

The utilization of qualitative evidence synthesis in Brazil’s Public Health System: qualitative analysis

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Background




The management of health technologies is carried out by the Brazilian Health Regulatory Agency (Anvisa), the National Committee for Health Technology Incorporation (Conitec) and the National Agency of Supplementary Health (ANS). Conitec in the public sector and ANS in the private sector are responsible for evaluation, incorporation, dissemination, use and exclusion of technologies in the health sytem(1).

The approach in the health sector to help in the decision-making process is the use of evidence-based researches(2). In this scenario, another type of evidence research is rising: the use of qualitative evidence. There are several types of qualitative research being used, especially the use of qualitative evidence, such as the use of GRADE-CERQual approach that comprises a transparent method to access the confidence in the findings of a qualitative research(3).


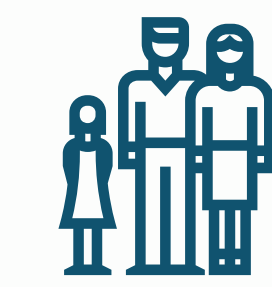


Objective

The aim of this study is to analyze the utilization of qualitative evidence synthesis in Conitec in Brazilian Public Health System (SUS).

Methods

-  A review of all qualitative evidence syntheses available on the Conitec’s website was conducted to evaluate how the evidence is being used and their role in decision-making in Brazil's public health system.
-  We visited the website of Conitec (<https://www.gov.br/conitec/pt-br/centrais-de-conteudo/biblioteca-virtual/sintese-de-evidencia-qualitativa>) in January 2025.
-  All published contents available on the Conitec website were collected and a table with the content was done.

Results

-  Seven qualitative evidence syntheses were identified on the Conitec website, with the first published in November 2022 and the most recent in November 2024.
-  All publications had the objective to understand the perspective and experiences of patients, families, and caregivers about the treatment of one of the following conditions: systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), familial amyloidotic polyneuropathy (FAP), mucopolysaccharidoses (MPS) types I and II, diabetic retinopathy (RD), cystic fibrosis (CF) and fracture of the neck of femur (FNF).
-  The first publication was demanded for the incorporation of a medication to SLE, which was ultimately not approved for inclusion in the SUS. Four syntheses were conducted to update the clinical and therapeutic national protocol (PTC for Portuguese) for the disease (MPS types I and II, FAP and FNF).
-  Two syntheses supported PTC updates following the incorporation of medications by Conitec that introduced advancements in treatment options available in the public system in Brazil.

Date	Illness	Qualitative Evidence Synthesis Title	Objective	Medication	Incorporation?
2022	Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE)	Experiences and perspectives on out-of-hospital drug treatment for SLE	This qualitative evidence synthesis (QES) aimed to address the experience of patients, family members and caregivers (formal or informal) with the drug treatment for SLE in an out-of-hospital context.	Belimumabbe	No
2023	Familial Amyloid Polyneuropathy (FAP)	Perceptions on the treatment of FAP	Review process of the Clinical Protocol and Therapeutic Guidelines for FAP from scientific findings on the experience of illness and perception of treatment by patients and family members.	Not applicable (N/A)	N/A
2023	Mucopolysaccharido sis type II (MPS)	Perceptions on the treatment of MPS type II	Update of the Clinical Protocol and Therapeutic Guidelines of MPS type II from scientific findings on the experience of illness and perception of treatment by patients and family members	N/A	N/A
2023	Mucopolysaccharido sis type I (MPS)	Perceptions on the treatment of MPS type I	It aims to contribute to the process of updating the Clinical Protocol and Therapeutic Guidelines of MPS type I from scientific findings on the experience of illness and perception of treatment by patients and family members	N/A	N/A
2024	Diabetic retinopathy (DR)	Perceptions about the treatment of diabetic retinopathy	It aims to contribute to the process of updating the Clinical Protocol and Therapeutic Guidelines of DR from scientific findings on the experience of illness and perception of treatment by patients and family members considering the recent incorporation of the biodegradable dexamethasone implant as a therapeutic option to treat diabetic macular edema	dexamethasone biodegradable implant (DEXi)	Yes
2024	Cystic Fibrosis (CF)	Perceptions about Cystic Fibrosis treatment	It aims to contribute to the process of updating the Clinical Protocol and Therapeutic Guidelines from scientific findings on the perception and experience of the treatment of the disease, with emphasis on triple therapy (elexacaftor/tezacaftor/ivacaftor) incorporated in the SUS	(elexacaftor/tezacaftor/ivacaftor)	Yes
2024	Femur neck fracture	Perceptions about the treatment of Fracture of the Neck of the Femur in elderly people	It aims to contribute to the process of updating the Brazilian Guidelines for the Treatment of Fracture of the Neck of the Femur in the Elderly from scientific findings on the experience of illness and perception of treatment by patients, family members and informal caregivers	N/A	N/A

Conclusion

The utilization of qualitative evidence synthesis in Brazil is new and is gaining space in the public health system. Now, the only fields that utilizes this type of evidence is mostly to update the available protocols for treatments with only one publication prior the incorporation of a medication. This indicates that this field is yet to be explored in submissions of medications to be analyzed in the health technology assessments in Brazil

References

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