

Executive Summary

Sustainable Future Healthcare Policy and Utilization of Health Technology Assessment

Ji Eun Choi¹, Mi Seong Kim¹, Sukyeong Kim¹, Yeonhang Ryu¹, Eun Kyo Park¹, Eunji Park¹, Seongwoo Seo¹, Jihyun Song¹, Miryung Yoon¹, Min-ji Lee¹, Suhyun Lee¹, Kyung Sun Cho¹, Ha Young Choi¹

¹ National Evidence-based Healthcare Collaborating Agency

□ Introduction

The National Evidence-based Healthcare Collaborating Agency (NECA) holds an annual conference to establish its major agenda items relating to healthcare in accordance with the policy environment and social needs, as well as to discuss future directions for the development of Health Technology Assessment (HTA). Furthermore, as the secretariat of HTAsiaLink, NECA plays a leadership role in HTA in the Asia-Pacific region.

The 2018 NECA Annual Conference—celebrating the ninth anniversary of its founding—was held to respond to the domestic policy environment and global social needs, and the theme of the conference was “Expanding Health Insurance Coverage and Health Technology Assessment: Realization of Value-based Healthcare” Many people from various fields related to healthcare participated in the conference, including officials from the Ministry of Health and Welfare, experts in related organizations, as well as specialists from domestic and abroad. The conference was divided into two sections, each of which had a sub-theme. We invited experts abroad who have specialty in the each sub-theme as speakers to share their experiences and made an opportunity to compare those examples with current circumstances in Korea.

In May 2018, the seventh HTAsiaLink Annual Conference was held in Chiang Mai, Thailand. At this conference, leading HTA professionals from around the world held presentations and discussions on the theme of ‘Testing Treatment: Strengthening HTA for better healthcare’ In addition, in order to promote the 2019 HTAsiaLink Annual Conference held in Seoul, NECA carried out various promotional activities such as having a promotional booth and distributing NECA brochures and booklets about the Clinical Research Project for National Health.

Methods

I. NECA Annual Conference Planning

The advanced preparation of the 2018 Annual Conference began in the second half of 2017. First, the entire process of the 2017 Annual Conference was discussed and improvements to be made for the 2018 Annual Conference were identified in a research staff meeting. In addition, a set of potential themes was discovered through a careful analysis of the healthcare agenda, which broadened the range of choices. Timely issues were identified by considering domestic and international agenda items and health policy issues, and these issues were illustrated using major projects—including Health Technology Assessment Research, New Health Technology Assessment, and Clinical research for national health—corresponding to each area of the annual promotion plan that was developed in accordance with the mid- and long-term strategy of the organization between 2017 and 2019. A major goal of this process was to organize customized sessions at which various interested parties—including healthcare specialists and members of academia, the medical community, civil groups, industry, government, and related organizations—had the opportunity to expand communication and cooperation, facilitating their continuous and active participation. Full-scale planning of the Annual Conference began in January 2018. The main theme

was finally decided and the detail program was planned in accordance with the theme. The list of speakers and discussants was finalized, including specialists in the relevant fields, and finally, an appropriate and carefully-targeted promotion strategy was established.

II. Satisfaction Survey

As part of the preparations for the Annual Conference, a satisfaction survey among the participants was conducted to identify areas for improvement for the next year's conference. There were 8 survey items, to which the participants responded using a 5-item scale. In addition to the items on satisfaction, the survey included items that elicited opinions about subjects of interest and feedback from the participants.

□ Results

I. NECA Annual Conference Opening

1) NECA Internal Workshop

NECA workshop was held, to which specialists from different countries were invited to examine the current status of expanding health coverage in Japan and learn about disinvestment in Australia in order to respond preemptively to changes in the healthcare policy environment in Korea. The workshop was held between 3 pm and 4:30 pm on Thursday, March 22 at NECA conference room. Professor Niki Ryu from Nihon Fukushi University in Japan gave a presentation on the recent healthcare system reform in Japan, entitled 'Recent Debate over How to Tackle Rapid Increases in Pharmaceutical Expenditure in Japan' Mary Warner, the director of the Australian Government Department of Health, did a presentation on HTA and disinvestment experience in Australia. Most participants were NECA research fellows, and Professor Sang-il Lee attended as the external expert.

