Helping policymakers find a way

SPOTLIGHT ON 2009
INTRODUCTION

At times like these, when decision-making is fraught with uncertainty, we believe RAND Europe can be most helpful. There is often more than one route through the maze. By applying fresh thinking to thorny issues, we can open up new avenues for policymakers. More than ever, sustainable public spending must be based on a disciplined assessment of which initiatives are working and which are ineffective, not what is easy to cut. Tough, potentially controversial decisions need a strong evidence base.

What do we mean by ‘evidence’?

“The truth is rarely pure and never simple.” Oscar Wilde

Policymakers are bombarded with opinions, suggestions and statistics daily. The difficulty is knowing what to trust. Governments routinely measure many outcomes and outputs, but top-line figures often hide more than they reveal. We use multi-method, multidisciplinary approaches to get to the heart of an issue. We review academic and policy literature to understand past experience and emerging trends, and use sociological and qualitative analyses to understand what lies behind the numbers. For example, in a project on translating medical advances into clinical practice we are studying the underlying processes, capabilities, perceptions and incentives that facilitate or block successful change.

For uncertain futures do not suddenly become predictable, but we can shed light on the possible costs and consequences of different options. Our review of interventions to de-radicalise violent extremists looks at the psychological, social and physical factors that underlie a decision to reject violence. We combine these techniques with rigorous quantitative methodologies such as benchmarking, impact assessment and modelling to explore choices in ways that reflect uncertainty and complexity.

What is easy to cut. Tough, potentially controversial decisions need a strong evidence base.

In years to come, will we view 2009 as a year when “the world shifted on its pivot”, as TIME magazine recently said of 1989? The long-term impacts of recent economic upheavals are still uncertain, but undoubtedly policymakers face difficult and complex choices right now.
Making a difference
Our ultimate measure of success is the impact of our research on policy. This year we have highlighted four recent projects which are already helping to shape policy debate. Since policy typically evolves over time, it can be years before we see the effects of our research – here are some examples of RAND Europe research which had impact in 2009:

- In 2003, RAND Europe began a stream of research on the priorities and preferences of patients needing hospital treatment in England. This work informed the ‘Free Choice’ policy introduced in 2008, which allows patients to choose any NHS-funded provider. Currently we are evaluating how patients are responding to choice in practice for the UK Department of Health.

- Our pioneering 2005 work on fraud and error in social security systems resulted in an Error, Fraud and Corruption toolkit to help World Bank staff and client ministries assess and mitigate problems in middle and low-income countries. We are now looking more widely at the governance of social security systems: current work for the World Bank in South-East Asia will be the first time that the governance agenda has been used to assess the effectiveness of such systems.

- RAND Europe was invited to present insights on innovation for the 2008 review of the UK health service led by Lord Darzi. The NHS Innovation Challenge with prizes totalling £20 million was launched in April this year, drawing directly on the ideas and evidence we presented.

Building for the future
Impact is a theme which runs throughout this year’s review, and we took several steps in 2009 to help us increase our future impact. A new Innovation and Technology Policy team will extend our work on research evaluation and strategy formulation. Our outreach programme has been extended to cover Cambridge, Brussels and London, and has been well attended by opinion-formers. We also welcomed two new Trustees to our Board. RAND Europe is fortunate to have support from such a distinguished group, and their comments in this year’s Spotlight illustrate the diversity and reach of our work. Building on our core values of objectivity and quality, and the RAND Corporation’s heritage of rigorous, relevant policy research, I am confident that we can achieve our vision of being Europe’s most trusted institute for policy research and ideas.

Jonathan Grant
President, RAND Europe
jgrant@rand.org
Every year, governments and charities invest billions in health research. Advocates point to the huge potential benefits of new life-saving or life-enhancing interventions for patients – but from a hard economic perspective, there has been little analysis of the return on this investment for society as whole.

