
CHBRP Approach to Medical Effectiveness Review

California Health Benefits Review Program

Janet Coffman, MA, MPP, PhD
University of California, San Francisco
International Society on Health Care Priorities
September 18, 2012



What is Medical Effectiveness Analysis

- Answers the universal question:
 - Does scientific evidence show whether these treatments/procedures work?
- Provides systematic and objective reviews of pertinent peer-reviewed medical literature.



CHBRP ME Analytic Approach

- Perform literature search
- Review pertinent literature
- Make a qualitative “call” on the literature
- If feasible, summarize quantifiable evidence for specific health outcomes



ME: Sources of Information

- Peer-reviewed publications
 - Meta-analyses and systematic reviews
 - Randomized controlled trials
 - Observational studies

- Other published/documentated information
 - Systematic reviews
 - Clinical guidelines

- Expert opinion - only if no studies available



ME – Terms to Categorize the Body of Evidence

- Consistent use of concluding statements helps policymakers

CHBRP concluding statement

- Clear and Convincing Evidence
- Preponderance of evidence
- Ambiguous/conflicting evidence
- Insufficient evidence

Translation

- It works
- It seems to work
- Studies cut both ways
- Few well-designed studies



Example: Tobacco Cessation

- Clear and convincing evidence from a large number of studies that the following treatments increase long-term abstinence from smoking
 - Counseling (multiple types)
 - Pharmacotherapy
 - o Nicotine replacement therapy
 - o Prescription drugs



Example: Tobacco Cessation

- Less evidence of the impact of coverage for tobacco cessation treatments
 - Preponderance of evidence that coverage is associated with greater use of pharmacotherapy
 - Evidence of the impact of coverage on use of counseling is ambiguous



Where CHBRP's Standard Method Works Well

- The bill focuses on a single type of benefit, service, or intervention
- The literature is substantial
- The evidence is consistent and of high quality



When CHBRP's Standard Method Works Less Well

- Breadth too large to address within 60 days
- Evidence differs across diseases or treatments
- Address terms and conditions of coverage



Standard Analysis Infeasible in 60 days

- **Challenge:** Number of indications too great for analysis.
- **Dilemma:** How to be responsible when we can't provide complete information.
- **Bill Example:** Oral Chemotherapy
 - 54 types of cancer; 40 medications
 - Roles of medications in treatment varied



Solution

- Presented general descriptive information about the medications.



Evidence Differs Across Diseases or Treatments

- **Challenge:** Strength of evidence varies across diseases or treatments addressed
- **Dilemma:** How to be responsible when a single conclusion cannot be drawn
- **Bill Example:** Gynecological cancer screening
 - 3 types of cancer & 3 conclusions



Solution

- Carefully write and format report to help readers understand that conclusions differed across the three cancers
 - Cervical – preponderance of evidence favors screening
 - Endometrial – insufficient evidence
 - Ovarian – preponderance of evidence that can detect cancer at an earlier stage *but* insufficient evidence of long-term impact on morbidity and mortality



Insufficient Literature

- **Challenge:** Typical of bills evaluating the impact of a kind of coverage, rather than a treatment itself, on outcomes.
- **Dilemma:** Not enough information to make inferences.
- **Bill Example:** Step therapy for pain medications.



Solution

- Noted the lack of direct evidence of effects on pain relief or control
- Summarized the few available studies on effects on utilization and quality of life
- Discussed the limitations of the literature



Outline

- Brief overview of private health insurance in US and CA
- What are benefit mandates?
- Overview of CHBRP
- Medical Effectiveness analysis approach
- **Benefit Coverage, Cost, Utilization analytical approach**
- Public Health analysis approach
- Takeaways

