

## HEALTH EVIDENCE NETWORK SYNTHESIS REPORT 76

**In what ways do cultural contexts influence the knowledge translation process for health decision-making and what are the implications for policy and practice?**

Eivind Engebretsen | Priya Umachandran | John Ødemark | Trisha Greenhalgh



**World Health  
Organization**

European Region

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## Abstract

This report explores how knowledge translation (KT) and cultural contexts are conceptualized and utilized, with a focus on health policy-making theory and practice. KT takes place within cultural contexts that can powerfully frame what policy problems are and what type of research is accepted by policy-makers. This is illustrated with studies from the COVID-19 pandemic regarding the use of face masks across cultures and of the influence of cultural contexts on KT and evidence-informed decision-making arising from the Black Lives Matter movement. Many Indigenous cultures conceptualize physical health in a holistic manner that encompasses both social and ecological aspects, which are often not considered in the biomedical understanding of health. Effective KT within local cultural contexts requires going beyond general categories (such as Indigenous culture) and assumptions about particular types of culture. Some KT models and frameworks include local context as a factor in translation, identifying community-, culture- and language-focused strategies to improve cultural competency for health-care interventions. Policy considerations are suggested that support the adoption of complex understandings of cultures in knowledge production, communication, translation and use.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

BLM	Black Lives Matter (movement)
COVID-19	coronavirus disease
EVIPNet	Evidence-informed Policy Network
HEN	Health Evidence Network
KT	knowledge translation
RCT	randomized controlled trial
SARS	severe acute respiratory syndrome
SARS-CoV-2	severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (causing COVID-19)

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