In partnership with the Health Economics Research Group (HERG) at Brunel University and the Office of Health Economics, RAND Europe helped to develop groundbreaking new methodologies to produce the first detailed quantification of the health and GDP impact of medical research in the UK. Even by cautious estimates, the real economic returns are substantial. The team found that £2 billion of public and charitable investment in cardiovascular disease (CVD) research generated £69 billion in direct health benefits, less £16 billion of incremental care delivery costs. Taking all factors together, the annual return in health gains from UK research on CVD came to 9% – this return would be still greater if time lags from research to impact could be reduced. Wider economic gains were estimated to generate a further 30%, totalling a 39% return in perpetuity. The equivalent figure for mental health research was 37%.

The team estimated research spending between 1975 and 1992 by piecing together spend data from the major funders. Clinical guidelines were used to quantify the time lag between research and impact, and estimate the proportion of gains attributable to UK research. To quantify health impacts, the team used a ‘bottom-up’ approach, looking at the effect of specific interventions on different patient groups over a 20-year period. Health gains were valued using quality adjusted life years (QALYs) gained. The work was funded by the UK Medical Research Council, the Wellcome Trust and the Academy of Medical Sciences. It has attracted interest from funders and policymakers and was cited in a House of Lords debate.

Security policy is a growing concern worldwide, but the debate is often polarised between those seeking to address security threats and those concerned with safeguarding civil liberties and privacy. The issue for policymakers is the extent to which the general public is willing to make trade-offs between the two in practice.

Most information on individual liberty, privacy and security decisions is provided through opinion surveys. However, standard surveys capture only uni-dimensional ‘yes/no’ views, which encourage over-simplistic responses. As a self-funded public benefit initiative, RAND Europe used a ‘stated preference’ approach to clarify the real trade-offs that individuals might make between security, liberty or privacy when faced with alternatives. The project also sought to quantify the monetary value that people ascribe to different benefits.

We found that people are willing to forgo some liberty and privacy, and even willing to pay extra for certain security infrastructure, but there are clear areas of concern. In some instances, governments would need to subsidise people to accept this intrusion on their civil liberties up to a maximum of £19 (averaged across respondents).

The research examined three scenarios in which privacy and liberty might conflict with security: travelling on the UK rail network; attending a major public event; and applying for a passport. We found that rail travellers were not only comfortable with the idea of camera surveillance, but willing to pay considerably more for CCTV cameras that automatically identify faces. Whether travelling or at an event, people would prefer to pass through an X-ray archway instead of a pat-down or bag search. People were also willing to pay an extra £7 for the perceived additional security of including fingerprint data in their passport. However, there was clear concern about sharing biometric data such as DNA, or sharing any confidential passport data with other government departments, EU countries or – especially – the private sector. People in the UK are also wary of introducing armed police or military in public venues.
Illicit drug use results in massive health, social and law enforcement costs throughout the European Union. EU Member States invest heavily in programmes to disrupt trafficking and reduce drug availability, but a major difficulty is finding reliable ways to measure their impact on an illegal and shifting market of unknown size.

Most European countries collect information on drug seizures and arrests, although the data collected varies between countries. To inform these efforts, the European Commission (EC) asked RAND Europe to develop indicators that could enhance understanding of illicit drug markets, and give better insights into the effects of supply-reduction efforts. Drawing on expert interviews, case studies and forensic results, literature review and RAND’s previous work on drug markets and drug-related crime, we concluded that, rather than simply measuring drug volumes seized or street price, a key indicator should be the purity-adjusted street price.

This is because if law enforcement agencies successfully reduce supply in a region, drug dealers seeking to maintain profits face a choice: raise prices or dilute the product they sell. Since raw (non-adjusted) prices have halved since 1990, this might suggest that supply-reduction efforts have limited effect. However, our analysis of transaction-level data to generate purity-adjusted prices shows that product purity fluctuates dramatically. RAND Europe has recommended that the EC and Member States statistically analyse purity data from drug seizures, systematically collect price data from users and introduce consistent information-recording policies. Combined with other key indicators and information, this would help law enforcement agencies to track the impact of supply-reduction efforts in fast-changing drug markets, and could provide useful intelligence on sources, trafficking routes and seasonality of supply. In the longer term, standardised definitions of drug trafficking offences across all Member States, coupled with a pan-European database for drug seizure information, could improve our understanding of trans-European drug trafficking and criminal activity.

