

What is a health technology?

Health technology is any technology that is used by healthcare providers to screen, diagnose, treat, rehabilitate, and/or support patients of the condition of interest to attain good health outcomes and quality of life. This includes:



Pharmaceuticals

(e.g., specific drugs and vaccines)



Medical and Surgical Procedures

(e.g., dialysis, mastectomy, hysterectomy, etc.)



Screening and Diagnostic Test

(e.g., colonoscopy, pap smear, etc.)



Medical Equipment and Device

(e.g. implants, pacemakers, etc.).

What is health technology assessment?

Health technology assessment (HTA) is the systematic process of evaluating a health technology using scientific evidence to assess its quality, safety, efficacy, cost effectiveness, and budget impact. It evaluates the “added value” of a health technology compared to the current standard of care.

Important to the HTA process is the conduct of an economic evaluation. This is an analysis comparing health technologies and their alternatives, looking not just at outcomes but also at costs. Aside from the economic evaluation, the HTA process also considers the social, ethical, and budgetary implications of a health technology to the health system.

- d. Should PhilHealth cover glycosylated hemoglobin (HbA1c) test in addition to Fasting Blood Sugar (FBS) test under diagnostic examination for the Primary Care Benefit package?
- e. Should the government consider a peritoneal dialysis (PD) first policy for renal replacement therapy?

Examples of questions that are not HTA-related:

- a. Should the DOH create a new program for a certain disease?
- b. Should PhilHealth develop a benefit package for a specific disease?
- c. Should PhilHealth increase the case rate for a particular surgical procedure?

5. CAN HTA BE CONDUCTED ON ANY HEALTH TECHNOLOGY?

HTA may be performed on any health technology of interest. However, the HTA Program will prioritize the assessment of technologies that satisfy certain regulatory requirements, if any. For instance, drugs should be FDA-registered and will be assessed based on its appropriate indication.

For questions or concerns, please contact:

Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Unit
Health Policy Development and Planning Bureau
Department of Health - Philippines

📍 Building 3, San Lazaro Compound, Tayuman,
Sta. Cruz, Manila

✉️ hta.phl@gmail.com

☎️ (+632) 651-7800 loc. 1326 / 1328



Introduction to Health Technology Assessment

What is HTA for?

Depending on context, the results of an HTA can be used differently. In the Philippines, the results of an HTA can help decisions on:



the inclusion of a drug in the Philippine National Formulary,



the cost-effective price for procurement,



the choice of intervention to be used in a DOH Program, and



the intervention to be covered in a benefit package by PhilHealth.

What are the benefits of HTA?

HTA determines the most cost-effective health technology amongst all alternatives. In the Philippine context, this process:



increases transparency and accountability in the government's decision-making,



improves efficiency in allocation of government resources, and



enables the government to negotiate for better prices of health technologies.

Who can conduct an HTA?

Any individual or institution that has the sufficient capacity and skills can do an HTA consistent with the methods manual developed by the DOH. In DOH, a dedicated office facilitates the process and conducts the assessment.

Who constitutes the HTA Program?

This HTA office includes a technical team that conducts the assessment (research proper), a secretariat that helps facilitate the process, and a multi-disciplinary expert HTA council, that appraises the results of the assessment. This council also makes a recommendation to the decision-making bodies (i.e., Department of Health, PhilHealth).

HTA OFFICE



Technical Team

Conducts the assessment (research paper)



Council

Appraises the results of HTA and makes recommendations to the decision-makers



Secretariat

Helps facilitate the process through its administrative functions

Frequently Asked Questions

1. WHY IS THERE A NEED FOR HTA? ?

DOH recognizes the various healthcare needs of Filipinos; however, the resources are limited. Hence, there is a need to prioritize. The HTA process helps DOH and PhilHealth decide on the priorities and resource allocation for health technologies.

2. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HTA AND WHAT FDA DOES?

FDA is a regulatory body; for example, FDA grants market authorization of drugs in the Philippines by looking at their clinical safety and efficacy. On the other hand, the HTA process is used by payers of healthcare, such as the DOH and PhilHealth, when deciding on coverage and reimbursement of health technologies.

3. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HTA AND CPG?

In essence, the HTA method and CPG development both involve evidence-based processes. The main difference is that CPGs are developed for decisions made at individual patient-level care, while HTA recommendations are for national-level decisions on service coverage.

4. WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF 'HTA' AND 'NOT HTA-RELATED' QUESTIONS?

Examples of questions that are HTA-related:

- Should the program fund the subcutaneous form of the drug instead of its intravenous form for cancer patients?
- What is the optimal screening strategy (i.e., fecal occult blood test, sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy) for colorectal cancer?
- Should the eye health program cover eye convergence testing for children?