

Incorporating Ethics to Transform Health Technology Assessment in BC

Katherine Duthie & Manik Saini

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Disclosure

I have the following relevant non-financial relationships to disclose:

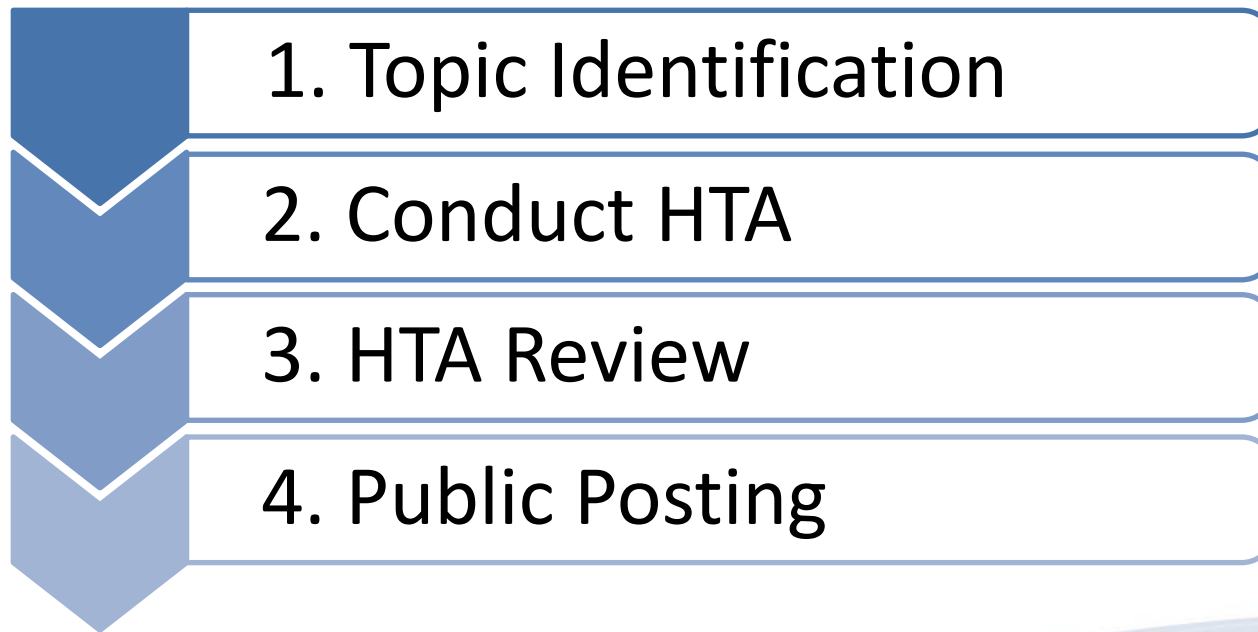
- Katherine Duthie is a member of the BC Health Technology Assessment Committee

Overview

- BC Health Technology Assessment (HTA)
- Ethics in HTA & Policy
- New Ethics-integrated HTA Process
- Implementation Considerations
- Transforming HTAs

Overview: BC Health Technology Assessment Process

- The BC Health Technology Assessment Committee (HTAC) makes recommendations on the public provision of non-drug health technologies
- Below the four main stages of this process are visualized



Ethics in HTAs & Policy

- Ethical analyses are incorporated to varying degrees by HTA-producers across Canada
- Prior to 2018/19, BC had not incorporated ethical analyses in their process
- Internationally, ethical considerations have been incorporated in to HTA work:
 - Sweden – National Centre for Priority Setting in Health Care
 - Germany – IQWiG
 - France – Haute Autorité de Santé
 - Netherlands

Benefits of Ethics in HTA

Conceptually

- Provides context for findings of other domains
- Brings forward underlying concerns which may be affecting deliberation
- Enables decision-makers/committee to be explicit about rationale for recommendations
- Can prepare decision-makers for public response/controversy

Anecdotally

- Enables balance of systems level/individual level consideration (e.g. balancing cost-effectiveness with individual choice)
- Helps to frame the conversation to develop recommendations

