

### **Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak: can HTA improve preparedness and response in emergencies with a high degree of uncertainty?**

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Evidence-based decision-making is central to public health. Implementing evidence-informed actions is most challenging during a public health emergency as in an epidemic, when time is limited, scientific uncertainties and political pressures tend to be high, and irrefutable evidence may be lacking. The Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak is determining a scenario of uncertainty for public health decision-making with fragmented and different responses also within countries (i.e. regional level), which are implemented quickly, sometimes not fully supported by the necessary body of scientific evidence. In such a situation, following a common line and having a shared tool that would allow to include evidence in public health decision-making, would be strategic to strengthen the impact of interventions, enabling stakeholders and decision makers taking actions based on the best available evidence through a process which is systematic and transparent. The objective of this presentation is to use the example of the COVID-19 outbreak, in order to explore how HTA can improve preparedness and response in emergencies with a high degree of uncertainty, representing the mechanisms through which interdisciplinary evidence feeds into decision-making processes during public health emergencies, addressing the link between scientific evidence and decision-making in public health emergencies, overcoming the key challenges faced by public health experts when advising decision makers, including strengthening and accelerating knowledge transfer through rapid HTA, improving networking between actors and disciplines.