



**Health
Information
and Quality
Authority**

An tÚdarás Um Fhaisnéis
agus Cáilíocht Sláinte

Knowledge Sharing and Impact Assessment

Health Technology Assessment Directorate

2024 REPORT

About the Health Information and Quality Authority

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) is an independent statutory body established to promote safety and quality in the provision of health and social care services for the benefit of the health and welfare of the public.

Reporting to the Minister for Health and engaging with relevant government Ministers and departments, HIQA has responsibility for the following:

- **Setting standards for health and social care services** — Developing person-centred standards and guidance, based on evidence and international best practice, for health and social care services in Ireland.
- **Regulating social care services** — The Chief Inspector of Social Services within HIQA is responsible for registering and inspecting residential services for older people and people with a disability, and children's special care units.
- **Regulating health services** — Regulating medical exposure to ionising radiation.
- **Monitoring services** — Monitoring the safety and quality of permanent international protection accommodation service centres, health services and children's social services against the national standards. Where necessary, HIQA investigates serious concerns about the health and welfare of people who use health services and children's social services.
- **Health technology assessment** — Evaluating the clinical and cost effectiveness of health programmes, policies, medicines, medical equipment, diagnostic and surgical techniques, health promotion and protection activities, and providing advice to enable the best use of resources and the best outcomes for people who use our health service.
- **Health information** — Advising on the efficient and secure collection and sharing of health information, setting standards, evaluating information resources and publishing information on the delivery and performance of Ireland's health and social care services.
- **National Care Experience Programme** — Carrying out national service-user experience surveys across a range of health and social care services, with the Department of Health and the HSE.

Visit www.hiqa.ie for more information.

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Overview of the Health Technology Assessment Directorate

Health technology assessments (HTAs) are designed to inform safe and effective health policies that are both patient-focused and achieve best value for money. HTA is a multidisciplinary activity that requires a broad range of expertise, comprehensive evidence synthesis and data analysis, and ongoing stakeholder engagement. HTA can cover a range of fields, including clinical effectiveness and safety, cost effectiveness, budget impact and organisational implications, as well as social, ethical and legal issues.

The Health Act 2007 outlines the statutory functions of HIQA, and this underpins the basis for the conduct of HTAs and evidence syntheses.

These functions are:

1. To evaluate the clinical and cost effectiveness of health technologies including drugs and provide advice arising out of the evaluation to the Minister and the Executive.
2. At the request or with the approval of the Minister to review and make recommendations as the Authority thinks fit in respect of the services, to ensure the best outcomes for the resources available to the Executive.
3. To evaluate available information respecting the services and the health and welfare of the population.

In addition to conducting HTA, we also conduct evidence synthesis to support the development of National Clinical Guidelines, inform the development of health policy and inform generic justification of medical exposure to ionising radiation practices. We also develop national HTA guidelines to inform the production of timely, consistent and reliable assessments that are relevant to the needs of the people using health and social care services.

The work of the HTA Directorate in 2024 was conducted by approximately 50 staff and was broadly classified into seven main functions:

- Core HTA
- Immunisation HTA
- Screening HTA
- Centre in Ireland for Clinical guideline support and Evidence Reviews (CICER)
- Public health policy evidence synthesis and advice
- Generic justification of medical exposure to ionising radiation practices
- Strategy, support and research (SSR).

Overall, the aim of all the above HTA Directorate functions is to ensure that the best available evidence is presented to support decision-making in order to promote a safe, effective, efficient, and sustainable healthcare system.

Core HTA

The core HTA function informs investment and disinvestment decisions by the Minister for Health and the Health Service Executive (HSE) on a broad range of health technologies. A health technology is defined as an intervention developed to prevent, diagnose or treat medical conditions; promote health; provide rehabilitation; or organise healthcare delivery. The intervention can be a diagnostic test, device, medicine, vaccine, procedure, programme, or system.

Immunisation HTA

The Immunisation Team was established in 2023 and is funded to conduct HTAs and evidence syntheses to inform national immunisation policies as prioritised by the Chief Medical Officer of the Department of Health.

Screening HTA

The National Screening Advisory Committee (NSAC) was established in 2019 as an independent advisory committee that advises the Minister for Health and Department of Health on new proposals for and revisions to population-based screening programmes. Since 2020, the Screening HTA Team in HIQA has provided evidence synthesis (including HTAs) and evidence-informed advice to support the work of NSAC. This support has involved assessments of both new and existing population-based screening programmes, and reviews of processes used to inform screening policy (such as prioritisation and decision-making approaches, and the development of ethical frameworks).

CICER

The Centre in Ireland for Clinical guideline support and Evidence Reviews (CICER) is funded by the Health Research Board (HRB) and is hosted by HIQA within the HTA directorate. CICER was awarded funding spanning the period from 2017 to 2024, and again from 2024 to 2028, to produce evidence to support the development of National Clinical Guidelines, which are quality assured by the National Clinical Effectiveness Committee (NCEC) and mandated by the Minister for Health for implementation in Ireland. CICER provides methodological support to guideline development groups and aims to deliver a high-quality evidence base regarding systematic review of clinical and cost effectiveness and budget impact analysis.

Public Health policy evidence synthesis and advice

The Public Health Team, which replaced the COVID-19 Team, was established in 2023 to conduct evidence syntheses and provide evidence-based advice to inform

national public health policy, as prioritised by the Chief Medical Officer of the Department of Health.

Generic Justification of Ionising Radiation Practices

Under SI 256 of 2018, HIQA is responsible for the generic justification of new practices involving medical exposure to ionising radiation (MEIR) before they are generally adopted. HIQA may also consider the justification of existing practices when new and important information becomes available about the effectiveness or safety of the practice or about alternative practices that could replace it. HIQA is also responsible for the preparation of guidelines for the use of MEIR in asymptomatic individuals for the early detection of disease, but outside of a screening programme. The ionising radiation evidence review team in HIQA's HTA Directorate assists HIQA in fulfilling these functions. HIQA has convened a MEIR Expert Advisory Group (EAG) to support it in its role as the competent authority.

Strategy, Support and Research

The Strategy, Support and Research (SSR) Team was established with the overarching aim of developing strategy and policy, enabling and enhancing research activities, and providing support to the rest of the Directorate to allow it to meet its business plan objectives. The SSR function provides cross function support to the HTA Directorate in the areas of research, programme management, administration, library, corporate reporting and risk management.



Image 1: Members of the HTA Directorate at the directorate away days in Kilkenny in May 2024



Image 2: Members of the HTA Directorate at the directorate away days in the Smithfield Office in December 2024