New Ethics-Integrated Ethics Process

HTA Step	Ethics Task	Person Responsible
Topic Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply checklist/triggers to stratify technologies to determine which technologies require an ethic analysis 	Committee Ethicist
Scoping*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with researchers, project managers and committee ethicist to identify key questions, outcome measures, etc. 	Independent Ethicist
Development*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literature review ID key ethical themes and considerations Develop any necessary new analysis Direct contact with HTA researchers to stay informed of process/key findings 	Independent Ethicist
Draft finalization*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review draft HTA Finalize ethics analysis in light of results 	Independent Ethicist
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The committee ethicist updates the HTA scoring matrix with topic specific ethical concerns based on the ethic analysis The committee reviews and scores the ethical findings alongside the standard scoring criteria 	Committee Ethicist

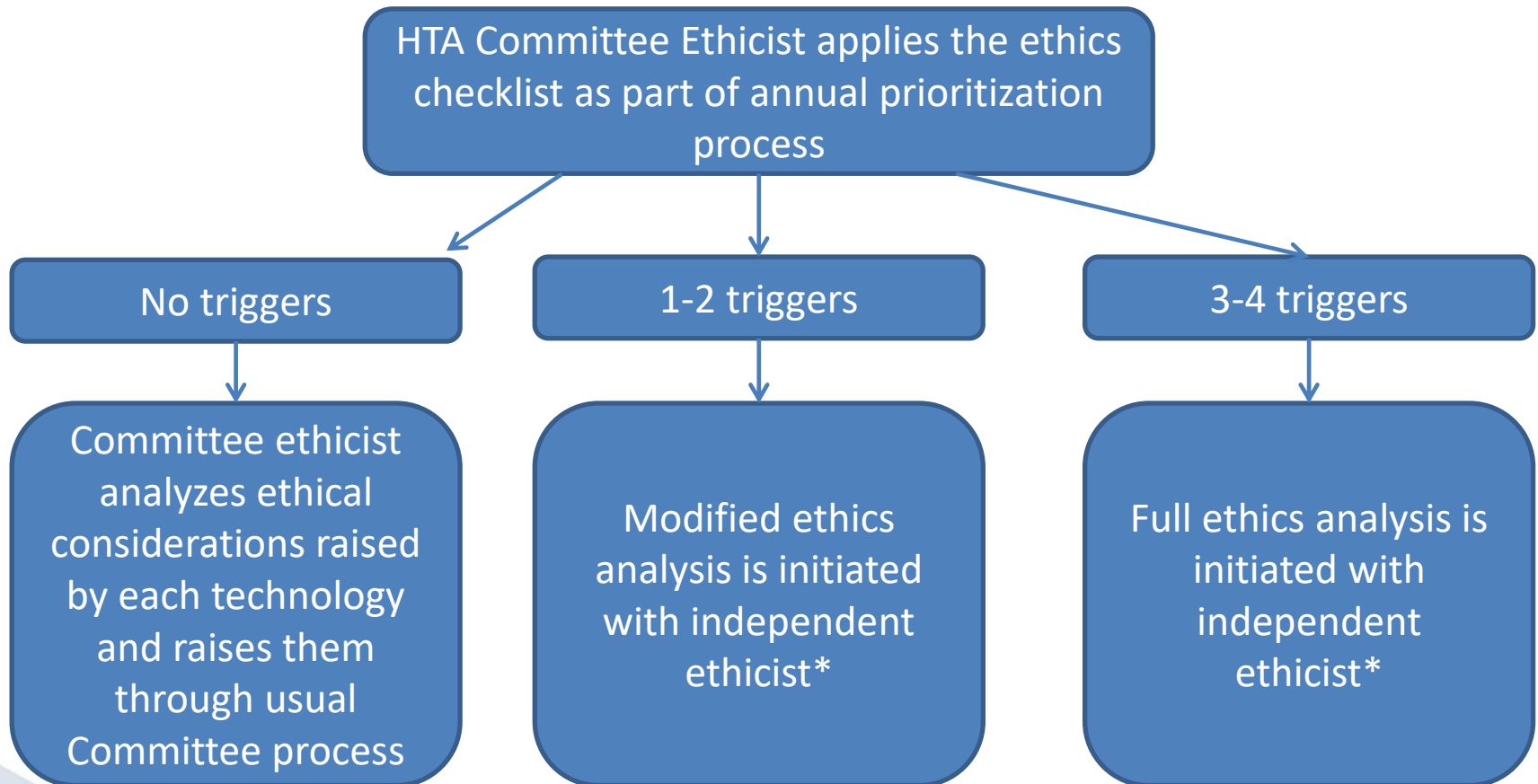
*Only performed on a limited basis when an HTA does not trigger an ethics analysis