2) NECA Annual Conference Opening

At the 6th NECA Annual Conference in 2018, domestic and abroad specialists in various fields discussed implementing value-based healthcare using HTA in accordance with the government policy of expanding health insurance coverage. The conference was held between 9 am and 5:50 pm on Friday, March 23, with the theme of “Expanding Health Insurance Coverage and Health Technology Assessment: Realization of Value-based Healthcare.” During the conference, experiences from other countries were shared about approaches to expand health coverage and enhance publicness, equity, accessibility, and innovations in healthcare from the point of view of HTA, and discussions were held about future strategies for implementing value-based healthcare. The venue was conference room 401 at COEX. The conference was divided into two sections, and the second section had two sessions. There were 3 moderators, 8 speakers and 14 panelists in various fields from the Ministry of Health and Welfare, medical institutions, related organizations, industry, and customer groups. There were 459 participants in total: 345 outside participants and 114 NECA staff members.

II. Satisfaction Survey Results

A satisfaction survey was sent to the conference participants to identify areas of improvement for the next Annual Conference. Fifty-one participants responded to the survey, and the average score for the 8 items was 4.4 out of 5 points. The scores for the items on the role of NECA and its importance were 4.4 and 4.6, respectively, which were equivalent to those of the previous year's survey, and the score for the item on satisfaction with the environment increased by 0.1 points, from 4.3 to 4.4. Items 4, 5, and 6 had the lowest average scores (4.39). It is possible that these items had relatively low scores because the presentations were primarily about current healthcare issues, not about NECA, which led to an insufficient understanding of NECA and the goals of the conference. Another cause of

dissatisfaction was the inconvenience that participants experienced in the transition to a large-scale venue and the lack of information that they had received about the venue. Therefore, these results should be considered when choosing the theme and venue for next year's Annual Conference.

III. Follow-up measures

After the Annual Conference, an appreciation letter that stated the organizers would strive to accept feedback and a solicitation of further communication and cooperation was sent to all participants including moderators, speakers, panelists, personnel of government and its related organizations, healthcare specialists, and other attendees of the conference to build solidarity and to promote a network of knowledge and information. Furthermore, a video of each session of the conference was edited and shared via the website of NECA as well as other SNS channels of NECA such as blog and facebook.

□ Planning for the 2019 Health Technology Assessment Week

In 2019, NECA will be celebrating the 10th Anniversary of its launch, and thus it will prepare an opportunity for specialists from Korea and neighboring countries to share perspectives on the current healthcare issues and to address challenges within the region. In addition, the NECA plays a leading role in the HTAsiaLink, network of HTA organizations in the Asia-Pacific region, and 8th HTAsiaLink Annual Conference will be held in Seoul linked with the NECA Annual Conference. The 2019 Health Technology Assessment Week will be held on 22nd through 27th April at COEX and Seoul National University Hoam Faculty House. The former president of NECA, heads of related organizations, and healthcare policy and clinical specialists are invited as advisors to form an organizing committee for deciding upon the theme and program, as we encourage participation by specialists in various fields and related organizations. Three advisory

committee meetings were held, and continuing discussions will be held to finalize the detail program of the conference via further meetings.

□ Further Considerations and Conclusions

The Annual Conference has suggested that NECA will play a leadership role as an institute of HTA in a rapidly changing healthcare environment. Of particular note the 9th Anniversary Annual Conference in 2018, it was an opportunity to seek for expanding health coverage from the point of view of HTA and to discuss value-based HTA to reflect scientific evidence as well as social value, as the importance of HTA in the process of the government's policy on expanding health coverage was emphasized.

As such, the Annual Conference is a suitable opportunity to communicate with the interest groups including domestic and abroad specialists on healthcare issues and to promote the identity of NECA. The conference helped to establish a solid foundation for NECA's future developments and improvements of the healthcare system. As the year 2019 marks the 10th Anniversary of NECA, we will provide a forum to trace the past decade of HTA in Korea and an opportunity to promote harmony and friendship among experts from home and abroad in the field of HTA. Furthermore, we also expect that NECA will continue to play the role of the leading Korean agency in the field of HTA for further decade.

Keywords

Annual conference, Value-based, Health technology assessment