

DevoManc: The role of health research & innovation



Part 1 - Devolving health and social care innovation(s)

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National or local?

Some lessons and ideas

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The task

Technical efficiency improvement

- More for the same
- The same for less

Allocative efficiency / transformation

- Doing more appropriate work

Restructuring to release costs

Restricting services offered or changing access

This requires

A high quality diagnosis of the problem

Theory of change

Improvement methodology

Technical skills

- Data analysis
- Process redesign

High quality engagement with staff

Local political skills

Question

At what level is this best done?

- National
- Regional
- Local
- Clinical micro-system

How would you make this decision?

Little theory to help

Very little broad theory on the allocation of responsibilities across levels of government.....

.... [even] the just published Handbook on Health System Governance doesn't address these issues

Richard Saltman

National level policy

A few things tend to be always done nationally:

- Fundamental standards
- Technical functions e.g. Blood
- Negotiations with the pharma industry on policy and (usually) pricing
- Public health e.g. tobacco control, alcohol pricing, food hygiene, infectious disease control

Always local

- A few things are never national – but not many
- But national/ local has different meanings:
 - Estonia 1.1 million
 - Denmark 5 million – 5 regions
 - England 53 million - 4 regions, 211 local areas
 - Local government similarly variable

Deciding on levels

Which type of change?

Technical

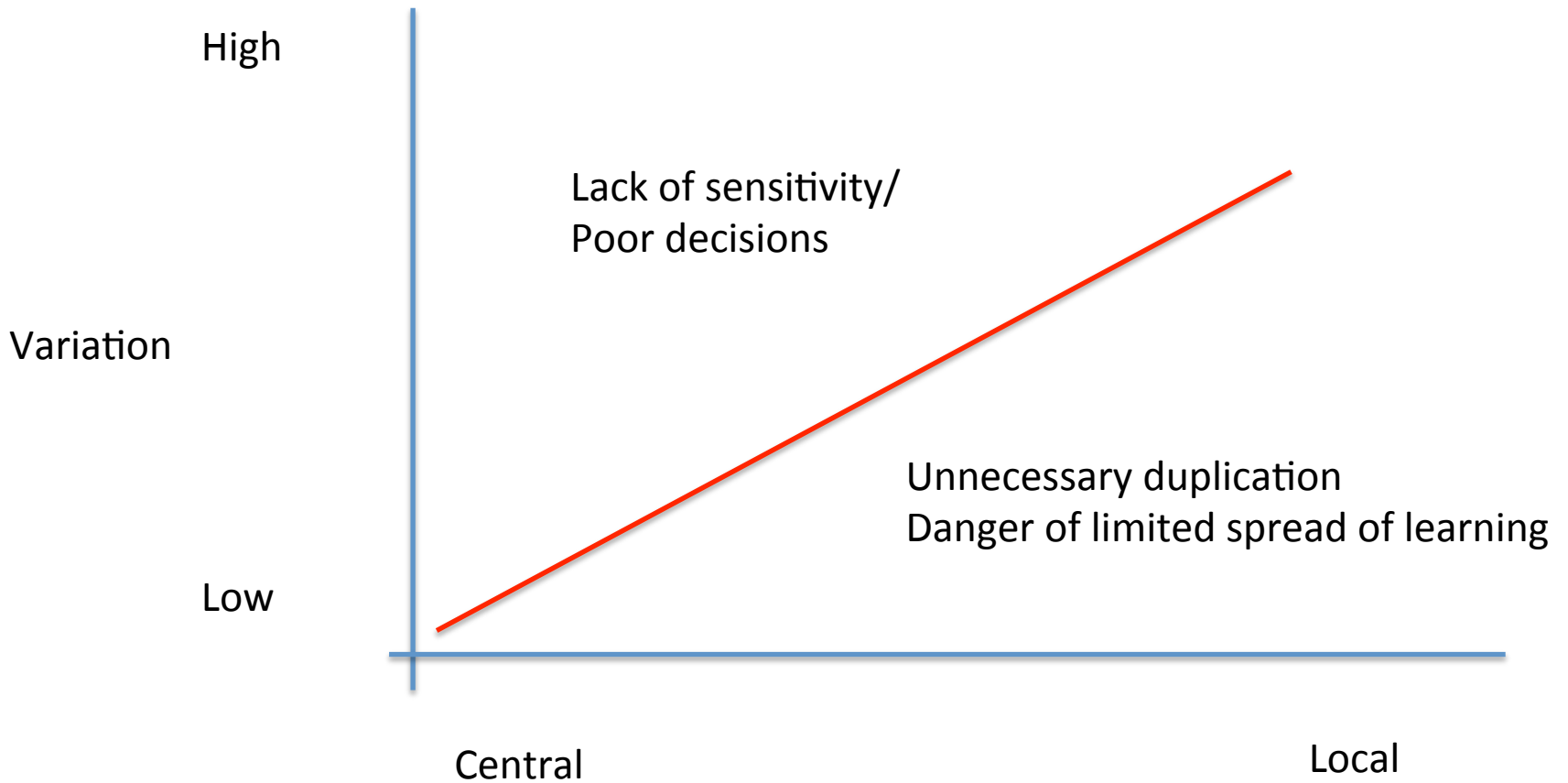
- Problem is well defined
- Solution is known can be found
- Implementation path is clear

Adaptive

- Challenge is complex
- To solve requires transforming long-standing habits and deeply held assumptions and values
- Involves feelings of loss, sacrifice, anxiety, betrayal to values
- Solution requires learning and a new way of thinking, new relationships
- Triggers avoidance of uncomfortable issues

After Prof Ron Heifetz

Locating decisions



Does distance lend enchantment?

Problems

- Loss of context
- Different starting points
- Message integrity
- Less specific policy possible
- Temptation to be helpful
- Vulnerability to lobbying
- Lightning conductor problem

Advantages

- Clarity
- Ability to see connections
- Fewer distractions
- Less specific policy possible
- Mobilise national resources
- Ability to build coalitions

So

National when.....

- Agreement on goals
- And methods
- Variation is not required
- Collective action or coercion is needed

Local...

- We are less sure
- Experiment is needed
- Local legitimacy is important

Lessons about change

- Particular issues about collective approaches
 - Defection
 - Altman's paradox
 - Change in the mandate from above
- Inadequate attention given to:
 - Rules of engagement
 - Dealing with disputes
 - Governance and financial flows
 - Use of agreements to regulate behaviour