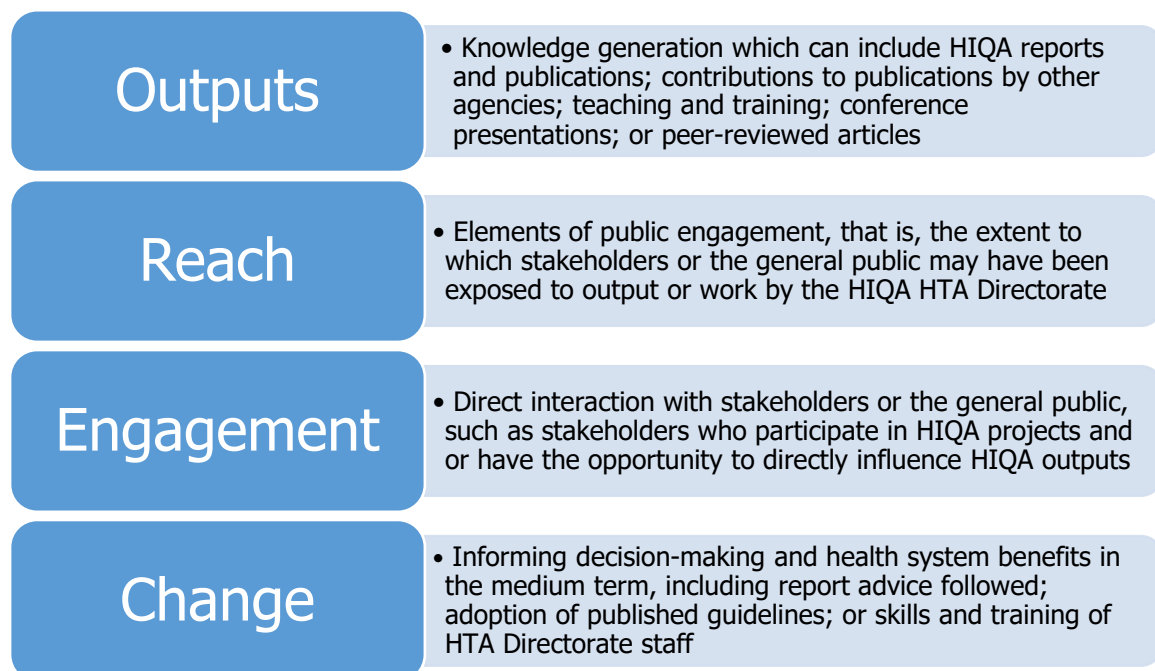
1. Introduction

The impact or influence of HTA Directorate activity is evaluated to assess its reach and contribution to decision-making and whether this is proportionate to the resources used to deliver it. Accordingly, this report follows the HTA knowledge sharing and influence measurement framework developed by the HTA Directorate and approved by the Board of HIQA in 2019. The framework outlines a broad set of metrics capturing different facets of knowledge sharing and influence across all HTA Directorate activity. The framework is only designed to capture short or medium-term impacts.

This report documents impact metrics for 2024.

Long-term impact on health and health services, or on economic measures, cannot easily be captured within this framework due to the time lag associated with the emergence of these impacts, and the challenges in attributing such impacts or outcomes to a specific activity of the HTA Directorate. It is important to note that benefits are likely to accumulate over time, so the reported impact is dependent on the time point at which it was measured. This report documents the impact metrics for 2024.

Figure 1. Metrics for measuring impact of HTA Directorate activity



HTA Impact Report 2024 Snapshot



10,630

Views of our 155 HTA outputs, which were downloaded from our website over 4,783 times.

9,194

Clicks on our 21 LinkedIn posts, with total impressions numbering 85,661.



54

Workshops, presentations and posters delivered at national and international conferences, workshops and seminars.



2024

18

Reports published, including 3 Public Health reports, 3 HTA reports, 3 Screening reports, 2 Immunisation reports, 2 Generic Justification of Ionising Radiation Practices reports, 1 report to support the National Clinical Effectiveness Committee and development of National Clinical Guidelines, and 4 public consultations.

2. Outputs

Outputs refer to knowledge generation which can include HIQA reports and publications; contributions to publications by other agencies; teaching and training; and other forms of dissemination such as conference presentations or peer-reviewed articles. The following lists the outputs of the HTA Directorate in 2024, categorised by team.

Public Health – Reports published

- [*A rapid HTA of gene expression profiling tests for guiding the use of adjuvant chemotherapy in early-stage invasive breast cancer \(update\)*](#)
- [*Review of national rare disease strategies in selected countries*](#)
- [*Summary of publicly-funded fertility preservation services*](#)

Core HTA - Reports published

- [*Protocol for a health technology assessment of an alternative telephone pathway for acute, non-urgent medical care needs in the pre-hospital setting*](#)
- [*Health technology assessment of Herpes Zoster \(shingles\) vaccination*](#)
- [*HTA of birth cohort testing for hepatitis C \(update\)*](#)

Screening HTA - Reports published

- [*Evidence review of universal ultrasound screening for developmental dysplasia of the hip \(DDH\) in infants in Ireland*](#)
- [*Protocol for a health technology assessment of screening for abdominal aortic aneurysm in men*](#)
- [*Protocol for a health technology assessment of extending BowelScreen to those aged 50 to 54 years*](#)

Immunisation HTA - Reports published

- [*Rapid health technology assessment of immunisation against respiratory syncytial virus in Ireland*](#)
- [*HTA of Enhanced inactivated influenza vaccines for over 65s*](#)

Generic Justification of Ionising Radiation Practices - Reports published

- [*¹⁷⁷Lutetium PSMA radioligand therapy for the treatment of metastatic castrate-resistant prostate cancer: Evidence synthesis to support a generic justification decision*](#)
- [*Magnetic resonance imaging-guided radiotherapy: Protocol for an evidence review to inform generic justification*](#)

Reports conducted to support the work of the National Clinical Effectiveness Committee and the development of National Clinical Guidelines

- [*Advances in the development of clinical practice guidance: A scoping review*](#)

Public consultations conducted

- Public consultation on an assessment of adding shingles vaccine to the national immunisation programme for adults (19 March - 30 April 2024).
- Public consultation on an assessment of switching to enhanced flu vaccines for those aged 65 years and older (30 May - 11 July 2024).
- Public consultation on updated national guidelines for conducting economic evaluation and budget impact analysis in health technology assessments (21 October - 2 December 2024).
- Public consultation on draft guidelines for the justification of medical radiological procedures on asymptomatic individuals (6 November - 18 December 2024).

Teaching delivered

During 2024, members of the HTA Directorate presented the organisation's work to undergraduate and postgraduate students enrolled in a number of courses such as:

- Bachelor of Pharmacy, University College Cork
- MSc in Clinical Pharmacy, University College Cork
- MSc in Radiation Therapy, University College Cork
- MSc in Radiography, University College Cork
- MSc in Applied Social Research, Trinity College Dublin
- MSc in Health Policy and Management, Trinity College Dublin
- MSc in Pharmaceutical Medicine, Trinity College Dublin
- BSc in Radiation Therapy, Trinity College Dublin
- MSc in Health Economics, University of Galway
- Economics and Finance students, University of Galway
- Undergraduate students, Royal College of Surgeons Ireland
- Postgraduate students, Royal College of Surgeons Ireland

- SPHeRE PhD programme, Royal College of Surgeons Ireland
- MSc in Public Health, University of Limerick
- BSc in Radiography, University College Dublin
- MSc in Public Health, University College Dublin.

Conference oral presentations and workshops delivered

- Ahern S, Walsh KA, Quigley J, Carrigan M, Harrington P, Teljeur C, Ryan M. Expansion of the childhood immunisation schedule in Ireland to include varicella vaccination: A health technology assessment. Structured Population health, Policy and Health-services Research Education (SPHeRE) 2024.
- McGarry M. An update on the justification of practices by HIQA. Irish Institute of Radiography and Radiation Therapy.
- Carrigan M, Dullea A. Using a text mining word frequency tool (Pubreminer) to build search strategies. European Association for Health Information and Libraries (EAHIL).
- O'Brien KK, Dullea A, O'Brien K, Keaveney M. Development of guidelines for the justification of medical radiological procedures on asymptomatic individuals outside of a health screening programme. Radiation Safety Study Day.
- O'Brien KK, Dullea A, O'Brien K, Keaveney M. 2024 Update on Generic Justification Projects. Radiation Safety Study Day.
- Reece E, Jenkins O, Byrne D, Bergin A, Reidy E, Mc Loughlin C, Quigley J, Teljeur C, Harrington P, Ryan M. The Reactogenicity And Safety Of Recombinant Zoster Vaccine For Prevention Of Herpes Zoster And Associated Complications In Adults. Health Technology Assessment International (HTAi) 2024.
- Bergin A, O'Donnell H, Ahern S, Quigley J, Harrington P, Teljeur C, Ryan M. A Review of Health State Utility Values Associated with Herpes Zoster. HTAi 2024.
- Quigley J, O'Donnell C, Reece E, Hawkins N. Regionalization and patient-centered care: a rapid-realist review and implications for HTA. HTAi 2024.
- Carrigan M, Dullea A. Using a text-mining word frequency tool (PubReMiner) to build search strategies HSE Library Coffee Morning.
- Dullea A, O'Sullivan L, O'Brien KK, Harrington P, Carrigan M, Ahern S, McGarry M, Walsh KA, Clyne B, Smith SM, Ryan M. Sensitivity, precision and efficiency of search strategies built using PubReMiner compared with current best practice search strategy building. Global Evidence Summit (GES) 2024.
- Merriman N, Shrestha S, Tyner B, Comaskey F, Carrigan M, Lynch T, Cardwell K, Rohde D, Clyne B, Sharp M, Smith SM, Holland D, Cullinan M, Allen E, Dunphy P, O'Flaherty K, O'Neill M, Ryan M. Advances in the development of clinical practice guidance: A scoping review of key innovations. GES 2024.
- O'Sullivan L, O'Neill M, O'Brien KK, Dullea A, McGarry M, Spillane S, Walsh KA, Harrington P, Ryan M. Adapting the GRADE evidence-to-decision framework to facilitate robust decision-making: two case studies. GES 2024.
- Burke E, Norris M, Power V, Spillane S, Ryan M, O'Neill M. Lessons learned and new approaches to stockpiling for public health emergencies. European Public Health (EPH) Conference 2024.

