Author’s response to reviews

Title: Impact assessment of Iran's Health Technology Assessment Programme

Authors:

Bahareh Yazdizadeh (byazdizadeh@tums.ac.ir)

Farideh Mohtasham (f-mohtasham@farabi.tums.ac.ir; faridehmohtasham@gmail.com)

Ashraf Velayati (a.velayati@sbmu.ac.ir)

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Response to reviewer’s comments:

We would like to thank the reviewers for their valuable comments. Considerable changes were made to the article in response to the reviewer’s comments. The reviewer’s comments have been framed.

Reviewer #1:

My view about this manuscript is major revision; my comments are in below sentences:

1) I think, the reference number 7 is incorrect, please revise that.

Thank You for your attention. It was incorrect. We omitted it.

2) Some paragraphs about the quality appraisal checklists are redundant, I suggest, these should be deleted.

Thank you for your suggestion. We deleted some parts.

3) The results in abstract should be changed towards impact assessment results, not challenges.

We changed it to:
“The impact of nineteen equipment technologies and four pharmaceutical technologies were assessed in this study. Twenty researchers replied (response rate= 86.96%) the impacts of HTA reports from the researcher’s perspective’s questionnaires. To assess the impact of HTA reports from the target audience’s perspective, four policy-makers as the main target audiences were chosen and interviewed. The most common steps taken to disseminate the results of the HTA projects were the publication. Conducting the HTA had taught researchers and their colleagues’ new skills and had facilitated the securing of research grants from other organizations. The most reports had used the systematic review method but the relevant details had been scarcely presented about outcomes, costs, and analysis. The greatest impact of HTA reports on decision-making had been on policy-makers providing and allocating finances. Barriers in stewardship, identification and prioritization of topics, performance and dissemination of HTA results were the main barriers of implementation of HTAs.”

4) The selection methods of stakeholder should be elaborated in the method section.

We added a reference and changed our sentences to:

“… first the main stakeholders of the Iran’s HTA reports were identified from Yazdizadeh and college’s study(9) that introduced policy-makers at MOHME’s Standardization and Tariff Office, the Medical Equipment Office, the Food and Drug Administration and insurance organizations as the main target audiences of the HTAs in Iran. So, semi-structured interviews were held with their representatives, purposefully.”

5) Some HTA projects like PET scan, MRI 3 tesla, HBOT, HIFU prostate, Dual source CT angiography have big impacts on controlling of induced demands and controlling the market expenditures in Iran, I sensed this impact when I worked in HTA dept of Iran MOH as technical officer.

We assess the impact of HTA reports from the researchers and target audience’s perspective.

For assessing the impact of HTA reports from the target audience’s perspective, four policy-makers from MOHME’s Standardization and Tariff Office, the Medical Equipment Office, the Food and Drug Administration and insurance organizations as the main target audiences of the HTAs purposefully interviewed and the list of HTA reports that were included in this study was given to the interviewee to see whether or not they had been informed of the report results and what was the impact of the report.

For assessing the impact of HTA reports from the researcher’s perspective, we send them a questionnaire that examined the impact of HTA projects based on the Payback model.
Then we did not miss any evidence and maybe this incompatibility was as a result of some barriers that we mentioned in the text such as:

- Less number of researchers was aware of the impact of HTA reports.

- Inappropriate notification of the HTA Office and lack of its familiarity and interaction with stakeholders.

Reviewer #2:

Thanks for reworking this article for publication. Unfortunately I do not think the revisions you have made are adequate to make this article of publishable quality.

You have not referenced any of the literature in the field of research utilization apart from the Payback framework.

We added some references to our background.

You need to situate your article and findings within the extensive literature about the barriers and facilitators of research impact (e.g. Oliver et al 2014 systematic review).

Thank you for your suggestion. We added this reference. We also searched about other references, but HTA is a policy related evidence and it differs with basic and clinical evidence.

You need to explain and justify why you are using the Payback framework in your work.

We explain it in our background.

You need to explain your methods much more clearly, including justifying your overall approach, detailing the methods chosen and why, and being very clear about what documents were analyzed and how, and who the respondents were for the project.

We correct it. About what documents were analyzed, we should mentioned that as a result of sensitivity of issue for HTA office we could not be clear about the name of reports. But for reviewer’s information the list of HTAs conducted between September 2008 and September 2013 were:

In the findings you present lots of data but don't adequately discuss the data, nor link it to issues of research utilization and impact.

We would like to thank reviewer for its comment. We compare our finding and discussion part and changed them as reviewer requested.

In your discussion section there needs to me more reflection of your findings in relation to other studies and issues outlined in the literature.

We changed it.