

Title:

The Central Library's contribution to Hospital based Health Technology Assessment

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Summary:

In recent years, increasing attention has been placed on the adoption of HTA principles and tools to produce evidence for managerial decision making at an hospital level (Hospital Based HTA, HB-HTA). In Italy HTA has received growing institutional attention and has been wide-spread applied as HB-HTA, in spite of the lack of government HTA agencies. In 2004, Italian Ministry of Health appointed 5 hospitals with a specific experience in HTA to create the Italian Network of HTA and Policlinico San Matteo was one of the Network nodes. In the organizational model adopted by the Italian Network, evidence level, cost analysis and synthesis of health research findings about the effectiveness of different technologies are part of a more complex pre-assessment form, similar to the Danish mini-HTA form, that must be filled out by the department requesting the evaluation. The library's role is clearly central in this process, as librarians should not only search for the evidence literature, but they evaluate the evidence level and the internal validity of the studies retrieved. Despite traditional HTA, HB-HTA makes the literature evaluation more challenging, the internal validity of each study being dependent on its context. At Policlinico San Matteo, the collaboration between the scientific library and the hospital HTA group has become continuous during the last year. The aim of this work is to analyze the requests made to the library by the HTA group and the relapses on the evaluation process of new technologies in the hospital. Furthermore, we will consider the specificity and the skills that the librarian should have to work in this new approach to the scientific information. We describe our way to improve and facilitate the HTA group's work, starting from the design of a new web site with more information about HTA process and literature databases. In order to give clinicians proper tools to address correct technology requests, training courses have been designed with library support. Moreover, we try to define a threshold of technology assessment complexity above which library's involvement should be required. Considering that library staff is able to support a greater number of evaluation requests, we are studying the possibility of extending library's support to other hospitals where the librarians are not trained for this service.