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Managing the evaluation of multi-level multi-site programs

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Complex interventions are now of interest to evaluation theorists. These can be described in terms of being multi-level and multi-site. For example, many policy driven interventions aim to make a difference at the system level, on institutions within that system, and providers within institutions. The question arises as to how one can determine the worth of a given policy that aims to make an impact at these levels. This is an issue for those charged with managing evaluations with this aim of evaluating policy.

This paper considers these issues with particular reference to an evaluation of Mind Matters, a national mental health curriculum designed for schools. The paper also explores the relationships between key stakeholders in such an evaluation; such as program funders, those commissioned to undertake evaluation studies of the curriculum, and the roles for a management committee designed to oversee these evaluation studies.