

PD235 Impact Of A Consumer Panel To Inform Health Technology Assessments And Policy Development: The Singapore Experience

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Introduction: Patient involvement in health technology assessment (HTA) at the organizational level is vital to drive process development and capacity-building, and to ensure patients have the same opportunities as other stakeholders to effect policy changes. This presentation discusses the role and impact of the Agency for Care Effectiveness (ACE) Consumer Panel in the co-development of patient involvement and education initiatives in Singapore.

Methods: The composition and terms of reference of patient and citizen groups in overseas HTA or government agencies were reviewed to identify key aspects that could be generalized to Singapore's context. Using selection criteria, 20 individuals from local patient or voluntary groups representing a broad range of health conditions were shortlisted; 15 were formally appointed to the Panel in April 2022. Their contributions and impact on ACE's work and healthcare decision-making were documented throughout their two-year term. A qualitative survey was also conducted to seek members' feedback on their participation in the Panel and identify areas to improve collaboration.

Results: Since their appointment, ACE Consumer Panel members have played a key role in providing the collective voice of local patient organizations to guide ACE's work and have co-developed processes that ensure meaningful patient involvement in policy development and HTA. They have also informed ACE's workplan by providing advice on priority-setting, communication strategies, and patients' information needs. During their term, processes to include patient input in HTAs were formalized leading to the co-development of a process guide and supporting fact sheets, a patient glossary, and two patient training modules, which will be continually updated based on patient feedback.

Conclusions: The ACE Consumer Panel is the first long-standing engagement of healthcare consumers by Singapore's Ministry of Health. The Panel's contributions and impact on ACE's work serve as an example for other decision-makers on how to meaningfully involve patients at the organizational level, to understand their priorities and preferences, and to ensure healthcare policies remain relevant for the people affected by them.

PD237 Perspectives On Involvement In Health Technology Assessment: Insights From Representatives Of Persons With Mental Health Conditions

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Introduction: The participation of people with mental health conditions or patient representatives is of relevance in the health technology assessment (HTA) field, although there are some challenges that need to be considered. This study was designed to gain the perspectives of patient representatives with experience participating in HTA projects, with the aim of delving into the main issues and proposing ideas for the future.

Methods: A structured interview, based on five open-ended questions, was formulated and distributed via email. Five patient representatives from the Saúde Mental FEAFES Galicia (the Federation of Associations of Family Members and Persons with Mental Illness of Galicia, Spain) who had actively engaged in HTA projects over the past five years participated in the study. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis.

Results: Participants underscored the pivotal role of involving persons with mental health conditions and their representatives in HTA and emphasized the importance of knowing their perspectives, preferences, and values. Challenges included the complexity of HTA reports and processes, in terms of length and the technical language used, and socioeconomic barriers. Proposed solutions included material adaptation, streamlined processes, and institutional and professional support. Future recommendations emphasized improving awareness, disseminating the HTA field, fostering active participation, and emphasizing the relevance of participating in the HTA process. Of particular significance was the encouragement of training and capacity building among patients with mental health conditions.

Conclusions: This study reveals the need to strengthen and facilitate the participation of individuals with mental health conditions in HTA processes, and emphasizes the importance of knowing their perspectives, preferences, and values. Recommendations include training and capacity building, simplifying materials and processes, and providing adequate support.