Introduction to Health Technology Assessment (HTA)

- Health care systems
- What is Health Technology Assessment?
- How can patients* get involved?
- Who will help patients get involved in HTA?

*Patients = those who have the condition being studied, or non-professional carers/care-givers, or patient organisations or self-help groups
Our health systems

• People are living longer, with more long-term conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and HIV infection

• New treatments and medical procedures are available, but may be costly

• Annual healthcare budgets are fixed
Difficult decisions

• Do new treatments and procedures add value compared to current treatment?

• If we invest in a new treatment there is an “opportunity cost” - we must take investment away from somewhere else in the system

• How do we decide what the priorities are?
Health Technology Assessment

HTA is the systematic evaluation of the clinical effectiveness and/or cost effectiveness and/or social and ethical impact of a health technology on the lives of patients and the health care system.

Ref: www.htai.org
Health Technology Assessment

Assessments take international evidence about the new technology compared with the best standard of care used in the local healthcare context to determine added value.

The main purpose of HTA is to inform health care policy makers about:
- Whether a health technology should be used
- How best to use it
- Which patients will benefit most from it

Ref: www.htai.org
Health technologies

• A “health technology” is any intervention that may be used to promote health, to prevent, diagnose or treat disease, or for rehabilitation or long-term care

• This includes educational programmes, vaccines, diagnostics, medicines, surgical procedures, devices, screening programmes, organisation of health care etc…
HTA and decision making

HTA:

1. Assessment: critical review of scientific evidence
2. Appraisal: value judgements about evidence and a range of expert (and patient) opinions

⇒ Decision-making about whether the technology is made available in the healthcare system (country, region, hospital) and its level of reimbursement
HTA and decision making

• HTA can be considered as a bridge between scientific evidence and decision-making

• Patients’ views can light up the HTA bridge to help make sure decision-making is rational
Patients and HTA

• Patients bring real-life experience

• Living with an illness
  – ‘No one knows better what it is like to live with an illness day in, day out than those doing this - patients.’

• A technology
  – Their needs and preferences, benefits and unwanted effects

Understanding HTA. Health Equality Europe. 2008
Patient Evidence

Describing burden of illness

- Nature of illness (chronic, common, rare, life threatening, etc)
- Impact of illness daily life (home, work, social activities,…)
- Psychological and social issues (stigma, exclusion, mental wellbeing,…)
- The most difficult aspects of the illness
Patient Evidence
Impacts of Technology

• How current treatments are taken and issues arising – side effects, alteration of dosing,…

• How easily technology fits into daily life

• Outcomes from a treatment that would be most valued by patients, e.g.
  – relief of symptoms to allow return to work, ability to dress;
  – fewer visits to hospital

Understanding HTA. Health Equality Europe. 2008
How can patients’ perspectives in HTA be a route to robust evidence and fair deliberation?

- HTA is a scientific process
- Patients and carers can contribute to HTA:
  1. By providing EVIDENCE about their experiences and preferences
  2. Through PARTICIPATION in the HTA process

1. EVIDENCE about patients’ perspectives

• Gather robust evidence about a range of patients’ views on the illness and existing and new health technologies
  – Clearly structured
  – Providing facts, not emotion
  – Showing sources, methods, assumptions, findings and limitations
Gathering patients’ experiences

• Quantitative
  - Survey/questionnaires
  - Review of health records
  - Review of helpline questions

• Qualitative Evidence
  - Patient stories (in person, videos)
  - Social networking

• Qualitative research
  - Interviews, focus groups,..

• Building an evidence base

Themes

My experiences
2. PARTICIPATION in the HTA process

At every stage:
• *Prior to HTA to help design studies*
• Suggesting topics for HTA
• Scoping what should be assessed in an HTA
• Submitting evidence
• Participating as a patient expert on an HTA committee
• Providing comments on draft reports
• Producing patient friendly summaries of HTA
• Dissemination/communication
• *Evaluating uptake of HTA recommendations*
Health Technology Assessment International
Interest Group - Patient/Citizen Involvement in HTA

• Website: glossary, Understanding HTA Guide, resources
• Email discussion list and ebulletins
• Working Groups:
  ➢ Patient Involvement and Education
  ➢ Methods and Impact
  ➢ Citizen and Community perspectives
• Reduced HTAi subscriptions for patients
• Grants for patients to attend annual HTAi conference
• Join the Interest Group for free!

http://www.htai.org/index.php?id=545
Patients developing HTA

• Engage with those running clinical studies to ensure they include outcomes that are important to patients

• Get involved in qualitative research

• Work with HTA Agencies to develop their processes for engaging patients so that patients can help demonstrate the value of a new technology

• Engage with politicians to ensure that robust HTA systems lead to rational and consistent decisions by healthcare payers

• Encourage collaboration among stakeholders to ensure rapid access to technologies that demonstrate value
HTA and You!

- HTA is used to help health systems make investment decisions
- Patients and carers have important perspectives that can contribute to HTA
- Patient evidence should include clear facts about experience and views
- Patients and carers may be included in the HTA process at all stages
- Find out what happens in your local HTA process. Ask how you can be involved!

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