

Joining Forces to Enhance Evidence Informed Decision-Making in Eurasian Countries: a SWOT analysis

Authors

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Background: Rapid development in health technologies affects health policies of countries. Thus governments try to provide high quality, equal and accessible health care to public while managing health care budgets. Health technology assessment (HTA) has shown remarkable growth over the last 30-40 years and has been used as a basis for health care policy decisions in European and North American countries and in recent years it has rapidly become widespread in regions such as Latin America and Asia. Countries also contributed to the regional/global development of HTA by establishing networks according to their cultural and geographical proximity, or the commonality of systems. In 2015, Eurasian HTA Initiative was established with the leadership of Turkish Evidence Based Medicine Society and included the countries extending from Balkans to Central Asia that are thought to be new, but promising for development of HTA. The objective of this study was to analyze common strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) in the enhancement of evidence-informed decision making for the members of this initiative.

Methods: The initiative has organized two meetings in March and November, 2015, with participation of Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, Kazakhstan, Krygyzstan and Turkey with Tunisia as an observer country. Both meetings included workshops for facilitating interactive discussions and brain storming to facilitate a SWOT analysis.

Results: Lack of adequate number of certified/licensed EBM/HTA courses, absence of EBM related courses/lectures in curricula of undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate schools are some of weaknesses, but availability of web-based resources, and courses on critical appraisal, quality assessment and/or pharmacoinformatics-based courses for doctors, pharmacists, dentists, nurses in different countries in the region could be seen as some of the strengths. Although lack of regional expertise and some reliance on out of region expertise and/or professionals in EBM are major weaknesses, availability of trained personnel and some international educational activities on EBM in the region, potential for relevant information/experience exchange among the partners in the region are some of the opportunities.

Conclusion: The SWOT analysis has shown common challenges and opportunities for the member countries towards evidence-informed decisionmaking and the initiative is thought to be a major opportunity for a permanent network and a knowledge-sharing platform in the region.