Reporting on ethics in HTA: Methods, results and interpretation

Introduction to Ethics in HTA – HTAi 2017

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3 topics to address:

1. Guidelines re: ethics for HTA?

2. Reporting on ethics issues in HTA:
   A. Method
   B. Results

3. Presenting the interpretation of the results
1. Guidelines re: ethics for HTA – for whom?

• Those familiar with HTA but not with ethics in HTA

• Those evaluating the quality of a SR including an ethics component
  – E.g. updating an SR from another country

• Those implementing the findings of an SR containing an ethics component
1. Guidelines re: ethics for HTA – benefits

- Help to structure the analysis (thus, readability)
- Increase transparency (thus, reproducibility, transferability)
- Consistency in terminology
- Improve communication (ethicist/agency/decision-makers)
- Facilitate quality assessment of the analysis
1. Guidelines re: ethics for HTA – are there any?

SR of methodological guidelines for ethics in HTA:
- 43 conceptual frameworks and/or guidelines
- Various jurisdictions/agencies
- Variety of methods
- Various purposes (identification of ethics issues, QA, etc)

Take home message: Resources exist to help you.

2. A few points to keep in mind when reporting on ethical issues in HTA

• Transparency
  – Perspective adopted
  – Value conflicts

• Framework
  – Which one adopted, why

• Usefulness of the output
  – What do the decision-makers want/need?

• Context-sensitivity
  – Socio-cultural values, political ideologies, values underpinning the health system, etc.
2. Reporting on methods: key steps in doing a systematic review of ethical issues in HTA

1. Review question
2. Inclusion/exclusion criteria
3. Evidence searching
4. Data extraction
5. Quality assessment
6. Reporting on the results  (more shortly)
7. Interpretation of results (more shortly)

(References: Sofaer and Strech 2012; McCullough et al 2007; Hofmann et al 2014; adapted)
2. Reporting the results: Example 1


• SR of ethical issues related to ASCT; uses B. Hofmann’s framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension/Question</th>
<th>Number of publications with related arguments (N = 102)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moral issues</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1 What are the morally relevant consequences of the implementation of the technology?</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 Does the implementation or use of the technology challenge patient autonomy?</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3 Does the technology violate or interfere with basic human rights in any way?</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4 Does the technology challenge human integrity?</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Reporting the results: Example 2


• **Question:**
  – [P] In patients with mental disorders
  – [I] is use of concealed medications in food or drink,
  – [C] rather than prescribing medications in the usual way or forcibly administering them,
  – [O] ethically justifiable?

• Narrative discussion of included 7 publications + table of “critical analysis”

• N.B. did not assign their findings to a framework (e.g. B.Hofmann’s, principlist, etc.)
2. Reporting the results: Example 2 cont’d

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1 Critical Analysis of Papers on Concealed Medications</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patient Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Griffith &amp; Bell, 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treloar, Philpot, &amp; Beats, 2001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harkness, 2001</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
3. Interpretation of results

**Issues to consider:**
- Arguments/issues identified: listing vs weighing
- Evidence gaps?
- Main ethical disagreements identified
- Linkage of findings to context
  - values of the health system
  - socio-cultural values
  - relevant stakeholder groups
  - political context
3. Interpretation of results

**Approach to interpreting the results:**

- E.g., 10 key ethical issues were identified in the literature.
- Main disagreement was between arguments that [...] and arguments that [...].
- The following 2 arguments are the most relevant to our health system:
  - Arg 1 [describe & clarify relevance to context]
  - Arg 2 [describe & clarify relevance to context]
- Value preference A supports adopting the position following from arg 1.
- Value preference B supports adopting the position following from arg 2.
GRAZIE TANTE (Italian) / THANKS HEAPS (Australian) / THANK YOU VERY MUCH (Queen’s English)

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