HEALTHY CARERS

Health work is often physically and psychologically demanding, increasing the risk of injury, infection or illness. Yet a recent review for the UK Department of Health revealed that many NHS staff do not believe that the NHS takes a positive interest in their health, safety and wellbeing.

What do we gain by improving the health of health workers?

10.3m working days lost to the NHS in England each year through sickness absence

71% proportion of nurses and midwives who have reported for work despite feeling ill [1]

£555m annual cost saving of reducing NHS sickness absence by one-third

The NHS Health and Wellbeing Review was commissioned to see how investment in staff health and wellbeing could help the NHS meet its goals of quality, innovation, productivity and prevention, and improve patient care. Working in partnership with The Work Foundation and Aston Business School, RAND Europe conducted an in-depth analysis of NHS staff wellbeing and workplace support for health. We found that NHS workers have some of the highest levels of sickness absence in the public sector – 10.7 days on average – but also high levels of ‘presenteeism’, where staff attend work despite feeling ill. Musculoskeletal problems, stress and mental health issues were the most common concerns. The Review concluded that NHS hospitals should embed workplace safety and staff wellbeing into daily practices and provide better support for staff with health problems, such as early intervention services and ‘fast-track’ care. The financial benefits of these improvements would far exceed the costs – a realistic one-third reduction in sickness absence would gain the NHS 3.4 million working days per year. In addition, patient care and satisfaction should improve: local healthcare providers with low rates of sickness absence nearly always scored better on measures of patient satisfaction and quality of care.

RAND Europe reviewed information on international best practice, conducted a staff perception survey with more than 11,000 responses, ran staff focus groups, workshops and other events, and assessed more than 200 responses to a call for evidence. We also benchmarked the findings against other European healthcare information. The UK Secretary of State for Health responded to the Review in November. The recommendations will be included in the NHS Operational Plan for 2010.

[1] Qualified nurses and midwives in 18-30 age group.
MAKING A DIFFERENCE

“Our mission is to help improve policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis. RAND Europe’s external Trustees provide essential independent guidance, informed by diverse backgrounds and accomplishments. Their experience in both the public and private sectors is invaluable.”

James A. Thomson (Chairman, RAND Europe Board of Trustees, CEO and President of the RAND Corporation) and Jonathan Grant (Trustee, RAND Europe)

Philippa Foster Back OBE
Director, Institute of Business Ethics
I have interests in a variety of areas so RAND Europe’s work ticks a lot of boxes for me – it’s a mutually reinforcing relationship. Their approach is very compatible with the way we do things here. The thinking power behind the research is impressive, they build intellectual capital through the people they attract and their work environment promotes cross-fertilisation to enhance the sum of the whole. They are also good at translating their ideas for business and government.

Professor Laurens Jan Brinkhorst
Former Deputy Minister of the Netherlands
RAND’s great strength is the thoroughness of their research. They are more than a think-tank in the conventional sense. I would like to help RAND Europe achieve a greater level of recognition in Europe outside the UK and increase the range of their European clients. The quality is something special, and the access to US information is a big advantage. There is definitely a place for that quality in the European context.

Lord Crisp KCB
Independent Crossbench member of the House of Lords
There’s an important distinction between research which explores an interesting idea and research that provides practical input to decision-making. RAND Europe fills the second niche by doing high-quality research on real policy issues. They are also open to working in partnership with others, which is important in areas such as healthcare where profound changes in thinking are taking place. I’d like to help RAND Europe become as well-known and well-regarded here as the RAND Corporation is in the US.

Sir John Boyd KCMG
Retired Master, Churchill College, Cambridge. Former British Ambassador to Japan
As a foreign service officer, RAND Corporation’s work was well known to me – for example, their distinguished work on China strategy in the 1960s. I like RAND’s clarity, intellectual rigour, objectivity and focus on problems coming over the horizon. RAND Europe can make a real contribution, applying tried and tested analytic techniques to major societal challenges that affect us in Europe and across the Atlantic, and where no one country has the solution.
Sir Lawrence Freedman  
KCMG  
Professor of War Studies and Vice Principal, King’s College London  
As an historian of the Cold War and the nuclear age, I knew of RAND’s critical role in developing new ways of thinking about strategy. I became aware of their work on social and environmental issues as Head of the School of Social Science and Public Policy at King’s. The RAND approach is all about public benefit, using sophisticated methodologies to look differently at difficult issues, and RAND Europe has a similar pioneering ethos. With Europe’s public sector facing turbulent times, there is an even greater need for clear thinking and analysis.

