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IS THE HORIZON SCANNING IN ACCORDANCE WITH HEALTH TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS

Leonor Varela-Lema
Janet Puñal-Riobóo
Beatriz Casal-Acción
Ramón de la Fuente Cid
López García Marisa

Galician Agency for Health Technology Assessment (avalia-t),
Galician Ministry of Health, SPAIN



avalia-t
Agencia de Avaliación de
Tecnoloxías Sanitarias de Galicia

Summary:

Background: many countries worldwide have structured horizon scanning systems to identify new and emerging technologies but important doubts have been raised regarding their timeliness or efficacy to select technologies for formal assessment. Building on the results of a PubMed literature search, we engaged a panel of clinicians to select technologies that were anticipated to be highly relevant for clinical practice.

Objectives: 1) assess the efficacy of the PubMed approach to identify innovative technologies of high clinical value 2) analyze the evaluation of selected technologies by international HTA organisms.

Methods: 146 eligible key experts (42 specialties; min 3-per-specialty) scored the potential impact (9 point rating-scale) of the new and emerging technologies identified by the systematic PubMed search strategy (January 2012-June 2012). The main databases of ongoing and finalized HTA reports (EUnetHTA, INAHTA and EuroScan) were searched to identify how many of the prioritized technologies (mean > 6) were subject to formal HTA reports in the next 2 years (January 2014).

Results: of the 263 technologies identified by the PubMed search (published between 2011 to 2012), 52 were anticipated to be of high clinical value. Inter-rater agreement differed greatly between specialties but overall concordance was high. Of prioritized technologies, 17% (n = 9) ended in a finished or ongoing report. Of these, 3 (33%) had been assessed previous to our identification.

Conclusions: the current study suggests that technologies that might be prioritized and assessed by current detection systems do not always coincide with those demanded by clinical practice or that formal evaluation is not in enough advance to allow for early assessment. The methodology proposed can probably contribute to improve the impact of horizon scanning systems and could be useful to many HTA organizations worldwide.