very”

Correlational designs

Tiny samples

Policy-friendly

Anchored response
scales 6x/week

Rigorous tests of
alternative Hyps

Large samples

Local or national data

In sum,



Conventional wisdom

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Conventional wisdom

**It requires researchers to take time
away from other duties**



Conventional wisdom

The key to having a impact on policy is getting the word out



**Under the right conditions, it's
surprisingly easy to have an impact on
policy**



Under the right conditions, a single study can have major impacts



**Under the right conditions, others will
do much of the work for you**



**Getting the word out is not enough;
doing the right research is key**



Doing the right research

- ◆ H1: IVs that decision makers can control
- ◆ H2: DVs that decision makers care about
- ◆ H3: Evidence they find compelling



Doing the right research

- ◆ H1: IVs that decision makers can control
- ◆ H2: DVs that decision makers care about
- ◆ H3: Evidence they find compelling

Good luck!