

Bridging the Gaps: How to make research findings impact policy-makers?

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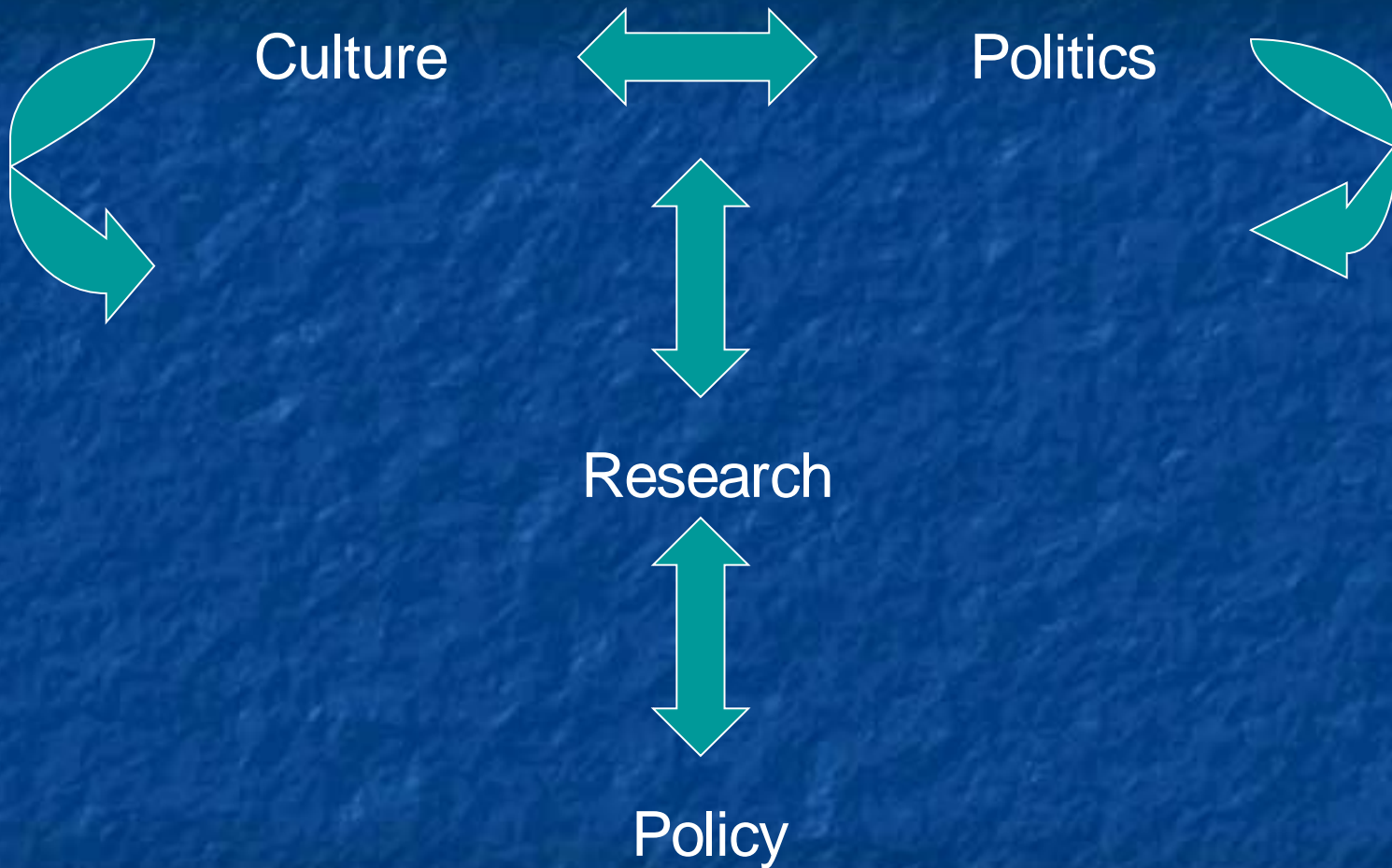
Focus

- Identify areas for research that may be valued by policymakers
- Steps needed to gain support for research in policy

