RIHTA: the Italian network for HTA toward the HTA national programme on medical devices

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BACKGROUND

- The Italian context is characterised by a high degree of regional autonomy in healthcare themes;
- Only a few Regions have been independently establishing HTA and Early Awareness and Alert (EAA) programmes;
- Noticeable differences in mandate, definitions, and methodologies can be observed among them;
- Competences are unevenly distributed across the country as different HTA and EAA uptake schemes have been developed.
- In the fall of 2014, the financial law gave to the MoH the remit to establish a HTA national programme on medical devices based on regional collaborations coordinated by AGENAS.

OBJECTIVES

- Core mission for Agenas: to support Regional governments in establishing, improving, and maintaining HTA and EAA activities.

In 2009 Regions and Agenas agreed to create the Italian Network for HTA (RIHTA – Rete Italiana per l’Health Technology Assessment). Great support have been received from the Italian Ministry of Health (MoH) to set up procedures and methods for the management and sharing of the assessment needs for “non-drug” healthcare technologies.

RIHTA aims to:
- Spread of HTA and EAA culture;
- Establish new local HTA and EAA programmes;
- Improve the programmes already in place;
- Share the information produced by members;
- Facilitate collaboration among Regions on common healthcare topics;
- Support integration of HTA and EAA within (local) decisional processes.

RESULTS

- At today, the RIHTA network has 16 members (Regions, Autonomous Provinces, and Regional Agencies).
- RIHTA’s scientific and administrative secretariat is permanently hosted by Agenas, in Rome.
- For HTA projects, a Prioritisation Committee, involving 4 representatives of RIHTA members and 1 representative of the MoH, meets up twice a year, to prioritise topics of common interest.
- For EAA projects, all the members are invited to prioritise new and emerging technologies in need of assessment.
- By periodic calls, all RIHTA members have the chance to collaborate in HTA and EAA projects, sharing human resources and skills.
- Five HTA projects funded by the MoH have been carried out under Agenas-RIHTA agreement during 2014.
- Five HTA projects have been committed to Agenas-RIHTA for 2015 and are currently ongoing.

CONCLUSIONS

- RIHTA is a lively network acknowledged at national and local level.
- Level of collaboration among RIHTA members is constantly increasing around the defined schemes, processes, and common methods.
- Critical areas have been identified (e.g., rapid dissemination of results, stakeholders participation, IT management).
- Strategies and actions are currently being discussed to address critical issues and develop further the network.