Thinking Out Loud
Health Services Research:
Past and Future

Robert H Brook, M.D., Sc.D., F.A.C.P.
RAND Distinguished Chair in Health Care Services
Senior Advisor, RAND Corporation
Professor of Medicine, David Geffen School of Medicine, UCLA
Professor of Health Services, UCLA School of Public Health
Director of Robert Wood Johnson/UCLA Clinical Scholars Program

Context

1. **Will humans exist?**
2. **Will women be immortal?**
3. **Will Los Angeles be under water; will Edmonton be a tropical paradise?**

What Has Health Services Research Done for You?

1. **Health can be measured**
2. **Quality of care can be measured**
3. **The more people pay for care out of their own pocket the less care they use – but they reduce their use of both appropriate and inappropriate care equally**
4. **At the margin reducing the use of medical services has little impact on health**
5. **Reducing health disparities as a function of where you live will require fundamental changes in the environment**

RAND

What Has Health Services Research Done for You?

6. Health professionals respond to money

7. Evidence-based medicine, patient decision-aids, and use of quantitative tools to make better decisions have been developed

8. We have designed health care to be wasteful

9. Depression is the leading cause of morbidity

10. Children need to feel safe to learn

RAND

How Can We Make a Big Difference?

Questions

- **Can We Change the Process of Developing Devices, Drugs, and Other Innovations in Health Care Away From the Status Quo of Introducing Products or Services That Increase Cost at Very Little Health Gain, to a Process That Saves Money or Produces Dramatic Changes in Health?**

Questions, cont'd

- **Can We Develop Methods and Tools That Would Allow Communities to Decide How to Improve the Health of Their Citizens?**

- **Is it Possible to Make Better Trade-offs In Investment In Education, Health Services, or Physical Infrastructure?**

Questions, cont'd

- **Given the Enormous Changes in Demography that Will Occur, How Do We Develop a Fair Contract With the Elderly Regarding Healthcare?**

Questions, cont'd

- **Is It Possible for a Leading Country in the World to Guarantee That People Receive Appropriate Health Care?**

- **Can We Combine Patient and Provider Incentives with Explicit Real Time Measures of Appropriateness of Care?**

RAND

Questions, cont'd

- **Can the Quality Movement Be Changed Into a Value Movement which attempts to Simultaneously Maximize Quality and Affordability?**

RAND

Questions, cont'd

- **How Can We Encourage Communities to Become Full Partners with Professionals In Maintaining the Health of Their Community?**

- **Can New Communications Techniques Be Used to Change or Focus the Distribution of Power Between Health Care Professionals and Communities?**

RAND

Questions, cont'd

- **Can We Develop a Reporting System For the Country, or More Globally, That Measures Progress In Improving Quality, and Defines How Much of Current Morbidity and Mortality Could Be Prevented By Improved Quality, and At What Cost?**

RAND

Questions, cont'd

- **There is Currently an Explosion in Basic Science. This Explosion Will Make it Impossible for Doctors to Practice Medicine Without the Use of Sophisticated Decision Tools. How Can We Quickly Transform Medicine to Ensure that When the Basic Science is Produced it Will Be Used Efficiently and Effectively?**

Contract With

- **People/Community**
- **Patients**
- **Students/Residents/ Faculty**
- **Non-health professional students**

Health Models

- **Models**
  - **Medical**
  - **Public Health**
  - **Social Determinants of Health**

Specific Ideas

1. **All students in the university understand models of health & those models are taught by medical / nursing students**

2. **All students provide 8 hours per month of voluntary service to promote community health**

3. **Health care organizations include community organizations as equal partners**

RAND

Specific Ideas, cont'd

4. **All medical records include in the front pictures of the patient, the nuclear family, the bedroom, and the house if one exists**

5. **All children's medical records contain an explicit tracking system of grades and academic achievement**

6. **Responsibility for modifying lifestyle be shared between community and health care providers. All health care facilities become healthy places and ecologically friendly**

RAND

Specific Ideas, cont'd

7. **Reduction of avoidable hospitalizations become a shared responsibility of community and health care providers**

8. **Appropriateness of care be explicitly assessed prior to care being rendered**

9. **Community agrees to allow their information to be used to improve science and care**

10. **Feedback/Close loops**

RAND

What We Can Do Now

1. **Implement Archimedes**
2. **Use QA Tools and ALCOVE to Measure Quality**
3. **Implement Assessment of Preventability of Death and Whether Death Was a Good Death**
4. **Add Functional Status to Database**

RAND

What We Can Do Now, cont'd

5. **Determine How Much of What a Specialist Does Can Be Replaced By Technology**

6. **Make Everything Transparent – What is the Health Services Researcher Facebook**

7. **Start a National Movement**

8. **Working Together; Do Not Be Afraid of Profit**

RAND