

HEALTH TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND EVIDENCE SYNTHESIS BULLETIN



Welcome Message

**From
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- Deputy Chief Executive
- Director of Health Technology Assessment

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Welcome to our second bulletin of the year, covering activities from April through June in the area of health technology assessment (HTA) and evidence synthesis.

Our aim is to provide a brief overview of our most recent reports, conferences we have attended, and academic articles we have published. All of our publications are available to read in full on our website, www.hiqa.ie.

Arguably our most significant milestone this quarter was the opening of a public consultation on our draft HTA on the use of an enhanced inactivated influenza (flu) vaccine in those aged 65 years and older, which opened on 30 May and closes on 11 July. We approved the use of ¹⁷⁷Lutetium PSMA radioligand therapy for safe and effective treatment of some patients with prostate cancer. We published our annual Knowledge Sharing and Impact Assessment Report for 2023, looking at the broad reach of our HTA function, and we were very busy with presentations here and abroad on a wide range of topics. You can read about this and more inside.

In the coming months, we plan to publish our final HTA on the addition of shingles vaccination to the adult vaccination programme, following a public consultation held earlier this year; a rapid HTA of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine; a protocol for a HTA on alternative telephone pathways to access acute hospital care; and a protocol for a HTA on extending the age range for BowelScreen. At the same time, we will continue to justify practices involving medical exposure to ionising radiation, and will be working on a range of other HTA and evidence synthesis topics.

As always, we appreciate your feedback, and welcome suggestions for future editions. Reach out to us at htanews@hiqa.ie.

REPORTS



PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON ENHANCED FLU VACCINES FOR PEOPLE AGED 65+



A public consultation on our draft HTA on the use of an enhanced inactivated influenza (flu) vaccine in those aged 65 years and older, which opened on 30 May, closes on 11 July.

We found that enhanced flu vaccines are safe, and can be more effective than standard vaccines. We also found that offering an enhanced vaccine, in place of a standard one, to those aged 65 years and older would be a good use of resources, as part of the HSE's Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Programme. This finding depends largely on the cost of the vaccines, and would be a key consideration in any final decision.

You can read the draft report and take part in the consultation [here](#).

HTA KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

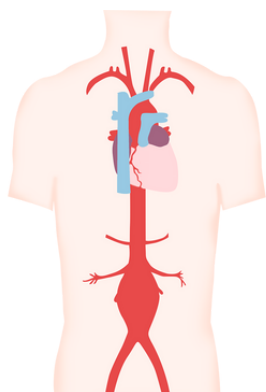


In June we published our annual [Knowledge Sharing and Impact Assessment Report for 2023](#), detailing the findings of an impact evaluation of our work in HTA and evidence synthesis. Highlights include:

- 4,039 views of our 130+ HTA outputs, which were downloaded from our website over 1,600 times
- 3,094 clicks on our LinkedIn posts about our HTA publications and Evidence Synthesis Bulletin
- 39 workshops, presentations and posters delivered at national and international conferences, workshops and seminars
- 23 public health and COVID-19 reports; HTA reports and protocol; screening reports and protocol; immunisation reports; HRB-CICER reports; and generic justification of ionising radiation practices reports published.



STUDY OF ABDOMINAL AORTIC ANEURYSM IN MEN UNDERWAY



We are working on a HTA studying the value of screening for abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) in men, scheduled to be completed next year. This HTA will provide advice to the National Screening Advisory Committee to inform its recommendation to the Minister for Health on whether to introduce an AAA screening programme for men in Ireland. Read the protocol [here](#).

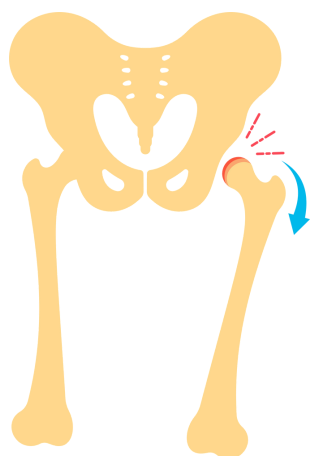
AAA involves bulging in the aorta, the main blood vessel that runs from the heart down through the chest and stomach. Typically AAAs have no symptoms, but can grow and rupture if left untreated, which can be fatal. Early detection may reduce the risk of mortality.

