METHODS:

The number, types, and methodological attributes of RAs produced over a 25-year partnership with a single requestor were reviewed. The reasons for developmental changes in RA products over time were charted to document the push-pull tension between requestor needs and HTA best practice. The elements contributing to the relevance and impact, or not, of the RAs were also identified.

RESULTS:

Results demonstrated the dynamic relationship required for HTA researchers to meet best practice and requestor needs. As literature search spans lengthened and data analyses became more complex, limitations were imposed on RAs to fulfill the requirements of timeliness, utility, and best practice. Adaptations were driven by requestor, researcher, and the external policy environment. Facilitators of RA utility for HTA requestors include: asking focused, well-articulated questions; specifying the request's purpose; providing detailed information about local context and other relevant issues; and understanding the risk of bias associated with RAs. Considerations for HTA doers include: assembling a team using a triage process; involving requestors throughout RA development; negotiating deliverables and timelines using a HTA product matrix; transparently reporting methods; narratively describing methodological issues; and internally reviewing the draft RAs.

CONCLUSIONS:

RAs are a useful component of HTA programs. To keep these products relevant and useful, HTA agencies must allow RAs to evolve according to need, but with grounding in good practice. Negotiating the line between rigor and relevance is a key skill for HTA agencies. Having the right team is helpful.

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OP78 Code Of Ethics: Missing Cord In The Evidence-To-Action Connection?

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INTRODUCTION:

Ethics is a set of moral principles that guide our behavior when it affects others. HTAi acknowledges the fundamental values of "service, collaboration, professionalism and integrity, transparency, accountability". Ethical conduct balances self-interest with consequences of that behavior for others. Unethical behavior has serious personal consequences and in the case of HTA practitioners it can damage stakeholder trust and thereby hinder implementation of evidence by policy makers. Compliance with regulation alone may not suffice in building stakeholder confidence. There is need for individuals and agencies to develop a 'culture of integrity' at all levels in the HTA process above and beyond compliance with the law. A strong ethical culture will foster trust of stakeholders, strengthen collaboration, improve implementation of recommendations and benefit society. This is the importance of developing a code of ethics to guide conduct and detail standards of professional practice expected of HTA practitioners affiliated to HTAi and related agencies.

METHODS:

I will argue for the development of a detailed code of ethics for HTAi and related agencies. To do this, I will explain how the code of ethics gives guidance and informs the users (HTA practitioners), and how they can guide stakeholders in the HTA processes. The public relations benefits of a code of ethics will also be discussed. I will explain why having a mere list of seven words as "values" is not sufficient guidance to professionals with diverse backgrounds who are collaborating in a multidisciplinary team.

RESULTS:

The role of a code of ethics in helping professionals to choose their actions well is an effective way to integrate ethics in HTA, safeguard the integrity of HTA processes, and improve evidence implementation by stakeholders.

CONCLUSIONS:

HTAi should develop a detailed code of ethics for its membership.

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OP79 A Meta-Framework To Inform Health Inequalities In Systematic Reviews

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