**HTA implementation in Sicily: a bottom-up approach**


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**Purpose**

In an effort to improve the Regional Health System (RHS) while containing the public spending, the Sicilian Department of Public Health (SDPH) has promoted the adoption of HTA methods and practices. With this objective the regional Unit dedicated to HTA, supported by the technical and scientific assistance of the Innovation Unit of the National Agency for Regional Healthcare (AGENAS), has implemented a specific action covered by the Technical Support Operative Project for Health (POAT Salute) 2007-2013. This paper illustrates the original approach adopted.

**Method**

In order to develop the Sicilian Network for HTA (SNHTA) a bottom-up approach has been adopted. This method consisted of shifting the "as-is" to the "to-be" situation by four strategic steps: involvement, communication, testing and training of all the people concerned in the process. The bottom-up approach was aimed to define the rules of SNHTA, ensuring consistency with the health system organisation.

**Results**

So far the project has developed the SNHTA composed by multidisciplinary teams for HTA both at health regional (NTHTA) and local level. Moreover, tools for HTA diffusion and integration in decision-making have been developed. Among others: the work-flow that rules the relationships inside the SNHTA, the conflict of interest statement form, the check list for mini-HTA, the HTA application form, the research protocol template, the open register for experts voluntarily supporting HTA and the regional guidelines for coordinating SNHTA.

**Conclusion**

The Sicilian "experiment" of HTA methods implementation by the use of a bottom-up approach toward a permanent network represents an original way to build HTA capacity spreading this culture in the health system. This is a dynamic process requiring a step by step adaptation to the context. Further work and time are needed to provide evidence of its effectiveness in the middle and long term period. We hope that people involvement in capacity building will make the HTA implementation more effective and efficient.

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