Ethics & priority setting for HTA: a decision-making framework

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Jennifer Gibson, PhD
University of Toronto Joint Centre for Bioethics, & Canadian Priority Setting Research Network
Outline

- Clarify key priority setting concepts
- Identify common approaches to priority setting
- Introduce an ethical decision-making framework (A4R)
- Describe application of A4R to HTA
Key concepts

- **PS** = distribution of resources among competing needs and demands.
- **PS** occurs at all levels of the health system:
  - governments, RHAs, hospitals, PBM & HTA agencies, clinical programs.
- **Rationing** = resource allocation, priority setting, sustainability.
Priority setting approaches

- Evidence-based medicine
  - PS is an issue of *effectiveness* - ensuring “right treatment, right patient, right time”

- Economics
  - PS is an issue of *efficiency* – achieving best net “value” in allocation of scarce resources

- Ethics
  - PS is an issue of *justice* – allocating scarce resources justly among competing demands
Ethical framework: Goals are legitimacy and fairness

- **Legitimacy**: who has moral authority to make priority setting decisions about available resources?
- **Fairness**: when does a stakeholder have sufficient reason to accept a priority setting decision as fair?
Ethical framework: Process is important

- PS requires both data/info & effective decision-making processes.
- International experience shows difficulty of reaching agreement on *what* decisions should be made.
  - Competing values/mandates
  - Limited data
- It is possible to reach agreement on *how* decisions should be made.
Ethical framework: Accountability for reasonableness (A4R)

- **Relevance** – decisions based on reasons fair-minded people can agree are relevant under the circumstances
- **Publicity** – reasons publicly accessible
- **Revision** – opportunities to revisit/revise decisions & mechanism to resolve disputes
- **Enforcement** – to ensure 3 conditions met
A4R in action: examples

- **Relevance:**
  - ✓ Identify a multidisciplinary decision-making team
  - ✓ Define criteria with stakeholder input
  - ✓ Collect data/info related to each criterion

- **Publicity:**
  - ✓ Communicate decision *and* its rationale

- **Revision:**
  - ✓ Provide formal mechanism for decision review

- **Enforcement:**
  - ✓ Monitor, evaluate and improve the PS process
### Applications to date...

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Case examples: PS in HTA

- NICE (UK)
  - Public input on values - Citizen’s Councils
  - Rationales posted on public access website
  - Interactive website for stakeholder feedback
  - Formal appeal mechanism

- Cancer Care Ontario
  - Multidisciplinary decision-making body, including patients & public members
  - Rationales publicly accessible along with decisions

Priority setting requires both data/information and effective decision-making processes.

Priority setting decisions are value-based, so there is a need for legitimate and fair processes to address these value questions.

A4R is a practical framework for legitimate and fair priority setting.
References

- Daniels & Sabin. 2002. Setting limits fairly: can we learn to share scarce resources? Oxford University Press.
Acknowledgments

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- Tariq Asmi, Douglas Martin, Craig Mitton, Peter Singer
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jennifer.gibson@utoronto.ca