Horizon scanning for new health technologies

The International Network of Agencies for Health Technology Assessment\(^1\) – define a **new health technology** as any intervention that may be used to promote health, to prevent, diagnose or treat disease or for rehabilitation or long term care (this includes pharmaceuticals, devices, medical and surgical procedures and organisational systems used in healthcare).

**Scottish Health Technologies Group (SHTG)**\(^2\) - the remit of SHTG is to provide advice on the evidence about the clinical and cost effectiveness of existing and new technologies likely to have significant implications for patient care in Scotland (excluding the medicines which are reviewed by the Scottish Medicines Consortium). This advice is intended to support the planning and decision making processes in NHS Boards. This includes a horizon scanning function to provide early intelligence on health technologies in development.

The Scottish Health Technology Group (SHTG) receives a quarterly report (Evidence Based Assessment Report - EBAR) of technologies that will have significant implications for patient care in Scotland. From this, the SHTG:

- Select technologies to further research the clinical and cost effectiveness evidence
- Provide advice on implementation
- Provide costing tools, including clinical and resource impact reports and costing templates.

Horizon scanning for new and emerging technologies - this section of their quarterly report highlights recently published reports on new and emerging technologies, for which cost effectiveness evidence is not yet available (due to the early stage of development of these technologies and the consequently limited evidence base, summaries are not provided).

The Evidence Based Assessments Report for SHTG 2011/001 (March) alone notes 25 emerging technology reports (evidence and forecast reports) including for example for:

- Repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (NeuroStar System) for major depressive disorder,
- Laparoscopic sleeve gastrectomy for obesity,
- Therapeutic vaccines for metastatic melanoma,
- Human insulin inhalation system (Technosphere Insulin Inhalation System) for type 1 diabetes.

**Health Technologies in NHSScotland** - a group is being established (the Health Technologies Strategic Direction Group) by Jill Vickerman NHSScotland to develop a strategic framework which will rationalise arrangements for the uptake of clinically and cost-effective health technologies to enhance patient care and optimise outcomes, while reducing inequalities in access and provision. Further, the group will seek to put in place measures for identifying ineffective or obsolete health technologies so that they may be withdrawn as part of a planned, evidence-based approach in order to accommodate new developments. Horizon scanning is part of the scoping of this work.

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\(^1\) [http://www.inahta.org/](http://www.inahta.org/)
Further reference sites

National Horizon Scanning Centre
(http://www.haps.bham.ac.uk/publichealth/horizon/index.shtml)
The National Horizon Scanning Centre is funded by the NIHR and aims to provide advanced notice to national policy makers of selected key new and emerging health technologies that might require evaluation, consideration of clinical and cost impact or modification of clinical guidance around 2–3 years prior to launch on the National Health Service.

Prof John Hutton – York Health Economics Consortium – NHS innovation – there are good examples of technology innovation which can make the difference these should not been seen as the panacea. ‘Technology and service changes can be cost effective in delivering health benefits but they may not reduce the budget cost to the organisation. Its important that decision makers recognise that investment is necessary to save more in the future’.³

³ National Health Executive May/June 2011 – page 24