

The European Network of Health Economic Evaluation Databases (EURO NHEED) project

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Background and objectives

The aim of the European Network of Health Economic Evaluation Databases (EURO NHEED) is to implement databases on the economic evaluation of health care interventions in France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom and associated countries, as shown in Table 1. [1,2]

The goal of the databases is to index all the published literature in health economics evaluation for the countries covered by the network. The co-ordinator of the project is the Collège des Economistes de la Santé (Paris, France)

Table 1: 17 Countries covered by EURO NHEED

France	→	Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland (French publications)
Germany	→	Austria, Switzerland (German publications)
Italy	→	Switzerland (Italian publications)
Netherlands	→	Belgium (Flemish publications)
Spain	→	Portugal
Sweden	→	Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway
U-K	→	Ireland

Methods

The structure and the content of the EURO NHEED databases are based on that of the UK's NHS Economic Evaluation database (NHS EED) [3] and France's *Connaissances et Décision en Économie de la Santé* (CODECS) database [4].

Framework and implementation of EURO NHEED

Recruitment and local training

- 1) Development of a common strategy for the management and maintenance of the databases (Methodological Guide and handbook).
- 2) Training programme for the participants
- 3) Exploration of indexing issues (thesaurus)
- 4) Development of a method for the analysis of full evaluations
- 5) Literature searches
- 6) Create the "technical" structure and implement the software of the databases
- 7) Classification and analysis of the data

Committees created to guide methodological and administrative developments:

1- The Coordinating Committee: Gérard de Pouvourville (President, CES), Emile Lévy (Manager of CODECS Coordinating Committee) and the CES staff: Its role is to produce the administrative documents, prepare meetings, disseminate information, manage the budget and manage the platform for the databases.

2- The EURO NHEED Steering Committee: Gérard de Pouvourville (France), Julie Glanville, John Nixon and Michael Drummond (United Kingdom), Matthias Graf von der Schulenburg (Germany), Frans Rutten (Netherlands), Livio Garattini (Italy), Fernando Antonanzas Villar (Spain) and Bengt Jönsson (Sweden). Its role is to develop and agree the handbook, the methodological guide and the thesaurus, Scientific Committee (define the scientific objectives and orientations of the network), evaluate the work done by each centre and decision-making structure.

3- Local Steering Committees: Their role is to advise at the centre level.

Results

EURO NHEED successfully obtained funding from the European Commission under the 5th framework program "Quality of life and management of living resources". The project started in January 2003.

Process:

- (1) Identification of relevant published economic papers by comprehensive searches,
- (2) Classification according to established criteria,
- (3) Writing *Bibliographic records* for all the identified papers and *Structured abstracts* for the cost-benefit, cost-effectiveness and cost-utility studies identified.

Bibliographic record

- 1) Title, authors, journal name (or book/ report title), volume, number, pages, publication date and language.
- 2) Economic study type
- 3) Health technology
- 4) Disease
- 5) Target population
- 6) Type of intervention
- 7) Key words
- 8) URL of published abstract
- 9) URL of full text of article if available

The databases will be accessible free of charge on the Internet.

Structured abstract

- **SUBJECT OF STUDY:** Health technology, disease, type of intervention, hypothesis/study question
- **KEY ELEMENTS OF STUDY:** Economic study type, study population, setting, dates to which data relate, source(s) of effectiveness and tolerance data, modelling, link between effectiveness and cost data.
- **DETAILS ABOUT CLINICAL EVIDENCE:** (1) Single study, (2) Review/synthesis of previous published studies, (3) Based on opinion
- **ECONOMIC ANALYSIS:** Measure of health benefits used in the economic analysis, direct costs, indirect costs, currency, statistical analysis of quantities/costs, sensitivity analysis.
- **RESULTS:** Estimated benefits used in the economic analysis, cost results, synthesis of costs and benefits, author's conclusions.
- **CRITICAL COMMENTARIES:** Choice of comparator, validity of estimate of effectiveness, health benefit and costs, other issues, publications of related interest.
- **IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY:** According to the findings of the paper and the EURO NHEED expert.

Discussion

EURO NHEED is the first attempt to develop such a resource on a multi-national basis. The benefits provided by this project are the harmonisation and increased understanding with regard to the theory and methodology of economic evaluations, and improved interpretation of the generalisability of studies. Furthermore, it will advance the state of the art in collecting, summarising, critiquing and disseminating health economics evaluations studies conducted in Europe [5].

One of the possible future developments of EURO NHEED is the inclusion of East European countries and Japan in the network.

Countries and project leaders involved in EURO NHEED

FRANCE: Prof. Gérard de Pouvourville – Collège des Economistes de la Santé

GERMANY: Prof. Dr. J.-Matthias Graf von der Schulenburg – Universitaet Hannover

ITALY: Prof. Livio Garattini - Istituto di Ricerche Farmacologiche Mario Negri

NETHERLANDS: Prof. Dr. Frans Rutten - Erasmus University Rotterdam

SPAIN: Prof. Fernando Antonanzas Villar - Universidad de la Rioja

SWEDEN: Prof. Bengt Jönsson - Stockholm Health Economics Consulting AB

UNITED KINGDOM: Ms. Julie Glanville - Centre for Reviews & Dissemination

References

1. Ulmann P, Boulenger S (2001) Development of a European Network of Health Economic Evaluation Databases. Submission to the European Commission. Collège des Économistes de la Santé, Paris.
2. Boulenger S, Ulmann P (2002) EURO NHEED: Projet de réseau européen de base de données sur l'évaluation économique en santé (European Network of Health Economic Evaluation Databases). *La Lettre du Collège* (Collège des Économistes de la Santé), 4:5-7.
3. NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (2001) Improving access to cost-effectiveness information for health care decision making: the NHS Economic Evaluation Database. York: University of York.
4. Boulenger S (2002) CODECS: Connaissances et Décision en Économie de la Santé: Première base de données francophone sur l'évaluation économique en santé (Knowledge and Decision in Health Economics: The first database in economic evaluation for French-speaking countries). *La Lettre du Collège* (Collège des Économistes de la Santé), 4:2.
5. Nixon, J, Ulmann, P, Glanville, J M, Boulenger, S, Drummond, M F, de Pouvourville, G The European Network of Health Economic Evaluation Databases Project. *The European Journal of Health Economics* (in print).