



Monthly Digest

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The HTAi Virtual Annual Meeting will take place from Saturday, June 19, to Wednesday, June 23, 2021. This year's meeting will explore the role of HTA in leading health innovation. This theme aligns very well with the mission of HTAi to provide an open platform for global collaboration that leverages collective intelligence to improve health outcomes.

The ultimate goal of health innovation is to improve our ability to meet public and personal healthcare needs and demands by optimizing the performance of health systems. Ideally, innovations in healthcare should deliver scalable solutions across the entire health system – policies, technologies, delivery methods, and so on – to improve diagnosis, treatment, education, outreach, prevention, research quality and delivery, and access to healthcare. This year's meeting will be animated by three sub-themes related to innovation in HTA: (1) HTA in a changing evidence ecosystem; (2) putting patients at the heart of the innovation pathway; and (3) innovation in HTA to catalyze new health system interventions. Collectively, the dialogue and discussions across these sub-themes will enable a deep exploration of the opportunities to grow the presence and impact of HTA across global health systems.

We had, of course, hoped to convene this meeting in person in Manchester, UK, but in the face of continuing uncertainty arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and with participant safety uppermost in our minds, we made the difficult decision to move this year's meeting to an entirely virtual platform. Still, the International Scientific Program Committee, the Local Organizing Committee and local host organizations have worked closely with HTAi to ensure that the program is informed by the very best in HTA that the UK has to offer. Equally, the virtual platform is being purpose built to enable meaningful networking and connection to share information, ideas, and best practices. I am confident that our Virtual Annual Meeting will be an engaging and enlightening opportunity for researchers, policymakers, health care practitioners, technology developers, patients, and others with an interest in HTA to gather as a community of peers and reflect on how innovation is happening now, and how it might happen in the future – all in service of better evidence, better methods, and better decisions.

I am enormously grateful to our 2021 Annual Meeting local hosts for their stalwart support in these extraordinary times, particularly when we moved from an in-person to a virtual meeting: The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), Health Improvement Scotland (HIS), and the All Wales Therapeutic & Toxicology Centre (AWTTC). I am also, as ever, grateful to my staff at the HTAi Secretariat, our Board, and most especially our members.

Very best regards,

Rob Abbott

rabbott@htai.org



Schedule at a Glance

We are pleased to announce that the 2021 Virtual Annual Meeting schedule has now been posted on our website.

The Annual Meeting will see up to 14+ hours of content broadcasted June 19 – 23, providing our attendees with plenty of opportunities to access live and engaging content regardless of their location or time zone.

Workshops

Workshops are scheduled for June 19 - 20, with half and full-day options on both days. Half-day workshops are 3 hours, and full-day workshops are 6 hours running from **08:00 -15:00 or 17:00 – 00:00 (UTC)**. With a range of exciting topics available, there is sure to be something to spark your interest from beginner to advanced.

[Check out the workshop descriptions and schedule](#)

Keynote & Plenaries

Keynote & Plenaries will take place daily June 21 – 23. There will be a focus on bringing together bright minds to give talks that are idea-focused and on a wide range of subjects to foster learning, inspiration, wonder-and provoke conversations that matter.

[Read more about our daily plenary sessions](#)

Panels

Panels are scheduled across 10 time slots June 21 - 23 at various session times running from **05:00 – 22:00 (UTC)**.

A maximum of 6 panels are scheduled in parallel that provide opportunities to hear from and engage with peers and colleagues who are discussing the big issues being faced in HTA related fields today.

[See the panel schedule and descriptions](#)

Networking

Networking is a key element of our Annual Meetings and being virtual will not be a barrier to the event. Attendees can drop into the Platform Orientation session on Saturday, June 19, to have a guided tour of the platform and gather the knowledge and tools to make the most of the virtual experience. Make sure to create a profile and tell us a bit about yourself! Don't forget to include your social media handles and share our hashtag #2021VirtualAM so colleagues can reach out to make connections and collaborate.

On Monday, June 21, there will be themed breakout sessions to join in on a live discussion centred around key topic-related questions or concepts.

[Secure these times in your calendar](#)

Social Events

Social events are an important part of HTAi Annual Meetings, giving attendees the chance to catch up with old friends and colleagues, let off some steam and make new connections. The Welcome Reception will take place on Sunday, June 20, with some fantastic entertainment, fun and family-friendly activities, and the opportunity to network according to your areas of interest and expertise. On Tuesday, June 22 *Catch Up and Connect* will give attendees the chance to learn a new skill and take part in a fun virtual class before breaking into groups to network and catch up with colleagues old and new.

Registration

[Annual Meeting](#) and [Workshop](#) Registration is still open. Secure your seat now!

