

Strategy 2.2: Develop policy and practice environments that value research

BBV & STI Research, Intervention and Strategic Evaluation (BRISE)

BRISE is an integrated program that delivers policy relevant research, strategic advice, capacity building and communications to support the response to blood-borne viruses (BBV) and sexually transmissible infections (STIs) in NSW. BRISE is a collaboration of the Ministry of Health, the Kirby Institute and the Centre for Social Research in Health at UNSW Australia.

BRISE objectives are to facilitate the generation of policy-relevant research and increase the use of research in practice. Strategies include flexible and collaborative research priority setting, making research more accessible and developing workforce capacity to utilise evidence. BRISE maximises awareness of its research outputs and outcomes by regularly reporting on research activity.

BRISE promotes the value of its research outputs and demonstrates use in policy and practice by holding stakeholder workshops to facilitate exchange between researchers and policy makers. Each year BRISE hosts a series of interactive symposiums with practitioners and policy makers to showcase research and how it is being used in practice, developing policy and practice environments that value research, as per *Population Health Research Strategy 2.2*.

The first annual work plan was developed in 2014 through an iterative process of collaborative consultation and review, within a state-wide policy framework. Forums were held over two days to provide opportunities for collaborative priority setting with key stakeholders including non-government organisations, local health districts (LHDs), clinicians, academics and policy makers. Research priorities identified in the forums were graded by stakeholders according to policy relevance, impact and urgency. Results of the consultation were cross-referenced by the Ministry against priorities in each of the NSW BBV and STI Strategies and the Aboriginal BBV and STI Framework. A collaborative approach for setting the first workplan increased the likelihood that research outputs would be coproduced, policy aligned, timely and used in practice.

Over the course of the 5-year research program, the format of the symposiums has changed from face-to-face delivery to topic-specific webinars to increase the reach of the showcases. For instance, webinars have been held on the changing landscapes of biomedical prevention in HIV and on hepatitis C elimination. The aim of these workshops is to share how the results of the BRISE-supported research have informed policy and practice and to encourage future adoption of the results of the research in policy and practice. An additional Research Program has been approved for 2019–2024.

BRISE projects include the hepatitis C webinar which showcased the results of the research project, *Estimates and Projections of the Hepatitis C Virus Epidemic*, which produced estimates for hepatitis C prevalence, incidence and morbidities in NSW by LHD over 2016–2030, and identified annual treatment targets required for each LHD to achieve the NSW strategy goal of hepatitis C elimination by 2028. Speakers at the webinar provided a response to the research to discuss how they are using it in practice, and included representatives from drug and alcohol in Central Coast LHD and Central and Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network.

Further reading

Gordon T, Power C, Duck T, Schmidt HA, Holden J. A priority-driven, policy-relevant research program to support a response to blood-borne viruses and sexually transmissible infections in NSW, Australia. *Public Health Res Pract* 2018; 28(3). pii: 2831820.