- McDowell C, Tyner B, Shrestha S, McManus L, Comaskey F, Harrington P, Walsh KA, O'Neill M, Ryan M. Exercise interventions for Long COVID: a systematic review of randomised controlled trials. EPH 2024.



Image 3: Members of the HTA Directorate at the Health Technology Assessment International (HTAi) 2024 Annual Meeting in Seville

Left to right: Aoife Bergin, Emma Reece, Patricia Harrington, Susan Spillane, Joan Quigley, Andres Lopez



Image 4: Members of the HTA Directorate at the National Patient Safety Office (NPSO) 2024 conference in Dublin

Left to right: Michelle O'Neill, Celine Larkin, Aoife Bergin, Olga Andriyashchenko, Máirín Ryan, Barrie Tyner



Image 5: Members of the HTA and HIS Directorates at the European Public Health Conference 2024 in Lisbon

Left to right: David Byrne, Cillian McDowell, Valerie Power, Daráine Murphy, Elaine Foley, Michelle Norris, Eimear Bourke

Conference posters presented

- Merriman N, Shrestha S, Tyner B, Comaskey F, Lynch T, Cardwell K, Rohde D, Clyne B, Sharp M, Smith SM, Holland D, Cullinan M, Allen E, Dunphy P, O'Flaherty K, O'Neill M, Ryan M. [Updating standards for clinical practice guidance: A scoping review of key innovations](#). Structured Population health, Policy and Health-services Research Education (SPHeRE) 2024.
- Reece E, Jenkins O, Byrne D, Bergin A, Reidy E, Mc Loughlin C, Quigley J, Teljeur C, Harrington P, Ryan M. [A Systematic Review of Reactogenicity And Safety Of Recombinant Zoster Vaccine For Prevention Of Herpes Zoster And Associated Complications In Adults](#). SPHeRE 2024.
- Dullea A, O'Sullivan L, O'Brien KK, Harrington P, Carrigan M, Ahern S, McGarry M, Walsh KA, Clyne B, Smith SM, Ryan M. [Assigning GRADE Levels In An Overview Of Reviews](#). SPHeRE 2024.
- Bergin A, Cardwell K, Jenkins O, Swanton D, Ahern S, Walsh KA, Harrington P, Teljeur C, Ryan M. [Cost effectiveness of seasonal influenza vaccination in older adults: a rapid review of economic modelling approaches](#). SPHeRE 2024.
- Bergin A, O'Donnell H, Ahern S, Quigley J, Harrington P, Teljeur C, Ryan M. [A Review of Health State Utility Values Associated With Herpes Zoster \(Shingles\)](#). SPHeRE 2024.
- McDowell C, Lynch T, McLoughlin C, Burke E, Spillane S, Carrigan M, O'Neill M, Ryan M. [Overview of multiplex antigen near-patient tests for acute respiratory infections](#). SPHeRE 2024.
- Swanton D, Cardwell K, McLoughlin C, Harrington P, Teljeur C, Ryan M. [Rapid health technology assessment of the extension of the seasonal influenza vaccination programme to include those aged 50 to 64 \(general population\)](#). SPHeRE 2024.
- Byrne D, Reece E, Jenkins O, Bergin A, McLoughlin C, Carrigan M, Quigley J, Harrington P, Teljeur C, Ryan M. [A Systematic Review of The Clinical Effectiveness of Recombinant Zoster Vaccine For Prevention of Herpes Zoster in Adults](#). SPHeRE 2024.
- Quigley J, Reece E, O'Donnell K, Hawkins N. [Healthcare regionalisation and patient-centred care: a rapid-realist review and implications for HTA](#). SPHeRE 2024.
- Norris M, Burke E, Comaskey F, McLoughlin C, McManus L, Power V, Spillane S, Ryan M, O'Neill M. [A review of national public health strategies in selected countries](#). SPHeRE 2024.
- Jenkins O, Ahern S, Quigley J, Teljeur C, Harrington P, Ryan M. [A rapid review of the methodology of economic modelling studies of herpes zoster vaccination in adults](#). SPHeRE 2024.
- Reece E, Jenkins O, Byrne D, Bergin A, Reidy E, Mc Loughlin C, Quigley J, Teljeur C, Harrington P, Ryan M. *The Reactogenicity And Safety Of Recombinant Zoster*

Vaccine For Prevention Of Herpes Zoster And Associated Complications In Adults. Health Technology Assessment International (HTAi) 2024.

- Bergin A, O'Donnell H, Ahern S, Quigley J, Harrington P, Teljeur C, Ryan M. *A Review of Health State Utility Values Associated with Herpes Zoster.* HTAi 2024.
- Norris M, Comaskey F, McLoughlin C, Merriman N, Tyner B, O' Mahony A, Carrigan M, Harrington P, Ryan M, O' Neill M. *Review Of The International Epidemiology Of Long COVID.* HTAi 2024.
- Maher A, Jordan K, Finnegan E, Spillane S, O'Neill M, Ryan M. *Evidence Review Of Universal Ultrasound Screening For Developmental Dysplasia Of The Hip In Infants.* HTAi 2024.
- McDowell C, Lynch T, Burke E, McLoughlin C, O'Neill M, Spillane S, Ryan M. *Overview of multiplex antigen near-patient tests for acute respiratory infections.* HTAi 2024.
- McDowell C, Tyner B, Shrestha S, McManus L, Comaskey F, Harrington P, Walsh KA, O'Neill M, Ryan M. *Interventions to Improve Long COVID Symptoms: A Systematic Review of Randomised Controlled Trials.* HTAi 2024.
- McDowell C, Tyner B, Shrestha S, McManus L, Comaskey F, Harrington P, Walsh KA, O'Neill M, Ryan M. *Interventions to Improve Long COVID Symptoms: A Systematic Review of Randomised Controlled Trials.* SPHeRE 2024.
- Dullea A, O'Sullivan L, O'Brien KK, Harrington P, Carrigan M, Ahern S, McGarry M, Walsh KA, Clyne B, Smith SM, Ryan M. *Assigning GRADE Levels To An Overview Of Reviews Using General Principles Identified From Current GRADE Guidelines.* HTAi 2024.
- Finnegan E, Maher A, Jordan K, O'Donnell H, Comber L, Spillane S, Harrington P, Ryan M. *Review of MCDA-like Processes For Prioritization Of Newborn Bloodspot Screening Conditions.* HTAi 2024.
- Swanton D, Cardwell K, McLoughlin C, Harrington P, Teljeur C, Ryan M. *Rapid health technology assessment of the extension of the seasonal influenza vaccination programme to include those aged 50 to 64 (general population).* HTAi 2024.
- Byrne D, Reece E, Quigley J, McLoughlin C, Jenkins O, Bergin A, Carrigan M, Reidy E, Harrington P, Teljeur C, Ryan M. *A Systematic Review Of The Clinical Effectiveness Of Recombinant Zoster Vaccine For Prevention Of Herpes Zoster In Adults.* HTAi 2024.
- López A, Jordan K, Foley E, Maher A, O'Neill M, Ryan M, Spillane S. *Review of international guidelines, assessments, and policies for ultrasound screening of abdominal aortic aneurysm.* National Patient Safety Office (NPSO) Conference 2024.
- Larkin C, Tyner B, O'Neill M, Doody P, Carrigan M, Geaney F, Ghosh B, Smith SM, Ryan M. *Development of an outbreak costing tool for public acute hospitals in Ireland: Protocol and preliminary results.* NPSO 2024.
- Merriman N, Shrestha S, Tyner B, Comaskey F, Carrigan M, Lynch T, Cardwell K, Rohde D, Clyne B, Sharp M, Smith SM, Holland D, Cullinan M, Allen E, Dunphy P, O'Flaherty K, O'Neill M, Ryan M. *Advances in the development of clinical practice guidance: A scoping review of key innovations.* NPSO 2024.

