

## Pressemitteilung

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## Austrian Institute for Health Technology Assessment (AIHTA) presents Research Programme for 2021/22

**New research programme focuses on a combination of established and new programme lines, as well as on a balance between self-initiated, shareholder and third-party funded projects:**  
<https://aihta.at/page/currentprojects/en>

The AIHTA, Austria's independent body for scientific decision support in health care, has presented its research programme for 2021/2022: In addition to the programme lines "Horizon Scanning in Oncology", well established for years with the early assessment of new oncology drugs just before their approval, and the "Evaluation of Individual Medical Procedures (MEL)" for evidence-based reimbursement decisions for new hospital interventions, the "Covid-19 Horizon Scanning System (HSS)", which was launched in 2020, will also be continued. Furthermore, in addition to the five shareholder projects (e.g. on digital health applications or the long-term effects of a Covid-19 disease), two self-initiated projects (on the economic and social dimension of parental mental illness and on evidence-based reimbursement processes in Europe) and three third-party funded projects (support for children with mentally ill parents, EUnetHTA, CoreMD) will be realised in 2021. The popular AIHTA "Policy Briefs", short reports for rapid decision support, will also continue in 2021.

### Multiannual programme lines

The three programme lines pursue different objectives: In the Covid-19 HSS, selective searches for ongoing clinical trials and short descriptions of advanced products ensure that health policy-makers are informed at an early stage about the clinical status of vaccines and medicines - also with the perspective on evidence-based purchasing. The focus is on vaccinations in children and adolescents up to 18 years of age, as well as the effectiveness of vaccines in mutations. The oncological horizon scanning (since 2009) is mainly aimed at new oncological drugs that might have significant financial or therapeutic impact. Fact sheets on all new cancer drug therapies are made available to the regional drug commissions and payers on a monthly basis. Since 2015, the drugs are being evaluated by applying the ESMO scale according to "magnitude of clinical benefit" (MCBS). The third programme line for the evaluation of cost-intensive hospital services provides evidence syntheses (efficacy and safety) for individual interventions, which result in recommendations for inclusion or non-inclusion in the Austrian benefit catalogue of hospital services.

### Individual and third-party funded projects

The individual and third-party funded projects have a similarly broad range of topics: One project on digital health applications focuses on a synthesis of "Symptom Checkers" as well as the evaluation process itself and its stepwise integration in the reimbursement process and according requirements on the digital health applications before their reimbursement. The methodological foundation for the evaluation of digital health applications was laid by AIHTA in a project in the previous year. Another project is concerned with the late and long-term effects of Covid-19 ("Long Covid"): in addition to a systematic and critical review of the literature on diagnosis and frequencies of the clinical expressions of the disease, the focus is also on the rehabilitation treatments and support needs of the Long Covid patients. Other projects in the 2021/2022 research programme deal with implementation aspects of data collections of expensive gene therapies, the comparison of the effectiveness of different national strategies for non-communicable diseases or the

evaluation of tele-medical diabetes care in Austria, for example, with the help of a systematic analysis of evaluation methods of the actual effects of digital care. The third-party funded project "Village" (a cooperation with the Ludwig Boltzmann Society and the Medical University of Innsbruck) is dedicated to an evidence-based support service for children with a mentally ill parent. Formal and informal resources across sectoral boundaries are to provide a non-stigmatising, participatory support programme. The other externally funded projects concern the coordination of European cooperation of HTA institutions (EUnetHTA), whereby AIHTA coordinates the joint assessment of medical devices, and the new EU project CORE-MD, which is to develop methodological support for regulators in the context of the implementation of the EU Medical Devices Regulation. AIHTA is leading the work package "Networking and Community Building" and will - together with Team NB (European Association of Notified Bodies) - develop a training compendium for staff of Notified Bodies, clinical investigators by clinicians, etc.

#### Self-initiated projects and policy briefs

19% of the budget can be used by AIHTA for self-initiated research, including research projects dedicated to patient groups without a lobby. In the course of this, a project on the economic and social dimension of parental mental illness will be carried out in 2021/2022, which will provide an overview of the cost-effectiveness and broad effects of family-oriented complex interventions. Another self-initiated project will use a comparative analysis of selected high-risk medical devices in German, Austrian and French hospitals to investigate the relationship between the use of new medical devices with uncertain clinical benefit and reimbursement factors. Smaller projects will continue to be addressed at AIHTA in 2021 in so-called "Policy Briefs": These include a project on the evidence of stool DNA testing for the early detection of colorectal cancer, two projects on the transparency of sponsorship of patient initiatives and in non-interventional studies (NIS), and a project on the public R&D; funding of oncology drugs.