

How can guideline development and policy development be linked?

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In the second paper in a three-part [series](#) on health systems guidance, John Lavis of McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada and colleagues explore the challenge of linking guidance development and policy development at global and national levels. Writing in this week's *PLoS Medicine*, the authors call for a division of labour between global guidance developers, global policy developers, national guidance developers, and national policy developers, and argue that a panel charged with developing health systems guidance at the global level could best add value by ensuring that its output can be used for policy development at the global and national level, and for guidance development at the national level.

The authors state: "Our examination of the range of factors that can influence policy development (and that can be flagged for consideration in health systems guidance) highlights the need for rigorous system and political analyses in policy briefs at the national level."

In last week's [PLoS Medicine](#), Xavier Bosch-Capblanch and colleagues, in the first paper in the health systems guidance series, examined how guidance is currently formulated in low- and middle-income countries, and the challenges to developing such [guidance](#), such as the translation of research. The authors suggested that further research is needed to adapt existing approaches (e.g., those used in clinical guidelines) to produce meaningful advice that accounts for the complexity of health systems, political systems, and contexts.

More information: Lavis JN, Røttingen J-A, Bosch-Capblanch X, Atun R, El-Jardali F, et al. (2012) Guidance for Evidence-Informed Policies about Health Systems: Linking Guidance Development to Policy Development. *PLoS Med* 9(3): e1001186.
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