

Health Services Planning and Budgeting

Health Needs Assessment

What is Health Needs Assessment (HNA)?

- A systematic method of reviewing health issues facing a population
- This helps in priority setting and allocation of resources to improve health and reduce inequalities
- An important public health tool that provides information about a population regarding service provision

What is Health Needs Assessment (HNA)?

- Provides health needs of specific populations and sub-groups
- Enables identification of relevant partners in the health sector
- Populations are involved in service planning and resource allocation

Benefits of HNA

- Strengthens community involvement in decision making
- Promotes partnerships and team work
- Improves communication between the public and other agencies
- HNA can improve use of resources

Challenges of HNA

- Working across professional boundaries
- Access to relevant data and the target population
- Maintaining commitments across partnerships
- Translating findings into action

Resource Required for a HNA

- Capacity and strong management skills
- Clear aims and objectives for the project have been identified
- Identify and involve the right people
- Secure access to the target population
- A capable project team
- Identifying stakeholders
- Adequate resources

3.2. Stakeholders in health service planning

- The different partners or sectors that should be involved in decisions about health?

Other assessment tools

- Health impact assessment (HIA)
 - Assess the impact of a policy or project on the health of the population
- Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)
 - Assesses the impact of a policy or program on economic, social and environmental outcomes
- Health Equity Audit (HEA)
 - Assesses inequities in health and access to health services within a defined population

Steps of a Health Needs Assessment

Step 1: Getting started

- Choosing the population
- Objectives
- Identifying stakeholders
- Resources
- Challenges

Step 2: Identifying health priorities

- Profiling the population
- Collecting data
- Identifying and assessing needs
- Determinants of needs

Step 3: Assessing a health priority for action

- Selecting priority health conditions
- Identifying the relevant determinants
- Determining effective interventions

Step 4: Planning for change

- Identifying interventions and aims
- Developing an action plan
- Developing an M&E strategy
- Managing risks and challenges

Step 5: Way forward

- Lessons learnt
- Impact assessment
- Choosing next priorities