Implementation Models, Theories & Frameworks

Implementation Outcomes Framework

The Implementation Outcomes Framework is a standardised taxonomy of implementation outcomes that are conceptually distinct from service- or client-level health outcomes and are designed to evaluate the process of implementing evidence-based practices in health care and related settings.

Type

Evaluation Framework

Purpose

To guide evaluation of how well an evidence-based intervention is implemented, rather than whether it improves service or patient outcomes. The Implementation Outcomes Framework defines a set of standard outcomes that help identify *why* implementation is succeeding or not, supporting better planning, evaluation, and improvement of implementation efforts.

Elements

- **Acceptability**: the perceived appropriateness or satisfaction with the intervention or implementation strategy by key stakeholders.
- **Adoption**: the intention, initial decision, or action to try or employ an innovation.
- **Appropriateness**: the perceived fit or relevance of the intervention in a setting.
- **Cost**: the financial impact of implementing the intervention.
- **Feasibility**: the extent to which the intervention can be successfully used within a given setting.
- **Fidelity**: the degree to which the intervention is implemented as intended by the original protocol or program design.
- **Penetration**: the integration of the intervention within a service setting or across units/settings (often framed as reach at the organisational level).

- **Sustainability**: the extent to which a program or practice continues to be delivered over time after initial implementation efforts.

These outcomes are distinct from clinical or service outcomes (e.g. patient health, safety, efficiency), helping clarify what aspect of implementation is being measured.

Use with

Determinant frameworks to map determinants to outcomes.

> CFIR: to operationalise and measure implementation aspects that CFIR helps design or identify (e.g., inner/outer settings, process, individual characteristics).

Process or evaluation frameworks to provide complementary dimensions.

> RE-AIM: provides a parallel taxonomy for implementation-specific outcomes, enabling richer interpretation when both are applied to a study.

Strengths and Limitations

STRENGTHS

- Provides a clear and practical set of outcomes to evaluate implementation success.
- Widely used and recognised, supporting consistency across studies and health services.
- Flexible and complementary, working well with other frameworks (e.g. CFIR, RE-AIM).
- Helps distinguish implementation success from clinical effectiveness.

LIMITATIONS

- Inconsistent definitions and measurement approaches across studies can limit comparability.
- Focuses on implementation processes, so additional work is needed to link to patient or system outcomes.
- Requires careful selection and application to avoid superficial or incomplete evaluation.

See it in practice

Implementation strategies and outcomes for occupational therapy in adult stroke rehabilitation: a scoping review (Murrell, Pisegna, & Juckett, 2021).

Find out more

Outcomes for implementation research: Conceptual distinctions, measurement challenges, and research agenda (Proctor et al., 2011).

Research and scholarly methods: implementation science studies (Kuo, Trinkley, & Rabin, 2022).

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