

Who we are

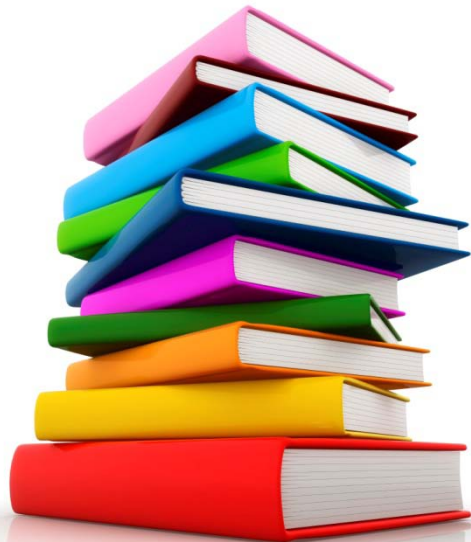
AHTA has nineteen research staff, as well as administrative support, and operates a strong multi-disciplinary team. This team consists of dedicated individuals with backgrounds, variously, in clinical epidemiology, public health, psychology, pharmacy, medicine, health economics, statistics, science and bioethics. AHTA also benefits from the support of several affiliate academics and clinical consultants.

Opportunities

AHTA has hosted several international undergraduate and postgraduate internship students from Germany, Italy and France.

Local students interested in conducting a research project with AHTA in the field of health technology assessment, evidence-based health, or health policy should contact AHTA Managing Director, Tracy Merlin (tracy.merlin@adelaide.edu.au).

Undergraduate and postgraduate students have undertaken both short and long-term projects with AHTA.



Recent publications

Hillier S, Grimmer-Somers K, Merlin T, Salisbury J, Tooher R, Weston A. FORM: An Australian method for grading recommendations in evidence-based clinical guidelines. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 2011, 11(23): 11-23.

Buckley E, Docter S, Morona J, Reddin E, Mnatzaganian G, Juneja V, Merlin T (2011). Prevention, Identification and Management of Foot Complications in Diabetes: Technical Report. Adelaide SA.

Mundy L, Hiller JE, Merlin TL, Letter to the Editor - The true role of horizon scanning in Australia: Who it informs and why. *International Journal of Technology Assessment in Health Care*, 2011, 27(1): 95-98.

Tamblyn D, Ellery B, Merlin T (2011). Brachytherapy for the treatment of prostate cancer. MSAC Application 1089.1, Review of Interim Funded Service. Canberra, ACT: Commonwealth of Australia.

Merlin T, Street J, Holton C, Mundy L, Tamblyn D, Juneja V, Ellery B, Reddin E, Scrimgeour S, Hennessy S (2011). Review of MBS items for specific ophthalmology services under the MBS Quality Framework. Medicare Benefits Branch, Canberra, ACT: Commonwealth of Australia.

Doidge J, Merlin T, Liufu Z, Tamblyn D, Jia LY, Hiller JE (2011). Vertebroplasty and kyphoplasty for the treatment of vertebral fractures. MSAC Application 27.1, Review Interim Funded Service. Canberra, ACT: Commonwealth of Australia.

Newton S, Docter S, Reddin E, Merlin T, Hiller JE. (2010). Depression in adolescents and young adults. Evidence Review. Adelaide SA: beyondblue.

For more information

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Adelaide Health Technology Assessment (AHTA)



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What is Health Technology Assessment?

Health Technology Assessment (HTA) is the process of systematically reviewing existing evidence on medical technologies, and health interventions and providing an evaluation of their safety, effectiveness, cost-effectiveness and impact on the health system. This independent evaluation informs health policy, and service delivery decisions and also impacts on clinical practice.

About Adelaide Health Technology Assessment (AHTA)

'Integrating evidence, priorities and values in health care'

Adelaide Health Technology Assessment (AHTA) is located within the Discipline of Public Health, School of Population Health and Clinical Practice, The University of Adelaide.

AHTA is dedicated to:

- Providing excellence in evidence based assessment of health care technologies and interventions for the development of informed policy and clinical decision making;
- Improving equity of access to health technologies in Australia;
- Producing high quality research on approaches to assessment; and
- Training and education to produce Australian and international practitioners of Health Technology Assessment (HTA).

Staff within AHTA have extensive experience performing evidence-based assessments on a wide range of health care technologies, procedures and services. Specific processes have been developed to conduct systematic literature reviews, HTAs and clinical practice guideline development using "best-practice" methodologies. These are featured in our applied research for the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, on behalf of the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC), Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC), and for the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). Other research has built on the applied research, particularly in the fields of health service disinvestment or reallocation, and direct-to-consumer marketing.

Applied research activities

Health care evaluation

In a systematic manner AHTA identifies, collates, appraises, and synthesises evidence (research) on different health interventions, to allow policy makers or health professionals to decide if the intervention is effective, safe, and cost-effective. AHTA provides these HTAs to the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC). This assists the MSAC to provide an evidence-based recommendation to the Australian Health Minister, on whether the medical technology should receive public funding via listing on the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS).

Health care research

AHTA is conducting research to identify the applicability, feasibility and impact on public funding of using the "linked evidence" methodological approach when assessing diagnostic tests. AHTA are also assessing the feasibility of the "linked evidence approach" in the evaluation of co-dependent technologies (e.g. pharmaceuticals targeting a specific biomarker identified by a test). A framework to assess co-dependent technologies for reimbursement decisions has been developed and is being piloted nationally.

Guideline development

AHTA plays three roles with respect to the development of evidence-based clinical practice guidelines: Selected senior staff act in a methodological advisory capacity, on behalf of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), to external developers, assisting with the development of clinical practice guidelines; staff conduct systematic literature reviews for the purposes of clinical practice guideline development; individuals also provide methodological guidance to the NHMRC to assist with the revision of standard approaches or processes of guideline development.

Pharmaceutical evaluation

Industry submissions to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) are critiqued by AHTA staff in terms of whether the pharmaceutical is safe, effective and cost-effective. This evaluation aids decisions regarding whether the pharmaceutical should be publicly funded through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

Disinvestment

In the 2009-10 Budget, the Australian Government agreed to put in place a new evidence-based framework to better manage the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) into the future.

A key component of this Quality Framework is the implementation of a systematic approach to the review of existing MBS items to ensure they reflect contemporary evidence, offer improved health outcomes for patients and importantly, represent value for money. The primary focus of the review framework is to identify and evaluate current MBS services that present potential safety and quality issues, or provide the opportunity to encourage more appropriate clinical use.

Please visit www.adelaide.edu.au/ahta to find out more about AHTA's activities.

HTA short course

Each year, at the end of semester two, AHTA and the Discipline of Public Health offer an intensive course in HTA.

The course takes a broad view of the assessment of health technologies such as medical procedures, medical devices, pharmaceuticals and public health interventions to inform policy decision-making regarding access to (and public funding of) these technologies.

