Section 6.2

Economic Evaluation of Knowledge Translation

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Knowledge Inquiry

- There is an increasing demand for clinical decisions and policy to be led by economic factors (Kernick, 1998)
- Outcomes based on knowledge translation need to be quantified economically (Kennedy & Stokes, 2003; Ramsey & Sullivan, 1999)
- Practitioners hesitate to include economic data because of a lack of understanding or inability to interpret such information (Williams, McIver, Moore & Bryan, 2008)
Synthesis

• While economic analysis is becoming more prevalent, there is a need for methodological consistency in applying cost principles to knowledge translation (Hagberg & Lindholm, 2006)

• Economic evaluation is infrequently included in guidelines (Coyle & Graham, 2003; Vetter, 2007)
Three types of economic evaluation seem best suited to KT in healthcare:

- **Cost-effectiveness analysis:**
  - Outcomes measured in “natural units” such as life-years gained or numbers of cases detected

- **Cost-benefit analysis:**
  - Determining the “worthwhileness” of an intervention

- **Cost-utility analysis:**
  - Comparing an intervention effect of two or more dimensions such as Quality Adjusted Life Year, where both length and quality of life are considered
• Resource demand can exceed resource availability necessitating choices between competing demands
• This begs the following questions regarding economic consideration in KT:
  – When assessing specific interventions, how can costs be included as outcomes?
  – When allocating healthcare resources, what role does KT play?
• Determine relevant costs and benefits that are specific to the context, i.e., individual, organization, community, society at large

• Consider direct and indirect costs
  – Direct - Resources consumed by the intervention, i.e., cost of prescriptions, cost of equipment
  – Indirect - Costs as a consequence of the intervention, i.e., time/productivity loss, transportation costs

• Local cost and consequence data should be used when available
• Most healthcare providers are generally not knowledgeable about economic principles.

• Use of economic information is found inconsistently within the literature (Coyle and Graham, 2003; Vetter, 2007).

• There are methodological weaknesses inherent in reports, often leading to incorrect assumptions about effectiveness of an intervention (Hagberg and Lindholm, 2006).
• There is a need to promulgate the use of and dissemination of economic information
  – Determine parameters for economic evaluation of evidence-based interventions and clinical guidelines
  – Determine which existing templates offer the most beneficial information for use
  – Educate practitioners in basic economic principles and their application
• Evaluate the literature for increased use of economic data within reports

• Evaluate the literature for appropriate cost principles within reports
Monitor Knowledge Use

- Monitor use of cost and consequence info alongside evaluation of KT strategy or to inform decisions, e.g. in priority setting.
- Use of incremental ratios
  - Quantify through the analysis costs and benefits throughout different phases of the program
  - Based on the economic evaluation used to make implementation decisions, compare change in cost to change in the benefits of the intervention
- Assess both the resource use and expected benefits of various interventions. These include both the change in clinician practice and the health outcome changes at the client level attributed to the change in care.
• Economic evaluation provides a way of thinking rather than a definitive solution to a particular problem.

• Further work is needed to determine parameters for evaluation, to make recommendations for appraisal of implementation studies, and to determine how best to influence the use of existing templates for economic evaluation.
References


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