

Role Of Cochrane Systematic Reviews In Health Technology Assessment In Argentina

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Background:

Health Technology Assessment (HTA) has been increasingly considered for decisions in health care policy in developed countries. Nevertheless, little is known about its use in Latin America. The Institute for Clinical Effectiveness and Health Policy (IECS) provides HTA reports to the public and private institutions in Argentina.

Objective:

To describe the utility of Cochrane Systematic Reviews (SR) in the production of HTA documents by a weighty HTA agency in Argentina.

Methods:

All HTA documents produced since 2000 were assessed and its authors surveyed.

Results:

From the 67 HTA reports undertaken a 36% evaluated drugs, 48% were therapeutic procedures and 16% were diagnostic procedures. Documents can be accessed through internet (www.iecs.org.ar). The majority of the evaluated technologies comprised new technologies such as interferon, PET, coated stents, insulin glargine or bevacizumab.

A 61% of HTA used SR (22% Cochrane SR [CSR], and 39% non-Cochrane SR [NCSR]). Only 45% of diagnostic HTA used SR. The NCSR/CSR utilisation ratio was 2 for therapeutic procedures and 1.5 for diagnostic and drug evaluations. The question of the HTA was much related with CSR and NCSR in 80% and 65% of cases respectively. CSR contributed 75% to answering the question and NCSR 63%, being the first more frequently updated and considered of better quality (Table).

Variables	All SR (n=41)	CSR (n=15)	NCSR (n=26)
Utilisation of SR in HTA (n=67)	61% (41/67)	22% (15/67)	39% (26/67)
Question of the HTA much related to SR	71 % (29/41)	80% (12/15)	65% (17/26)
Contribution to answer the HTA's question	67.3 ± 22.4%	74.7 ± 21.0%	63.1 ± 22.4%
Considered Non-updated SR	45% (18/41)	50% (7/15)	42% (11/26)
Considered of bad quality SR	15% (6/41)	7% (1/15)	19% (5/26)

Conclusions: Cochrane Systematic Reviews are used in a low proportion of emerging HTA in Argentina. Other sources provide more timely answers.

Cochrane Reviews more frequently contributed to answering questions, and were considered of better quality than non-Cochrane Reviews, but cover a smaller proportion HTA.