

The Complex Task of Translating Health Research into Health Policy in the Philippines

“(We should) ensure that research outputs reach a wider audience and contribute to national health strategies,” declared UP Manila Chancellor Michael Tee at the opening of the 1st Consultative Meeting of all stakeholders of the Acta Medica Philippina last March 2026.¹ Yet, the pathway from published peer-reviewed research to integration into a national health policy and implementable health strategy is circuitous.²

It would seem logical that data-driven decision-making in implementing health strategies should be the norm. Prevalence statistics such as that provided in the article by Collantes and co-authors on stroke in the Philippines should guide the planning and implementation of noncommunicable disease prevention and control measures in the country.³ This paper was cited in the Clinical Practice Guidelines on the Management of Acute Ischemic Stroke and Intracerebral Hemorrhage in the Philippines, published in 2024.⁴ Already, an article by Lanuza and co-investigators on outcomes in the management of stroke using thrombolysis consistent with the guidelines published portrays the alignment of evidence and policy leading to favorable results.⁵

These articles track the translation from data to the design of programs to clinical decisions. The Lanuza article is an example of descriptive analytics, a tool afforded by the collection of historical data to evaluate the efficacy of recommendations. Predictive analytics as well as prescriptive analytics are other areas where research findings become consequential in health policy and strategy.⁶ An article by Ong on the economic evaluation of the WHO elimination strategy for hepatitis B in the Philippines provides the relevant answers, the prescriptive analytics to be exact, to guide policy makers to make decisions on required health expenditures.⁷

Yet barriers exist. The inability of policy makers and health strategy implementors to utilize research findings is due to various reasons and includes a disconnect between the generators of data and the targeted end-users.² Already, many strategies have been employed to overcome these obstacles.

The establishment of the National Unified Health Research Agenda was a step in the right direction.⁸ More stakeholder consultations are required to make the agenda truly responsive and better utilized. The Universal Health Care Law also has evidence-informed policy making integrated as a general principle.⁹ Hopefully, with such mechanisms, the political and structural issues plaguing the translation of research to policy can be overcome. Acta Medica Philippina is honored to contribute to solutions through the publication of this relevant evidence to make such translation consistent and sustainable.

Angela G. Sison-Aguilar, MD, MSc, MBA

*Editor-in-Chief
Acta Medica Philippina*



eISSN 2094-9278 (Online)
Published: April 16, 2026
<https://doi.org/10.47895/amp.v60i7.14234>
Copyright: The Author(s) 2026

REFERENCES

1. Lingdas CA. Ensuring Research Translates to National Impact: UP Manila convenes stakeholders to strengthen Acta Medica Philippina [Internet]. Manila: University of the Philippines Manila; 2026 [cited 2026 Apr 15]. Available from: https://www.upm.edu.ph/cpt_news/ensuring-research-translates-to-national-impact-up-manila-convenes-stakeholders-to-strengthen-acta-medica-philippina/
2. Abu-Odah H, Said NB, Nair SC, Allsop MJ, Currow DC, Salah MS, et al. Identifying barriers and facilitators of translating research evidence into clinical practice: A systematic review of reviews. *Health Soc Care Community*. 2022 Nov;30(6):e3265-76. doi: 10.1111/hsc.13898. PMID: 35775332.
3. Collantes MEV, Zuriaga YMH, Uezono DR. Incidence and prevalence of stroke and its risk factors in the Philippines: a systematic review. *Acta Med Philipp*. 2022 Aug 15;56(14):26-34. doi: 10.47895/amp.vi0.1753.
4. Clinical Practice Guidelines on the Management of Acute Ischemic Stroke and Intracerebral Hemorrhage in the Philippines [Internet]. 2024 [cited 2026 Apr 15]. Available from: <https://www.strokesocietyphilippines.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/CPG2024.pdf>
5. Lanuza PDT, Lukban MCS, Naoe EEL, Ditan ID, Pascual JLR, Collantes MEV. Clinical outcomes of stroke thrombolysis in the Philippine General Hospital: a five-year retrospective study. *Acta Med Philipp*. 2025 Sep 15;59(13):8-15. doi: 10.47895/amp.v59i13.11341. PMID: 41104054; PMCID: PMC12521997.
6. Chao K, Sarker MNI, Ali I, Firdaus RBR, Azman A, Shaed MM. Big data-driven public health policy making: Potential for the healthcare industry. *Heliyon*. 2023 Aug 31;9(9):e19681. doi: 10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e19681. PMID: 37809720; PMCID: PMC10558940.
7. Ong JP, Lam HY, Yacapin CC, Ulitin AR, Zarsuelo MM. Economic evaluation of the WHO elimination strategy for Hepatitis B for the Philippines. *Acta Med Philipp*. 2025 Sep 30;59(14):60-74. doi: 10.47895/amp.v59i14.9571. PMID: 41181285; PMCID: PMC12572874.
8. Dorotan MMC, Estanislao RDF, Sales RKP, Magdaraog MAC, Geroy LSA. Operationalizing the development of the National Unified Health Research Agenda 2017-2022. *Acta Med Philipp*. 2019 Jun 28;53(3):224-8. doi: 10.47895/amp.v53i3.133.
9. Lam HY, Zarsuelo MM, Capeding TPJZ, Silva MEC, Mendoza MAF, Padilla CD. Policy analysis on province-level integration of healthcare system in light of the Universal Health Care Act. *Acta Med Philipp*. 2020 Dec 26;54(6):650-8. doi: 10.47895/amp.v54i6.2608.