Gunvor Kronman  
CEO, Hanaholmen – Cultural Cooperation Center for Finland and Sweden  
I’ve been impressed by the way RAND develops solutions, particularly in emerging areas. They are closer to the realities of societal decision-making than other, more academic research bodies. I also like their cross-sectoral approach. I serve on public, private and third sector boards in Finland, so I see how different perspectives can inform each other. There is potential to create a ‘third way’ that combines private sector approaches with public policy perspectives, which RAND Europe is well-placed to support.

The Right Honourable Michael Portillo  
Former Cabinet Minister, UK  
I’ve spent most of my career in politics, wrestling with public policy issues, so I’m particularly interested in RAND Europe’s work in education, health and welfare. As a former Secretary of State for Defence, I also appreciate RAND’s heritage in defence research and its current global work – not just systems but logistics and manpower issues. Participating in the ‘Politics Aside’ event last year highlighted RAND’s scope for me: the quality and diversity of people involved in international policy dialogue was exceptional.

Professor Frank Kelly FRS  
Master, Christ’s College, Cambridge  
My background is applied mathematics, particularly modelling networks. I came across RAND Europe when I was advising the UK Department for Transport, and I was impressed by their careful evidence-based approach. They shed light on debates that are often rather emotional or polemical – for example, whether new roads generate traffic – and provide a framework for rational thought. I’d like to see them continue to extend the range of clients, sectors and issues they tackle within Europe.

The Honorable Philip Lader  
Chairman, WPP Group. Former US Ambassador to the Court of St James’s. Trustee, RAND Corporation  
RAND is the world’s pre-eminent source of objective policy analysis, with deep resources in healthcare, education, transportation, civil justice and countless other areas. I have been the beneficiary – as client, contributor and Trustee – of the remarkable work done by RAND’s exceptional staff. RAND Europe is an important component of our strategy. As a member of both the US and European Boards, I am impressed by the breadth and high quality of RAND Europe work as well as its entrepreneurial approach and strong growth.
EXCHANGING IDEAS

RAND Europe’s annual outreach events in Brussels, Cambridge and London bring together thought-leaders and decisionmakers from many fields who believe in the importance of evidence-based policymaking. We aim to create stimulating and informal opportunities to share ideas on issues of potential benefit to the public interest.

CAMBRIDGE, CHRIST’S COLLEGE
From our Cambridge base, we provide research to inform policymaking across Europe. As a city, Cambridge combines a long tradition of innovative thinking and scientific discovery with a growing reputation as a hub for new technology development and entrepreneurial growth. On 20 July 2009, we held our inaugural outreach event in Cambridge in the beautiful Fellows’ Garden of Christ’s College. With local opinion-formers present from business, government, NGOs and the voluntary sector, the event highlighted the potential for Cambridge to become an important hub for policy research.

CAMBRIDGE, ROBINSON COLLEGE
In November, we co-sponsored the first cross-party debate on UK science policy involving all three mainstream British political parties. RAND Europe President Jonathan Grant joined Lord Drayson, Minister for Science and Innovation, Conservative spokesman Adam Afriyie and the Liberal Democrats’ Dr Evan Harris on the panel chaired by Professor Ian Leslie from Cambridge University. The three party spokesmen all stressed the central role of science to the economy. A lively discussion covered many current topics, including research funding, independent scientific advice and libel law.
CARL BILD T, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF SWEDEN. MR BILD T WAS THE FIRST EUROPEAN TRUSTEE OF RAND CORPORATION FROM 2002 TO 2006, AND FORMER ADVISER TO RAND EUROPE

BRUSSELS, THE RESIDENCE PALACE
One year after our Brussels office opening, we held our second annual reception on 8 October 2009 to recognise our commitment to Brussels-based work. The event at the historic Residence Palace was attended by guests from the European Commission, EU and private and charitable sectors. The keynote speaker was Carl Bildt, current foreign minister and former prime minister of Sweden, the country holding the Presidency of the EU at the time of the event. He provided a wide-ranging and thought-provoking analysis of the EU’s potential to provide leadership and stability both within and around the region and on the global stage.

