From Evidence to action

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Postgraduate Course for Training in Medicine
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When does evidence lead to policy change?
When does evidence lead to action?
Determinants of Success

- early involvement of all stakeholders
- avoidance of “losers”
- passion and communication competence
But for many risk factors for chronic diseases

- stakeholders are active proponents of risk
- economic losses are perceived or real
- researchers talk to researchers
What are the major risks and who are the stakeholders?

**Tobacco:** companies, advertisers, hospitality, farmers.

**Diets rich in saturated fat, sugar, salt:** companies, advertisers, multiple “special interests”, retailers, farmers.

**Alcohol:** companies, retailers, advertisers, sports groups.

**Physical inactivity:** sports goods and organization, urban designers, schools.
Strategies used to block the use of evidence

- deny
- dispute
- propose alternatives
- block funding
HOW INDUSTRY MANIPULATES SCIENCE AND GAMBLIES WITH YOUR FUTURE

TRUST US, WE'RE EXPERTS!

SHELDON RAMPTON AND JOHN STAUBER

AUTHORS OF TOXIC SLUDGE IS GOOD FOR YOU!

"If you want to know how the world wags, and who's wagging it, here's your answer."—Bill Moyers
Case studies

- Tobacco
- Sugar
- Salt
- Alcohol
Tobacco

- Decades of documented industry deception
- Evidence kept in dispute
- Corporate social responsibility
Pan American Health Organization
Sugar

- Eat food and drinks containing sugar sparingly and not between meals (Department of Health, SA)
- Eat/use sugar and sugar containing foods and drinks in moderation (Association of Dietetics in SA)
Marion Nestle

Food Politics

How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health
Salt
“Reduced consumption of salt undermines efforts to iodize salts and prevent iodine deficiency.”

Salt industry submission to WHO
Alcohol

- Does advertising lead to increased consumption in youth?
- What proportion of total alcohol consumed is drunk by underage youth and excessively by adults?
Concluding thoughts

– Evidence exists in a social/political reality
– Action is often independent of sound science
– Political commitment to science and its application is critical to success