Recognize How Research Is Viewed

- Research for research sake...only for the benefit of the researcher and not the community or individual
- Social science research to perpetuate the researcher...never any conclusions...only need for another study
- Do not deal with “real life” issues

“...we have made virtually no progress in our ability to understand what it takes to change the developmental trajectories of the most vulnerable young children who live in the most threatening environments.” Shonkoff, 2003



Child and adolescent mental health

Global Challenges for Research

- Lack of knowledge about the importance of child mental health
- Stigma
- Competition among vested interests
- Ability or inability to mount advocacy
- Erosion or strength of family structure
- Urbanization

Challenges for the Researcher

- Non-pharmacological research in developing countries
- Sustained funding for long-term outcome research
- Inter-disciplinary research
- Research addressing controversial issues – autism etiology, PTSD
- Easier for politicians to support categorical research

Policy Relevant Research

- Needs Assessment
- Evaluation
- Cultural/Developmental Epidemiology
- Outcomes studies
- Process studies (implementation science)
- Economic analysis (burden)
- Effectiveness studies

Leverage Categorical Programs

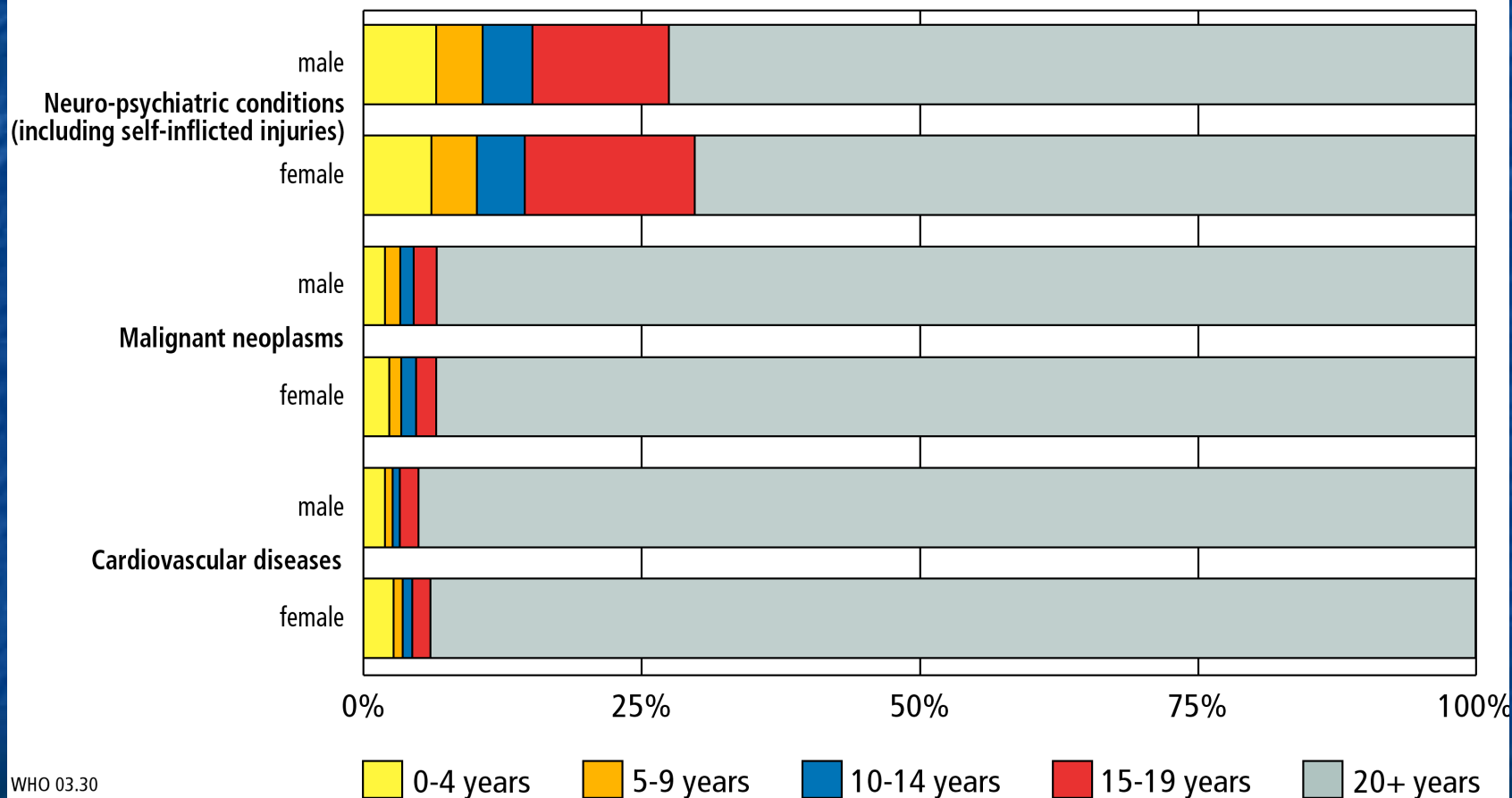
Categorical versus General

- Autism
 - ADHD
 - PTSD
 -
-
- Research Infra-structure
 - Research Training
 - Evaluation Funding/Needs Assessment

Data for Policy

Economic Studies

Figure 1. **World: DALYs in 2000 attributable to selected causes, by age and sex**



Burden of Disease

- Measurable
- Disability Adjusted Life Years
- Impairment
- Lost productivity
- Lifetime economic cost to society...Scott and colleagues (2001) have shown the cost of the childhood diagnosis of conduct disorder

Burden of Disease and the Non-Communicable Disease

- Concepts need to be embraced to make the economic and political arguments for the support of child and adolescent mental health services.
- Clinicians as well as policymakers can utilize these concepts in communicating with colleagues
- Can influence program development

Antisocial behavior in childhood is a major predictor of how much an individual will cost society (Scott, BMJ, 2001)

Clinical Perspectives on the Burden of Disease

