



INAHTA at HTAi 2005

INAHTA and INAHTA member agencies are well represented at the second Annual Meeting of HTAi in Rome, June 2005. Three parallel sessions and two pre-conference workshops are managed or co-organized by INAHTA.

International Organizations and Health Technologies

With five international organizations presenting their profiles and practices, this session will address issues of potential conflict and division of work. The panel will discuss a future scenario that will best meet the interests of the consumers.

Industry Relations With HTA Agencies

The panel session will include a high-level overview of the information and survey results gathered by the INAHTA Working Group on Industry Relations, followed by brief presentations from INAHTA agencies about how they work with industry.

New Surgical Technology, Which Evidence to Use?

This session will provide an overview of the deficiencies in evidence surrounding new surgical technologies and how to manage this. Changed approaches to RCTs need to be considered and poor-level evidence adapted. Traditional high-level evidence, while desirable, needs supplementation if useful guidance is to be given to surgeons, patients, and health authorities. These challenges will be outlined and approaches to deal with them presented.

Integrating ethics into HTA

The INAHTA Board has asked a working group consisting of representatives from member organizations to suggest a procedure by which to include ethical and social issues in HTAs. The terms of reference given to the group were broad, with the goal to develop procedures that could be used by all members. The panel will present some of the ideas that have been in the forefront during the work, drawing on the experiences of ethicists and of individuals with practical experiences of working with HTA.



The INAHTA exhibition booth presents the Network, activities, and member agencies.

EUNetHTA

INAHTA is an intended collaborating partner in the effort to prepare and submit a project proposal to the EU DG SANCO's Public Health Programme aimed at developing an operational, sustainable European Network for Health Technology Assessment (HTA) - EUNetHTA.

The proposal consists of 1) the development of an organizational framework for a sustainable European Network for HTA and 2) the development of practical tools to fill into this framework to ensure timely and effective production, dissemination, and transfer of HTA results into useful policy advice to the Member States and EU.

The general strategic objective of the Network is to connect public national HTA agencies, research institutions, and health ministries, enabling an effective exchange of information and support to policy decisions by the Member States.

Read more at www.eunethta.net



INAHTA News

News From the INAHTA Secretariat

The Network undertakes many new initiatives and activities including proceedings from Working Groups efforts. INAHTA's news @lert service has attracted many subscribers. Over 600 healthcare and HTA professionals, healthcare managers, and representatives from pharmaceutical companies receive an e-mail notification when new content is added to INAHTA's website. About 10 000 unique visitors have visited the new website, since it was launched in May 2004, and the members-only section has about 500 users.

Over 350 INAHTA briefs, classified into 17 categories, are available on the website; many linked to the full text report, HTA Database record, and completed HTA Checklist.

INAHTA Working Groups

INAHTA currently has six groups working throughout the year.

External Communication – Communication has top priority, to further enhance the flow of information within INAHTA, to promote INAHTA, and to emphasize the importance of HTA for quality decisions in providing health care to target groups. INAHTA's overall policy group on External Communication will develop strategic plans and discuss further development within existing collaborative efforts. INAHTA is already involved in several efforts; one representative follows the proceedings from the OECD Health Project, the chair participates in the HTAi Board, INAHTA is a partner of WHO Health Evidence Network, and the intended partner of the EUNetHTA project proposal. In 2006, INAHTA will apply to become a WHO Collaborating Centre.

Industry Relations aims to create awareness of INAHTA among industry. This is becoming more important due to INAHTA's growing relationships with global organizations and the need for increased knowledge and use of HTA findings. This group discusses what INAHTA can gain from a relationship with industry. The update of the 2002 survey on industry relations, conducted in January 2005, will be presented at a session during the HTAi annual meeting (page 1). Strict rules of engagement are currently under development. INAHTA is also involved in the HTAi Policy Forum to discuss possibilities of HTA agency–industry collaboration.

Internal Communication checks internal and external

communication procedures and structures, identifies preferences, problems and barriers, and works out solutions and improvements. The group is now focusing on how to improve the flow of information within the network and enhance the products that INAHTA has developed over the years. A workshop on INAHTA products is taking place in Rome at the HTAi Conference in June 2005.

Impact of HTA has developed a framework for reporting specifically on HTA impact. A pilot version was in place in 2003, and the final revised and improved framework will be in place later this year. INAHTA members are requested to provide information on HTAs for which there are indications of impact on decisions by government at the regional, national, or international level. Positive, interim, and negative indications of impact are all welcome. The group will continue discussions eg, on how to involve patients in HTA.

The Quality Assurance agreed that linking HTA reports in the HTA Database to a checklist is a step towards providing an opportunity to obtain information on the purpose of the assessment, on the methods used, assumptions made, and conclusions reached, and on how to make better use of each other's reports. Completed HTA Checklists are now available on www.inahta.org and linked from an INAHTA Brief when available. In May 2005, the group conducted a survey on completing and validating already completed HTA Checklists. Group members have reviewed evidence tables in INAHTA members' HTA reports to describe the status and to propose a common standard for the way studies should be presented in evidence tables. Discussions will also continue on rapid assessments in HTA in 2005

Education and Training activities now involve finalizing a glossary of HTA terms together with the Information Resources Group in HTAi. The group agreed to develop of a "framework" for the twinning concept, which could be used by INAHTA members who are considering twinning with, or adopting, another agency. AHFMR has produced a paper on this topic describing the twinning process. This will form a base for further discussions.

The Ethical Issues group is finalizing a report on handling ethical issues in HTA. Terms of reference given to the group were broad and were aimed at developing procedures that could be used by all members in the future. Future steps and proceedings will follow (page 1).

