Social Values and Health Priority Setting

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Aims

- Not a literature review!
- To provoke further thought on values outlined in background paper
- To explore the range of interpretations of the values
Process values: Transparency

How might we define transparency?

- Everyone knows **who** makes decisions
- Everyone knows **who** makes decisions, **and by what processes**
- Everyone knows **who** makes decisions, **by what processes** and **for what reasons**

Basic transparency of institutional arrangements

Transparency of institutional decision making processes

Full transparency of institution, processes and criteria
Process Values: Accountability

To *whom* is accountability owed?.....

And accountability for *what*?

- **The Courts**
  - Meeting basic entitlements

- **Priority Setters**
  - Clinical effectiveness
  - Value judgements

- **Patients**
  - Clinical effectiveness
  - Value judgements

- **Health professionals**
  - Clinical effectiveness
  - Value judgements

- **Insurance payers**
  - Financial Expenditure
  - Cost effectiveness

- **Taxpayers**
Process Values: Participation

*Who* might participate?
Patients, health professionals, experts, taxpayers, insurance payers, citizens….

*Why* value participation?

- If people have their say, then they can’t complain at the result
- Decisions are more legitimate if different interests can contribute
- It improves the quality of decisions
- Those whose money is being spent should have a say in what it’s used for

The more of these reasons apply, the more we move from consultation to control.
How to define clinical effectiveness?

- Any intervention showing some evidence of benefit
- Only interventions that definitely provide benefits
- Only interventions that definitely provide benefit to patients, and are better than available alternatives

- Uncertain, lack of evidence, but available – solidarity?
- Certainty, good evidence but patients may wait
- Minimal risk to patients – paternalist?
- Patients take a risk – autonomy?
### Content Values: Cost-Effectiveness

How important is cost-effectiveness, relative to other values?

- It’s just **one factor amongst many** and should not have privileged status
- It’s **one of the most important factors** but not always decisive – however it might be unusual for other values to over-rule it
- It’s **of primary and decisive importance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Strong focus on individual-related values, e.g. dignity</strong></th>
<th><strong>Who benefits can be important</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less focus on individual-related values, more on collective ones, e.g. opportunity costs</td>
<td>Doesn’t matter who benefits – QALY is a QALY</td>
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What might justice/equity require in priority setting?

- All patients with the same condition should be treated the same. Health is the only relevant factor. Treats all individual patients the same; expresses health solidarity;

- Some patients should be ‘positively’ prioritised because of their status – e.g. vulnerable populations, the young, the poor, people with dependents. Factors other than health should be taken into consideration. May consider people other than patient; may express socio-economic solidarity;

- Some patients should be ‘negatively’ prioritised because they are responsible for their condition. Factors other than health should be taken into consideration. Focus on individual; autonomy important; may factor in capacity to benefit.
Content Values: Solidarity

What might solidarity require?

- All have access to ‘comprehensive care’, however defined - Full social solidarity

- All have access to a ‘basic package’, however defined - Partial solidarity

- Entirely private arrangements - Weak solidarity
How important is autonomy?

Autonomy as personal *preference* and personal *responsibility*

- We should give *low priority to individual preferences*, and *individual responsibility should not condition access* to treatment.

- People should be able to exercise *some preferences over some care*

- People are *responsible for spending their own money* and for their own lifestyle choices

Priorities set collectively

Individualistic focus for priorities
Some questions…..

- What other values? Eg. dignity, compassion …??

- How do process and content values relate to one another?

- What might lead some countries to prioritize some values over others?