- Use of “cultural epidemiology” to provide more than a statistical face to the issues that compel action...impairment in a cultural context, diagnosis in a cultural context.
- Need to appreciate child and adolescent mental disorders as “co-morbid” with other health disorders and social phenomena.

Research and Context

Services Research

- Outcomes studies
- Enhanced data gathering through WHO AIMS (Assessment Instrument for Mental Health Systems)
- Longitudinal studies
- Evaluation
- Access to care

Need a better way to
conceptualize need...
epidemiological numbers alone
not heard...impairment, long-
term cost

Collective Efficacy

Research of Felton Earls, MD

Cultural Epidemiology

- Integration of the frameworks and methods of anthropology and epidemiology
- Not looking solely at diagnoses, rather at the illness experience, the degree of impairment and the local cultural view of the “illness” as meaningful elements of analysis.

Cultural acceptance of a diagnosis leads to political will to support research: Asperger's (autism) --- enormous USA investment in autism

Issues for Policymakers and Researchers

- Need a nomenclature that fits with the presentation of children in life situations...co-morbidity a sign of a lack of understanding of appropriate diagnosis (Mario Maj, MD, WPA, Istanbul 2006)
- An environmental/ecological perspective needs to be incorporated with the clinical perspective
- Need for rational care - a primary focus on psychopharmacological approaches, will not advance care in low income countries and may distort care elsewhere

Despite the demonstration of effective prevention strategies both high and low income countries fail to invest adequately in prevention...mental health professionals must be part of the effort.

Communicating Research Findings

Communicating Research Findings

- Findings need to be more accessible and clearer for a policy and public audience
- Increase access to findings from low income, non-Western countries
- Engage the media in positive reporting
- See research results as first step for advocacy for policy and programs...not end point

Policy

Essential in current political
climate worldwide to be
concerned with policy...leads to
funding, distortion of priorities,
restrictions on research

WHO Guidance Package on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Policy