AAA affects approximately 1% to 3% of people aged 65 years and older, with a prevalence three to six times higher in men than in women, which is why assessment of screening for men has been prioritised.

REPORTS



SCREENING REVIEWED FOR DEVELOPMENTAL DYSPLASIA OF THE HIP IN INFANTS



In May we published a report on universal ultrasound screening for developmental dysplasia of the hip (DDH) in infants in Ireland. This evidence review was requested by the National Screening Advisory Committee. Read it [here](#).

DDH is a congenital disease where the 'ball and socket' joint of the hip does not properly form in babies and young children.

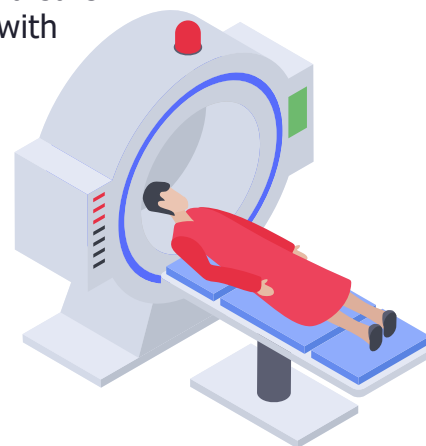
Launching the report, our Deputy CEO said "We found that the evidence relating to the effectiveness of universal compared to selected ultrasound screening for DDH was too limited to allow us to make a clear conclusion on the added value of universal screening. As a result, there is a lot of uncertainty around whether or not introducing universal ultrasound screening would be beneficial."

JUSTIFICATION OF IONISING RADIATION PRACTICES <<<

¹⁷⁷Lutetium PSMA radioligand therapy

In April, we published approval of the use of ¹⁷⁷Lutetium PSMA radioligand therapy for the treatment of metastatic castrate-resistant prostate cancer. Read it [here](#). Available evidence indicates that this therapy is a safe and effective treatment, as part of the care of some patients with prostate cancer.

¹⁷⁷Lutetium PSMA radioligand therapy is a cancer medicine that targets certain prostate cancer cells. Once it binds to the cell, it emits a small amount of radioactivity, causing damage to the cell. This therapy has been developed for some patients whose prostate cancer has spread to other parts of the body and whose disease has progressed despite receiving other types of anti-cancer treatment, such as chemotherapy or hormone therapy.



New practices involving patients' exposure to ionising radiation must be justified by HIQA. We are currently working on an evidence review to inform generic justification of magnetic resonance imaging-guided radiotherapy, and a scoping review for the development of guidelines for the justification of medical radiological procedures on asymptomatic individuals.



CONFERENCES



HEALTHTECH IRELAND



On 2 May in Dublin, Dr Máirín Ryan presented at the HealthTech Ireland Symposium.

The event, with the theme of 'Transforming Healthcare, Together', centred on current collaborative cross-sector technology work in health services and Máirín presented on how our HTA and evidence synthesis work is a collaborative process seeking to inform evidence-based and best practice decision-making.

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR HEALTH INFORMATION AND LIBRARIES



At the annual conference of the European Association for Health Information and Libraries (EAHIL), held from 11-14 June in Riga, Latvia, our Librarian Marie Carrigan presented on an ongoing Study Within A Review which is investigating search strategies developed using a text-mining tool, PubReMiner, to inform our work.

This research is supported by Evidence Synthesis Ireland and the SPHeRE programme.



PrISMA



PrISMA kick-off meeting participants

Our Senior HTA Analyst Lydia O'Sullivan attended the kick-off meeting for the PrISMA (Preparatory activities for the Implementation of quality and Safety of Medical ionising radiation Applications) project in Amsterdam, held on 27-28 May.

PrISMA is a preparatory joint action which is part of the wider Strategic Agenda for Medical Ionising Radiation Applications (SAMIRA) action plan — the EU's first comprehensive plan to support the safe, high-quality and reliable use of radiological and nuclear technology in healthcare.



CONFERENCES

HTA INTERNATIONAL 2024 ANNUAL MEETING

We were well represented at the Health Technology Assessment International (HTAi) 2024 Annual Meeting held from 15-19 June in Seville, Spain.

