

Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP)

making sense of evidence

10 questions to help you make sense of economic evaluations

How to use this appraisal tool

Three broad issues need to be considered when appraising an economic evaluation:

- **Is the economic evaluation likely to be usable?**
- **How were costs and consequences assessed and compared?**
- **Will the results help in purchasing services for local people?**

The 10 questions on the following pages are designed to help you think about these issues systematically.

The first three questions are screening questions and can be answered quickly. If the answer to all is “yes”, it is worth proceeding with the remaining questions.

There is a fair degree of overlap between several of the questions.

You are asked to record a “yes”, “no” or “can’t tell” to most of the questions.

Record your reasons for your answers in the spaces provided.

The 10 questions are adapted from Drummond MF, Stoddart GL, Torrance GW. Methods for the economic evaluation of health care programmes. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

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A/ Is the economic evaluation likely to be usable?

Screening Questions

1. Was a well-defined question posed?

Yes Can't tell No

HINT: Is it clear what the authors are trying to achieve?

2. Was a comprehensive description of the competing alternatives given?

Yes Can't tell No

HINT: Can you tell who did what to whom, where and how often?

3. Does the paper provide evidence that the programme would be effective (i.e. would the programme do more harm than good)?

Yes Can't tell No

HINT: Consider if an RCT was used; if not, consider how strong the evidence was.

Is it worth continuing?

B/ How were consequences and costs assessed and compared?

Detailed Questions

4. Were all important and relevant resource use and health outcome consequences for each alternative:

A) identified?

Yes Can't tell No

HINT: Consider what perspective(s) was/were taken

B) measured accurately in appropriate units prior to evaluation

Yes Can't tell No

HINT: Appropriate units may be hours of nursing time, number of physician visits, years-of-life gained, etc.

C) valued credibility?

Yes Can't tell No

HINT: Have opportunity costs been considered?

5. Were resource use and health outcomes consequences adjusted for different times at which they occurred (discounting)?

Yes Can't tell No

6. Was an incremental analysis of the consequences and costs of alternatives performed?

Yes Can't tell No

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7. Was an adequate sensitivity analysis performed?

Yes Can't tell No

HINT: Consider if all the main areas of uncertainty were considered

C/ Will the results help in purchasing for local people?

.....
8. Did the presentation and discussion of the results include enough of the issues that are required to inform a purchasing decision?

Yes Can't tell No

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9. Were the conclusions of the evaluation justified by the evidence presented?

Yes Can't tell No

.....
10. Can the results be applied to the local population?

Yes Can't tell No

Consider whether:

- *The patients covered by the review could be sufficiently different to your population to cause concern*
- *Your local setting is likely to differ much from that of the review*