

**Title:** A cross-sectional study of health technology assessments in the area of public health

**Stojanovic J, PhD\*** (Department of Health, Kinesiology, and Applied Physiology, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada; Montreal Behavioural Medicine Centre, CIUSSS-NIM, Montréal, Canada), Reviriego E, MSc (Osteba. Basque Office for Tehcnology Assessment. Basque Foundation for Health Innovation and Research (BIOEF), Basque Country, Spain); Gutiérrez-Ibarluzea I, PhD (Basque Foundation for Health Innovation and Research (BIOEF), Basque Country, Spain); Lenoir-Wijnkoop I, PhD (Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Utrecht University, Utrecht, Netherlands).

**Background:** Public health (PH) interventions are the main pillars of sustainable health care systems. Health technology assessment (HTA) provides guidance in health policy decision making, but is traditionally focused on clinical area. PH interventions are underrepresented in the HTA field, mainly due to their complex design and multidisciplinary nature.

**Objectives:** To provide a global mapping of HTA initiatives related to the assessment of PH technologies.

**Methods:** We conducted a survey across 85 European and international institutions from September 2018 to January 2019. The questionnaire covered questions regarding activities related to the evaluation of PH technologies, including existing evaluations of PH technologies and barriers to reaching a decision and implementation.

**Results:** We received 52 responses (35% from Europe; 27% and 19% from North and South America, respectively), mainly covering HTA agencies, public administrations and research institutes. Seventy-one percent of institutions engaged in HTA in the area of PH, and 80% of them evaluated less than five PH technologies in the period 2013 - 2018. Respondents reported 76 PH evaluations, including chronic disease screening, prevention of infectious diseases, maternal, pre and neonatal screening. The most commonly reported barriers in HTA process were: lack of data; conflicting stakeholder priorities; and methodological issues.

**Conclusion:** The present survey reports modest engagement of HTA institutions in the realm of PH technologies. Evaluation of behavioural interventions remains extremely rare. Reshaping and bridging current PH and HTA practices will be crucial for tackling the burden of both non-communicable and communicable diseases.