Foresight and policy making:
The Dutch Public Health Foresight Study 2018

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Shaping Our Future in Wales
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Why Foresight studies?

- Future is uncertain but worth/necessary to explore
- To identify societal future challenges
- Anticipating on (undesirable) trends and changes
- To review and assess strategies and policies ("policy making is about the future")
- Promote discussion about future trends to support decision making
From present to future

- Present
- Future
- Scenarios
- Possible futures
- Desirable futures
- Likely future

A, B, C, D

Forecast
Two dimension of uncertainty

● Cognitive uncertainties / limitation of knowledge about the future
  – Economic growth
  – Technological progress
  – Geopolitical changes

● Normative “uncertainties”
  – What do we want to achieve / desire?
  – Different ideas about what we value most

● Normative aspects in the public sector as important as cognitive
Time horizon

Depending on the issue at hand and the purposes

Time Horizon:

- <5 year for current policies
- 5-10 year for current policy makers
- 10-30 year for structural changes
- > 30 year for visionary scenarios
Public Health Foresight Study (PHFS)

Legal basis
● Every 4 years

What?
● Strategic foresight study (horizon 2040)
● Input for national and local public health policy

Available in English
● Website: www.vtv2018.nl/en
The Public Health Policy Cycle in the Netherlands
Approach of Public Health Foresight Study

- **Trendscenario** / Business-as-usual scenario
  - What are we facing in the coming 25 years if current trends continue and now new policies are implemented?
  - Quantitative (a.o. risk factors, disease burden, expenditures) and qualitative (technology, health care demand)

- Major **societal challenges** arising from the Trendscenario
  - Based on survey (1000 citizens, 300 health professionals and 150 students), Policy reports, etc

- **Options for actions**
  - What can we do, and who should do what?

Together with **stakeholders** (policy, practice, research)!
Three major societal future challenges

- High disease burden cardiovascular diseases and cancer
- Independently living older people with dementia and other complex problems
- Mental pressure on teenagers and young adults

Vulnerable groups

- Based on stakeholder consultation
- What? Who?
Some lessons learned...

- Complex issues require an integrative and personal approach
- Technology and restructuring of the living environment provide opportunities
- Different way of working: new roles and skills from policy makers, professionals, researchers and citizens
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