

To receive this monthly e-bulletin, please send your request to OHTACinfo.moh@ontario.ca. We would appreciate your providing your contact details including your name, title and organization (not required). All details are kept confidential and will not be supplied to third parties.

Note: The internet posting of the following publications may be delayed. If you are unable to find the report you are looking for from the [Ontario Health Technology Advisory Committee](http://www.ontariohealthtechnologyadvisorycommittee.ca) website, please contact us directly at OHTACinfo.moh@ontario.ca to request a copy by email.

NEW REPORTS FROM MAS & OHTAC

The following reports have been recently completed and will soon be available for download at the [Ontario Health Technology Assessment Series](http://www.ontariohealthtechnologyassessmentseries.ca). Accompanying each are OHTAC's recommendations concerning the use of the related technologies in health care facilities across Ontario.

1. ***Airway Clearance Devices for Cystic Fibrosis, OHTAS vol.9 no. 26.*** This report examines the safety and efficacy of airway clearance devices (ACDs) for cystic fibrosis and, where possible, differentiates between devices on grounds of clinical efficacy, quality of life, safety and/or patient preference. Three classes of airway clearance devices and their subtypes were examined: positive expiratory pressure devices (PEP), airway oscillating devices (AOD; either handheld or stationary), and high frequency chest compression (HFCC)/mechanical percussion (MP) devices. Each was also compared to the current treatment standard of chest physiotherapy. Among the key findings of the report were that PEP is at least as effective, or more effective, than physiotherapy and that there are no significant differences between handheld AODs and PEP. The analysis also found that PEP and handheld AODs are economically feasible from a health system's perspective.
2. ***Ultraviolet Phototherapy Management of Moderate-to-Severe Plaque Psoriasis, OHTAS vol.9 no. 27.*** Phototherapy treatment (PT) for psoriasis involves exposing the skin to ultraviolet radiation, either as UVA or UVB. The machines that emit the radiation are similar in appearance to telephone booths and can target broad areas of the skin's surface (handheld units are also available to target localized areas). In this report, which was performed as an update to the NIHR 2000 systemic review on treatments for severe psoriasis, 26 new clinical trials examining PT or photochemotherapy were identified and analyzed. Among the principal findings of the report is that PT provides effective, short-term control of clinical symptoms for patients with moderate-to-severe plaque psoriasis that have failed or are unresponsive to management with topical agents.
3. ***Point-of-Care International Normalized Ratio (INR) Monitoring Devices for Patients on Long-term Oral Anticoagulation Therapy, vol.9 no. 12.*** OHTAC has issued its recommendations on the use of point-of-care devices for INR measurement. These devices offer an alternative to laboratory-based testing and venipuncture, enabling INR determination from fingersticks sample of whole blood. This permits the immediate determination of INR results in a variety of settings including physician offices, anticoagulation clinics, long-term care facilities, or by the patients themselves. OHTAC's recommendations state that such devices be made available in Ontario as an alternative to laboratory-based testing and that implementation strategies be developed.
4. ***Safety of Laparoscopic Adjustable Gastric Banding, Rapid Review.*** Recent concerns of complications following bariatric surgery prompted MAS and OHTAC to conduct and update of their 2005 report on the use of laparoscopic adjustable gastric band (LAGB) and laparoscopic roux en y gastric bypass (LRYGB) for the treatment of morbid obesity. This Rapid Review focuses on the safety of these procedures and examines the recently published evidence on this topic from studies conducted within Canada and internationally.

OPEN FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

The following reports will soon be available in draft form on the [MAS website](#) for public comment and input. MAS and OHTAC encourage readers to download and review our reports and provide feedback, comments and suggestions to: OHTACinfo.moh@ontario.ca.

