The evaluation turning point!

Amia Downes, DrPH

Office of Policy, Planning, and Evaluation (OPPE)

Board of Scientific Counselors Meeting

September 2019

Federal Evaluation Landscape

Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act

This bipartisan legislation will improve the ability of researchers, evaluators, and statisticians both inside and outside government to securely use the data government already collects to better inform important policy decisions.

The legislation requires each federal agency to:

Develop an evaluation plan

Establish an evaluation officer

"Routinely creating and using evidence requires a strong infrastructure and commitment."

NIOSH Evaluation Landscape

OPPE Evaluation Team efforts

Translation Research Program

Surveillance Program

Center for Workers' Compensation Studies

Division/Lab/Office researchers

Economic analysis (Economic Research and Support Office and RAND)

Program Reviews and ECB Efforts

Program Reviews

   Implemented modified CA

   5 reviews completed

   Developing impact stories

   AEA/EERS presentations and article

Evaluation Capacity Building

   Administered ECB survey

   Formative research

Using the Contribution Analysis Approach to Evaluate Science Impact: A Case Study of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

Amia Downes[1], Emily Novicki[1], and John Howard[1]

Abstract
Interest from Congress, executive branch leadership, and various other stakeholders for greater accountability in government continues to gain momentum today with government-wide efforts. However, measuring the impact of research programs has proven particularly difficult. Cause and effect linkages between research findings and changes to morbidity and mortality are difficult to prove. To address this challenge, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health program evaluators used a modified version of contribution analysis (CA) to evaluate two research programs. CA proved to be a useful framework for assessing research impact, and both programs received valuable, actionable feedback. Although there is room to further refine our approach, this was a promising step toward moving beyond bibiliometrics to more robust assessment of research impact.

Keywords
government evaluation, impact evaluation, public health, case studies

Program Review Dilemma

47 recommendations from 4 program reviews
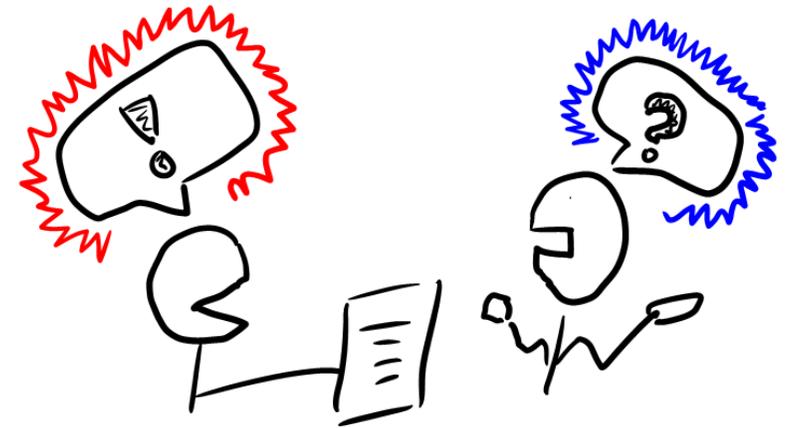
Straightforward, process steps

Topics where NIOSH has not traditionally done work in a program

Broad recommendations, scattered across many areas within one program

Significantly more resources

Lack of control/New partnerships

Continue everything you're doing

Back up!

Evaluation 101: Do not pursue an evaluation if you are not in a position to use the results!

   No implementation process

   What are the expectations for implementation?

   Where are we going?

   NIOSH is at an evaluation crossroads!

