

MEDIA BRIEFING

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Think Tank Releases New Study Supporting NHS Top-ups

The Stockholm Network today releases its fourth in a series of studies on Health Technology Assessment (HTA). The report, *What Price for a Year of Life? The Threshold Discussion in Health Technology Assessment*, looks at how HTA bodies such as Britain's NICE make their decisions on what treatments and drugs constitute value for money.

Typically, bodies like NICE measure the benefits of a treatment as the period by which a patient's life is extended and improved (using a measurement known as Quality Adjusted Life Years – QALY). But once this figure is known, up to what cost per year should a treatment be considered 'cost-effective' meaning that its benefits are worth the costs of the state financing this medicine? Is there a monetary threshold above which a new medicine should not be reimbursed (or, in other words, should be denied) in a given country? These are just some of the major issues that the paper examines.

Commenting on yesterday's announcement that the NHS will allow patients to top-up their NHS covered drug treatment, Stockholm Network's Director of Research and one of the report's authors, Dr Meir Pugatch, said:

"The threshold concept is too static a way of evaluating drugs and medical treatments. It's a principle largely based on a 'one-size fits all' model. Instead, public health care systems should allow more patient flexibility and greater co-operation between public and private health providers. Top-ups is an excellent way to start."

To view the executive summary of the report, please go to:

http://www.stockholm-network.org/downloads/publications/Executive_summary_1.pdf

To view the full report, please go to:

http://www.stockholm-network.org/downloads/publications/HTA_4.pdf

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Notes to Editors:

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