**The Role of Health Policy Analysis**

**Introduction**

Health policy analysis is of critical importance when defining the policy-life course concerning different health issues. There has been an increased emphasis on the need to develop effective policies concerning the prevention of obesity among children, adolescents, and adults. For this reason, it is important to understand the significance of policy analysis and how it influences the development and implementation of effective policies. There is a need to understand the major players and actors in the development of health policies. This paper will focus on discussing how obesity can become a critical health issue in the government policy agenda.

**Discussion**

The issue of obesity requires political attention so that it can become a priority in agenda setting. Specifically, obesity has become an epidemic in the society, but there is a need for different advocates to take measures by influencing political elites. Different interest groups can also ensure that obesity becomes one of the critical issues in the political agenda. Policy analysis helps in understanding the processes surrounding policy formulation. The availability of research concerning the causes as well as the adverse effects of obesity and the proper dissemination of results to political advocates can lead to effective policy formulation (Buse, Dickinson, Gilson, & Murray, 2009). There is a need for a diverse range of studies that have focused on understanding the causes and effects of obesity and the most effective intervention strategies. Policy analysis also helps in understanding the drivers and obstacles of policy implementation. Recognizing the drivers that lead to effective implementation of policies is of critical importance in pushing the process forward. On the other hand, policy analysis helps in understanding the obstacles that prevent national and state goals concerning the prevention of obesity.

Various barriers have prevented the successful implementation of policies related to obesity. Undertaking a rigorous policy analysis can empower researchers to understand the barriers that have prevented the successful implementation of obesity prevention policies. It is evident that the United States is yet to achieve the national goals regarding the reduction of obesity prevalence. Understanding the barriers will help in developing proper approaches to enhancing the process of implementation (p. 4). A rigorous policy analysis is a critical tool in health development and can help in ensuring that there are effective policies that promote the prevention and management of obesity. The process can also help in ensuring that politicians and policy makers recognise obesity as an issue that needs addressing urgently. Currently, obesity has received attention from key decision-makers because of its increased prevalence. Additionally, policy analysis has helped in understanding the stakeholders that can support change or that are likely to resist any positive reforms that will lead to positive outcomes (p. 6). For instance, food companies have been reluctant to adopt regulations concerning the proper labelling of food products to empower consumers to make healthier choices.

**Conclusion**

Through policy analysis, it becomes easier to deal with the supporters of the policy as well as the opponents. Policy analysis helps in the development of effective strategies that can help in the mobilisation and management of interest groups to support the process of policy development to prevent obesity. Policy analysis is also beneficial in the evaluation of the outcomes associated with obesity-related policies. Particularly, policy development can help in modifying the implementation process and establishing realistic deadlines in the implementation process. There is a need to utilise policy analysis as a remarkable tool in the in establishing effective policies concerning obesity.

**Reference**

Buse, K., Dickinson, C., Gilson, L., & Murray, S. F. (2009). How can the analysis of power and process in policy-making improve health outcomes? *World Hospitals and Health Services : The Official Journal of the International Hospital Federation*, *45*(1), 4–8. Retrieved from http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19670517