If you have any questions regarding the Annual Meeting, please email annualmeeting@htai.org.

INTEREST GROUPS



HTAi Grant Gives Open Access to Patient Involvement and Low- and Middle-Income Country Papers

HTAi Interest Groups are keen to share good practice, but without funding for open access it can be locked away from patient groups and people in developing countries.

Thanks to HTAi Interest Group grants, the outcomes of projects undertaken by the Patient and Citizen Involvement Interest Group (PCIG) and the Developing Countries Interest Group (DCIG) can be shared widely in two new open access papers in the Society's journal.

The development of PCIG's newest tool to support meaningful patient involvement, the Summary of Information for Patients - international template, is the focus of one paper authored by sub-committee members: Nigel Cook, Heidi Livingstone, Jennifer Dickson, Louise Taylor, Kate Morgan, Martin Coombes, Sally Wortley, Elisabeth Oehrlein, Maria Jose Vincente-Edo, Franz Waibel, and Barry Liden.

The paper is valuable reading for any jurisdiction thinking about adapting and implementing the tool as it contains insights from different stakeholders about their experiences of a tool used by the Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC) and useful tables summarising the information patient groups sought.

You can [read and share it from this link](#).

Low- and middle-income countries have unique challenges for progressing universal health coverage with HTA, which in turn have implications for patient and citizen involvement. A joint DCIG -PCIG's project to explore the routes to involvement in low- and middle-income countries has piloted an approach to uncovering the context-related aspects. This work is now available in an Open Access article which provides rich insights into this complex research and potential routes for involvement.

You can follow this [link to read and share](#) the paper authored by sub-committee members: Anke-Peggy Holtorf, Debjani Mueller, M. Sharmila A. Sousa, Lauren Pretorius, Kalman Emry Wijaya, Sylvester Adeyemi, and Dipen Ankleshwaria.

Annual Business Meetings Approaching

This year the Interest Group Annual Business Meetings (ABMs) will be held online outside of the 2021 Annual Virtual Meeting. These meetings will be held by individual Interest Groups. The

ABMs provide an opportunity to get an update on group activities and completed or upcoming projects. Watch out for more information coming your way from the Interest Groups you are engaged with. The meetings will take place over the two weeks following the Annual Meeting in June.

RWE Post Meeting Report

Over 250 registrants signed up for our first quarterly Real-World Evidence and Artificial Intelligence (RWE&AI) Interest Group webinar titled "Compare and Contrast RWE Guidelines

Across Decision-Makers Including HTAs." The main goal of this webinar was to promote integration and collaboration among RWE AI Interest Group members.

Ashley Jaksa, MPH, was the presenter and lead author of the [study](#). She is currently the Scientific Partnerships Lead at Aetion, an RWE analytics platform provider. Her work focuses on collaborating with decision-makers, like HTA bodies, to help determine how they will use RWE and help them set standards for RWE submissions. She also works with biopharma customers to ensure their RWE is meeting best practices.

[View the recording](#)

If you have any questions regarding Interest Groups, or would like to submit a webinar topic, please email Sydney Ruller at sruller@htai.org.



Save the Day: Virtual Annual General Meeting of Members

We invite all our members to save the date for Friday, June 18, to join us for the Annual General Meeting of Members. The meeting is scheduled to start at **12:00 UTC**. The official Notice of Meeting and agenda will be circulated and posted on our website 21 days before the meeting in accordance with the Society Bylaws.

Call for Applications: Latin America Policy Forum Scientific Secretary

The current Scientific Secretary's term of office is ending in 2021 and we are now seeking to

appoint a Scientific Secretary to the Latin America Policy Forum! Applicants must be highly skilled individuals or organizations with experience with program management, scientific content (including translation from Spanish to English) and meeting coordination.

Closing date for applications: June 30, 2021

[Read more about the call for applications](#)

To submit an application and for all inquiries, please email policyforum@htai.org.

HTAi Announcements

We have recently welcomed a new Committee Liaison to the Secretariat, [Amren Thakur](#)! Amren brings a unique blend of industry, research, and academia and we couldn't be happier to welcome him to the team.

Every vote counts!

There are only a few days left to cast your vote for the 2021 Board of Directors Election!

Please take a moment to cast your vote as soon as possible. **Elections close on May 7 at midnight MDT.**

CIVICA (CES), a third-party electoral service, has sent you a ballot to your email on behalf of HTAi. *Please note that the email may appear in non-primary inboxes and folders (e.g., "Promotions", "Updates", "Other", "Junk", "Spam", etc.).*

If you did not receive your electoral ballot, please email us at info@htai.org.

[Read more about the 2021 Board of Directors Election](#)

If you have any questions regarding Board Elections, please email Tatiana Hagerty at thagerty@htai.org.