- Dullea A, O'Sullivan L, O'Brien KK, Harrington P, Carrigan M, Ahern S, McGarry M, Cardwell K, O'Neill M, Walsh KA, Clyne B, Smith SM, Ryan M. *Assigning GRADE Levels In An Overview Of Reviews*. Global Evidence Summit (GES) 2024.
- Dullea A, O'Sullivan L, O'Brien KK, Carrigan M, Ahern S, McGarry M, Harrington P, Walsh KA, Smith SM, Ryan M. *Diagnostic Accuracy of 18F-Prostate Specific Membrane Antigen (PSMA) PET/CT Radiotracers in Staging and Restaging of Patients With High-Risk Prostate Cancer or Biochemical Recurrence: An Overview of Reviews*. GES 2024.
- Sharp MK, Logullo P, Murphy P, Baral P, Burke S, Grimes DR, Ryan M, Clyne B. *'How did media coverage of health research published by Irish academic institutions (2017–2023) change over time?'*. GES 2024.
- Clyne B, Murray R, Sharp MK, Razidan A, Hibbitts B, Ryan M, Mahtani K, Lynch R, Smith SM, O'Neill M, Schünemann H, Alonso-Coello P, Munn Z. *Investigating how the GRADE Evidence to Decision (EtD) framework is used in Clinical Guidelines: a scoping review*. GES 2024.
- Power V, Norris M, Swanton D, Reidy E, Spillane S, Ryan M, O'Neill M. [Review of national rare disease strategies: innovation driving change](#). European Public Health (EPH) Conference 2024.
- Foley E, Jordan K, Lopez A, Carrigan M, Maher A, O'Neill M, Ryan M, Spillane S. [Systematic review of clinical effectiveness and safety of abdominal aortic aneurysm screening in men](#). EPH 2024.
- Norris M, McDowell C, Power V, Spillane S, Ryan M, O'Neill M. [An Irish public health policy research team: impact and lessons learned, one year on](#). EPH 2024.
- Byrne D, Power V, Bergin A, Panaro A, Cardwell K, Teljeur C, Walsh KA, Harrington P, Ryan M. [Rapid health technology assessment to inform policy: a case study with respiratory syncytial virus](#). EPH 2024.
- Ahern S, Bergin A, Cardwell K, Harrington P, Teljeur C, Ryan M. *An Economic Evaluation of Herpes Zoster Vaccination With the Recombinant Vaccine for Adults in Ireland*. ISPOR (The Professional Society for Health Economics and Outcomes Research) Europe 2024 Conference.
- Ahern S, Harrington P, Jenkins O, Quigley J, Teljeur C, Ryan M. *Developing Automated Decision Rules Based on Vaccine Cost to Identify Optimal Vaccination Strategies*. ISPOR Europe 2024.
- Jenkins O, McLoughlin C, Shrestha S, Teljeur C, Harrington P, Ryan M. *The Impact on Health Service Delivery of Providing an Alternative Telephone Pathway for Acute, Non-Urgent Medical Care Needs in the Pre-hospital Setting: a Scoping Review of International Practice*. ISPOR Europe 2024.
- Teljeur C, Ahern S, Ryan M. *A new approach to one-way sensitivity analysis and the tornado plot*. ISPOR Europe 2024.
- McLaughlin S, Abeer A, Sharp MK, Walsh KA, Nemzoff C, Foley S, Clifton E, Flood M, Spillane S, Harrington P, Teljeur C, O'Neill M, Smith SM, Ryan M, Clyne B. *Comparison of Published Rapid Health Technology Assessments (HTA): A Cross-Sectional Analysis of an International Database*. ISPOR Europe 2024.

Peer-reviewed publications

- Dullea A, O'Sullivan L, O'Brien KK, Carrigan M, Ahern S, McGarry M, et al. [*Diagnostic Accuracy of 18F-Prostate Specific Membrane Antigen \(PSMA\) PET/CT Radiotracers in Staging and Restaging of Patients With High-Risk Prostate Cancer or Biochemical Recurrence: An Overview of Reviews*](#). Seminars in Nuclear Medicine. 2024.05.003
- Sharp MK, Logullo P, Murphy P, Baral P, Burke S, Grimes DR, Ryan M & Clyne B. [*Altmetric coverage of health research in Ireland 2017-2023: a protocol for a cross-sectional analysis*](#). HRB Open Research. 2024 Jun 18;7:36
- Ahern S, Browne J, Teljeur C & Ryan M. [*An economic evaluation and incremental analysis of the cost effectiveness of three universal childhood varicella vaccination strategies for Ireland*](#). Vaccine. 2024.04.027
- Murray R, Magendran E, Chander N, Lynch R, O'Neill M, Devane D, Smith SM, Mahtani K, Ryan M, Clyne B & Sharp MK. [*Co-design workshops to develop evidence synthesis summary formats for use by clinical guideline development groups*](#). Syst Rev. 2024 Mar 27;13(1):97. PMID: 38539257; PMCID: PMC10967093
- Clyne B, Sharp MK, O' Neill M, Pollock D, Lynch R, Amog K, Ryan M, Smith SM, Mahtani K, Booth A, Godfrey C, Munn Z & Tricco AC. [*An international modified Delphi process supported updating the web-based "Right Review" tool*](#). J Clin Epidemiol. 2024 Mar 22:111333. PMID: 38522755
- Walsh KA, O'Donnell H, O'Loughlin M, Eames H, Jiang J, O'Brien KM, Broderick N, O'Brien KK, Carrigan M, Comber L, Cardwell K, Quigley J, Smith SM, Murchú É, Butler K, Corcoran B, Connolly K, Harrington P, Ryan M & O'Neill M. [*Duration of protective immunity following COVID-19 vaccination of individuals with underlying health conditions: A rapid review*](#). Reviews in Medical Virology. 2024 Mar;34(2):e2504

Invited presentations given

- Invited oral presentation
 - Ryan M. Health Technology Assessment by HIQA: an update. HealthTech Ireland Symposium - Transforming Healthcare, Together.
 - Dullea A. Generic Justification & HTA of Radio-Ligand Therapy. Focus meeting on radioligand therapies, hosted by the International Nuclear Management Academy (INMA) & Irish Association of Physicists in Medicine (IAPM).
 - McGarry M. An update on the justification of practices by HIQA. Radiotherapy Department, Cork University Hospital
 - Ahern S. How a HTA can inform Public Health decision-making. Specialist Registrars in Public Health Medicine - Health Economics Study Day, Royal College of Physicians Ireland
- Invited panel discussion

- Harrington P. Can The EU HTA Regulation Support Vaccine Innovation and Provide Framework for Assessing Full Value of Vaccines? Health Technology Assessment International (HTAi) 2024.
- Ryan M. Co-chair of HTA Roundtable Europe — a key platform to network HTA agencies. The International Society for Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research (ISPOR) Europe Conference 2024.
- Teljeur C. Overcoming Obstacles: Charting the Path Ahead. ISPOR Real-World Evidence Summit 2024.

Vignette 1

The HSE Open Access Research Awards were established in 2014 to encourage and reward open access publishing in the Irish health sector. Submissions are invited from across a range of disciplines in health and social care. The awards build on the HSE's statement on Open Access publishing and the commitment to develop and promote open research.

Members of the HTA Directorate won a 2024 Annual HSE Open Access Research Award in the Community and Social Care category for the paper titled '*Duration of protective immunity following COVID-19 vaccination of individuals with underlying health conditions: A rapid review*'. The review looked at how long people with underlying health conditions are protected after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine. This work was undertaken to inform decisions on how often COVID-19 vaccine boosters should be offered. You can read the paper [here](#).



