

A lay person's experience on a Medication Council

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Québec Public Drug Insurance Plan

- Implemented in 1997
- Covers about 40% of the population
- 3 groups of insured persons :
 - Social welfare recipients
 - Elderly (65 +)
 - Persons without private insurance
- The rest of the population : covered by private insurance through employer

Québec Medication Council (Conseil du Médicament): Overview

- Created in 2003 (from the merging of 2 existing organizations)
- Mandate :
 1. Advise health minister on medications to put on provincial formulary (3 lists/year)
 2. Promote optimal use of medications
- Permanent staff (n=40)
- Council meets monthly

Incorporating social values # 1

- Regarding listing of drugs on provincial formulary
- Through lay members on Medication Council

Québec Medication Council: Composition

- N members = 15
- President and Vice-president: pharmacist and physician
- 7 experts: pharmacology, pharmacoeconomy
- 1 Min. of Health representative; 1 CEO
- 4 Societal (lay) members. Currently :
 - 1 Retired Nursing professor
 - 1 Professor in Bioethics
 - 1 Professor in Theology
 - 1 Professor in Health Administration (Blais)

Role of societal (lay) members on the Québec Medication Council

- Societal members must not be :
 - Physicians
 - Pharmacists
 - From Insurance Company
 - From Drug maker or Wholesaler
- Role not officially defined
- Contribute lay perspective
- Take part in all decisions

Incorporating social values # 2

- Regarding listing of drugs on provincial formulary
- Through expanded evaluation criteria

The Council's drug evaluation process

1. Drug companies submit studies and request listing of their medication on Quebec formulary
2. Council permanent staff and experts assess documentation, provide advice to Council
3. Council deliberates and formulates recommendations to Health Minister
4. Health Minister accepts or rejects Council's recommendations

The Council's drug evaluation criteria

1. Therapeutic value	Essential criterion
2. Reasonable price	
3. Cost-effectiveness	
4. Impact of listing medication on population health and on other healthcare system components	New criteria (social considerations)
5. Appropriateness of listing medication given the purpose of the Drug Insurance Plan	

*“If at first you don't succeed,
try, try again”*

- Example of first two ways of incorporating social values
- The true story of Medication **M**
- How societal considerations can change a Medication Council decision
- Names of drug and company cannot be revealed

Chapter 1 – First attempt

- Drug company X submits a new medication, **M**, to Council
- Based on available evidence, Council considers that medication **M** :
 - lacks proof of therapeutic value
- Council refuses medication **M**

Chapter 2 – Second attempt

- Drug company X resubmits the medication **M** with new data
- Based on new evidence, Council considers that Medication **M** now:
 - Has therapeutic value
 - Is not cost-effective
- Council refuses medication **M**
- But...

Chapter 3 – Second thought

- Following rejection, Council members are uneasy : “Decision taken with too narrow view”
- Some request to reconsider decision
- Special committee, including lay members, set up to review medication **M** considering other criteria than therapeutic value and strict cost-effectiveness, i.e. societal criteria

Chapter 4 – So what...

- Following a re-evaluation of the evidence and considering all criteria, Council considers that Medication **M** :
 - Has therapeutic value
 - Does not fully meet economic criteria
 - Has positive effects on population health and other healthcare system components
- Council accepts medication **M**

Epilogue

- New societal aspects are taken into consideration when deciding to list a drug on formulary
- Relatively new process for Council and pharmaceutical companies (since Fall 2007)
- Companies do not always present full data regarding these societal criteria

Incorporating social values # 3

- Regarding listing of drugs on provincial formulary
- Through citizens' written comments

Input from citizens

- Once a request to list a drug is presented : request is made public
- Citizens have 30 days to send written comments to Council
- 40 to 60 letters received at each list
- Impact of such input difficult to assess
- Issue : if a group is supported by the industry, whose interest is promoted?

Incorporating social values # 4

- Regarding the promotion of optimal use of medications
- Through lay members on Medication Council

Promoting optimal use of medication

- Council designs and implements activities to promote optimal use (e.g., prescription guidelines, action plan to treat asthma, home medication review, medication profile for physicians)
- Lay members input: comments, concern for access, for actual impact on patients, and for equity

Conclusion

- Several ways of incorporating social values
- Input of lay members on Quebec Medication Council is important, but...
- Lay members on Council are not the average "men and women on the street"
Could they be?
- Lay members should :
 - Have knowledge (to understand complex issues)
 - Be assertive (not impressionable by "experts")
 - Have vision beyond their own interest

Thank You!