

HTA269

Are we leaving no one behind?

Health technology assessment as a pathway to social justice

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Background

Health inequality refers to differences in health statuses/outcomes among people. Health inequity occurs due to unjust and systematic factors. Both relate to low socio-economic development and reduced social justice. As a result, many global efforts aim to reduce health inequality/inequity. For example, improving access to quality healthcare and essential medicines is a key objective of the Sustainable Development Goals. Health Technology Assessment (HTA) has been recognized by international health organizations as a potential mean to advance health equality/equity. This research aimed to identify HTA appraisal frameworks of high-income/middle-income countries (HICs/MICs) to assess whether considerations of health equality/equity are included as core principles of the HTA process.

Methods

First, we selected Europe as a region in which most HICs have established HTA entities, and Latin America (LatAm) and Asia as regions in which HICs and MICs are in the process of establishing HTA entities. Within these, we selected 5 Western and 5 Northern Europe, 5 LatAm and 5 Asian countries with established formal HTA entities. We reviewed the HTA appraisal frameworks for the 15 countries and identified those in which equality/equity were considered as part of the decision-making criteria. Second, we reviewed initiatives by the Institute for Clinical and Economic Review (ICER) and the Centers of Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in the USA aiming to improve equality/equity.

Results

First, we found that HTA agencies in HICs and MICs are slowly advancing towards equality/equity goals. Out of the HTA entities identified, only 8 have established equality/equity as part of the decision-making criteria. Most (62.5%) of these corresponded to the European region, and, within this region, to the Northern region. Among these 8 HTA entities, equality/equity criteria was mostly (75.0%) observed during the prioritization stage of the HTA process.

