

# Pharmacoeconomic Trends, Applications, and Potential Developments

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Public health alarms all over the world have gone off because of Corona virus 2019 (COVID-19). With this pandemic, an economic crisis is storming in. Despite the health emergency being largely unexpected, the economic recessions are expected, as part of economic cycles. In this sense, COVID-19 was a trigger to an economic technical correction, and the two issues combined will have noticeable impacts in healthcare all over the world, for the years to come.

This issue of *Global Journal on Quality and Safety in Healthcare (JQSH)* is very timely, as it is devoted to the topic of pharmacoeconomics. In a world of scarce resources (including the financial means available to healthcare), healthcare technologies assessment (HTA) and pharmacoeconomics are key capabilities to support decision making and provide valuable insights to management and policy making in healthcare. In fact, managers, researchers, pharmacists, and clinicians in all disease areas are deemed to become more aware of the financial aspects of treatments and diagnostics in the merits of organizational innovation and research and development activities. Moreover, economics is not just about costs—it looks at the results, the health and real-world consequences of decisions so that one can advise which options or technologies bring the best outcomes with regard to the required investment. This is a multidisciplinary work, contingent on the availability and on the quality of data.

This issue of *JQSH* present articles with practical impacts in quality improvement, including the organization of healthcare services under COVID-19<sup>[1]</sup> and a special case on medication use.<sup>[2]</sup> Because HTA is growing as a necessary competence of providers and healthcare systems, we also offer a review of health economic evaluation methods in the Middle East and in Africa<sup>[3]</sup> and a preparedness plan for COVID-19 in Saudi Arabia.<sup>[4]</sup> We then have two brief communications on how to perform outcomes measurement in a real-world setting<sup>[5]</sup>

and on therapeutic drug monitoring by pharmacists,<sup>[6]</sup> bringing insights on specific case studies and raising awareness around those topics. Likewise, we present the following case from Sudan: a cost-effectiveness analysis of a supply chain network—an innovative application of tools and concepts from HTA.<sup>[7]</sup> Finally, HTA has been discussed in many forums and has evolved for more than 30 years as a companion discipline to healthcare delivery and policy. So, we present a summary of the “International Pharmacoeconomics Forum,” which took place in Riyadh in November 2019 and focused on oncology.<sup>[8]</sup>

In the foreseeable future, the economic burden of several diseases is likely to keep increasing—both in the case of infectious surges, like COVID-19, and chronic diseases, like cancer or diabetes—because of them being more prevalent and because of medications and other production factors becoming more expensive with time.<sup>[9]</sup> We will continue to witness impressive successes on the side of science with treatments and diagnostics, but these innovations will come at a cost. Irrespective of our healthcare systems and economies being able to bear those costs, we need sound methodology and data to make proper assessments and support decision making. This is where *JQSH* wants to make an impression by delivering actionable insights, connected to the real world, stemmed from academic work that has been performed with quality and thoroughly assessed by peers. We want to serve the community in a knowledge-based way.

This issue also targets an international audience, because we believe these are shared concerns and we can foster best practice exchanges. We know HTA will play an increasingly important role in the organization of care, drug development, and reimbursement decisions, so *JQSH* will continue to emphasize the role of healthcare professionals in this task and will contribute to define the conditions in which innovations are likely cost-effective and advisable to systems.

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