NICE National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

HTA255

NICE Reduces Waiting Times for Technology Adoption: Early Value Assessment as a Pragmatic Approach to Adopting Promising Innovation in the NHS

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Introduction

The NHS faces ongoing challenges in adopting innovative technologies quickly enough to meet rising demand and workforce pressures. Traditional health technology assessments can take several months, delaying access to tools that could improve patient flow, reduce waiting times, and support more efficient or remote care. To address this, NICE developed the Early Value Assessment (EVA) programme, a faster and more pragmatic approach to evaluating and recommending promising innovations that can strengthen triage, speed up diagnosis, and improve how care is delivered. EVA allows early NHS use of these technologies while further data are collected, ensuring that adoption keeps pace with innovation and that patients benefit sooner.

Objectives

Describe how NICE's EVA programme helps adopt technologies that have the potential to reduce waiting times or provide remote care, faster than the current formal evaluation process, which can take up to 38 weeks.

Methods

NICE selects high-priority technologies for EVA when they show strong early potential. Unlike full NICE guidance, EVAs do not require a complete upfront evidence base since committees can review existing evidence and mandate evidence generation to address identified gaps. The EVA team suggests how to collect this data, using UK sources and real-world data, giving technology developers an evidence generation plan to guide their evidence collection while allowing conditional NHS use. This streamlined process speeds adoption, ensuring timely use of the valuable technologies in the NHS while stronger evidence is collected. This approach ensures delivery of healthcare innovation that can improve patient outcomes.

Results

To date, NICE has recommended 116 technologies for early NHS adoption through EVA, including several globally recognised AI tools. Some examples include:

- Virtual wards
- Virtual reality for agoraphobia
- Robot assisted surgeries
- AI to help identify fractures
- AI to help identify skin cancer
- AI to guide radiotherapy treatment
- Digital support for mental health (psychosis, eating disorders, depression and anxiety)
- Diagnostic tool for genetic-guided antibiotic prescriptions to reduce childhood hearing loss

The successful integration of these technologies shows the effectiveness of the EVA programme in facilitating impactful and timely advancements in medical care. It is estimated that EVA topics deliver guidance 50% faster by halving the evaluation process to 18 weeks.

Conclusion

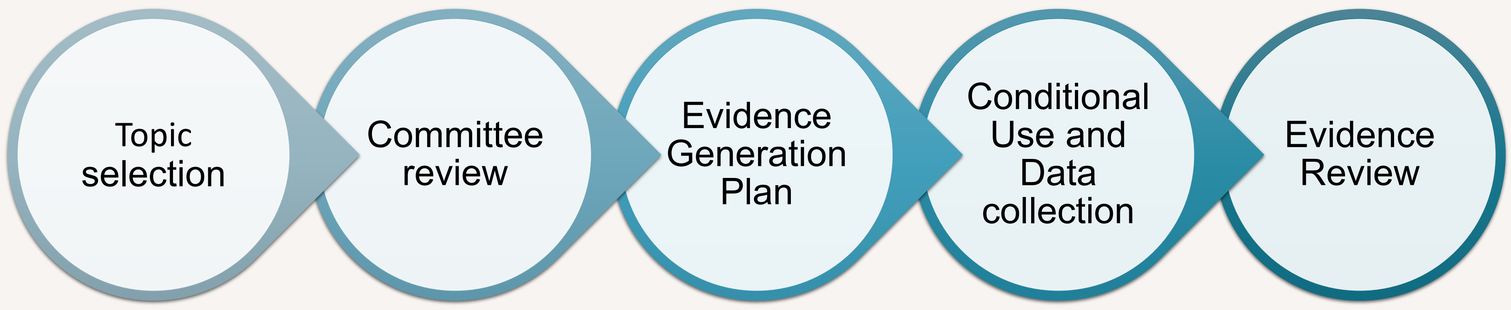
The Early Value Assessment programme demonstrates a new way to evaluate and recommend innovative healthcare technologies that can benefit patients and the NHS sooner.

This approach shows how NICE can support conditional adoption while evidence is generated, rather than waiting for complete data before use. It ensures that patients and the healthcare system can access the benefits of the latest technologies without delay, while maintaining a focus on real-world evidence and safety.

By supporting faster adoption and continuous evidence generation, EVA promotes safe innovation and smarter data collection. This approach helps the NHS keep up with change, improve care and help patients to access the care they need more quickly.

Digital imaging technology evaluated through NICE's Early Value Assessment, supporting faster and more accurate diagnosis in the NHS.

EVA process from topic selection to adoption while evidence is generated



References

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