Image 6: Winners of the 2024 HSE Open Access Research Awards

Vignette 2

Since 2016, the Centre in Ireland for Clinical guideline support and Evidence Reviews (CICER) at HIQA has received funding from the Health Research Board (HRB) to support the development of evidence-based recommendations in National Clinical Guidelines. These guidelines are prioritised, quality-assured, and published by the National Clinical Effectiveness Committee (NCEC) and mandated by the Minister for Health. As well as supporting guideline development groups, CICER supports the NCEC to ensure their processes are in line with international best practices in guideline development. To that end, in 2024, CICER published a [report](#) "*Advances in the development of clinical practice guidance: A scoping review*" to inform an update to NCEC Standards. After publication, the CICER team presented the report to (and participated in) the NCEC Standards Expert Advisory Group. The new NCEC Standards were subsequently [published](#) in May 2025. CICER's scoping review identified health equity as an additional core component of clinical guideline development internationally, which has now been incorporated into the NCEC Standards as a core component in their standards. The results of the report were presented internationally at the Global Evidence Summit in September 2024. More information can be found [here](#).

3. Reach

The concept of reach is intended to capture elements of public engagement – specifically, the extent to which stakeholders or the general public may have been exposed to output or work by the HIQA HTA Directorate.

The number of downloads provide a measure of people actively seeking HIQA HTA outputs. These are measured as the total number of downloads for a document in the period 1 January to 31 December 2024.

As reports are shared directly by email with the targeted stakeholders (that is, Department of Health, the HSE, the various EAGs, and so on), such downloads are not tracked by the presented website metrics.

Up until 2022, all CICER reports were hosted on the website of the National Clinical Effectiveness Committee (NCEC) as opposed to the HIQA website.

Downloads of reports published in 2024 on HIQA website

- Herpes Zoster (shingles) vaccination health technology assessment: Public consultation (608 views, 132 downloads)
- Health technology assessment of Herpes Zoster (shingles) vaccination (369 views, 226 downloads)
- Updated National Guidelines for Health Technology Assessment: Public consultation (315 views, 118 downloads)

- Rapid health technology assessment of immunisation against respiratory syncytial virus in Ireland (309 views, 219 downloads)
- Advances in the development of clinical practice guidance: A scoping review (302 views, 121 downloads)
- Draft guidelines for the justification of medical radiological procedures on asymptomatic individuals: Public consultation (284 views, 167 downloads)
- HTA of Enhanced inactivated influenza vaccines for over 65s (262 views, 246 downloads)
- Review of national rare disease strategies in selected countries (259 views, 131 downloads)
- A rapid HTA of gene expression profiling tests for guiding the use of adjuvant chemotherapy in early-stage invasive breast cancer (221 views, 41 downloads)
- Influenza vaccination health technology assessment: Public consultation (210 views, 95 downloads)
- HTA of birth cohort testing for hepatitis C (203 views, 87 downloads)
- Protocol for a health technology assessment of screening for abdominal aortic aneurysm in men (165 views, 55 downloads)
- Protocol for a health technology assessment of an alternative telephone pathway for acute, non-urgent medical care needs in the pre-hospital setting (155 views, 52 downloads)
- Protocol for a health technology assessment of extending BowelScreen to those aged 50 to 54 years (148 views, 40 downloads)
- Evidence review of universal ultrasound screening for developmental dysplasia of the hip (DDH) in infants in Ireland (140 views, 67 downloads)
- ¹⁷⁷Lutetium PSMA radioligand therapy for the treatment of metastatic castrate-resistant prostate cancer: Evidence synthesis to support a generic justification decision (101 views, 100 downloads)
- Summary of publicly-funded fertility preservation services (73 views, 9 downloads)
- Magnetic resonance imaging-guided radiotherapy: Protocol for an evidence review to inform generic justification (59 views, 49 downloads)

In 2022, an Evidence Synthesis Bulletin was launched to summarise and disseminate widely the work HIQA completed at the request of the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET) and related groups tasked with the national COVID-19 response. During periods of high production and frequent output, the bulletin allowed for all reports, advice and analysis to be collated and made easily accessible to academics, other stakeholders and the public. The bulletin now includes all HTA Directorate evidence synthesis outputs and is published on our social media platforms and website and sent directly to subscribers. In 2024, we published four bulletins summarising all our outputs throughout the year. In addition to being disseminated directly to key stakeholders via email, the 2024 bulletins had 63 views and 19 downloads from the HIQA website.

When examining regional and national media coverage between January to December 2024, HIQA's Dr Mairin Ryan, Deputy CEO and Director of Health Technology Assessment, was quoted 22 times; Dr Conor Teljeur, Chief Scientist, was quoted 61 times; and Michelle O'Neill, Deputy Director of Health Technology Assessment, was quoted twice.

Media coverage in 2024 on HTA evidence outputs

- Overall media clippings - 287
- Print - 277
- Online - 257
- Broadcast radio - 11
- Press - 186

Three HTA team members were interviewed 11 times in total on radio in 2024. Dr Mairin Ryan was interviewed on radio three times, Dr Conor Teljeur was interviewed on radio seven times, and Michelle O'Neill was interviewed on radio once. HTA team members were featured on six different radio stations in 2024.

RADIO STATIONS THAT FEATURED HTA PROJECTS IN 2024



Radio stations that interviewed HTA staff in 2024



In addition to traditional media coverage, HTA Directorate outputs were disseminated online using social media platforms, including LinkedIn.

LinkedIn social media posts in 2024 on HTA evidence outputs

- 21 posts
- 85,661 impressions
- 9,194 link clicks

Citations of peer-reviewed articles by members of the HIQA HTA Directorate demonstrate the extent to which work within the Directorate influences academic research activity internationally. Since its first academic publication in 2012, the HTA Directorate has published 85 peer-reviewed articles, which have been cited a total of 3,763 times (with a median of 12 citations per article), as of 23 May 2025. In 2024, the HTA Directorate published a total of six peer-reviewed articles, which have been cited 11 times, as of 23 May 2025.

Citations of HTA peer-reviewed publications published in 2024

- Clyne B, Sharp MK, O' Neill M, Pollock D, Lynch R, Amog K, et al. An international modified Delphi process supported updating the web-based "right review" tool. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*. 2024;170:111333. Cited by: 4
- Dullea A, O'Sullivan L, O'Brien KK, Carrigan M, Ahern S, McGarry M, et al. Diagnostic Accuracy of 18F-Prostate Specific Membrane Antigen (PSMA) PET/CT Radiotracers in Staging and Restaging of Patients With High-Risk Prostate Cancer or Biochemical Recurrence: An Overview of Reviews. *Seminars in Nuclear Medicine*. 2024; S0001-2998(24):00044-8. Cited by: 2
- Murray R, Magendran E, Chander N, Lynch R, O'Neill M, Devane D, et al. Co-design workshops to develop evidence synthesis summary formats for use by clinical guideline development groups. *Systematic Reviews*. 2024;13(1):97. Cited by: 2
- Walsh KA, O'Donnell H, O'Loughlin M, Eames H, Jiang J, O'Brien KM, et al. Duration of protective immunity following COVID-19 vaccination of individuals with underlying health conditions: A rapid review. *Reviews in Medical Virology*. 2024;34(2):e2504. Cited by: 1
- Ahern, S., Browne, J., Murphy, A., Teljeur, C., & Ryan, M. An economic evaluation and incremental analysis of the cost effectiveness of three universal childhood varicella vaccination strategies for Ireland. *Vaccine*; 2024; 42(14):3321–3332. Cited by: 1

- Sharp MK, Logullo P, Murphy P, Baral P, Burke S, Grimes DR, et al. Altmetric coverage of health research in Ireland 2017-2023: a protocol for a cross-sectional analysis. HRB Open Research. 2024; 18(7):36. Cited by: 1

HTA publications are uploaded to the international HTA database, INAHTA: <https://database.inahta.org/>. The international HTA database provides free access to bibliographic information about ongoing and published health technology assessments commissioned or undertaken by HTA organisations internationally. A total of 166 records authored by HIQA are available in the INAHTA database. In 2024, a total of 11 HTA reports were uploaded to the INAHTA database.

