

COMPARATIVE REVIEW OF HTA COUNTRY PROFILES FOR UKRAINE AND GERMANY

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Health technology assessment (HTA) issues are in the top of professional discussion during last decade. Improving and optimisation of its functioning may play significant role in the increasing of access to the health of the population and guarantee universal health coverage in different countries. Beginning from 2015 WHO provides Global Survey (Health Technology Assessment and Health Benefit Package Survey) among 115 countries and areas, that amounted to 59% of WHO members. The findings of the second round 2020/2021 Survey for both Ukraine and Germany have been presented in the theses aimed to compare two functioning systems.

The 2020/2021 survey on HTA was developed by WHO. The respondent list consisted of officially nominated survey focal points in member states and areas [[Health Systems Governance and Financing \(who.int\)](#)]. Resulted all findings, it were HTA profiles for all 115 countries presented [[hta updated merged final.pdf \(who.int\)](#)]. Ukraine and Germany HTA profiles were compared by all 6 groups of parameters giving in the profile: Institutions and Governance, Available Resources, Assessments, Appraisals, Recommendations, Barriers.

Results. Both of countries have the HTA on the national level and describe it as systematic process to support decisions-making. And both approved the existence of standard methodology or process guideline and legislative and/or regulatory requirement to consider HTA results in health benefit package decisions.

There are two basic independent organisations in Germany, which carry out the HTA process on different stages – appraisal, recommendations and assessment (tabl.). It should be noted, the Federal Joint Committee (germ.: G-BA) is the highest body of self-administration in the healthcare system in Germany. It is commissioned by the legislature to make legally binding decisions on the benefit claims of around 74 million insured people and the remuneration of service providers in statutory health insurance [[Startseite - Gemeinsamer Bundesausschuss \(g-ba.de\)](#)]. Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care IQWiG directly performs health technology assessment. It receives contracts exclusively (as part of its statutory responsibilities) from MoH and G-BA. The so-called general mandate of the Federal Joint Committee (G-BA) also allows the institute to independently take on topics and work on them from a scientific point of view. Since 2016, the legislator has delegated to IQWiG a public offer

procedure for the evaluation of examination and treatment procedures, the so-called HTA reports (Health Technology Assessment). IQWiG's expert opinions serve as the basis for G-BA decisions on reimbursement of benefits by public health insurance companies. To achieve its objectives, IQWiG also contracts research with external experts [Institut für Qualität und Wirtschaftlichkeit im Gesundheitswesen (iqwig.de)]

Table

Organizations responsible for assessment, appraisal, and recommendation*

<i>Organizations</i>	<i>Appraisal</i>		<i>Assessment</i>		<i>Recommendation</i>	
	<i>Ukraine</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>Ukraine</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>Ukraine</i>	<i>Germany</i>
Pharmaceutical/ medicines appraisal	Expert committee of MoH	G-BA	HTA Department of State Expert Centre of MOH	IQWIG, G-BA	MoH	G-BA
Medical procedures	N/R	G-BA	N/R	IQWIG, G-BA	N/R	G-BA
Medical devices	N/R	G-BA	Since 2022_HTA Department of State Expert Centre of MOH	IQWIG, G-BA	MoH	G-BA
Diagnostic tests	N/R	G-BA	N/R	IQWIG, G-BA	N/R	G-BA
Population level health interventions	N/R	G-BA	N/R	IQWIG, G-BA	N/R	G-BA

*WHO Survey 2021, [hta_updated_merged_final.pdf \(who.int\)](#): G-BA: Gemeinsamer Bundesausschuss (germ.), IQWIG: Institute für Qualität und Wirtschaftlichkeit im Gesundheitswesen (germ.), N\R> no reply.

In Ukraine it is shown other situation, when all types of activity are carried out by the same Authority although different departments of it.

The list of health technologies in Ukraine consist from pharmaceuticals and medical devices only while in Germany from all categories giving in survey (see tabl.).

The second part of the survey “Available resources” describes that in Ukraine to professional staff of HTA body has involved 6-20 persons while in Germany – more 100 persons. About budgeting from public sector and private funding in Ukraine both of these resources don’t work for HTA... In Germany there is allocated public sector budget and 5% of resources are receiving from private fundings.

The third part of HTA profile, “Assessment” allows to compare HTA timing for both countries. Thus, in Ukraine it takes 1-3 months that may be characterised as fast assessment and is very positive in conditions of urgent access to health technologies for users (patients, population). At the same time in Germany this process spends 6-12 months. Clearly, assessment during 12 months sometimes may completely stop the

(universal) health coverage process. But it should be memorised that HTA process in Germany is functioning basically successfully. At the investigation moment it was approximately 100 assessments were performed in Germany for last 12 months compare 7 in Ukraine.

The fourth part of portfolio “Appraisals” is the most discussable in comparison. Best findings for Ukraine are the availability of the national guidelines for the preparation of economic evaluation and database of health technology costs or prices while in Germany this point is “no reply” and “no” respectively. Discussable point is the invitation of the stakeholders in the appraisal body to react/comment in Ukraine. There is no such option in Germany.

Skipping fifth part “Recommendation”, the last part “Barriers” should be described. For Ukraine internal experts have listed all 6 ranks of “barriers for use” and 5 ranks “barriers for production capability”. To the basic barriers to use were considered by prioritization: institutionalization of HTA, mandate from policy authority, qualified human resources, political support, awareness/advocacy of the importance of HTA and other issues. Among the barriers for production capability in Ukraine are data availability, dedicated human resources, budget availability, knowledge of methods and other issues. In Germany, political support and dedicated human resources have been listed by their experts.

Conclusions. Existing WHO’s Global Survey emphasises importance and actuality of HTA development all over the world. The analysed findings, namely, countries HTA profiles, are good opportunity for comparison and resulting in case of necessarily of HTA system improving. Taking into account dynamism both Health and HTA systems, it processes of continuous changes and reviews of the existing system. HTA should be renewed in defined period of time (established internal by country). As the future research areas in Ukraine, it possible to discover optimal fundings for HTA, because by giving profile, there are no fundings. As result it may find it reasonable to increase the number of specialists for assessment. An important component to the development and improvement of the HTA system in Ukraine can also be the settlement of the issue of specialists’ education, again on the condition that the requirements for specialists are clarified, because currently HTA is conducted by specialists of various qualifications, however, there is an educational standard for an expert in HTA approved in 2023, and whether this level is mandatory for makers in HTA and who has right educate such specialists can also be determined in the future. The necessity and importance of the functioning of the HTA system in Ukraine is undeniable, at the same time, the process of its development and improvement must be continuous, which, in turn, will ensure efficiency and benefit for the health care system and each citizen in particular.