This is AVALIA-T

Galician Agency for Health Technology Assessment



Dr. Teresa Cerdá Mota
Director, AVALIA-T

"Our challenge is to support decision makers (health professionals and patients) by giving them the best available scientific evidence on health technology and healthcare systems. We also contribute to evaluation, monitoring changes in current practice, and health outcomes."

History and structure

The Galician Agency for Health Technology Assessment (avalia-t) was established in 1999 by the Galician Regional Government. Avalia-t is a unit of the Department of Health and has a director and multidisciplinary staff.

Mission

Our main goal is to contribute toward improving the health of the Galician population. We support the decision-making process by providing the best available evidence on the efficacy, effectiveness, safety, and equity of specific health technologies. We also elaborate on clinical practice guidelines and support relevant assessment studies.

How AVALIA-T works

Systematic reviews are our main product. Basically, we work at the request of directive entities of the Galician Department of Health. However, we can also work via our own initiative, for other entities, or for private organizations. Avalia-t plays a relevant role in supporting primary studies and systematic reviews on health technologies at the national level. All of our HTA reports include internal and external reviews and are always based on the best available scientific evidence. We are starting to work in the area of clinical practice guidelines for the Public Galician Health Care System.

Dissemination activities

All of our HTA assessment reports are free of charge and can be downloaded from our webpage <http://avalia-t.sergas.es>. When we finish a report we send notification by e-mail to all professionals associated with the technology assessed and also to the managers of health services. Some of our reports are published in scientific journals or institutional publications. All technical reports can be obtained upon request.

Current projects

- Clinical usefulness of the endoscopic capsule
- Congenital hypothyroidism: clinical practice guidelines
- Inguinal hernia: clinical practice guidelines
- Variability in medical practice
- Detecting needs in the health care system.

Future plans

- To improve dissemination of HTA findings
- To increase participation by Galician health care professionals and patients in every HTA project
- To contribute to national and international collaboration on HTA.

Information Box

Country	Spain
Description of population served	Galician Region
Population served (mil)	2.7
Current HTA budget (mil USD)	0.35
Permanent staff	7
Consultants	variable
Ongoing TA projects	5





INAHTA Briefs

Briefs are a publication series intended to be a forum for member agencies to present overviews of recently published reports. Briefs are published regularly and placed on the INAHTA website as soon as they become available. A selection of new INAHTA briefs:

- Treatment of Depression, **SBU**
- Low Level Laser Therapy for Wound Healing: An Update, **AHFMR**
- Advance Directives for End-of-life Care in the Elderly - Effectiveness of Delivery Modes, **AHFMR**
- Prevention of Restenosis: Drug Eluting Stents, **NOKC** (former *SMM*)
- Effectiveness of Physical Therapy, Restricted to Electrotherapy and Exercise, for Osteoarthritis of the Knee, **NOKC** (former *SMM*)
- Moderately Elevated Blood Pressure, **SBU**
- Postural Support Devices, **AÉTMIS**
- Liquid Oxygen Therapy at Home, **AÉTMIS**
- Generalisability in Economic Evaluation Studies in Healthcare: A Review and Case Studies, **NCCHTA**
- Identification and Assessment of Ongoing Trials in Health Technology Assessment Review, **NCCHTA**

Conferences

2nd Annual Meeting of Health Technology Assessment International (HTAi) – Bringing HTA into Practice

The 2nd Annual Meeting of HTAi will take place from June 20th to June 22nd, 2005, in Rome, Italy. It will focus on the role of HTA in technological innovation processes, addressing key questions such as, "What are the appropriate instruments, necessary skills, and useful partnerships?"

For more information: www.htai.org

The 5th International Health Economics Association (iHEA) World Congress

The iHEA was formed to increase communication among health economists, foster a higher standard of debate in the application of economics to health and health care systems, and assist young researchers at the start of their careers. The 5th world congress takes place in Barcelona, Spain, July 9–13, 2005.

For more information: www.healtheconomics.org

New Member Agencies

INAHTA welcomes four new members. Read more about the organizations at www.inahta.org

AVALIA-T Galician Agency for Health Technology Assessment, Spain

IECS Institute for Clinical Effectiveness and Health Policy, Argentina

IMSS Mexican Institute of Social Security, Mexico

MAS Medical Advisory Secretariat, Canada

Recently Published Reports

A selection of recently published reports from INAHTA agencies:

- Suicide Prevention Strategies: evidence from systematic reviews (English), February 2003, **AHFMR**.
- Stroke rehabilitation services: systematic reviews of the clinical and economic evidence (English), March 2003, **CCOHTA**.

INAHTA Executive Committee

Chair: Finn Børlum Kristensen

e-mail: dacehta@sst.dk

Vice-Chair: John Gabbay

e-mail: J.Gabbay@soton.ac.uk

Executive Secretary: Nina Rehnqvist

e-mail: management@sbu.se

INAHTA – Network Secretariat

Vice Executive Secretary: Helena Dahlgren

e-mail: dahlgren@sbu.se

Network Coordinator: Margareta Nordwall

e-mail: nordwall@sbu.se

Assistant Coordinator: Elin Kullerstrand

e-mail: kullerstrand@sbu.se

Webmaster: Susanne Eksell

e-mail: eksell@sbu.se

Treasurer: Mikael Sparrings

e-mail: sparrings@sbu.se

Mailing Address: INAHTA c/o SBU,

Box 5650, SE-114 86 Stockholm, Sweden

Street Address: Tyrgatan 7

Telephone +46 8 412 32 00

Fax +46 8 411 32 60

Web page: www.inahta.org