

The Power of Expertise?
Politicians-Bureaucrats Interactions, National Budget
Transparency and the Impact of the Israeli Finance
Ministry on Health Policy

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The literature points to the great power of the bureaucracy and its impact on processes of public policy design. This article presents the balance of power between different players in the Israeli health policy arena, while focusing on the interactions between politicians and bureaucrats, and transparency regarding the national budget. The article points to the Finance Ministry bureaucrats as the most dominant and powerful players – though their power is not as absolute as it might seem. The conduct of the Ministry of Finance bureaucrats and their extensive use of the Economy Arrangements Law (*khoq hahesterim*) limit the participation and influence of other players in designing policy. This contributes to a severe lack of trust between the various players in the Israeli health care policy arena. In such an environment of mistrust, and under structural conditions of centralization, the other players tend to find alternative solutions for promoting the public policies that they seek. Sometimes, they even choose to cooperate with the Finance Ministry bureaucrats.

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