

Analysing HTA Impact at the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research

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Christa Harstall

Assistant Director, HTA

Don Juzwishin

Director, HTA

Richard Thornley

Coordinator, Impact Analysis

A H F M R



ALBERTA HERITAGE FOUNDATION
FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

Three Questions

1. What is impact?

2. Why do we care?

3. What are we doing?



Impact?

Impact: the broad and diverse effects stemming from a program's activities (outcomes)

“The use of research knowledge to inform decision-making ... constitutes the most appropriate generic measure of the impact of research that can be assessed routinely” (Lavis, et al., n.d.)



Impact? Simple!

Was the assessment read, understood, and used?

Has it influenced the individual or group for which it was developed?

What has happened as a result of the assessment?



Simple! Or not...

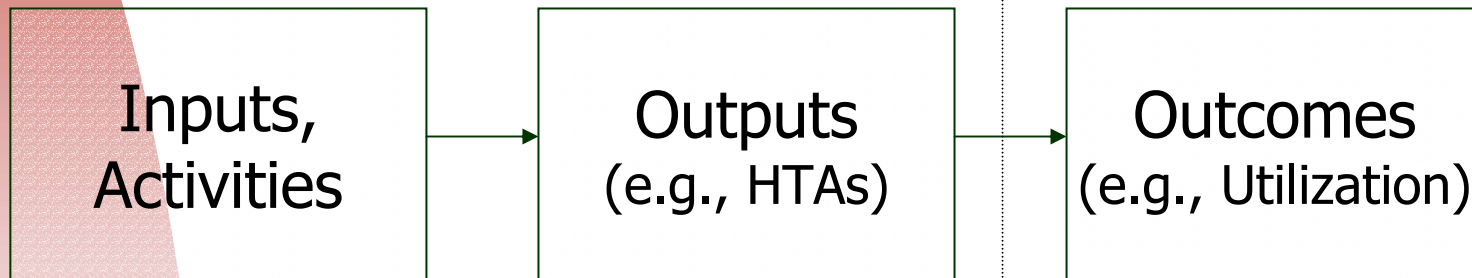
1. Multiple influences & relationships
2. Proliferation of sources of information & evidence
3. Conceptual, instrumental, & symbolic utilization
4. Utilization may be invisible to HTA agency, unanticipated, unpredictable timing, etc.
5. Shortage of standardized tools for assessment
6. Accountability issue