Views on INAHTA database of reports published in 2024

- Enhanced inactivated influenza vaccines for over 65s: protocol for a health technology assessment (30 views)
- Rapid health technology assessment of immunisation against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in Ireland (23 views)
- Health technology assessment of Herpes Zoster (shingles) vaccination (22 views)
- ¹⁷⁷Lutetium PSMA radioligand therapy for the treatment of metastatic castrate-resistant prostate cancer: Evidence synthesis to support a generic justification decision (19 views)
- Health technology assessment of birth cohort testing for hepatitis C: a short report update (19 views)
- Protocol for a health technology assessment of screening for abdominal aortic aneurysm in men (17 views)
- Review of national rare disease strategies in selected countries (15 views)
- Evidence review of universal ultrasound screening for developmental dysplasia of the hip (DDH) in infants in Ireland (14 views)
- Advances in the development of clinical practice guidance - scoping review (12 views)
- Protocol for a health technology assessment of an alternative telephone pathway for acute, non-urgent medical care needs in the pre-hospital setting (11 views)
- Magnetic resonance imaging-guided radiotherapy: Protocol for an evidence review to inform generic justification (9 views)

TRIP (Turning Research into Practice) database www.tripdatabase.com is a clinical search engine that helps users quickly and easily identify high quality research evidence. TRIP database now includes HIQA publications and provides links to the HIQA website, which makes our content more discoverable.

HTA publications and peer-reviewed open-access publications authored by HTA team members are published on Lenus, the Irish health research repository: <https://www.lenus.ie/>. HIQA has a collection on the Lenus repository that collates

HIQA's openly available research output. In 2024, 15 HTA reports were added to Lenus. The table below presents the total number of downloads and views for HIQA's HTA reports published in 2024.

Downloads and views in Lenus of HTA outputs published in 2024

- Duration of protective immunity following COVID-19 vaccination of individuals with underlying health conditions: A rapid review (156 views, 21 downloads)
- Diagnostic Accuracy of F-Prostate Specific Membrane Antigen (PSMA) PET/CT Radiotracers in Staging and Restaging of Patients With High-Risk Prostate Cancer or Biochemical Recurrence: An Overview of Reviews. (76 views, 50 downloads)
- Health technology assessment of Herpes Zoster (shingles) vaccination (68 views, 21 downloads)
- Advances in the development of clinical practice guidance: A scoping review (53 views, 6 downloads)
- ¹⁷⁷Lutetium PSMA radioligand therapy for the treatment of metastatic castrate-resistant prostate cancer: Evidence synthesis to support a generic justification decision (51 views, 10 downloads)
- Evidence review of universal ultrasound screening for developmental dysplasia of the hip (DDH) in infants in Ireland (46 views, 7 downloads)
- An international modified Delphi process supported updating the web-based "right review" tool (45 views, 55 downloads)
- Protocol for a health technology assessment of screening for abdominal aortic aneurysm in men (43 views, 13 downloads)
- Magnetic resonance imaging-guided radiotherapy: Protocol for an evidence review to inform generic justification (42 views, 9 downloads)
- HTA of birth cohort testing for hepatitis C: a short report update (38 views, 7 downloads)
- Altmetric coverage of health research in Ireland 2017-2023: a protocol for a cross-sectional analysis (32 views, 16 downloads)
- Rapid health technology assessment of immunisation against respiratory syncytial virus in Ireland (19 views, 44 downloads)
- Summary of publiclyfunded fertility preservation services (15 views, 16 downloads)
- Protocol for a health technology assessment of an alternative telephone pathway for acute, non-urgent medical care needs in the pre-hospital setting (15 views, 10 downloads)
- Protocol for a health technology assessment of extending BowelScreen to those aged 50 to 54 years (11 views, 12 downloads)

HIQA has a research community on Zenodo (which is a general purpose open repository): <https://zenodo.org/communities/higa-repository/>. In 2024, eight search strategies were uploaded to the HIQA community. A total of 37 records were available from the HIQA community in Zenodo in December 2024. As of 4 June

2025, these 37 records were viewed a total of 3,298 times and downloaded a total of 2,041 times.

Views and downloads on Zenodo

- Search Strategies for the Generic Justification Evidence Synthesis: magnetic resonance guided radiotherapy (147 views, 46 downloads)
- Search Strategies for extending BowelScreen to those aged 50 to 54 years: clinical effectiveness and harms (112 views, 62 downloads)
- Search Strategies for the Cost Effectiveness of Colorectal Cancer Screening (91 views, 31 downloads)
- Search strategies for extending BowelScreen to those aged 50 to 54 years (58 views, 21 downloads)
- Search strategies for a rapid review for economic modelling studies on RSV immunisation (45 views, 22 downloads)
- Search Strategies for Teledermatology for triage of primary care referrals: a health technology assessment (44 views, 9 downloads)
- Search strategies for a systematic review of tools used for costing outbreaks in acute hospital settings (44 views, 29 downloads)
- Search strategies for a new telephone pathway to access the Irish healthcare system for acute but non-urgent conditions out of normal GP hours: a health technology assessment (17 views, 7 downloads)

Vignette 3

Following a robust and competitive process, HIQA was awarded €2.5 million from the Health Research Board (HRB) for continued development of national clinical guidelines aimed at ensuring safer, better healthcare. The grant involves 16 partners across 11 organisations. The four-year award will fund the Centre in Ireland for Clinical guideline support and Evidence Reviews (CICER), a partnership comprising HIQA, Trinity College Dublin (TCD) and clinical and methodological experts, until 2028. The funding announcement in August 2024 received coverage in the Irish Times (Please see [here](#)), Medical Independent (Please see [here](#)), and Hospital Management (Please see [here](#)).

The new funding period will include a focus on public and patient involvement as part of an enhanced collaboration strategy. To that end, the CICER team was further successful in competing for supplemental funding to support knowledge exchange around guideline development under the HRB Knowledge Translation Award scheme 2024. The CICER team held a collaborators' kick-off at the Global Evidence Summit in Prague in September 2024 and hosted stands at the National Patient Safety conference (NPSO) and the Future of PharmacIE event.

"This will have such positive outcomes for the people of Ireland in the years to come. I look forward to fostering greater public and patient involvement in clinical guideline development and the recruitment of a panel to ensure greater public and patient voice in decision-making around clinical guidelines."

— **Stacey Grealis, who is providing a patient voice to the work of CICER**



Image 7:

Image: Members of the HTA Directorate and colleagues at the Global Evidence Summit, September 2024

Left to right: Barrie Tyner, Andrew Dullea, Niamh O'Rourke, Barbara Clyne, Yvonne Kelly, Melissa Sharp, Michelle O'Neill

4. Engagement

Distinct from reach, engagement captures direct interaction with stakeholders or the general public. The HIQA HTA Directorate interacts with stakeholders through their participation in HIQA projects, in which case the stakeholders have the opportunity to directly influence HIQA outputs. In 2024, the HTA Directorate had 15 Expert Advisory Groups (EAGs) which included 278 members from 67 organisations.

Advisory groups

- Enhanced inactivated influenza vaccines for over 65s
- Review of national rare disease strategies in selected countries
- Evidence review of universal ultrasound screening for developmental dysplasia of the hip (DDH) in infants in Ireland
- Health technology assessment of screening for abdominal aortic aneurysm in men
- Medical Exposure to Ionising Radiation
- Health technology assessment of Herpes Zoster (shingles) vaccination
- Health technology assessment of extending BowelScreen to those aged 50 to 54 years

- Rapid health technology assessment of immunisation against respiratory syncytial virus in Ireland
- Health technology assessment of an alternative telephone pathway for acute, non-urgent medical care needs in the pre-hospital setting
- Summary of publicly-funded fertility preservation services
- Scientific Advisory Group
- Low Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines
- Health technology assessment of teledermatology for triage of primary care referrals
- Health Technology Assessment (HTA) of immunisation against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) In Ireland
- Review of urgent and emergency healthcare services in the mid-west region of Ireland

Through participation of members of the HIQA HTA Directorate in external projects, committees and groups, we influence the outputs of other organisations and agencies.

National Clinical Effectiveness Committee and National Clinical Guideline Development Groups supported

- Management of an Acute Asthma Attack in Adults (aged 16 years and older)
- Management of obesity in adults in Ireland

Contributions to national committees

Throughout 2024, members of the HTA Directorate have contributed to the following national committees:

- HSE National Cancer Control Programme Technology Review Committee
- National Clinical Effectiveness Committee (NCEC)
- Evidence-based Quality Improvement and Patient Safety (EQUIPS) research network Follow-up After Disease Acquisition (FADA) Survey Steering Group
- Expert Advisory Group for the update of the 2015 NCEC Standards for Clinical Practice Guidance
- HSE Public Health Strategy Expert Advisory Group
- National Screening Advisory Committee (NSAC)
- Department of Health's Health System Performance Assessment Stakeholder Group.