1. ***Endovascular Repair of Abdominal Aortic Aneurysms in Low Surgical Risk Patients, Rapid Review.***
In 2005, the Ontario Health Technology Advisory Committee (OHTAC) made a recommendation for increased access to endovascular aneurysm repair (EVAR) of abdominal aortic aneurysms (AAAs) to patients at high risk for surgical complications and mortality, based on a field evaluation and systematic literature review conducted by the Programs for Assessment of Technology in Health (PATH). At the time, OHTAC did not recommend EVAR for low and moderate surgical risk patients because of inadequate long-term evidence. This new 'Rapid Review' of EVAR examines the latest evidence for the clinical and cost-effectiveness of the procedure for low risk surgical patients.
2. ***Population-Based Smoking Cessation Strategies.*** The objective of this substantial report is to provide the Ministry of Health Promotion (MHP) with a summary of existing evidence-based reviews of the clinical and economic outcomes of nine population-based smoking cessation strategies including:
 1. Mass media interventions
 2. Telephone counselling
 3. Post-secondary smoking cessation programs in colleges and universities
 4. Community-wide stop-smoking contests (i.e. Quit and Win)
 5. Community interventions
 6. Physician advice to quit
 7. Nursing interventions for smoking cessation
 8. Hospital-based interventions for smoking cessation
 9. Pharmacotherapies for smoking cessation, specifically:
 - a) Nicotine replacement therapies
 - b) Antidepressants
 - c) Anxiolytic drugs
 - d) Opioid antagonists
 - e) Clonidine
 - f) Nicotine receptor partial agonists

COMING SOON

In the coming weeks, the following reports will be made available on the [MAS website](#):

1. ***Vitamin D Testing.*** This review will evaluate the prevalence and clinical utility of Vitamin D testing.
2. ***Cancer Screening with Digital Mammography for Women at Average Risk for Breast Cancer, MRI for Women at High Risk.*** This report will explore the effectiveness of two separate modalities, digital mammography (DM) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), relative to film mammography, in the screening of women asymptomatic for breast cancer.

TOPICS CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW

The following topics are currently being reviewed by the Medical Advisory Secretariat and OHTAC. Completed reports and recommendations will be made available on our websites as soon as they become available.

Cardiac Diagnostic Imaging: Mega Analysis

The Medical Advisory Secretariat is examining the evidence of effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of non-invasive cardiac testing modalities to ensure that appropriate technologies are used in the treatment of patients with known or suspected coronary artery disease. Among the technologies examined in the review are SPECT, ECHO, CT Angiography, PET and Cardiac MRI.

Endovascular Laser Treatment for Varicose Veins

The purpose of this analysis will be to determine if endovascular laser treatment is a safe, effective, and cost-effective treatment for varicose veins, or reflux of the greater saphenous vein, compared to alternative treatments (compression devices, sclerotherapy, and/or surgery).

Vitamin D Testing

A request to review Vitamin D testing came in to the Medical Advisory Secretariat from the MOHLTC Health Services Branch. The prevalence of Vitamin D deficiency and clinical utility of Vitamin D testing will be evaluated.

Solid Organ Transplantation in HIV-Positive Persons

This review will determine the safety, effectiveness, and cost-effectiveness of solid organ transplantation in HIV-positive persons.

Pumpless Extracorporeal Lung Assist as Bridge to Lung Transplantation

This review will focus on the safety, effectiveness, and cost-effectiveness of pumpless extracorporeal lung assist devices.

Drug Eluting Beads for Unresectable Hepatocellular Carcinoma

This review is to determine the safety, effectiveness, and cost-effectiveness of drug eluting beads for unresectable hepatocellular carcinoma.

Clinical Utility of Laboratory Tests for Celiac Disease

This review will focus on the clinical utility of serologic tests for the diagnosis of Celiac Disease in adults and children.

To keep up-to-date with the draft releases and all new materials from MAS and OHTAC, be sure to visit to the "What's New" section of our websites.

For What's New at OHTAC, [click here](#). For What's New at MAS, [click here](#).

As usual, OHTAC and MAS welcome your questions and comments. Please submit them to us at: OHTACinfo.moh@ontario.ca