

## In Memoriam

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# In Memoriam: H. David Banta

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According to John F. Kennedy “one man can make a difference and every man should try” (1). It is therefore with great sadness to inform you that our beloved David Banta passed away on 10 Mar 2022 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. David has had a huge impact on the establishment and development of health technology assessment (HTA) (2) and has made a difference to many of us in the HTA field.

David received his Medical Doctor Degree from Duke University, and obtained Masters Degrees of Public Health and of Sociology from Harvard University in the US (3). He taught community medicine and public health at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York, and became an associate fellow of the Milbank Faculty. Thereafter, he joined the US Congressional Office of Technology Assessment (OTA). Under David’s leadership from 1977 to 1983, the Health Program of OTA played a leading role in establishing HTA, and its work was highly influential in the early development of HTA around the world.

In 1983, he joined the World Health Organization (WHO) and became Deputy Director of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). Two years later he moved to the Netherlands to coordinate a joint WHO/Dutch Ministry of Health project on future health care technology (4). From 1989 to 2003, he was affiliated at the Netherlands Organization for Applied Scientific Research, continuing as a half-time staff member of WHO until 1993. During 1994–7, he led the pioneering EUR-ASSESS project, a European Commission-funded project to develop coordination of HTA activities in Europe (5), and its successor HTA-Europe. These projects were instrumental in establishing a formal basis for HTA collaboration in Europe and a spirit of cooperation that has endured into the present (i.e., EUnetHTA). During his career, he consulted many times for the World Bank, supporting governments and national HTA programs, including those in middle-income countries, which had his key interest. For example, he was involved in setting up HTA programs and training activities in Brazil, China, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Malaysia, Mexico, Poland, Russia, Serbia, and Turkey. In addition, he was Professor of Public Health at the University of Maastricht, the Netherlands and Visiting Professor of Public Health at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine and The Boston University School of Public Health in the US.

David was one of the founders of the International Society for Technology Assessment in Health Care, HTA International (HTAi) predecessor. He edited the Society’s newsletter for more than 10 years, participated in establishing HTAi, and has been a member of the Editorial Board of the International Journal of Technology Assessment in Health Care since its founding in 1999.

David was an engaging, open-minded, loving person who was passionate about HTA and greatly enjoyed life. We will deeply miss him as a wise and inspirational colleague, mentor, teacher, and as a loyal friend who enriched us in many ways. When we talk about HTA we breathe his legacy; he definitely will continue to be in our hearts and minds.

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