LONDON, ONE GREAT GEORGE STREET, WESTMINSTER
Our first event of 2009 was the annual meeting of RAND Europe’s Board of Trustees, followed by a Trustees’ Reception for some 70 guests and staff. The event brought together a diverse group of researchers, academics, government officials and business leaders to meet Trustees and RAND Europe staff. Chairman James Thomson welcomed the guests and highlighted a number of RAND Europe initiatives and areas of research, while Trustees took the opportunity to thank clients and friends for their support. We intend to hold the Trustees’ Reception as a regular annual event.
OUR ORGANISATION

Requests for RAND Europe research continue to grow. We are investing in new people, space and capabilities to ensure that we meet both current and future expectations.

NEW SPACE

Positioning for future growth
In 2008, we opened our new office in Brussels. This year, continuing growth in staff numbers meant that our Cambridge premises were becoming uncomfortably cramped.

We knew we needed more space to accommodate new staff and planned initiatives. Rather than move to a new office, with all the associated upheaval, we expanded onto an additional floor in our Cambridge building. Since the RAND Europe working style relies on collaboration and cross-fertilisation, we had to find a way to bring the two floors together. After some months of dust and noise, we now have a new central staircase so the flow of debate and ideas can continue unchecked.

NEW STAFF

Ellen Nolte
Director of Health and Healthcare Team
Ellen joined us in May from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, where she was senior lecturer. Her background is in comparative health policy and health systems research, and she has a particular interest in innovative approaches linking health systems and population health outcomes. Ellen is also an honorary senior research fellow at the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies.

Martin Roland CBE
Chair in Health Services Research, University of Cambridge
Professor Roland is one of our senior advisers on health and healthcare. In April he took up the new Chair in health services research within the School of Clinical Medicine. This is a joint initiative between the University and RAND Europe to develop a centre of excellence and innovation in health services research. Professor Roland is an acknowledged leader in the field, and received a CBE in 2003 for services to medicine.
We also welcome two new operational directors, both of whom have international experience. Together they will ensure that our management processes are in good shape to support RAND Europe’s future growth.

**Iain Campbell**  
*Associate Director Human Resources*  
Iain joined us in March from Prometric, the leading global provider of comprehensive testing and assessment services, where he was head of HR for Europe and Asia. As RAND Europe grows and diversifies, Iain’s skills and knowledge will be vital to help us attract, inspire and develop exceptional people who share our values.

**Ian McEwan**  
*Finance and Commercial Director*  
Ian came to RAND Europe following 10 years heading the finance teams for growing technology businesses, including ProQuest, an internet publisher of academic databases, and Zinwave, a telecoms infrastructure business. Prior to that, Ian spent 10 years with Unilever. Ian’s extensive experience of building international businesses will be invaluable.

**NEW TEAM**

**Innovation & Technology Policy**

Innovation lies at the heart of our efforts to change our world for the better. Innovation is far more than invention: it is the way we develop and apply ideas to achieve new benefits, and encompasses processes and practices as well as products.

RAND Europe’s previous research on innovation policy has looked particularly at the effects of scientific research. In 2006, the English Department of Health funded a RAND Europe policy research unit to examine health research policy. We have also extended our thinking into other areas, such as innovation procurement and the use of prizes to stimulate innovation. The new Innovation & Technology Policy team will allow us to bring different strands together across a range of areas, while building distinctive expertise.

Team Director Joanna Chataway will continue as Co-Director of the ESRC INNOGEN Research Centre for innovation in the life sciences. Joanna’s own work focuses on promoting innovation to serve the needs of developing countries. “Stimulating innovation is important, and it’s vital to convert potential into products and processes that make a practical difference to society,” comments Joanna. “At RAND, the challenge will be to translate theory into policy. Many issues span sectors, such as ICT, user-innovation and capability-building. I hope to work closely with other RAND teams to explore policy crossovers, including those between research in industrially developing and developed country contexts.”

