

Finite resources are a reality in all health care systems, making it impossible for all available health care benefits to be afforded to everybody. Especially in the realm of coverage decisions for health technologies, evidence-based approaches are increasingly employed to facilitate quality and efficiency of care. These should therefore be as well thought-out and rigorous as possible. The general goal of this work was to better understand existing evidence-based practices in coverage decision-making and derive useful recommendations for the future, focusing on transparency, evidence completeness and equity. It comprises five separate research initiatives, all rooted in the principles of cross-national, comparative health policy research and combines policy and document analysis with participatory elements. Though practices across countries varied considerably, a general lack of transparency was observed in many cases; practices regarding the publication of evidence reports, appraisal results, meeting protocols and conflicts of interest were case-specific. Practices for the identification and inclusion of all available evidence also show variation, as does the influence of missing evidence on decision-making. Equity is not a standard consideration in HTA report production. Albeit sporadic, both horizontal and vertical equity considerations were included in analyzed HTA reports. In general, exemplary practices by specific institutions/in individual countries were identified for each of the elements examined. Countries should consider a legal endorsement of making information along the decision-making process publicly available. Increased institutional collaboration could promote awareness-raising and knowledge transfer regarding different approaches employed in different settings, both in regard to evidence completeness and equity.