

Review of the Challenges for Health Technology Assessment in the World

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Dear Editor,

Health technology assessment (HTA) plays an important role in health care systems decision-making (1).

Many countries have contributed to improve of allocative efficiency in their health care systems with use the result of assessments in health systems decision-making (2).

The purpose of this letter is to show the challenges related to health technology assessment, that most of countries have faced with when launching and developing an HTA systems and to investigate the literature related to HTA.

1. Lack of Human Resources to Conduct HTA

Inability and insufficiency in recruitment and retention of human resources are among this (3).

Need for specialized training for staff in an environment where rapid technological advancement was also identified as a significant challenge, especially in areas such as meta-analysis, health economics and budget impact analysis. Studies show that investing in training is very important, but it can be expensive (4).

2. Designing Process for Stakeholder Involvement

One of the most important challenges is designing an efficient process for participating stakeholders, firstly patient (4).

Lack of awareness of stakeholders about goals of HTA is also one of the challenges (5). Another discussion is how to effectively engage representatives from the health systems, industry, policy makers and charitable foundation that donate technologies to hospitals (4).

3. Apply Research Finding to Conclusion in HTA Reports Evidence-based Decision Making

There are several barriers for using HTA result, including the lack of awareness of stakeholders about HTA

knowledges and its application, the inadequacy of HTA reports, and its policies with other departments. While there is access to high quality evidence, there is no sufficient guarantee for the use of health technology assessment in decision making. Even in places where assessment have been made by national authorities, obtained evidence is usually not considered or will not run (4).

Some studies on the impact of health technology assessment on health policy have shown that only half of health technology assessment reports affect the decision-making process. However aim of HTA has been to improve the decisions of health managers and policy makers to improve quality, efficiency and justice (6).

Many studies on HTA challenges have identified validity of evidence and data as a major challenge.

There is no centralized database among public health care institutions. There is limited information for economic evaluation. Report also show that the quality of evidence is decline (4).

4. Shifting Political Context

Tension between federal government and states or provinces within a country can causes challenges to governance, funding, and operations of health systems organizations. Political instability and the rapid shift of policy makers and political change are also preventing to conduct HTA (4).

Insufficiency of health policy at the macro level because of multiplicity of decision making is the same category items (7).

There is no standard HTA approach. Although they often use the same method, but there is a difference depending on the limited resources.

Differences such as evaluation approaches, selection of comparison groups and determination of uncertainty in existing evidence (8).



Challenges for implementing HTA in studies referred to were (9).

Lack of access to information HTA;
 Technical and complex format of HTA reports;
 Data quality;
 Superficiality.

A series of challenges in the implementation of HTA at the policy level that is mentioned in the Drummond study: unavailability and the absence of health technology assessment finding, different view and uncertainty (8).

Another challenge for HTA is that the government and industrial resources invest finitely in it. Some agencies have even reported that the aim of HTA is to limit innovation (4).

5. Increasing Demand for HTA and Pressure for Rapid Assessments

Agencies indicated that they were facing increasing demand for HTA in their territory and legal authority often without increased resources. They noted that this demand often beyond the ability of agencies to supply the HTA. Agencies stated that this demand often come from the government and may be the result of increasing number of expensive medicines technologies being launched (4).

6. Translating HTA Into Policy and Practice

The implementation of recommendation from an HTA is an important challenge. This challenge express how to effectively translate HTA recommendation into policy and practice (4).

Knowledge translation in institution and among researchers, seems to have not yet been institionalized (3).

Studies have identified barriers to this challenge, including: lack of communication and trust between researcher and policymaker, conflict related to finances and poor quality of evidence (9).

Insufficient financial resourcing, poor financial planning and lack of funding are also important challenges.

Resource constraints one of the most agreed challenges between health systems and agencies. This challenge is especially exacerbated by the development and demand for new technologies (4).

To address these challenges identified in this paper requires for comprehensive participation of all stakeholder involve in this areas.

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