

## **EUNetHTA: An initiative to coordinate the European agencies for health technology assessment – with the intent to establish a sustainable European network for HTA**

**Finn Boerlum Kristensen**, MD, PhD, for the EUNetHTA Network

Danish Centre for Evaluation and HTA (DACEHTA), National Board of Health, Islands Brygge 67, DK 2300 Copenhagen. [fbk@sst.dk](mailto:fbk@sst.dk), [www.eunetha.net](http://www.eunetha.net).

**Background:** HTA is a multidisciplinary process that summarises information about the medical, social, economic and ethical issues related to the use of a health technology in a systematic, transparent, unbiased, robust manner. Its aim is to inform the formulation of safe, effective, sustainable, health policies that are patient focussed and seek to achieve best value. Many EU Member States have HTA agencies and others plan to establish such. Currently there is substantial duplication of HTA work undertaken across the EU, yet many areas that would benefit from HTA are not assessed.

**Overall strategic objective:** To connect public national HTA agencies, research institutions, and health ministries to enable an effective exchange of information and support to policy decisions by Member States. The aim is to achieve rapid uptake and use of effective health technologies that will achieve major improvements in patient outcomes and promote wise investment of resources.

**Project objectives:** To provide a robust multi-faceted input to decision making; use limited resources to undertake a wider range of HTAs; gain a better understanding of the links between HTA and policy making in different Member States; and support countries with limited HTA experience.

**Methods:** The network involves 59 partners and 24 EU Member States including international organisations working with informing health policy. EUNetHTA builds on but is not a continuation of previous EU supported HTA projects. EUNetHTA includes eight work packages to achieve coordinated, rapid, influential HTA work informing health policy in all Member States. Advocacy and communication strategies will be developed, which will focus on the needs and perspectives of HTA users. Stakeholder involvement will be encouraged in all work packages. EUNetHTA will develop and implement tools to provide reliable, timely, transparent and transferable information on the effectiveness of health technologies as input to decision-making. By doing this, the Network will assist the EU and its member states and the transition countries to plan, deliver and monitor health services effectively whilst recognising the need to consider national cultural, social, economic and ethical issues. Furthermore, the network will be responsive to improve input to policy and support countries developing HTA systems.

**Project outcomes:** EUNetHTA will facilitate transferability of reports among Member States by establishing ‘core’ information about the effectiveness of technologies that can be shared among Member States, thus avoiding duplication of effort; outlining the cultural, economic, social and ethical issues to be considered in national contexts; and supporting and assessing the adaptation of national HTA report to other contexts. A communication and information platform (and a clearinghouse facility to be implemented at a later stage) will be developed which can promote effective interaction between partners and users and effective use of evidence-based information. The project will include development of tools to improve the responsiveness of HTA to its consumers, pilot projects for different types of technologies and an evaluation of the network. The network will monitor emerging health technologies to identify those that will have greatest impact on health systems and patients and will support countries without institutionalised HTA activity. The improved coordination of HTA activities in the EU, and collaborative approaches to transferring HTA information into health policy and guidance could contribute to public health priorities and improvements in the health of EU citizens.