

Governance in the South African Health Sector: An In-depth Analysis of Financial Management Processes at a District Level

Choonara, S¹. Goudge, J¹. Nxumalo, N³. Eyles, J^{1,2}.

¹Centre for Health Policy, School of Public Health, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

²School of Geography and Earth Sciences, McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada.

Background: The World Health Organisation (WHO) considers governance to be a key component of the health system. Nested within a broader project funded by the Resilient and Responsive Health (RESYST) consortium in South Africa (SA), this doctoral study is focused on micro-practices such as daily activities, routines, decision-making authority and interaction of actors and their contributions to financial management processes at district level

Methods:

The RESYST project will make use of an action learning approach. The study will be conducted in one district in the Gauteng province of SA. Purposive sampling will be used to identify key managers (n=30) involved in financial management processes. Document reviews and semi-structured in-depth interviews (conducted between March-June 2014) will provide insight into district financial management processes. Thematic content analysis will be used to distill the study findings.

Expected findings

The presentation will provide an overview of district and sub-district plans over time, how decision-making and review processes work, the interface between strategic planning and routine practices such as procurement, as well as the role of provincial-district relationships and engagement. Drawing on the experience of other RESYST learning sites in Kenya and Western Cape, the link between plans, targets and operational budgets are likely to be weak despite review processes.

Significance:

This study will draw out the implications for financial management, and efforts to strengthen governance processes at the district level in SA, and other low and middle income settings.

Total word count: 285