



# Health Technology Assessment Policy and Methods Review Reference Committee

## Communique – 1 December 2023 meeting

The Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Policy and Methods Review (Review) Reference Committee (Committee) met by video conference on 1 December 2023.

Support staff from the Review Secretariat in the Department of Health and Aged Care (Department) attended.

### **What did the Committee discuss?**

#### **Issues and options for reform on HTA methods used for identifying the population, intervention, comparator and outcome (PICO) of a health technology**

The Committee deliberated over issues and options from considering the HTA expert research paper on HTA methods used for identifying the PICO of a health technology. The Committee recalled that the paper outlined different processes used to determine the PICO and how the PICO is used across comparable jurisdictions. The Committee recalled that some comparable jurisdictions either use a specific scoping phase to determine the PICO (e.g. the UK and health technologies considered by the Medical Services Advisory Committee) or rely on the sponsor to include the proposed PICO in its HTA submission based on guidance from the HTA body (e.g. Canada, and health technologies considered by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC)).

The Committee noted key views of stakeholders based on input received through Consultation 1 including the perception that disagreement in the PICO between a sponsor and committee may lengthen the time to access, that elements of the PICO should be brought forward in the HTA process and that there should be more transparency around the PICO before PBAC's consideration.

The Committee discussed the PICO within the HTA process and each element of the PICO criteria including comparator and the need on clarity for comparator selection. The Committee noted that the PICO criteria including its development and how it informs the evidence base of an HTA submission may impact the HTA recommendation a health technology may receive and access for certain groups of patients. The Committee noted there was currently no mechanism to require the consideration of equity or specific subpopulations within a submission.

The Committee discussed a number of potential options including in relation to enhancing the understanding of PICO criteria, stakeholder engagement in PICO determination, improving efficiency of PICO determination and improving equity through consideration of

health equity outcomes for priority populations. The Committee agreed to further refine these options for the Consultation 2 Options Paper.

### **Issues and options for reform on horizon scanning**

The Committee deliberated over issues and options from considering horizon scanning within the HTA expert research paper on horizon scanning and early value assessment. The Committee recalled that horizon scanning (in one form or another) is undertaken by some HTA and government agencies globally, and there are several inter-agency and cross-country collaborations in Europe and other regions. The Committee recalled that most jurisdictions with horizon scanning systems state that they use horizon scanning for health system planning purposes while some jurisdictions also utilise horizon scanning for HTA and non-HTA purposes (e.g. HTA pathway decision-making, price negotiations, reimbursement decisions and related decisions of government). The Committee recalled that the paper found a lack of information and data on the actual impact of horizon scanning on health systems.

The Committee noted that Australia currently does not have a nationally coordinated approach to horizon scanning to support HTA functions. The Committee noted that input received through Consultation 1 indicated that stakeholders considered that horizon scanning could serve a number of purposes including identification of emerging health technologies in therapeutic areas, identifying gaps in knowledge and data for certain health technologies, informing HTA assessment pathways (and whether flexibility and modifications would be required) and informing resource allocation and preparedness to support the adoption of new health technologies.

The Committee discussed several potential options about how horizon scanning could be conducted in Australia. The Committee agreed to further refine these options for the Consultation 2 Options Paper.

### **Issues and options for reform on clinical evaluation methods in HTA**

The Committee deliberated over issues and options from considering the HTA expert research paper on clinical evaluation methods in HTA. The Committee recalled that the paper explored various methods used for different purposes in HTA including evaluating non-randomised evidence, surrogate outcomes, value frameworks and incorporating equity and stakeholder evidence. The Committee recalled that the paper found that most of Australia's guidance on the clinical evaluation of health technologies is similar to comparable jurisdictions.

The Committee noted that input received through Consultation 1 indicated that stakeholders considered that HTA should allow more flexibility in the evidence base, and greater acceptance of nonrandomised evidence such as real-world data and surrogate health outcomes. The Committee noted stakeholders' support for greater and earlier consumer perspectives being brought into the process (aligned with parallel work with the Consumer Evidence and Engagement Unit) and the merits of an explicit value framework that can reflect consumer and patient value. The Committee also noted that stakeholders perceived it was unclear how evidence was being combined or weighted in reaching recommendations about reimbursement/funding.

The Committee discussed a number of potential options about development of additional guidance on HTA methods and providing more clarity for stakeholders around how HTA

committees take into account different elements of a submission to reach a recommendation. The Committee agreed to further refine these options for the Consultation 2 Options Paper.

### **Meeting close and next meeting**

The Committee noted the next meeting will be held on 14 December 2023.