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INTRODUCTION

HTA is a multidisciplinary process that benefits from the inclusion of diverse stakeholder perspectives. Integrating patient viewpoints is essential to reflect the values and needs of users. However, the systematic inclusion of these perspectives remains a challenge in South America.

OBJECTIVE

The objective was to identify, describe, and analyze the most developed mechanisms of patient and public participation in HTA in South America, highlighting best practices, challenges, and opportunities for strengthening inclusive and transparent decision-making.

METHOD

South America has 12 independent countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay, and Venezuela. In addition, the territory includes French Guiana, which is an overseas department of France.

A review of the official websites of Ministries of Health and HTA institutions the region, as well as HTA Network of the Americas (RedETSA), was conducted in May 2025. RedETSA includes 21 member countries represented by 41 institutions.

Documents addressing public and patient participation in HTA among South American countries were identified and analyzed. The most advanced experiences were observed in Argentina, and Brazil.

RESULTS

CONETEC

ARGENTINA: Social participation in CONETEC, established in 2018, is structured through a formal **Patient Forum**, which serves as a consultative body where patients, caregivers, and users share experiences and perspectives on health technologies. Participation occurs via open calls that invite individuals and patient organizations to provide insights on living with specific conditions, treatment benefits and risks, and preferences. These **contributions** are integrated with scientific evidence in HTA processes, including **prioritization** of technologies to be evaluated. Additionally, patient organizations can elect representatives to join CONETEC for 24-month terms.

Conitec

BRAZIL: Social participation in Conitec, created in 2011, is ensured through multiple mechanisms. All topics under evaluation are subject to **public consultations**, enabling citizens to share opinions, experiences, and technical information via electronic forms. These contributions are reviewed and can influence decisions. Public hearings and workshops further provide spaces for dialogue with civil society. The **Patient Perspective** tool collects insights from patients and caregivers about their experiences with diseases and treatments, ensuring that user voices complement scientific evidence during the Conitec meetings. A significant advance came in 2025 by law with the introduction of a **rotational voting seat** for civil society organizations within the Committee.



CONCLUSIONS

In the past 15 years, some South American countries have advanced in promoting social participation in Health Technology Assessment (HTA) through mechanisms like patient testimonies and public consultations. Despite these efforts, challenges remain—such as capacity-building, accessible communication, and ensuring real influence in decision-making—highlighting the need for stronger institutionalization and clearer links between HTA and technology incorporation.

Experiences from Argentina and Brazil show the importance of systematizing participation to achieve patient-centered decisions and more equitable health systems, a goal that other countries in the region should also pursue.

REFERENCES

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