

Article details: 2019-0049	
Title	Monitoring progress toward UN commitments: a systematic overview of characteristics of Canadian legislation to promote tobacco control, physical activity and healthy eating
Authors	Katerina Maximova PhD, Kim D. Raine PhD, Christine Czoli PhD, Jennifer O'Loughlin PhD, John Minkley JD, Kendall Tisdale MPH, Tania Bubela PhD JD
<b>Reviewer 1</b>	Maude Laberge
Institution	Department of Operations and Decision Systems, Faculté des sciences de l'administration, Université Laval, Québec, Que.
General comments (author response in bold)	<p>1. The title seems a bit misleading, as the study is not an assessment of the policies but more of an overview.  <b>We have revised the title as suggested by the Reviewer. For consistency, we have also revised the Abstract and study objectives accordingly on page 5 in the Introduction.</b></p> <p>2. In the introduction, the objective of the study is stated as: “to systematically assess the characteristics of Canadian federal and provincial legislation targeting tobacco use, physical activity and healthy eating with regard to its purpose, tools to accomplish the purpose, responsible authorities, target location, level of coerciveness, and provisions for enforcement”. The authors need to make clear the value of this objective in their introduction. For the reader, it is not obvious why this study is needed, and why this work is important. The word “assess” also does not seem adequate for what seems to be a characterization.  <b>In the context of ageing populations and escalating costs associated with the chronic disease burden, decision-makers need to know which evidence-based interventions provide better value for money because they are cost-effective, affordable and feasible to implement and scale-up in a range of local contexts. To assist decision-makers in setting priorities for optimal allocation of scarce resources, the WHO evaluated the scientific evidence of strategies already proven to be effective in high-income countries and carried out economic analyses to identify a set of priority interventions that should be implemented immediately – the so-called “best buys.” These “best buys” interventions were selected because they have significant public health impact, are highly cost-effective, have very low implementation cost.</b>  <b>For our paper, we were motivated by the need to systematically review the characteristics of Canadian legislation targeting physical activity and healthy eating, and compare these with tobacco control laws in order to provide a baseline for measuring progress toward UN commitments and to build Canadian consensus on the use of law for chronic disease prevention. We have revised the Introduction on pages 5-6 and edited the last sentence of the Discussion on page 15 to clarify the rationale for the study and better situate it in the current literature. We have replaced the word ‘assess’ with characterize as suggested by the Reviewer. We have also revised reference #6 to refer to the updated appendix of the WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2013-2020, which provides the most recent set of “best buys” and “good buys.” Lastly, we have incorporated the rationale for the study into the manuscript title.</b></p> <p>3. The authors use an existing database of Canadian policies (CPAC PPD) and identify characteristics on which to categorize legislation. It is not clear whether</p>

	<p>these characteristics were taken from some framework (Gostin?). If so, it needs to be more explicit so that readers can understand the methodology. If not, it would appear that the study does not lie on any theoretical or conceptual framework.</p> <p><b>Both the Prevention Policies Directory and our study were informed by the Rogers’ diffusion of innovations framework, which views policy diffusion as a process through which decision-makers learn policy solutions to public health problems from other jurisdictions. By quantifying the characteristics of legislations generated in our study, these data may serve future assessments of the diffusion patterns based on the rate of implementation of federal/provincial/territorial legislation targeting tobacco use or exposure, physical inactivity and unhealthy eating that may ascribe jurisdictions into different groups adapted from Rogers’ innovator categories: “innovators, early implementers, early majority, late majority, and laggards.”</b></p> <p><b>We have revised the text on page 5 under Introduction to clarify this and added the following reference (Ref #28).</b></p> <p><b>Rogers EM. Diffusion of Innovations, 5th edition. New York: Free Press, 2003.</b></p> <p>4. Policy development and the adoption of laws is a complex process and sensitive to a variety of contextual factors. Suggesting “missed opportunities” with laws that do not go far enough appears simplistic to the reality of the process. Highlighting lack of enforcement is important, yet remains relatively superficial for the complexity of the topic.</p> <p><b>We have removed ‘missed opportunities’ from the title and the last paragraph of the Discussion on page 14 as suggested by the Reviewer.</b></p> <p>5. Another important issue is that there is limited evidence on the effectiveness on the policies and laws that were passed. The authors did refer to some studies that assessed the effects of single policies, but because such evaluations are not systematic (and the quality of the evidence may be limited), it is difficult to make conclusions about directions to take.</p> <p><b>While it is true that Canadian evidence on the effectiveness of regulatory and legal interventions is only beginning to emerge, there is convincing international evidence that supports the use of such approaches for influencing behaviour change. The potential for using legal and regulatory policies and interventions for chronic disease prevention has been recognized by the WHO and endorsed by the UN. The UN commitments emphasize the need for urgent implementation of stronger legislative measures to accelerate action on chronic disease prevention.</b></p> <p><b>Please see our response and revisions made in response to comment #2 by Reviewer #1.</b></p> <p>6. Overall, although this paper is interesting, it is difficult to identify clearly its intention. The reader is left wondering what it is aiming to achieve.</p> <p><b>Please see our response and revisions made in response to comment #2 by Reviewer #1. We have substantially revised the Introduction to provide a better rationale for the study.</b></p>
<b>Reviewer 2</b>	Kelly Chessie
Institution	
General comments (author response in	An excellent article. A pleasure to read (clear, concise, well organized)

bold)

Interesting and useful question and findings.