Contributions to international committees

In terms of international committees, throughout 2024 members of the HTA Directorate have contributed to the:

- Coordination Group on Health Technology Assessment (HTACG) and its Joint Clinical Assessment (JCA) and Methodological and Procedural Guidance (MPG) subgroups, as well as the European Commission HTA Committee which oversees the development of the implementing acts for the Health Technology Assessment Regulation (HTAR)
- European Heads of HTA Agencies Group
- Heads of European Radiological Protection Competent Authorities' (HERCA's) working groups on artificial intelligence and therapeutic radiopharmaceuticals
- GINAHTA Steering Committee (Guidelines International Network (GIN), International Network of Agencies for HTA (INAHTA))
- Conceptual framework of the ecosystem of health decision-making (organised collaboratively by WHO/Europe and the Clinical Epidemiology and Research Center (CERC) at Humanitas University)
- Health Technology Assessment International (HTAi) Annual Meeting 2025 International Scientific Programme Committee
- ISPOR (The International Society for Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research) European HTA Roundtable Co-Chair
- ISPOR HTA Council
- Planning Committee for the ISPOR Real World Evidence Summit
- Celtic HTA Agencies Strategic Alliance
- UK National Screening Committee Blood Spot Task Group
- International Network of Agencies for HTA
- International Advisory Board for Evidence Synthesis Ireland.

Other Collaborations

- Partnership with the Department of Public Health in the Mid-West to co-host a Clinical Leadership in Public Health Medicine fellow funded by HSE from July 2023 to July 2024.
- Collaboration with the Health Library Ireland (formerly the HSE National Health Library and Knowledge Service). HSE librarians provided technical support to HIQA's evidence synthesis team throughout 2024, by peer reviewing search strategies.

- HIQA is a member of both Health Technology Assessment International (HTAi) and the International Network of Agencies for Health Technology Assessment (INAHTA). These international collaborations allow the HTA Directorate to share research and collaborate on and co-produce evidence reviews on health technologies.
- HIQA is a co-applicant on the Health Research Board Emerging Investigator Award (EIA) led by Dr Barbara Clyne, RCSI, entitled *Evidence synthesis and translation of findings for national clinical guideline development: addressing the needs and preferences of guideline development groups*. This research aims to support clinical guideline development processes underlying the work conducted by CICER by developing a 'toolkit' for evidence producers and end users.
- HIQA is a co-applicant on the Health Research Board Applied Partnership Award (APA) led by Dr Barbara Clyne, RCSI, entitled *Rapid Health Technology Assessments (rHTA) in Ireland: when do we need them?* This research aims to elaborate the definition and role of rapid HTAs in the context of informing national level policy, health service decisions and international practice.
- HIQA is a co-applicant on the Health Research Board Applying Research into Policy and Practice Award (ARPP) led by Dr Melissa Sharpe-Crowe, RCSI, entitled *Optimising the Dissemination of Health Research in Ireland*. This research aims to explore the media coverage of health research in Ireland and the current communication and collaboration between researchers, communications specialists and journalists with the aim of improving connections between these groups and identifying training needs for early-career researchers.
- HIQA is a co-applicant on a European Commission Strategic Agenda for Medical Ionising Radiation Applications (SAMIRA) preparatory Joint Action. Known as the PriSMA project, the preparatory Joint Action involves collaboration with 18 other Competent Authorities to support and sustain implementation of developments in the area of quality and safety issues concerning medical applications of ionising radiation across all EU Member States.
- HIQA signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between national HTA bodies in Scotland, Wales and Ireland in 2019. Since the signing of this MoU, HIQA has worked closely with its counterparts in Scotland (Scottish Health Technologies Group) and Wales (Health Technology Wales) on various HTAs and other projects of mutual benefit.
- A member of the HTA Senior Management team is a member of the first cohort of Young Academy Ireland, a new interdisciplinary organisation of early career researchers and innovators which brings together individuals who work collaboratively for the benefit of society.
- An Evidence Synthesis Ireland (ESI) funded Study Within A Review (SWAR) investigating the sensitivity and completeness of search strategies built using a text-mining word frequency tool (PubReMiner) compared to current best practice search strategy building is ongoing. This SWAR is being led by a member of the HTA Directorate in collaboration with other HTA colleagues as co-applicants on the grant.
- In 2024, HIQA partnered with the School of Pharmacy, University College Cork, to commence a project entitled "*Implications of the EU Regulation on Health Technology Assessment (HTAR) for high-risk medical devices (MDs) and in-vitro diagnostics (IVDs)*"

in Ireland. "This project, which is being conducted with the financial support of Research Ireland, through CÚRAM, the Research Ireland Centre for Medical Devices, aims to explore how the implementation of HTAR will influence reimbursement and decision-making processes for high-risk medical devices and in-vitro diagnostics across EU/EEA countries.

- HIQA along with 19 other European organisations from a total of 13 countries, has commenced an EU-funded project which aims to strengthen the long-term capacity and expertise of HTA bodies in implementing HTAR effectively and in a sustainable manner. The project is called 'HAG INSIGHT', which stands for, 'Heads of Agencies Group Initiative for Knowledge and Skill Enhancement in Health Technology Assessment Regulation.'

Vignette 4

The HTA Directorate of HIQA regularly takes on students and interns from various disciplines including pharmacy, health economics, public health, and radiation therapy. The directorate also supports placements and fellowships through the Structured Population health, Policy and Health-services Research Education (SPHeRE) PhD programme, Evidence Synthesis Ireland (ESI), the Aspire Post-CSCST (Certificate of Successful Completion of Training) Fellowship as well as postdoctoral researchers affiliated with academic partners.

For example, in 2024 a pharmacy intern from University College Cork had the opportunity to work as part of the multidisciplinary team on a range of projects that the HTA Directorate undertook. These projects included a systematic review on international clinical guidelines for the management of acute asthma attacks in adults in the CICER team and also, the cost of illness of colorectal cancer screening of studies in the Screening HTA team. They contributed to the work of the HTA Directorate by offering a valuable patient-centered outlook and knowledge on drugs. Their attention to detail and clinical knowledge was important in contributing to the quality of the evidence synthesis work undertaken. In addition, they participated in various outreach events like the Future of PharmacIE 2024 event where they connected with pharmacy students, opening doors to possible future collaborations with the HTA Directorate.

In turn, this placement greatly impacted the pharmacy intern's education by providing the opportunity to further develop critical appraisal, evidence synthesis and communication skills which are paramount as they progress throughout their pharmacy education and career. The placement equipped them with skills that will allow them to excel in a wide variety of diverse professions and seeing a real-world application of their skills reignited a passion to learn as they continue throughout their education.

"I really enjoyed my placement and found it eye-opening to see the multifaceted role of a pharmacist. I saw the positive impact my expertise and research work in conjunction with the directorate's has on patients, even in a non-patient-facing environment."

– **Pharmacy Intern**

Vignette 5

In 2024, the HTA directorate took on two Masters of Public Health students from the University of Limerick for the first time. During their placement, they participated in research on critical health interventions and gained insights into how the public health system in Ireland operates. They had the opportunity to share their perspective as interns, providing feedback for future placements, but also saw the opportunities available for growth as they progress in their education and career.

"Working in the HIQA Health Technology Assessment Directorate, I was placed with a fantastic team that showcased great work ethic in an environment that provides everything you need to excel."

– **Master of Public Health Intern**

This highlights the positive influence that a placement within the HTA Directorate can have on a student, intern, or fellow. By creating an effective, motivating and positive learning environment, they are empowered as learners and gain confidence professionally in their abilities to ensure safe and better healthcare for patients. Further, a new link was established with the MSc in Public Health programme in the University of Limerick through this placement, forging a new strategic relationship for the HTA Directorate.

Vignette 6

HIQA has been working towards the successful implementation of the EU Regulation on Health Technology Assessment (HTAR) and is represented on the Coordination Group and its Joint Clinical Assessment and Methodological and Procedural Guidance subgroups, as well as European Commission HTA Committee which oversees the development of the implementing acts for HTAR. HIQA also participated in the work of the Heads of HTA Agencies Group (HAG) and a member of the HTA SMT was appointed to the Secretariat of the HAG in 2024.

