



## HTA Executive Briefing Note

### AN EXPLORATORY REVIEW OF EVALUATIONS OF HEALTH TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AGENCIES

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#### **The Issue**

The demand for health technology assessments (HTA) is increasing and with it the need to demonstrate that HTA is an effective way to inform policy and practice decisions. However, to date there has been no comprehensive review of evaluations done of health technology assessment agencies.

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#### **Focus of Study**

The focus of this study was to:

- propose a generic evaluation framework for HTA agencies to strengthen their evaluation capacity.
  - review evaluations done of HTA agencies to determine what aspects of their operations have been evaluated, what approaches were used, and what was learned.
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#### **Key Findings**

The authors developed a conceptual framework for conducting evaluations of HTA agencies that includes: design considerations, product considerations, and evaluation outcomes. Each of these is discussed in detail in the full report.

The framework was used to present the results of a review of 16 HTA evaluations. Overall, the review found that a variety of approaches were used depending on the underlying intent of the evaluation. Most evaluations were qualitative and evaluated the structures, processes, products and impacts of the HTA agency.

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**Policy Considerations** Based on the findings of this review, the authors offer the following guiding principles for consideration:

- evaluation design should be purposeful and systematic and the evaluation framework proposed in this document is intended to help agencies toward this end
- evaluations should make use of and build on previous knowledge and experience
- evaluators need be deliberate and contextual in their methodologies
- agencies might consider making evaluation results public
- formative evaluation should precede impact or summative evaluation as HTA agencies evolve.

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**Methodology** A preliminary conceptual framework was developed based on the findings of a literature search. The framework was then refined based on the findings from the review of HTA evaluations. The evaluations were those conducted of members of the International Network of Agencies for Technology Assessment between 1994 and 2004.

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**Contact** For more information or a copy of the full report, contact the HTA Unit of the AHFMR at 780-423-5727. Copies of the report can also be downloaded from the HTA Unit Web site at <http://www.ahfmr.ab.ca/programs.html>

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