

Economic evaluation in the Philippines before the era of mandatory health technology assessment: A systematic review

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Background

With the passage of the Universal Health Care Law in 2019, health technology assessment (HTA) shall be required prior to any national insurance reimbursement; however, little is known about the historical capacity of the Philippines to perform economic evaluation (EE), a key HTA component.

Objective

We aimed to describe the scope and methods of EEs done in the Philippines.

Methods

A PRISMA-compliant search was carried out in several databases such as MEDLINE, Embase, and CINAHL to include all relevant publications until January 2020. We included full EEs conducted in the local setting published in peer-reviewed journals. Full-text reviews performed by two independent researchers, reconciling differences as needed. Eligible studies underwent assessment of eligibility, and quality appraisal using the Consolidated Health Economic Evaluation Reporting Standards (CHEERS) checklist. We then extracted relevant data focusing on the methods done.

Results

The database search yielded 596 initial results, of which 59 papers were considered for full text review after removing duplicates and inclusion/exclusion criteria assessment. Ultimately, 25 articles were identified eligible for data extraction: 14 (56%) cost-utility analyses (CUA), 5 (20%) cost-effectiveness analyses (CEA), 3 (12%) cost-benefit analyses, and 3 (12%) mixed CUA and CEA. Key findings were: 1) the dearth of economic evaluations done exclusively by local institutions despite the increase of EEs in the last five years; 2) the strong focus on vaccines and public health programs over drugs; and 3) the apparent absence of consensus on methodological parameters, reporting of findings, and cost-outcome ratios interpretation.

Conclusion

Anticipating the huge demand to be brought by the upcoming mandatory HTA, we recommend strengthening local research capacity and crafting standardized guidelines on the conduct and reporting of such studies to improve the homogeneity, quality, and quantity of economic evaluations in the Philippines.