System Inventory

What it is

In Prevention Tracker, the System Inventory was a database of items that could be classed as either an activity, program, strategy, policy, or regulation contributing to the prevention of chronic disease.

How we applied it

We put together an inventory of activities or programs that could have an impact on chronic disease prevention in each of the Prevention Tracker communities, including local activities and wider programs that reached the community. Based on methods identified in the literature,[1-3] the stages of data collection followed the pattern of: (1) identifying policies, regulations, programs, activities and campaigns for possible inclusion; (2) screening these on the basis of agreed inclusion criteria; (3) coding details about the included policies, regulations, programs, activities and campaigns; and (4) displaying these in a structured format.

We recorded information on all 'active' policies, regulations, programs, activities and campaigns at the time of data collection and entered details into a purpose-built database.

The following outlines the categories used to describe each entry in the inventory. These categories were informed by the literature identified above as well as the International Classification of Health Interventions (ICHI) being developed on behalf of the World Health Organization by researchers at the University of Sydney.

Risk factors being addressed (>one option allowed)

- Unhealthy diet
- Physical inactivity
- Smoking
- Unsafe use of alcohol
- Other, with detail requested

Target population (>one option allowed)

- Female only
- Male only
- Unemployed
- Low SES
- Preschoolers
- School aged kids
- Pregnant women
- Workers
- CALD
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- Inactive
- Other, with detail requested

Program means (>one option allowed)

- Participation
- Policy and guidelines
- Economic incentive
- Written materials
- IT
- Curriculum
- Media campaign
- Other, with detail requested

Program purpose (>one option allowed)

- Capacity building
- Education
- Regulation
- Restriction on consumption
- Restriction on sale
- Provision of services
- Advocacy
- Behaviour change
- Other, with detail requested

What we learnt about the system from using this method

In all four communities, we found a high proportion of activities focused on physical activity. There was a big focus on behaviour change and some alignment of programs in all four communities.

Where to go if you need more information

This is part of a series of fact sheets on the Prevention Tracker project. The series covers topics such as group model building, key informant interviews, social network analysis, system action learning, identifying and monitoring system impacts. The series is available under the Resource tab at: https://preventioncentre.org.au/our-work/research-projects/learning-from-local-communities-preventiontracker-expands/

References

1. Aicken C, Roberts H, Arai L. Mapping service activity: the example of childhood obesity schemes in England. BMC Public Health. 2010. Available from: www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/10/310.

2. Cleland V, McNeilly B, Crawford D, Ball K. Obesity prevention programs and policies: Practitioner and policy-maker perceptions of feasibility and effectiveness. Obesity. 2013:21; E448–E455. Doi: 10.1002/oby.20172.

3. Nichols M, Reynold R, Waters E, Gill T, King L, Swinburn B and Allender S. Community-based efforts to prevent obesity: Australia-wide survey of projects. Health Promot JAustral. 2013:24;111–17

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Systems and solutions for better health

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