

Health Technology Assessment – A Road To Better Healthcare System In India

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Abstract: Health technology assessment (HTA) refers to the systematic evaluation of properties, effects, and/or impacts of health technology. It is a multidisciplinary process to evaluate the social, economic, organizational and ethical issues of a health intervention or health technology. The main purpose of conducting an assessment is to inform a policy decision making. The importance of Health Technology Assessment is to help in reducing the Out of Pocket expenditure on healthcare and nationalize the concept of healthcare. In India, HTA is not given the due importance that it actually deserves. HTA generally focusses on the clinical aspect of Health Technology, leaving the patient-related, economic aspect and organizational aspect unattended. This paper will emphasize the importance of HTA in India which will provide adequate health services to all.

Keywords: HTA, out of pocket expenditure, health care, evidence -based, decision making

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What?

Health technology assessment is the systematic evaluation of properties, effects and/or impacts of health technologies and interventions. It is a process of examining and reporting properties of a medical technology used in health care, such as safety, efficacy, feasibility, and indications for use, cost, and cost effectiveness, as well as social, economic, and ethical consequences, whether intended or unintended.¹ It is a multidisciplinary process to evaluate the social, economic, organizational and ethical issues of a health intervention or health technology. The main purpose of conducting an assessment is to inform a policy decision making in health care, especially on how best to allocate limited funds to health interventions and technologies.^{1,2}

Why?

It is a cause of serious concern since the Health Budget in India is very meagre in comparison to International Budget allocation, these results in OUT OF POCKET situation to many patients which are uninsured and falling below the poverty line.³ Development of Health technology Assessment can solve this problem by utilizing the direct investments to be pooled into the healthcare budget which can result in the maximum utilization of resources to the patients. This is the time of need to develop effective HTA system from the Govt. of India, which can only resolve the catastrophic OUT OF POCKET situations.⁴ The value of money and cost effectiveness can only be achieved after the implementation of effective HTA system.

How?

One of the strengths of Health Technology Assessment is that it can help in the comparison of medical, surgical, and public health initiatives.⁵ If the system is developed with concerns given to the Indian healthcare, including the cultural, ethical, and philosophical considerations that are necessary for the local policy making, these equations can become the basis of decision-making on pricing, reimbursement and future investments that can be useful for the Indian healthcare system.⁶ As noted by Virgil, 'health is the greatest wealth'; economic productivity and prosperity depend on a healthy population.⁷ Although healthcare expenditure is considered to be an economic burden in our country, this statement explains the need to consider spending on healthcare as an investment for the economic well-being of the population. This can then help the Indian policymakers to make informed choices about choosing the most productive use of investments in the health which will in turn help in the general well-being of the country, by employing rigorous methodologies such as Health Technology Assessment.

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