FORMULARY DECISION MAKING PROCESS IN FIVE COUNTRIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR SINGAPORE

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PURPOSE
As healthcare costs increase globally, striking a balance between societal affordability of healthcare with individual access to state-of-the-art life saving technology, including pharmaceuticals, becomes increasingly significant. Important policy issues are raised when national authorities establish procedures to determine which medicines to reimburse, at what price and for which patients. The objective of this comparative analysis is to describe the process of drug formulary and reimbursement decisions in five countries and to discuss the implications for Singapore.

RESULTS

1. Initiation of the process
Manufacturer is main initiator
Clinician is main initiator

Allows for members of public/patient groups to initiate

2. Inputs into decisions

Assessment of information
Manufacturer main input
Review of published evidence
Expert opinion
No information available

3. Opportunities for public involvement
Public/industry involvement is part of process
Public members/consumer represent in appraisal committee
Industry given right of reply
No avenue to provide feedback

4. Transparency
Intermediate reports are publicly available
Formulary decisions are publicly available
No information on formulary decisions publicly available

METHODS
We reviewed the formulary decision process in five countries, United Kingdom [UK], Australia, Canada, Germany and Hong Kong and compared it to the process in Singapore. We focused on the following aspects:

1. Initiation of the process
2. Inputs into decisions
3. Opportunities for public and industry involvement
4. Transparency

Data collection involved:
- Reviewing the literature (searching with ‘national formulary process’, ‘national drug reimbursement decision-making process’, ‘regulation drug reimbursement’ in PubMed and Google Scholar resulted in 12 relevant articles)
- Accessing official websites of various healthcare authorities and various international institutes (such as OECD, WHO, European Commission etc.)
- Interviewing local and foreign experts

No information wrt Formulary decisions publicly available

Public/industry involvement allowed in appraisal committee
Informed and given an opportunity to comment
PBAC assesses recommendations to Committee
PBAC report is presented to Minister for Health

CONCLUSION
Reimbursement decisions in Singapore are not made publicly available, whereas all countries reviewed publish their decisions online. Singapore has no mechanism for members of the public or industry to initiate a drug listing process, or to provide feedback on the outcomes. Singapore may want to further explore international models and analyze the level of adaptation possible in the local context.