



Title	Economic Evaluations in International Health Technology Assessments – A Study of Methodologies
Agency	DACEHTA, Danish Centre for Evaluation and Health Technology Assessment National Board of Health, P.O. Box 1881, DK-2300 Copenhagen S, Denmark; Tel: +45 72 22 74 48, Fax: +45 72 22 74 07; www.dacehta.dk
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Aim

To investigate the economic content of international health technology assessments (HTAs) and to assess international practices in this field. The project focuses on the methods used in international HTA reports rather than on the actual results. Both the doers involved in conducting HTAs and the users of the results may benefit from this report. The presumed target group has a basic knowledge of economic terms in general and economic evaluation in particular.

Conclusions and results

Most of the economic evaluations in HTAs were conducted after collecting clinical data, using secondary data from literature reviews or meta-analyses. The data were often combined in decision analytical modeling. This approach is not observed to the same extent in economic evaluation in general, probably due to the nature of health technology assessment as a synthesis of clinical and other evidence gathered from a systematic literature review.

The use of cost-utility analysis was more widespread in HTA studies than in the general evaluations, and cost-benefit analysis was used in two cases. This indicates the application of advanced methods of economic evaluation in these health technology assessments. With respect to the identification of resource use, patient costs and time costs were more frequently identified in the HTA economic evaluations than in the general economic evaluations. Unfortunately, the perspective of the economic evaluation was not clearly stated in half of the health technology assessments.

Despite the existence of several formal guidelines for economic evaluation, the methodology used in evaluation, and its quality, appear to vary. Conducting an economic evaluation can be difficult, as suggested by the number of HTA economic evaluations that did not state the study perspective, did not perform discounting when relevant, did not perform sensitivity analysis, and used average costing/charges rather than marginal cost-

ing – issues important in economic evaluations.

Methods

A Systematic review. *Data sources:* HTA reports published by INAHTA members. *Types of studies assessed:* economic evaluations. Sixty-seven international HTA reports were systematically selected and examined based on a checklist composed specifically for this project. The checklist focuses on the design chosen for economic evaluation, the included costs and health gains, measurement and valuation of costs and health outcomes, discounting of future costs and health gains, incremental analysis, and sensitivity analysis. The results were then compared to the methodology used in a sample of economic evaluations undertaken in the health area in general.