Our Deputy Director of Health Technology Assessment, Dr **Patricia Harrington**, was a panellist for a recorded discussion 'Can The EU HTA Regulation Support Vaccine Innovation and Provide Framework for Assessing Full Value of Vaccines?' showing across the week. **Joan Quigley**, Head of Assessment, presented on 'Regionalization and patient-centred care: a rapid-realist review and implications for HTA'; **Aoife Bergin**, HTA Analyst, presented a poster titled 'A Review of Health State Utility Values Associated With Herpes Zoster (Shingles)'; and Dr **Emma Reece**, Information Scientist, presented a poster titled 'A Systematic Review Of The Clinical Effectiveness Of Recombinant Zoster Vaccine For Prevention Of Herpes Zoster In Adults'.



Our HTA Directorate was well represented, both virtually and in person, at the HTAi 2024 Annual Meeting in Seville.

Posters featured online included:

- 'Review Of The International Epidemiology Of Long COVID' from Dr **Michelle Norris**, Senior HTA Analyst
- 'Evidence Review Of Universal Ultrasound Screening For Developmental Dysplasia Of The Hip In Infants' from Dr **Arielle Maher**, Health Services Researcher
- 'Interventions to Improve Long COVID Symptoms: A Systematic Review of Randomised Controlled Trials' and 'Overview of multiplex antigen near-patient tests for acute respiratory infections', from Dr **Cillian McDowell**, Senior HTA Analyst
- 'Review of MCDA-like Processes For Prioritization Of Newborn Bloodspot Screening Conditions' from **Éanáán Finnegan**, HTA Analyst
- 'A Systematic Review of Reactogenicity And Safety Of Recombinant Zoster Vaccine For Prevention Of Herpes Zoster In Adults' from **David Byrne**, Health Services Researcher
- 'Assigning GRADE Levels To An Overview Of Reviews Using General Principles Identified From Current GRADE Guidelines' from **Andrew Dullea**, Health Services Researcher
- 'Rapid HTA of the Extension of the Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Programme to Include Those Aged 50 to 64 (general population)' from Dr **Karen Cardwell**, Senior HTA Analyst

OTHER EVENTS

PRESENTATIONS

Maeve McGarry, our Health Services Researcher, delivered a presentation titled 'An update on the justification of practices by HIQA' on 27 April at the 25th Annual Irish Institute of Radiography and Radiation Therapy Conference held in Cork.

On 3 May, **Andrew Dullea**, Health Services Researcher, spoke on the regulation of ionising radiation, generic justification and HTA at an Irish Nuclear Medicine Association focus meeting dedicated to radioligand therapies held at the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital in Dublin.

At an HSE coffee morning held on 30 May in Dublin, our Librarian **Marie Carrigan** and Health Services Researcher **Andrew Dullea** presented our ongoing Study Within A Review looking at search strategies developed using a text-mining word frequency tool (PubReMiner) in our HTA Directorate. The virtual coffee morning was hosted and well attended by librarians across HSE services, who had the opportunity to ask questions about SWARs and HIQA's ongoing research. This research is supported by Evidence Synthesis Ireland and the SPHeRE programme and is registered on the SWAR Store repository.

On 16 May, several members of our team presented at Radiation Safety Study Day in Dublin. Dr **Kirsty O'Brien**, Health Services Researcher, provided an update on the development of guidelines for the justification of medical radiological procedures on asymptomatic individuals. **Andrew Dullea**, Health Services Researcher, gave an update on evidence synthesis projects from 2023.



ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

Led by our Health Services Researcher, **Andrew Dullea**, we published a paper in Seminars in Nuclear Medicine on the diagnostic test accuracy of 18F Prostate Specific Membrane Antigen PET-CT radiotracers in staging and restaging of prostate cancer. Find it [here](#).

Susan Ahern, **John Browne**, **Aileen Murphy**, **Conor Teljeur**, and **Máirín Ryan** published 'An economic evaluation and incremental analysis of the cost effectiveness of three universal childhood varicella vaccination strategies for Ireland' in the journal Vaccine. This economic evaluation examined the cost effectiveness of universal childhood varicella vaccination in Ireland, and is available [here](#).