



Title	An Assessment of The Impact of NHS Health Technology Assessment Program
Agency	NETSCC, HTA, NIHR Evaluation and Trials Coordinating Centre Alpha House, University of Southampton Science Park, Southampton, SO16 7NS, United Kingdom; Tel: +44 2380 595 586, Fax: +44 2380 595 639; hta@soton.ac.uk, www.hta.ac.uk
Reference	Volume 11.53. ISSN 1366-5278. www.nchta.org/project/1440.asp

Aim

To determine: 1) how the impact of the NHS HTA program should be measured and the strengths and weaknesses of the models available; 2) the impact of the first 10 years of the NHS HTA program (1993-2003) and factors associated with HTA research that have made an impact.

Conclusions and results

The literature review showed the payback framework to be the best method for assessing the impact of research programs. The HTA program was shown to have had considerable impact in terms of knowledge generation and perceived impact on policy and to some extent on practice. Each project generated almost 3 peer-reviewed publications and numerous presentations. 85% of principal investigators considered their project had, or would have, an effect on policy and 64% that it had changed behavior, or would do so. This high impact may have resulted partly from the HTA program's objectives, in that topics tend to be of relevance to the NHS and have policy customers. The required use of scientific methods, notably systematic reviews and trials, coupled with strict peer reviewing, may have helped projects publish in high-quality, peer-reviewed journals. Factors associated with impact include: existence of policy customer (eg, NICE) and the track record of the research team.

Recommendations

This study concluded that the HTA program has had considerable impact in commissioning high-quality scientific research on topics that matter to the NHS. Recommendations were made on how the HTA program could improve, and on how the payback framework might be developed.

Methods

The literature review included assessments of research programs, investigating the strengths and weaknesses of the main approaches, identifying models of research impact, and providing recommendations for future

work. To evaluate the impact of the first 10 years we used a multiple methods approach (Hanney et al, 2003b), which triangulated NCCHTA documentation, a survey of lead researchers, and a sample of detailed case studies using interviews and documentary analysis.

Further research/reviews required

Further research was recommended on case studies, a rolling *impact* program, and on improved methods for *scoring* impact.