Accountability

Level of accountability: Staff

Program logic



Program has: Control

Influence

Context is: Defined

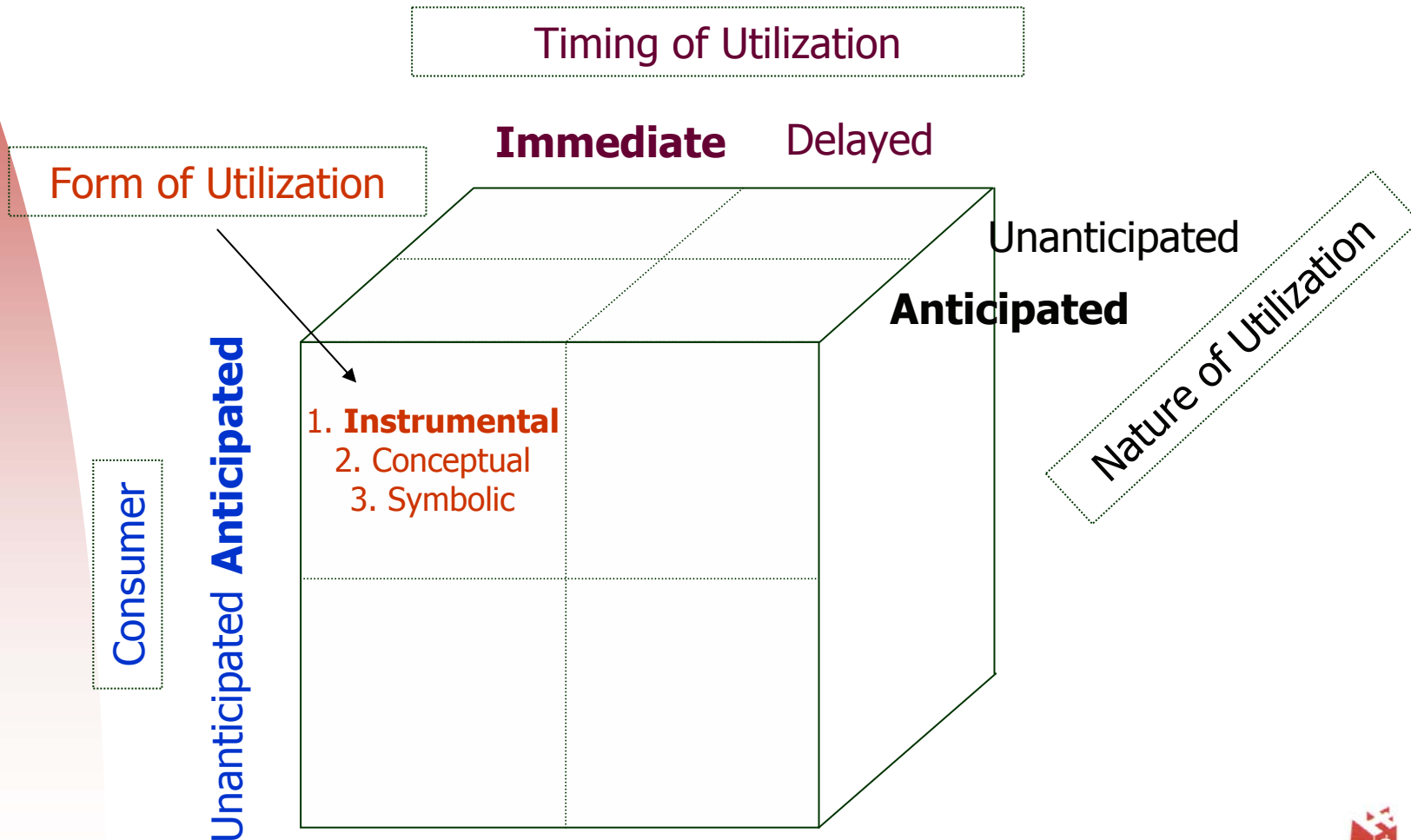
Messy, complicated

Focus on: Quality

Utilization and other impacts



HTA Utilization



Direct Client Interviews

1. Product-specific
2. Semi-structured interviews of “requesters” and “users”
3. Usually one or two interviews per product, mostly “users”
4. Examined process, utility, utilization
5. External consultant, possibly needs to be more internal role



