

# Making sense of evidence in management decisions: the role of research-based knowledge on innovation adoption and implementation in health care

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## Plain English summary

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# Plain English summary

## Background and methods

Innovation can improve patient care, but health-care managers' use of evidence when considering change in hospitals is not well understood.

We systematically looked at decisions about technologies available to help fight infections in hospitals. We selected nine NHS hospitals across England of different size and research experience and, through 191 interviews and 27 different technology examples, aimed to find out *which* decisions were made, *who* made these decisions and *how* the decisions were made. We were especially interested to learn about which forms of evidence were used by managers and looked at factors within and outside the hospital that may affect evidence use.

## Findings and conclusion

We found that different professional groups of managers looked for, and used in decisions, different forms of evidence from each other, including research and own experience. For example, nurse managers looked at a wider range of evidence than doctors in management roles. Doctor managers and non-clinical managers were concerned with evidence that helped their own decision-making, whereas nurses were also concerned with providing evidence to others to aid decision-making. Many factors within and outside the hospital helped or hindered the use of evidence. For example, infection outbreaks sometimes highlighted the need for evidence but, at the same time, added a time pressure to make decisions quickly. A lot of existing evidence held centrally in the NHS was not used in actual decision-making but, instead, evidence from suppliers and evidence gathered at the hospital level was used.

This study provides a learning opportunity for how policies intended for system-wide change can be implemented.

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