

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 first bulletin of 2025, covering activities from January through March in the area of health technology assessment (HTA) and evidence synthesis. Our aim is to provide a brief overview of our most recent reports, and to highlight the conferences we have attended. All of our publications are available to read in full on our website, www.hiqa.ie.

The year is off to a busy start, and promises to be even busier in the months ahead. We began in January with the publication of a [protocol](#) for a HTA of immunisation of infants and or adults aged 65 and older against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in Ireland. In February and March, we announced three studies being undertaken by [CICER](#), the Centre in Ireland for Clinical guideline support and Evidence Reviews regarding asthma, obesity, and a costing tool for infectious disease outbreaks in public acute hospitals. Also in March, we published updated [guidelines](#) for conducting economic evaluation and budget impact analysis in HTAs. The quarter concluded with the [relocation](#) of the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) to HIQA. You can read more about all of this in the following pages.

In other news, the EU Regulation of HTA (HTAR) came into effect on 12 January. We are representing Ireland on the HTAR Coordination Group and its subgroups which will oversee implementation, and on the EC HTA Committee, which is overseeing the development of the Implementing Acts for the Regulation.

In the coming months, some of our key work will include holding public consultations on a draft report of a HTA of screening for abdominal aortic aneurysm in men and on a draft report of a HTA of an alternative telephone pathway for acute, non-urgent medical care needs in the pre-hospital setting.

As always, we appreciate your feedback, and welcome suggestions for future editions. Reach out to us at htanews@hiqa.ie — and please share this bulletin with anyone you think may be interested.



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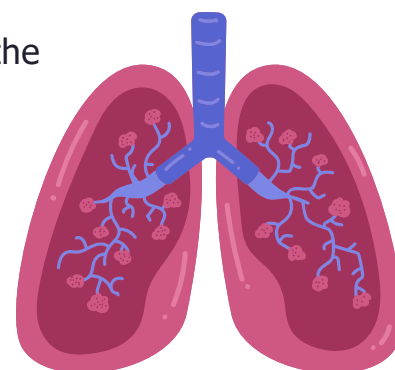


HTAs

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

In January, we published a [protocol](#) for a HTA of immunisation of infants and or adults aged 65 and older against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in Ireland.

The primary objective of this HTA is to provide advice to the Minister for Health and Health Service Executive (HSE) to inform a policy decision on the most appropriate RSV immunisation strategy for infants and or adults aged 65 and older in Ireland for the 2026-2027 and subsequent RSV seasons.



This HTA will build on our [rapid HTA](#) published in August 2024, and will include emerging international evidence as well as experience from the HSE's ongoing [RSV Immunisation Pathfinder Programme](#).

A draft report will be made available in due course for public consultation prior to being finalised and submitted as advice to inform decision-making by the Minister for Health and the HSE.

Updated guidelines on economic evaluation and budget impact analysis in HTAs

In March, we published [updated guidelines](#) for conducting economic evaluation and budget impact analysis (BIA) in HTAs.

Economic evaluation compares the costs and benefits of different choices to see which one is the best use of resources. Budget impact analysis helps decision-makers understand how much a new treatment or technology will cost and how it will affect the overall budget.

Publication of these updated guidelines follows a public consultation on draft updated guidelines that was held from 21 October to 2 December 2024. Feedback received was carefully considered and is reflected in a statement of outcomes document which has also been published.



CICER

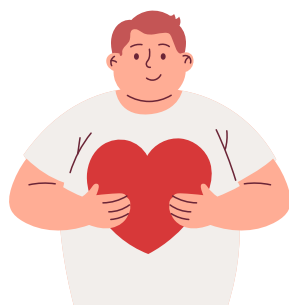
In this first quarter of 2025 we have announced three studies being undertaken by [CICER](#), the Centre in Ireland for Clinical guideline support and Evidence Reviews.

>>> Asthma

In February, we published a [protocol](#) for a review of international clinical guidelines regarding the management of acute asthma attack in adults. This review will help to inform an update to Ireland's National Clinical Guideline (NCG) on the management of acute asthma attack in adults by identifying and evaluating current international clinical guidelines.



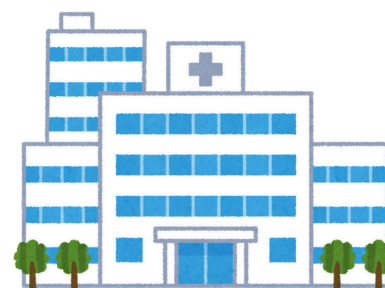
Obesity <<<



Also in February, we published a [protocol](#) for a review of international clinical guidelines regarding the management of obesity in adults. This review will support development of a National Clinical Effectiveness Committee NCG on the management of obesity in Ireland.

>>> Costing tool for infectious disease outbreaks in public acute hospitals

In March, we published a [protocol](#) for the development of a tool for the collection of costs attributable to infectious disease outbreaks in public acute hospitals. This research aims to provide a tool that will aid understanding of the financial impacts of disease outbreaks to inform resource allocation and further investments in infection prevention and control measures.



These three CICER reviews will be published in due course.

CICER is funded by the [Health Research Board](#) and hosted by HIQA. CICER produces evidence reviews and provides methodological support for the development of National Clinical Guidelines, which are published by the [National Clinical Effectiveness Committee](#).

