

Focusing on



– HIA –

How is the health of different groups affected by the proposed policy decision in question?





"The Health Question"

A simple itemized list of health impacts

"The Health Matrix"

A matrix showing how a decision may impact on various conditions, groups, and so on

"Health Impact Analysis"

A foundation for health impact assessment prior to decision-making

The Health Question



This simple option can be adopted prior to consideration of an individual policy proposal. It can also be used before collective decisions are made at meetings of local boards/committees.

A. Will the proposal promote health development for various groups/the population in relation to the social environment (e.g. opportunity to exert influence, mutual work and support)?

Yes No

B. Will the proposal promote health development for various groups/the population with regard to certain risk factors (e.g. the physical environment or living habits)?

Yes No

The Health Question, continued



C. Is the proposal consistent with overall municipality/county health targets and objectives?

Yes

No

Comments/justification:

.....
.....

Alternative proposal:

.....
.....

Our assessment is that:

.....
.....

The Health Matrix



	Prioritized group		Entire population	
	Long term	Short term	Long term	Short term
Democracy/opportunity to exert influence/equality				
Financial security				
Employment/meaningful pursuits/education				
Social network				
Access to health care and welfare services				
Belief in the future/life goals and meaning				
Physical environment				
Living habits				

The Health Matrix, example



Is the proposal in accordance with the overall targets of the municipality/county council?

Yes

No

Comments/justification:

.....
.....

Alternative proposal:

.....
.....

Our assessment is that:

.....
.....

An example of how the health matrix is employed



	Prioritized group		Entire population	
	Long term	Short term	Long term	Short term
Democracy/opportunity to exert influence/equality	+	+	+	-
Financial security	0	0	0	0
Employment/meaningful pursuits/education	+	+	+	+
Social network	+	+	+	0
Access to health care and welfare services	0	0	0	0
Belief in the future/life goals and meaning	+	+	+	+
Physical environment	+	+	+	0
Living habits	0	0	0	0

Health Impact Analysis



Health Impact Analysis is guided by a number of key questions. They may, for example, be appropriate to raise prior to analyses of strategic policy decisions.

General questions

1a: What does the local Public Health Report show regarding the health conditions of different groups within the municipality/county? Are there groups which are particularly vulnerable or already exposed to numerous health risks, or are there groups with evident health-trend problems?

1b: Are there defined health-policy targets?

Questions linked to the matter at hand

2. Are there particular health risks which can be expected to decrease or increase as a result of the proposal? Will impacts become apparent in the short term (within 5 years) or in the long term?

Health Impact Analysis, continued



3. For the distribution of ill-health within a population, it is of decisive importance which groups are subjected to decreased/increased health risks, and whether any decision will affect these groups' capacity either to deal with difficulties or, by contrast, increase their vulnerability.

4. In what way will the social environment in the local community be affected by the proposal?

5. Is there a risk that a proposal may have a "double" impact on certain groups, i.e. that both their health risks increase and their social environment deteriorates?

6. Are there alternative policies which might result in better health for exposed groups and the population as a whole?

7. Summary

An example of the application of Health Impact Analysis



To show how Health Impact Analysis can be employed, there follows a presentation of the possible health impacts of the introduction of school capitation allowances, a "voucher" system that allows parents and children freely to select the school of their choice within a defined area.

General questions

1a: What does the local Public Health Report show regarding the health conditions of different groups within the municipality/county? Are there groups which are particularly vulnerable or already exposed to numerous health risks, or are there groups with evident health-trend problems?

1b: Are there defined health-policy targets?

An example of the application of Health Impact Analysis, continued



The Public Health Report, or a questionnaire survey administered to children at upper level of compulsory school and their parents, shows bullying in some municipal schools to be a major problem.

One well-established health-policy target is that injuries (including those arising from violence), and also social differences in children's psychological health, shall be reduced.

Questions linked to the matter at hand

2. Are there particular health risks which can be expected to decrease or increase as a result of the proposal? Will impact become apparent in the short term (within 5 years) or in the long term?

An example of the application of Health Impact Analysis, continued



If freedom of educational choice means that children of well-off parents move from schools with weak resources, there is a risk of increased segregation within the school environment, and thereby also of increased social disparities with regard to children's mental health. A particular risk is that children with difficulties at school will not receive the tailored instruction they need.

On the other hand, freedom of choice has a value in itself. Many children will end up in an environment that suits them better. Those who have been bullied will be enabled to move to a school where they are less exposed to physical and mental violence.

3. For the distribution of ill-health within a population, it is of decisive importance which groups are subjected to decreased/increased health risks, and whether any decision will affect these groups' capacity either to deal with difficulties or, by contrast, increase their vulnerability.

An example of the application of Health Impact Analysis, continued



It is children with special needs who are most affected if a discrepancy arises between needs and resources. Accordingly, even if overall impact is favorable, social inequalities in children's health can still arise. It is possible that the "bullying effect" will be favorable, especially if "vicious circles" in schools left by some children are prevented. If freedom of choice in schools has a positive effect on parental involvement, the ability of children to handle difficulties at school may also increase.

4. In what way will the social environment in the local community be affected by the proposal?

The social environment referred to in this context may apply to the school or to the community at large. Increased freedom of choice may be a positive factor in relation to the school environment – in any case, in the schools that are actively sought after. At the same time, parents' involvement may increase in the schools to which children transfer. In

An example of the application of Health Impact Analysis, continued



the schools that children leave, there may be a need for arrangements to be reviewed. Dependent, among other things, on the quality of school management and the availability of resources, a vicious circle may develop. In particular, there may be an increasing proportion of children in need of special support, who have to cope on diminished resources and with increasing risks of frustration and violence. Children may also increasingly have to go to schools in areas where they do not live. This may have a negative impact on social networks in their local communities.

5. Is there a risk that a proposal may have a “double” impact on certain groups, i.e. that both their health risks increase and their social environment deteriorates?

If children with difficulties end up in environments with poorer prerequisites for obtaining help, this may have a negative effect on their

An example of the application of Health Impact Analysis, continued



development. Residential segregation generally leads to those with the greatest needs being in districts with the poorest resources. This trend may be reinforced by extending freedom to parents and children to select the school of their choice.

6. Are there alternative policies which might result in better health for exposed groups and the population as a whole?

Are there arrangements available in which consumers (children and parents) can affect the school environment without having to change school?

7. Summary