Vision for the future

Considerations

Evidence-Based Policy Making Act

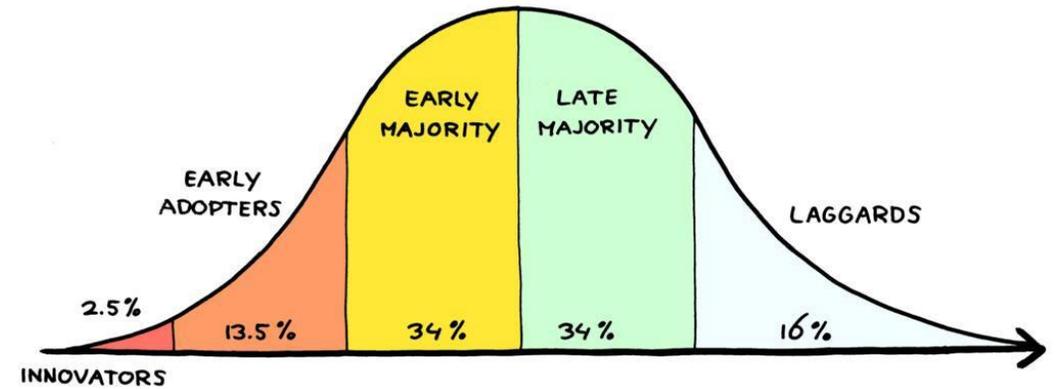NIOSH environment

    Diffusion of innovations

NIOSH plan

    Leverage resources

Prepare programs to undergo review using CA and implement recommendations

Current GPRA Measure

Achieve and sustain the percentage of occupational safety and health programs demonstrating effectiveness by scoring 7 out of 10 or greater in external review (Outcome)

FY	Target	Result
2017	**100%**	100% (Target Met)
2018	100%	100% (Target Met)
2019	100%	Dec 31, 2019
2020	100%	Dec 31, 2020

Revised GPRA Measure

Increase the effectiveness of occupational safety and health programs by executing a plan to build evaluation capacity and implement previous evaluation recommendations (Outcome)

FY	Target	Result
2020	NIOSH plan will be reviewed by external reviewers (establish baseline)	Dec 31, 2020
2021	NIOSH will receive a score of 4 out of 5 or better based on an external review of their progress implementing an evaluation capacity building plan	Dec 31, 2021
2022	NIOSH will receive a score of 4 out of 5 or better based on an external review of their progress implementing an evaluation capacity building plan	Dec 31, 2022
2023	NIOSH will receive a score of 4 out of 5 or better based on an external review of their progress implementing an evaluation capacity building plan	Dec 31, 2023
2024	NIOSH will receive a score of 4 out of 5 or better based on an external review of their progress implementing an evaluation capacity building plan	Dec 31, 2024
2025	NIOSH will receive a score of 4 out of 5 or better based on an external review of their progress implementing an evaluation capacity building plan	Dec 31, 2025

NIOSH Evaluation Capacity Building Plan

Four to five objectives based on the following topics:

Topic 1: Implementation sciences

Topic 2: Collecting and documenting intermediate outcomes (IOs)

Topic 3: Implementation of program review recommendations

Topic 4: Communication of IOs and evaluation findings

"the NIH cannot leave our research findings at the 'water's edge' and simply hope that others implement the findings supported by the NIH into practice and policy"

-Riley, Transl Behav Med. 2017 Jun; 7(2): 380–384.

NIOSH Evaluation Capacity Building Plan

Four to five objectives based on the following topics:

Topic 1: Implementation sciences

Topic 2: Collecting and documenting intermediate outcomes (IOs)

Topic 3: Implementation of program review recommendations

Topic 4: Communication of IOs and evaluation findings

Where to begin....

DLO	Program(s)	Topic 1: Implement. Sciences	Topic 2: Collection	Topic 3: Implement. Recommend.	Topic 4: Communication
DSR	CMVS, PSS (FF)	X	X		
PMRD/SMRD	MIN		X	X	X
NPPTL	PSS (FF)	X	X		
EPRO	EPR		X	X	X
WSD	OGE	X	X		
WSD	CMSHS		X		
OEP	AFF Centers		X		X

Questions for the Board:

What audiences should NIOSH prioritize for targeting with its impact stories?

From your perspective, what do you see as potential barriers to evaluation capacity building at NIOSH and what suggestions do you have for overcoming those barriers?