



## Universal Health Care in the Asia Region: Overcoming the Barriers using HTA and Real World Data

Reflections on the 2017 HTAi Asia Policy Forum  
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**Dr. Sean Tunis**  
President, HTAi

HTAi is proud to have convened the fifth Asia Policy Forum in Beijing, China. I personally attended and was thrilled to see such great interaction between the public and private organizations represented at the meeting. The Policy Forum series really do provide a unique environment in which key stakeholders can meet to discuss hot topics of HTA on 'neutral ground'.

This year saw great participation and support from the local agency, the China National Health and Research Development Center. We enjoyed a tour of a local hospital before the Forum and learnt lots about the local context, supplemented by presentations from key Chinese ministers. We look forward to further discussions with our HTA colleagues in Asia regarding ways in which members of HTAi can contribute to the further development of HTA in Asia.

**Professor Brendon Kearney**  
Chair, HTAi Asia Policy Forum

Universal health care (UHC) leads to good health, improved educational outcomes and workforce productivity, promoting long-term economic development. However, healthcare systems in the Asian region are experiencing huge pressures and are striving to achieve UHC. With this in mind, the overarching theme of the HTAi Asia Policy Forum (APF) was: 'Universal Health Care in the Asia Region: Overcoming the Barriers using HTA and Real World Data (RWD)'.

The HTAi APF convened 44 senior representatives from HTA agencies and industry from Asia. Through a mixture of keynote presentations, including from senior Chinese officials, and guided group discussions, APF members spent two days grappling with the topic. HTA and access to RWD were identified as essential tools to be used in achieving the goal of UHC; and this should be encouraged. However, issues such as transparency and accountability of HTA, as well as trust and collaboration between the public and private sectors, are important concerns which need to be addressed in order to progress this goal.



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## Overcoming the barriers to UHC with HTA - can HTA help?

HTA is only one priority-setting tool, and countries in Asia must first define healthcare priorities before they can conduct HTA on whole pathways, rather than on single technologies in isolation. Additionally, an incremental cost-effectiveness ratio (ICER) is not the only decision-making tool; Asian social values, patient experiences and context should be taken into account, along with capacity building and patient education.

The ultimate goal of HTA is to improve timely access to cost-effective technologies; it is not simply a cost-containment tool. There is an increasing and widespread use of HTA in the Asia region; it is important to ensure that the methodologies are standardized, with transparent prioritization for adding technologies to benefit packages in the UHC setting.

## The use of RWD in the Asia Region

A survey of HTA agencies and industry highlighted a surprising disconnect between what RWD agencies have and what industry is aware of and can access. A lack of trust and collaboration between agencies and industry in the Asia region, has resulted in industry being uncertain as to what data is required.

Countries also have conservative approaches to RWD access with privacy, legal, ethical and custodial concerns around public health database linkage. A code of ethics and common practice between government, agencies and industry, and guidelines on provision and collection of RWD, are needed.

### Actions:

1. Standardization of HTA methodology for the prioritization of technologies in the Asia region
2. HTAi are in the process of developing definitions for real world data (RWD) and real world evidence (RWE) to include in the HTA [glossary](#)
3. Development of a catalogue of the public and private data available in the Asia region
4. Development of a policy statement that agencies can use to approach the release of data

