

## BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVE

- While health technology assessment (HTA) plays a significant role in health care decision-making internationally, its role in US-based decision-making is unclear. We aimed to assess how frequently US commercial health plans reference HTAs in their specialty drug coverage policies.

## METHODS

- We used the Tufts Medical Center Specialty Drug Evidence and Coverage (SPEC) database and reviewed the evidence cited in the publicly available specialty drug coverage policies of 17 large US commercial health plans.
- We assessed the frequency of HTA citations and categorized them based on (1) country of origin, (2) publishing organization, (3) inclusion of cost-effectiveness considerations, (4) disease category, and (5) whether the assessment included orphan drugs.
- Data were current in August 2023.

## RESULTS

- HTAs accounted for 450 of the 14,033 citations in our analysis (3.2%).
- Citation frequency varied across health plans (0.1% to 7.4%), with one plan accounting for most HTA citations (57.1%).
- Ex-US HTAs were cited more frequently than US-based HTAs (65.3%), however this was largely driven by one health plan (Figure 1).

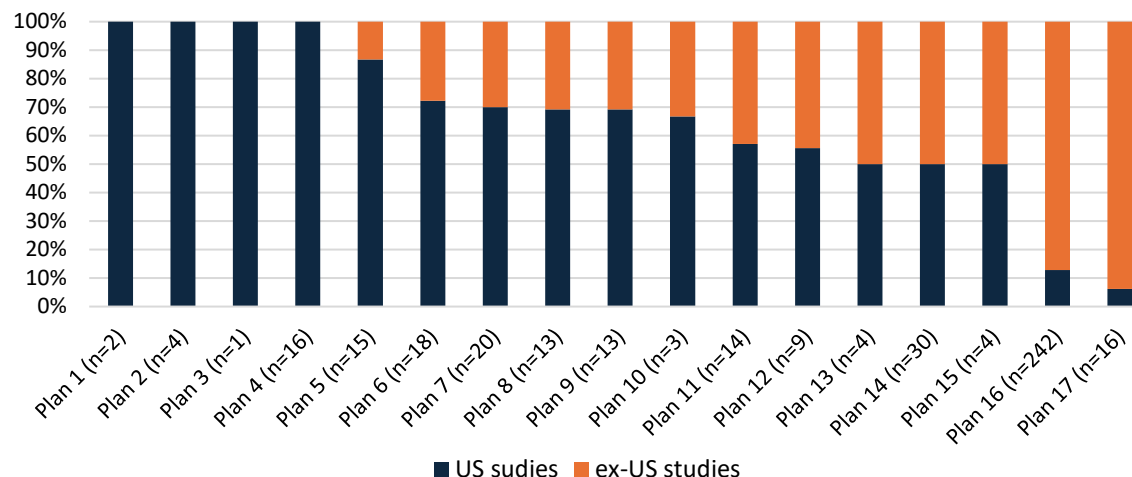


Figure 1. US and ex-US HTA citations by health plan

- The UK-based National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) was cited most often (28.9%), followed by the US-based Institute for Clinical and Economic Review (ICER; 16.7%) and Canada's Drug Agency (CDA-AMC; 12.7%).
- Most HTAs (78.7%) addressed cost-effectiveness.
- HTAs most often addressed neurological disorders (23.3%), followed by musculoskeletal disorders (20.2%) and cancers (13.8%); 40.6% of cited HTAs addressed treatments for orphan diseases.

## CONCLUSIONS

- HTAs represented a small proportion of the evidence cited by health plans in specialty drug coverage decisions, with significant variation in citation frequency across plans.
- Both US and ex-US HTAs were cited, and most addressed cost-effectiveness.
- Our analysis only captured evidence cited in publicly available coverage policies; health plans may use HTAs in other contexts, such as during price negotiations, or may consider them without explicitly citing them in coverage policies.
- These findings suggest that health plans may consider the information provided by HTAs when formulating coverage policies.

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## CONTACT

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