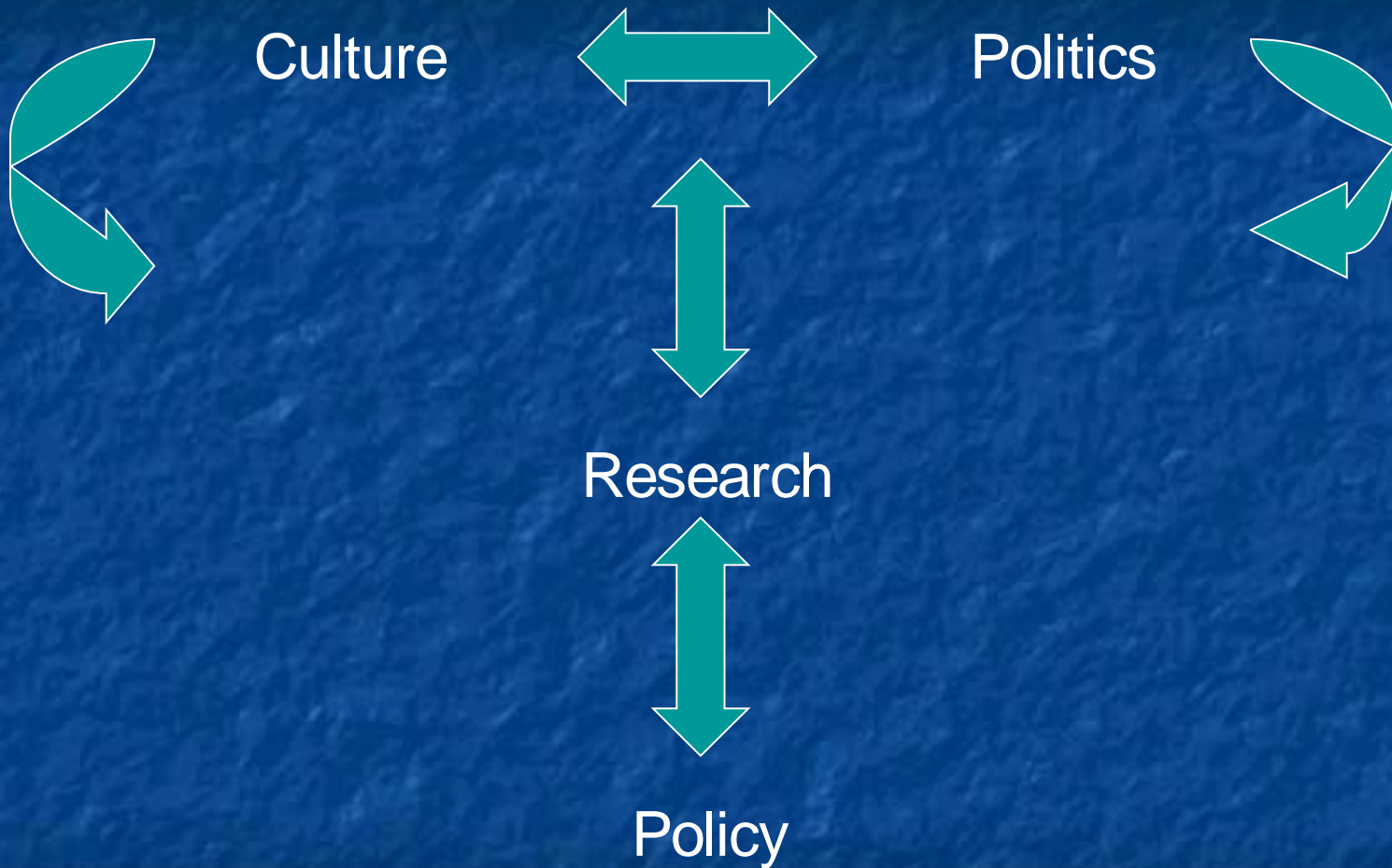
www.who.mental_health/

Advocacy by and for research
policy ... A partnership with
consumers and lawmakers

Policy can bring positive change,
but can also bring unwanted
regulation...beware that you
know the policy you advocate for

**Keep It Simple
Know the Benefits**

Advocacy---Become identified
with an initiative---Any initiative.



Child and adolescent mental health

Thank You