

## OP50 Health Equity Considerations In HTA: A Case Example Of Prenatal Screening

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**Introduction.** The Washington Health Technology Assessment (HTA) program has been guiding coverage decisions in the state since 2007. The Center for Evidence-based Policy works with the program to develop evidence-based HTA reports. In 2020, we presented an HTA on cell-free DNA prenatal screening for chromosomal aneuploidies. In the committee's discussion, questions around access to screening tests and to prenatal care more generally were raised. We present a case study of how health equities were considered in the development of coverage criteria.

**Methods.** We conducted an HTA using standard systematic review methodologies. Outcomes focused on test accuracy and the impact of screening. We did not look for evidence on access to prenatal screening tests or people's experience of prenatal screening. We reviewed the meeting transcript to identify issues of health equity and how they influenced the final decision.

**Results.** During the discussion of the evidence, the committee raised concerns around equitable access to cell-free DNA tests and prenatal screening, including: direct costs to the person; access to the full range of prenatal screening, including ultrasound; and, uptake of prenatal screening. Based on the findings from the evidence report, expert testimony, and public comment, the committee voted to cover cell-free DNA prenatal screening for chromosomal aneuploidies unconditionally.

**Conclusions.** Health equity is increasingly important in healthcare decision-making. Decision makers should consider how a decision may reduce health inequities and how it may inadvertently increase existing health inequities. Decision makers also need to understand the context within which the decision will be implemented. Consideration of health equity can be addressed in a number of ways, for example through systematic review of equity issues or patient experience or through the use of contextual knowledge from expert and public testimony. Regardless of the method, decision makers should remain transparent in how health equity considerations influenced their final determination.

## OP51 Improving Childhood Cancer Management And Financing In Ghana: Results From Stakeholder Mapping and Analysis

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**Introduction.** Coverage of childhood cancer treatment under the Ghanaian National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) has been a policy discussion recently. To improve priority setting, Ghana introduced and used health technology assessment (HTA) processes to guide the resource allocation. To understand the role of stakeholders throughout the HTA lifecycle and for this decision, a stakeholder mapping and engagement was undertaken. We share our results of this mapping and analysis for improving management and financing of childhood cancers in Ghana.

**Methods.** We used two main approaches; first, we undertook a systematic policy documents and literature review of stakeholders relevant in childhood cancer management and financing in Ghana. This was followed by a stakeholder engagement workshop of key stakeholders from the Ministry of Health, Ghana Health Service (GHS), National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA), academia, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private sector, teaching hospitals, patient groups, and civil society organizations. Participation was done in-person and virtual. Questions were moderated using a focus group discussion approach where responses were recorded. Data were analysed using synthesis and development of themes. Mapping of stakeholders was done using Mendelow's power-interest grid.

**Results.** The mapping identified eight key stakeholders in different roles: policy makers (Ministry of Health), payer (NHIA), healthcare providers (teaching hospitals, GHS, private hospitals), pharmaceutical companies, patient group (Ghana Parents Association for Childhood Cancers), and advocacy group (NGOs). Analysis showed that power and interest are concentrated with Ministry of Health and NHIA primarily because of control over resources. Also, while healthcare providers, patient groups, and advocacy groups have high interest, their power ranges from low to moderate. Further analysis of data from the workshop revealed that inability to pay for high cost of treatment leads to treatment abandonment. Payment for treatment was mainly out-of-pocket and by donation from philanthropist.

**Conclusions.** There was a strong will from stakeholders to extend coverage of the NHIS to childhood cancers in Ghana. Stakeholder engagement is a powerful tool and should be an integral part of every HTA process.

## OP52 Health Technology Assessment Of Pain-Free Blood Draw Devices In Pediatrics

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**Introduction.** Blood collection in a pediatric population is a time-consuming activity and an unpleasant experience. Moreover, many laboratory tests require only small amounts of blood while larger quantity of blood is usually drawn, generating excess waste that must be properly disposed of. To solve patient concerns and workflow inefficiencies biomedical companies developed Pain-Free Blood Draw (PFBD) devices. The aim of this health technology assessment