



NIHR Health Technology
Assessment programme



National Institute for
Health Research

About the HTA programme



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The Health Technology Assessment (HTA) programme, set up in 1993, is part of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and is the largest single national research programme for the NHS. It funds the production of independent research information about the effectiveness, costs and broader impact of healthcare treatments and tests for those who plan, provide or receive care in the NHS.

What is HTA?

The term Health Technology Assessment (HTA) includes all interventions used to promote health, prevent and treat disease, and improve rehabilitation and long-term care including:

- Drugs: such as antidepressants, contraceptives, antibiotics
- Devices: such as pacemakers, dialysis machines, hearing aids
- Procedures: such as surgical techniques, acupuncture, counselling
- Settings of care: such as general practice, hospitals, care homes
- Screening: for cancer, sexually transmitted diseases, stroke.

The HTA programme addresses the questions that patients and the NHS need the answers to in four different ways:



Commissioned research: The HTA programme identifies gaps in NHS knowledge and commissions the research to fill them through its commissioned funding stream.

Themed calls: Researchers are invited to submit research proposals in specific themed areas, where it has been identified that there is a particular need for evidence.

Researcher-led: Through this funding stream the HTA programme provides grants for researchers for clinical trials and evaluation studies that address questions of direct relevance to clinical practice in the NHS, and have outcomes that matter to patients. Researchers are invited to submit outline research proposals on an ongoing basis.

Working with policy customers: The programme commissions research for a number of policy customers, including the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) and the National Screening Committee, providing the scientific evidence to inform their decisions.

Broadening our horizons

Over recent years the HTA programme has undergone a number of changes to enable increased commissioning of research through both the commissioned and researcher-led funding workstreams.

Suggestions for research are actively sought from people working in the NHS, the public and consumer groups, and professional bodies such as Royal Colleges and NHS Trusts. These suggestions and researcher-led applications are considered by panels of independent experts (including NHS service users) who discuss the importance of the research.

These panels provide a greater depth of expertise while significantly increasing the programme's opportunity to consider and fund HTA research across the widest range of professional practice in the NHS. Shortlisted research priorities are developed into briefs which are advertised to the research community four times a year.

Research projects

The HTA programme commissions evidence synthesis and primary research projects, which can range from systematic reviews taking a year or so, up to large-scale clinical trials taking several years. The final reports are peer reviewed by a number of independent expert referees before publication in the influential journal series Health Technology Assessment.

Involving service users

The HTA programme actively involves patients and those who represent them at all stages of its work, from helping to set and prioritise the research agenda to commenting on research proposals. Their role is continuing to develop as the programme progresses.

Make a research suggestion

Any individual or organisation can submit a research suggestion for consideration by the HTA programme. An electronic form is available from: www.hta.ac.uk/suggest.



Keep up with the HTA programme: Follow the latest HTA projects and publications using the website www.hta.ac.uk

HTA journals: Titles are available to download free via the HTA website. Printed copies may also be ordered Visit www.hta.ac.uk/research/howtogetareport.shtml

Correspondence page: The website correspondence page encourages interaction between the HTA programme and those interested in its work by allowing comment on any published journal. Visit www.hta.ac.uk/correspond

HTA on DVD: A regularly updated DVD can be ordered free from the website containing all published journals. Visit www.hta.ac.uk/htaoncd

Email alerts: Know the latest in your speciality by registering to receive email alerts when a project starts or publishes in your area www.hta.ac.uk/email/alerting.shtml

Monthly email bulletin: Register to receive a free monthly email bulletin which provides updates on all programme activities. Visit www.hta.ac.uk/bulletin.shtml

RSS feeds: Register to receive regular news feeds about the HTA programme and its activities direct to your desktop. Visit www.hta.ac.uk/email/rss.shtml

Further information

For more details on our work, application deadlines and support when making an application please:

Visit: www.hta.ac.uk

Email: hta@hta.ac.uk

Tel: +44 (0)23 8059 5586

The HTA programme is managed by the NIHR Evaluation, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre (NETSCC, HTA), based at the University of Southampton.



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