



EVIDENCE SYNTHESIS
IRELAND



Evidence Synthesis Ireland Fellowship Scheme 2021

Review Centre/Group Mentor

Review Centre: Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA), Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Directorate

Mentor: Dr Susan Spillane, Senior Health Technology Assessment Analyst.

Review title

Processes informing national screening programme policy; an international review

Review type – please identify the type of review in question e.g. qualitative synthesis, Cochrane review of effectiveness, rapid review

Systematic review

Review details

The Scally Report (2018) recommended the establishment of a National Screening Committee to advise the Department of Health and the Minister on all new proposals for screening and on revisions to current programmes. The National Screening Advisory Committee (NSAC) was established following this report as an independent advisory committee to play a significant strategic role in the development and consideration of population-based screening programmes in Ireland.

The Health Technology Assessment (HTA) directorate within the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) has been commissioned to provide evidence synthesis support to the NSAC under an agreed work programme.

The current NSAC/HIQA work programme includes two evidence synthesis workstreams:

1. An international review of processes which inform policy for national screening programmes generally
2. An international review of processes for informing changes to neonatal blood screening policy

The ESI Fellow will assist in conducting the first of these workstreams.

The project will involve producing an overview of policy-making which is used by or recommended for international screening bodies. This will be performed to identify how other countries

formulate advice on screening policy and thereby to identify current best practice. Key areas of interest for the review will include:

- a. Proposal of topics for consideration within screening programmes, and prioritisation and selection procedures
- b. Key methodologies used for evidence review and evidence synthesis for informing screening policy
- c. Decision-making processes
- d. Approaches to governance

The methodology of the review will largely be based on a 2014 paper by Seedat et al., entitled '*International comparisons of screening policy-making: A systematic review*'. The review process will involve systematic searching of academic databases, searching of the grey literature (particularly websites of organisations involved in national screening programme policy), screening of search results for relevance, data extraction, summarising the results of the review and reporting of the findings.

As of the time of writing this review had not yet been commenced. By the time at which the ESI fellow will start work on this report HIQA will have drafted a protocol to inform the conduct of the review and will have presented this protocol to NSAC. This protocol will subsequently be submitted to the PROSPERO international prospective register of systematic reviews.

The primary outcome of this project will be to present the review to NSAC to inform future processes in establishing screening policy. A manuscript will also be drafted with the aim of academic publication of the review.

Review current status

Protocol in the process of being drafted

Any specific/desirable requirements for fellow

Desirable expertise:

- Experience in reviewing international policy or guideline documents (grey literature)

Estimated start and completion dates

Late February 2021 – May 2021