



No. 37: Measuring value in new health technology assessments: a focus on robotic surgery in public hospitals

24 August 2020

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The current processes for assessing the merits of implementing new health technology in public hospitals differ vastly across states, territories and public and private health systems. There needs to be a clear and consistent approach across governments, health services and clinicians to ensure that evidence to support the value of new technologies can be demonstrated in terms of both costs and patient outcomes.

Evidence-based studies with a focus on clinical outcomes are vital as is cost benefit analysis, but this must be enhanced with data on patient outcomes and experiences in order to fully assess the value of the investment.

The creation of a robotic surgery program at Metro North Hospital and Health Service in Queensland provides an example of how robotic surgery for hip and knee replacements was assessed and implemented in a major metropolitan public hospital.

Recommendations

- There needs to be a clear and consistent approach across governments, health services and clinicians to ensure that evidence to support the value of new technologies such as robotic surgery can be demonstrated in terms of both costs and patient outcomes.
- To determine the value of new technologies we need to ensure that patient outcomes and experiences are measured and included in datasets through standardised systems or collections.
- Data and evaluation need to be more coordinated with an open approach to collection and sharing. Current arrangements around registries are not consistent and it is not always clear who decides who has access to certain data or who decides what to collect.
- Funding models need to be re-considered and adapted accordingly to enable providers to focus on outcomes that matter to patients as well as cost efficiencies.
- Strategies need to be undertaken to ensure that clinicians are more engaged with overall hospital objectives to identify innovative new technologies and enable access through the public hospital system.
- To demonstrate value, health technology assessments must also include consideration of equity. Are the right patients receiving the right treatment? Value is only achieved across the whole health system if everyone that needs it can access it.