Statistical methods for HTA: establishing good practice and identifying opportunities for innovation

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Abstract

The health of the population may be enhanced by the use of existing and new technologies, but such technologies must be assessed to establish properly their contribution to health gain. The systematic and efficient evaluation of technologies relies heavily on good methodology, which in turn is intertwined with good statistical principles being employed in the design, analysis and interpretation of studies. Just as there is scope for developing and critically evaluating new health technologies, so there is scope for developing and critically evaluating statistical methods routinely used in Health Technology Assessment (HTA). Statistical developments and innovations are often reported and discussed in a statistical forum, such as journals or meetings, and it can take a long while before new ideas get incorporated in the standard armoury of HTA. We aimed to review new developments in statistical methodology relevant to HTA, with a view to making recommendations about areas where new developments are ready to be put into practice, and to highlight areas where there is currently inadequate research activity.

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