Features of Health Policy and Technology

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EDITORIAL

Traditionally health technology has been used as a portmanteau term to describe drugs, medical devices and diagnostic tests. Although these might be considered as core health technologies, there is good reason to broaden the definition of health technologies and include more discussion about the nature of the technologies, their applications, any modifications needed to make them usable by a wide range of health professionals and patients, and any supporting and enabling information technology applied to healthcare. This more sophisticated consideration of health technology is reflected in the approach taken by the World Health Organisation (WHO), which describes health technology as the 'application of organized knowledge and skills in the form of devices, medicines, vaccines, procedures and systems developed to solve a health problem and improve quality of lives'. Health Policy and Technology (HPT) is a cross-disciplinary journal, which focuses on past, present and future development and implementation of health policy and the role of technology in clinical and non-clinical national and international health environments.

The aims of the HPT are to publish relevant, timely and accessible articles and commentaries to educate and inform all stakeholders in health policy and technology, from researchers to clinicians, health economists, health policy leaders and experts in the biotechnology and pharmaceutical sectors. HPT welcomes submission of papers dealing with topics within the health technology and health policy spectrum, including drug discovery, diagnostics, medicines, devices, therapeutic delivery and eHealth systems and related ethical issues. Examples of themes of particular interest include: health technology assessment (HTA) methods and tools for evaluating clinical and non-clinical health technology-regulation and health economics-systems for supporting access to safe and effective medicines-national comparisons of health policy-national

and international studies of health policy on implementing effective technology-driven initiatives-impact of political change on trans-national health policy-stakeholder engagement with health technologies (clinician and patient/citizen buy-in)- health frameworks to support policymakers and other stakeholders in decision-making- consequences for health policy of cross-border health tourism-adoption and diffusion of health technologies HPT is the official journal of the Fellowship of Postgraduate Medicine (FPM), which also publishes the Postgraduate Medical Journal, in circulation internationally for over 90 years.

The aim of the FPM is to promote international calibre excellence in postgraduate medical education and research through its two journals and through holding and supporting conferences, workshops, debates and other activities, including through public outreach. The FPM welcomes applications from relevant health-related professionals in formal training programmes or in established senior positions who would like to contribute to its activities by becoming FPM Associate Members. In the effort to map the dimensions of this journal, perhaps there is an alternative definition for health technology than the one by the WHO given above. A pragmatic view would be to say that any technology can be considered a health technology if it is used somewhere in healthcare. A multitude of technologies can be used to promote health or manage disease, either directly or indirectly. An example of a paper from this issue that focuses on the interplay between health technology and health policy is the one by Lichtenberg & Tatar, who examined national impact of new drugs on health and economic outcomes using Turkey as a case study. One specific type of health technology is health information technology (HIT or Health IT), which has been defined as 'a broad concept that encompasses an array of technologies to store, share, and analyse health information'.

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