Intro

Chapter contents.

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What is causal mapping? What are its strengths and weaknesses? How does a causal map differ from a systems diagram? This chapter has some answers.

PAGES IN THIS CHAPTER

Why causal mapping ?

Causal mapping for outsiders

Mind mapping and causal mapping

A causal map consists of multiple links where a link from X to Y means someone believes X influences Y

Causal mapping helps make sense of many causal claims from many sources

Causal mapping starts from what people actually say

Causal mapping has been used for over 50 years in many disciplines

Do use causal mapping when you have large numbers of claims from multiple sources, and more open research questions

Do not use causal mapping if you have limited data or want precise models or specific causal links

Causal mapping approaches differ in application, construction, analysis and how they deal with multiple sources

Causal mappers believe that humans are good at thinking in terms of causal nuggets

Causal mappers believe that humans are the best detectors of causation

Causal mapping is part of the qualitative branch of the new causal revolution

Wise as folk

Causal mapping differs from related approaches - epistemic, less predictive, unsophisticated, many links, many sources, unclear boundaries

Causal mapping has three tasks – gathering, coding and analysing data

Task 1 – Gathering narrative data

Task 2 – Coding causal claims as causal qualitative data analysis

Task 3 – Analysing data, Answering questions

Strong evidence for a link is not evidence of a strong link

Causal mapping is easier if we are realist about causation

Causal mapping is good at coping with messiness and complexity

Granularity, generalisability and chunking are coding problems for causal mapping too