NIAC



The first quarter concluded with some very exciting news: on 31 March we welcomed the arrival of the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC), which moved from the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI) to HIQA.

This move means that NIAC's work has become a statutory function of HIQA. It recognises the critical role NIAC plays as a National Immunisation Technical Advisory Group (NITAG) in providing evidence-based expertise to inform safe and effective immunisation policies.

In hosting NIAC, HIQA will also be responsible for the Secretariat that provides clinical, technical and administrative support to the Committee.

The move to HIQA will be accompanied by an increase in the size of the Secretariat. This recognises NIAC's growing workload, which has increased significantly in recent years due to developments in the field of immunisation, including the emergence of new illnesses and the availability of new vaccines.

Colleagues from NIAC and HIQA gathered on 31 March to mark the move of NIAC from the RCPI to HIQA.



From its new location, NIAC will deliver independent recommendations and advice to the Minister for Health, develop the National Immunisation Guidelines for Ireland and advocate for best immunisation practices in the Irish context.

As Ireland's NITAG, NIAC will continue to work alongside a network of international member organisations, benefiting from peer-to-peer learning and collaboration at a global level.

NIAC information and resources, including NIAC recommendations and the Immunisation Guidelines for Ireland, are now available [here](#).



SURVEY: Rapid HTAs

What is Rapid Health Technology Assessment (rHTA)?

Have your say!

Members of the School of Population Health at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) and the Health Technology Assessment (HTA) team in the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) are co-applicants on a Health Research Board Applied Partnership Award (APA) led by Dr Barbara Clyne, entitled "Rapid Health Technology Assessments (rHTA) in Ireland: when do we need them?" This research aims to elaborate the definition and role of rHTAs in the context of informing national level policy, health service decisions and international practice.

HTAs are used to help decide which health technologies (such as drugs, medical tests, medical devices, surgeries, healthcare reorganisation) should be funded and used in the public health and social care system. These reports can often take a long time to produce, and sometimes decisions need to be made quickly. A rHTA report speeds up the process by simplifying or skipping some steps of a full HTA. In this survey, we are asking for your preferences on what rHTA reports should include, how much time they should take, and how interest-holders (otherwise known as stakeholders) should be involved in the process.

We are interested in hearing from anyone who has an interest in HTA, particularly if you have experience of being involved in the conduct of one, or have used it to inform decision-making. Interested individuals may include: policy-makers, payers, clinicians, patients, pharmacists, manufacturers, and producers and commissioners of HTA. Interested individuals may have been a part of the HTA process — for example, as a member of an expert advisory group for a HTA or providing feedback on a draft HTA through a public consultation.

The survey will take approximately 25-35 minutes to complete, and your responses will remain anonymous. You can access the survey [here](#).

If you have any questions about this study, please contact the research team:

Principal investigator: Dr Barbara Clyne, Senior Lecturer, RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences. barbaraclayne@rcsi.com

Lead Researcher: Sharon McLaughlin, Research Assistant, RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences. sharonmclaughlin@rcsi.ie



SPHeRE Conference

HIQA was well represented at the [SPHeRE Network 11th Annual Conference](#), which took place on 4 March at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) with the theme 'Translating research to health policy and system change'.



HTA colleagues at SPHeRE Conference

- Our HTA Analyst **Dr Andres Lopez** presented two posters: 'Systematic review of cost effectiveness of AAA screening in men' and 'Review of international guidelines, assessments, and policies for ultrasound screening of abdominal aortic aneurysm'. You can view these and all other posters [here](#).
- As part of HIQA's work with [CICER](#), funded by the [Health Research Board](#), our HTA Analyst **Barrie Tyner** spoke about a 'Systematic review of costing tools for infectious disease outbreaks in acute hospitals' while our Senior HTA Analyst Dr **Celine Larkin** spoke on 'Systematic review of international acute asthma guidelines: Identifying recommendations suitable for "adoption"'.
- Dr **Louise Larkin**, our Senior HTA Programme Manager, presented her poster, 'Supporting a rapidly expanding programme of work for a national Health Technology Assessment agency — what does it involve and what is the impact?'
- Our Senior HTA Analyst Dr **Michelle Norris** presented her poster, 'A summary of publicly-funded services for fertility preservation for medical reasons in selected countries'.
- **Orla Jenkins**, our HTA Analyst, presented her poster, 'The Impact on Health Service Delivery of Providing an Alternative Telephone Pathway for Acute, Non-Urgent Medical Care Needs: a Scoping Review of International Practice'. Orla also presented on 'Herpes zoster (shingles) vaccination in Ireland: a health technology assessment'.
- Our collaborator **Sharon McLaughlin**, Research Assistant at RCSI, presented her poster, 'Comparison of Published Rapid Health Technology Assessments (HTA): A Cross-Sectional Analysis of an International Database'.
- Our Health Services Researcher Dr **Martin Boudou** spoke on 'A review of statistical modelling approaches to inform the updating of national low-risk drinking guidelines'.
- Our Postdoctoral Fellow Dr **Rasha Alshaikh** presented her poster titled 'Mapping Current Decision-Making Pathways and Reimbursement Processes for High-Risk Medical Devices In EU'.
- Our Health Services Researcher **Laura Rouncivell**, on behalf of **Umakanth Vudumula**, spoke on 'Cost effectiveness review of teledermatology supported triage of primary care referrals'.