**Joanna Chataway**  
*Director of Innovation & Technology Policy*
CLIENTS & RESEARCH PARTNERS

Public sector

UK
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- Defence Science and Technology Laboratory
- Department for Transport
- Department of Health
- Higher Education Funding Council for England
- Home Office
- Information Commissioner’s Office
- Intellectual Property Office
- Local Better Regulation Office
- Medical Research Council
- Ministry of Defence
- National Audit Office
- National Institute for Health Research Service Delivery and Organisation programme
- National Policing Improvement Agency
- National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts
- Transport for London

European Commission Directorates-General
- Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
- Health and Consumers
- Information Society and Media
- Justice, Freedom and Security
- Research

Other
- The Amari Diwan, Qatar
- Defence Materiel Organisation, AU
- European Defence Agency
- European Network and Information Security Agency
- Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, NL
- Ministère de la Défense, FR
- Ministerie van Defensie, NL
- Ministerie van Economische Zaken, NL
- Ministerie van Justitie, NL
- Ministerio de Sanidad y Políticas Sociales, ES
- OECD
- Onafhankelijke Post en Telecom Autoriteit (OPTA)
- Transport Data Centre, AU
- Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, NL
- World Bank

Academic
- Brunel University
- Danmarks Tekniske Universitet
- London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
- Personal Social Services Research Unit
- University of Cambridge
- University of Kent

Foundations, professional bodies and not-for-profit organisations
- Airey Neave Trust
- Arthritis Research Campaign
- British Academy
- European Research Consortium for Informatics and Mathematics
- General Medical Council
- General Teaching Council for England
- Graham Boeckh Foundation
- The Health Foundation
- Institute for Government
- The King’s Fund
- New Philanthropy Capital
- Office of Health Economics
- Papworth Trust
- Trimbos Institute
- The Work Foundation

Private sector
- Abbott
- Accent
- Atkins
- British Telecom
- BUPA
- Capgemini
- Deloitte
- Ernst and Young
- GHK Consulting
- Halcrow
- Lloyds TSB Insurance
- Mott MacDonald
- Munich Re
- Royal Mail
- Roche
- Schering-Plough
- Scott Wilson Group
- Significance
- Valore Impresa
- WSP Development and Transport
SELECTED PUBLICATIONS 2009

RAND Europe reports can be accessed at: http://www.rand.org/randeurope/publications

- 2015: A connected and diversified Europe: eIDM vision paper TR-513-EC
- The affordability of alcoholic beverages in the European Union: Understanding the link between alcohol affordability, consumption and harms TR-689-EC
- Analysis to support the impact assessment of the European Commission’s smoke-free initiatives TR-646-EC
- Building a digital Europe: Lessons for the delivery of secure pan-European e-Government TR-597-EC
- Care to care? Assessing the challenges of integrating migrant women into Europe’s labour force RB-9430
- Embracing the future: Embedding digital repositories in higher education institutions RB-9411
- Evaluating grant peer review in the health sciences: A review of the literature TR-742-DH
- Health and wellbeing at work in the United Kingdom TR-758-DH
- Innovation procurement: Part of the solution DB-580-DH
- International comparison of ten medical regulatory systems: Egypt, Germany, Greece, India, Italy, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, South Africa and Spain TR-691-GMC
- Issues and ideas on innovation: Informing the NHS Next Stage Review DB-554-DH
- Issues in estimating the economic cost of drug abuse in consuming nations TR-709-EC
- Language matters: The supply and demand for UK born and educated academic researchers with skills in languages other than English TR-657-BA
- Mapping the impact: Exploring the payback of arthritis research MG-862-ARC
- Medical research: What’s it worth? Estimating the economic benefits from medical research in the UK EP-20080010
- The Netherlands F-16 comparative analysis: An evaluation of the process TR-656-MOD/NL
- Review of the European Data Protection Directive TR-710-ICO
- Room for improvement: Strong patient safety systems could limit health, social and economic harms from medical error RB-9472
- Security, at what cost? Quantifying people’s trade-offs across liberty, privacy and security TR-664 (forthcoming)
- Study on the requirements and options for Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) application in healthcare TR-608/1-EC
- Tackling violent crime: Findings from regional workshops with 12 crime and disorder reduction partnerships TR-698-NAO
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