



Title The Annual Report of the NHS Health Technology Assessment Programme 1999

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The 6th report of the NHS Health Technology Assessment Programme was just released and contains a useful summary of its activities under the former directorship of Sir Miles Irving, who recently retired. The new Chair of the Standing Group on Health Technology is Professor Kent Woods, Professor of Therapeutics at the University of Leicester, who will continue the development of the Programme.

Over 7 600 potential research topics have been submitted to the Programme for consideration. Tables 1 and 2 summarize the actions taken on these proposals. The report also summarizes the present situation regarding the 389 topics that have advanced to a competitive tender. The report lists all work commissioned thus far and presents executive summaries of the reports published during the current year (Health Technology Assessment 1998; 2: 10-20, 1999; 3: 1-16).

The range of technologies examined is broad: for example, molecular genetic diagnosis of Down's syndrome, stents for abdominal aortic aneurysms, screening for prostate cancer, telemedicine, and the use of laxatives in the elderly.

All parties interested in health technology assessment should read and contemplate the content of this extensive report, and also visit the NCCHTA website at: www.hta.nhsweb.nhs.uk

Table 1 NHS HTA Programme since 1993

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Number of topics identified	1300	400	400	400	1800	1350
Shortlisted by panels	91	64	60	66	60	65
Prioritized	56	49	42	54	44	42
Number of funded projects	76	51	33	47	22	4
Draft reports	21	10	7	2	1	1
Monographs published	32	13	1	-	1	-

Table 2 Commissioning workload of the HTA Programme 1993 - 1998 (Systematic reviews only)

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Topics-Areas advertized	39	20	17	23	17	21
Suggested outlines	428	189	105	112	79	115
Full proposals	125	30	31	49	28	42
HTA Board approved	50	27	17	22	16	3

Written by Prof. Lars Werkö, former Chair of INAHTA, 1995-1996