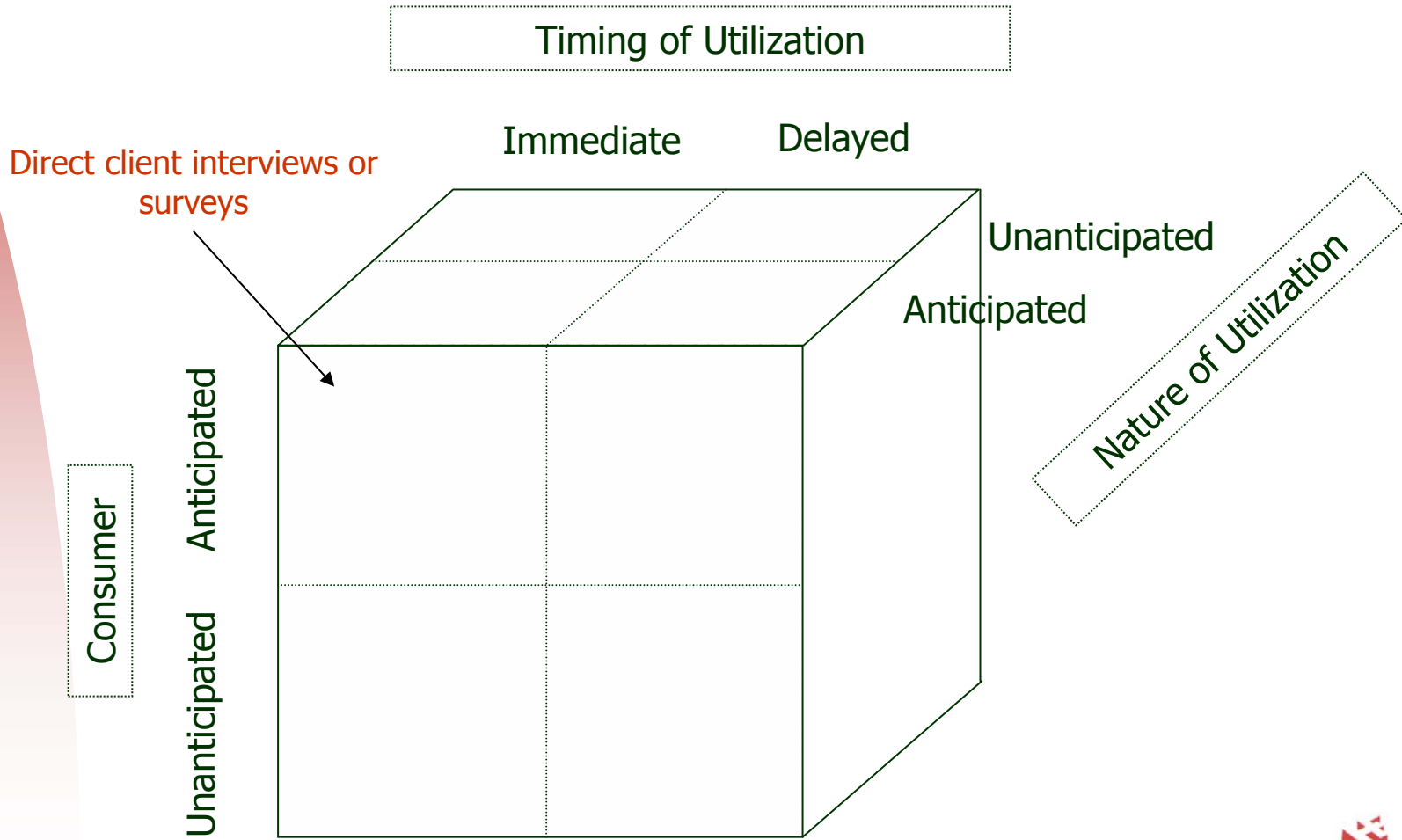
Interview Results

1. Clients reportedly used HTA reports
2. Uses included:
 - Decision-making support
 - General demands for information
 - Conceptual uses
3. Program able to develop actions from the consideration of these results



Beyond Clients...

Case studies; bibliometric & cybermetric techniques; solicited and unsolicited feedback (the "impact file")



Conclusions

1. Careful definition of impact
2. Not all HTAs will result in instrumental utilization—is this “no impact”?
3. One size does not fit all: basic, clinical, applied, health services
4. Suitability of different methods
5. Don't ignore outcomes



Resources

A Study of the Impact of 2001-2002 Health Technology Assessment Products, AHFMR HTA IP #15, 2003.

D. Hailey, Elements of Effectiveness for Health Technology Assessment Programs, AHFMR HTA Initiative #9, 2003.

INAHTA Working Group on the Impact of HTA.

A Framework for Evaluating the Utilization of Health Information Products, CWHPIN, 2000.

S. Dixon, et al. Evaluation of the impact of a technology appraisal process in England. *Journal of Health Services Research and Policy*, 8(1), 18-24.

J. Lavis, Social Impact of Research (<http://www.researchtopolicy.ca>).

The Societal Impact of Applied Health Research, Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences.