To support the successful implementation of the HTAR, HIQA along with 19 other European organisations from a total of 13 countries, was granted EU funding worth €1 million to undertake a project which aims to strengthen the long-term capacity and expertise of HTA bodies in implementing HTAR effectively and in a sustainable manner. The project is called 'HAG INSIGHT', which stands for, 'Heads of HTA Agencies Group Initiative for Knowledge and Skill Enhancement in Health Technology Assessment Regulation.' Substantial work was also conducted throughout 2024 by HIQA alongside its European partners, representing a total of 21 EU countries, to establish a consortium to support the administration of the Joint Clinical Assessments and Joint Scientific Consultations under HTAR.

5. Change

Change is intended to measure the informing of decision-making and health system benefits, including report advice followed; adoption of published guidelines; or skills and training of HTA Directorate staff.

Medium-term

Evidence informed decision-making

- Decision to change the childhood immunisation programme to include varicella (chickenpox) vaccination.
- Decision to extend the seasonal influenza vaccination programme to include adults aged 60 years and older.
- Informed decision-making regarding the choice of standard or enhanced inactivated influenza vaccines for older adults in the HSE Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Programme.
- Decision not to fund a herpes zoster vaccination programme for older adults based on the submitted price, with the potential to reconsider subject to more favourable cost effectiveness.
- Informed the ongoing decision-making process regarding potential RSV immunisation programme in infants and or older adults.
- Decision to generically justify ¹⁷⁷Lutetium PSMA radioligand therapy for the treatment of metastatic castrate-resistant prostate cancer.
- Informed national policy with regards to fertility preservation for medical reasons.
- Informed updates to the National Clinical Effectiveness Committee (NCEC) Standards.
- Informed the deliberations of the National Screening Advisory Committee.

Skills and knowledge gained through conference, course or training attendance

- Structured Population health, Policy and Health-services Research Education (SPHeRE) conference (13 staff members)
- Health Science Libraries Group Annual (HSLG) Conference (1 staff member)
- Activity Based Funding Conference (3 staff members)
- European Association for Health Information and Libraries (EAHIL) Conference (1 staff member)
- Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) summer school (1 staff member)
- Health Technology Assessment International (HTAi) 2024 (6 staff members)
- International Network of Agencies for Health Technology Assessment (INAHTA) Conference (1 staff member)
- Global Evidence Summit 2024 (3 staff members)
- National Patient Safety Office (NPSO) Conference 2024 (7 staff members)

- Launch of National PPI Festival 2024 (1 staff member)
- EQUIPS Research Network Inaugural In-person Event (1 staff member)
- ISPOR Europe 2024 (4 staff members)
- HealthTech Ireland Symposium (1 staff member)
- Annual Irish Institute of Radiography and Radiation Therapy Conference (1 staff member)
- Irish Nuclear Medicine Association (1 staff member)
- Radiation Safety Study Day (2 staff members)
- European Public Health (EPH) Conference (6 staff members)
- HSE Patient and Public Partnership 2024 (2 staff members)
- INGUIDE Certified Guideline Panel Member course (1 staff member)
- INGUIDE Certified Guideline Methodologist (1 staff member)
- Certificate in Professional Irish (1 staff member)
- Mental Health First Responder Training (1 staff member)
- Advanced Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (with diagnostic test accuracy focus) (1 staff member)
- Management Fundamentals (4 staff members)
- Evidence Synthesis Ireland – Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation (GRADE) training (2 staff members)
- Striving for efficient evidence synthesis and guideline development through the use of technology (All HTA staff members)

Vignette 7

The National Screening Advisory Committee (NSAC) is an independent expert committee that makes recommendations to the Minister for Health on proposals for new national population screening programmes, or changes to existing programmes. At the request of the Department of Health, the HTA Directorate within HIQA undertakes evidence synthesis and provides evidence-based advice to NSAC on behalf of the Minister for Health. The NSAC's fourth annual report was published on the 29 of October 2024 by the then Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly. The 2023 Annual Report, published in August 2024, is available for download on the [NSAC website](#).

The NSAC annual report noted that several evidence reports from HIQA, commissioned by the Committee, informed recommendations to the Minister for Health. These included the Health Technology Assessment (HTA) of the addition of spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) to the National Newborn Bloodspot Screening Programme, which resulted in an approval by the Minister for Health in November 2023 to add SMA to the newborn bloodspot screening programme, and HIQA's Evidence review of universal ultrasound screening for developmental dysplasia of the hip (DDH) in infants in Ireland, for which a recommendation was made to the Minister for Health in Q1 2024.

The NSAC annual report also noted the commencement of the HIQA HTA on extending the BowelScreen programme to those aged 50 to 54, and the HTA on screening for

abdominal aortic aneurysm in men. Former Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly noted that an evidence-based approach is crucial to the continuing development of Ireland's screening programmes, and collaboration with HIQA via HTAs is an essential component of this. He further stated that:

"I'm very pleased to confirm that additional resources being made available in 2024 will expand HIQA's capacity to conduct evidence reviews, thereby supporting NSAC to advance its work programme. This is important in the context of constantly emerging new developments and breakthroughs in the identification and treatment of newborn conditions. Notably, this will provide a platform for future expansion of the NBS programme, in line with Government commitments."

– **Former Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly**

Vignette 8

The Department of Health requested HIQA to carry out a HTA on the expansion of the childhood immunisation schedule to include varicella (chickenpox) vaccination which was successfully completed and published on 13 July 2023.

In 2024, the then Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly, advised that having considered the findings of the HTA, he has approved the introduction of the varicella vaccine to the primary childhood immunisation programme.

Subsequently, the Health Service Executive announced a series of changes to the primary childhood immunisation schedule, applicable to all babies born on or after 1 October 2024. This includes the introduction of the chickenpox (varicella) vaccine: dose 1 at 12 months old and dose 2 in junior infants (4/5 years old). Please find more information [here](#).

Vignette 9

To support the development of a national fertility preservation policy for Ireland, the Department of Health requested HIQA to undertake a review of publicly-funded fertility preservation services for medical reasons in selected countries. This review was completed by the Public Health team and published on 18 October 2024. This scoping review describes what services are publicly funded, who these services are available to, and any further service delivery considerations outlined within the selected countries.

In response to this publication, the Chief Medical Officer, Professor Mary Horgan wrote to Dr Mairin Ryan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Health Technology Assessment and stated the following:

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank and commend you and Dr Michelle Norris and the HIQA Evaluation team on the comprehensive and detailed report 'Summary of publicly-funded services for fertility preservation for medical reasons in selected countries' recently submitted to the Department. It is detailed and informative and will be most helpful in informing the Department's policy position in this area."

– **Chief Medical Officer, Professor Mary Horgan**

6. Conclusion

The Knowledge Sharing and Impact Assessment Report for 2024 demonstrates the significant impact of our work across the healthcare system. The HTA Directorate has continuously evolved and restructured in order to expand work streams and to facilitate additional functions. We look forward to exciting new projects and a new function in 2025. For example, at request of the Minister for Health, the HTA Directorate along with colleagues from the Healthcare Regulation Directorate, commenced a review of urgent and emergency care in Ireland's Mid West health region with the primary objective of ensuring safe, quality, acute care in the region. Significant work is being undertaken in this regard. The Directorate is also looking to advance work on a new work stream focussed on the conduct of JCAs under the HTAR. Additionally, substantial developmental work began in 2024 to support a move of the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) to HIQA, with its work becoming a statutory function of the authority. This committee is set up to

provide independent advice in relation to immunisation practices. As part of this move, the NIAC secretariat, which provides clinical, technical and administrative support to the Committee will become part of the HTA Directorate, with the aim for implementation in 2025.

Evaluation of the impact of our work is an essential component in understanding the extent to which it informs decision making and also its visibility to the general public. Dissemination of our work and making it subject to independent peer review provides reassurance of its quality and that it is carried out in accordance with international best practice. The Knowledge Sharing and Impact Assessment Report for 2024 demonstrates that the broad range of activities undertaken by the HTA Directorate continue to have a substantial impact and influence both nationally and internationally.

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