Ethical Triggers

The technology or its implementation or exclusion:

- Affects human dignity, human integrity, the realization of human rights, limits or affects capacity for individuals to exercise his or her own autonomy, or has consequence for patients who lack capacity to make decisions
- Be related to screening where the disease screened is not treatable, where treatment is not publically funded, or where follow-up and treatment pose significant risks to patients
- Raises concerns about justice, including when the technology makes significant demands of system resources
- Involves technologies used for beginning of life (including reproductive technologies) or end of life related health care services

Stratification



*An ethics review may also be initiated at the Committee's discretion

HTA Stages	Ethics Task	Person Responsible
Scoping & Development	Collaborate with researchers, project managers and committee ethicist to identify key questions, outcome measures, etc.	Independent Ethicist

Ethics Analysis

The independent ethicist will collaborate while developing an ethic analysis

- Collaborate with researchers, project managers and committee ethicists
- Identify key questions, outcomes, measures, themes, etc.
- Conduct literature review
- Develop new analysis as needed

HTA Stages	Ethics Task	Person Responsible
Draft finalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review draft HTA• Finalize ethics analysis in light of results	Independent Ethicist

Finalize

The independent ethicist will have early access to HTA drafts for review

- The independent ethicist will review the HTA and identify any further ethical concerns
- The ethics analysis will be reviewed by two committee members for comment and additional clarifications
- At this stage, the independent ethicist will finalize the ethics analysis

HTA Stages	Ethics Task	Person Responsible
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="343 77 1537 134">• The committee ethicist updates the HTA scoring matrix with topic specific ethical concerns based on the ethic analysis<li data-bbox="343 139 1418 168">• The committee reviews and scores the ethical findings alongside the standard scoring criteria	Committee Ethicist

Scoring & Recommendations

- The committee ethicists will update the HTA scoring matrix to focus on and include the most relevant ethical aspects for a specific technology/intervention
- The HTA committee uses the ethics-specific scoring criteria as part of a multi-criteria decision analysis (MCDA) scoring process
- Based on the MCDA results, the committee prepares recommendations for the provision of the technology in BC

Implementation Considerations

- Integration between ethics analysis and other domains of HTA (as completed by contracted HTA units)
- Separation of roles between ethicist on HTA committee and consulting ethicist for a particular HTA
 - E.g. COI for screening ethicist (committee ethicist) vs. consulting ethicist
- Integration of results of ethics work in to HTA Committee deliberative framework
- The ethics process benefits/utility will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Transforming Health Technology Assessments

Realized benefits

- Ethics checklist has provided consistency and assurance that ethical considerations are included in the decision making process
- The ethics process has identified ethical concerns in iCBT, fentanyl urinalysis test strips, and Deep Brain Stimulation
- In the case of Deep Brain Stimulation consideration of ethical issues helped decision-makers be prepared for public response/controversy

Expected benefits

- Based on a screening of previously reviewed technologies; the new ethics process is expected to be triggered for 2 or 3 out of every 10 technologies reviewed
- Enables decision-makers/committee to be explicit about rationale for recommendations
- Deliberate incorporation into the scoring process is expected to better balance other considerations (e.g. cost-effectiveness vs autonomy)

Questions, comments?

Katherine Duthie – *Clinical Ethicist*

Katherine.Duthie@albertahealthservices.ca

Manik Saini – *Director, Health Technology Assessment*

Manik.Saini@gov.bc.ca