SESSION II

HEALTH POLICY

INTEGRATING HEALTH ECONOMICS INTO THE PRODUCT DECISION-MAKING PROCESS: LESSONS LEARNED FROM DECISION-MAKERS

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OBJECTIVE: The purpose of this study was to understand the decision-making process used when selecting ulcer-dressing products, and to ascertain the use of health economics in the decision process.

METHODS: Diverse groups of nurses highly involved in product selection were interviewed. The groups included five home-care nurses (Group 1), four acute-care nurses (Group 2), and five nurses who spent some time in LTC (Group 3). Discussions centered on 1) product switching triggering events, 2) key decision-makers, 3) mapping the decision-making process, and 4) understanding of health economics. Information about the key decision-makers at different institutions was discussed.

RESULTS: 1) Performance issues were the most common reasons for product switching (66%). Product availability was the most influential factor (48%). 2) No differences in product selection criteria were observed among nurses in home, acute and long-term care. However, level and role of the nurse in each setting influenced his or her part in decision-making and product selection. 3) Product evaluation and hands-on experience were the most important elements for selecting a new or replacement product. The ability to incorporate the product into customized patient protocols was also important. 4) While nurses were somewhat familiar with the term “cost-effectiveness,” most preferred the term “value.” Approximately half used such information to support wound-care product decisions. Nurses were more likely to consider a product supported by a straightforward economic assessment rather than a complex decision analysis.

CONCLUSION: Product selection relies heavily on trial evaluations. In addition, published health-economic studies are often too complicated. In order for health-economic research to inform decision-making in the wound-care market, studies should: 1) identify target audiences and address their decision-making needs; 2) “speak” to their audience by using terms familiar to decision-makers; and 3) present simplified diagrams, charts or models.

MACRO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF HEROIN MARKETS IN THE EU AND THE IMPACT OF SUBSTITUTION TREATMENT

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OBJECTIVES: To develop a macro-economic model to assist European policy makers in assessing the effects of different measures to reduce problematic drug use.

METHODS: Existing economic behavior theories and different modalities of heroin use provided a number of principles and a framework out of which a cohort-level macro-economic model was created. A 20-year, Markov state-transition model was developed, within which a (potential) cohort of the adult general population makes the decision whether or not to initiate heroin use. The model processes information on the impact of substitution treatment on different sub-populations of heroin users and on changes in health, costs, and rewarding effects of the drug. The model is designed to analyze different policy scenarios (e.g., legalizing heroin: decriminalizing heroin, substitution treatment expansion, substitution treatment reduction). The model parameters are based on a literature review, expert elicitation, and (qualitative) economic input data. The model outputs are the expected changes in heroin use, health, costs, and rewarding effects over time. To validate the model, the results are compared to (qualitative) expert elicitation and analysis of existing quantitative data.

CONCLUSION: The model provides a valuable tool for policy makers who need to evaluate the effects of different measures to reduce problematic drug use. The model is flexible and can be adapted to different policy scenarios. The model results provide insights into the potential impact of different measures on heroin use, health, costs, and rewarding effects. The model can be used to evaluate the costs and benefits of different policy scenarios and to inform policy decisions.