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Book Reviews: Technical Books Section

(Page 4 b - Review by Professor G.S. Meena, India)



FEATURED BOOK: MAIN PAGE

A VALUABLE BOOK AND FOOD FOR THOUGHT

[Review 1] [Main Page] [Review 2]

Rating : 9.0
★★★★★★★★★
(9/5)

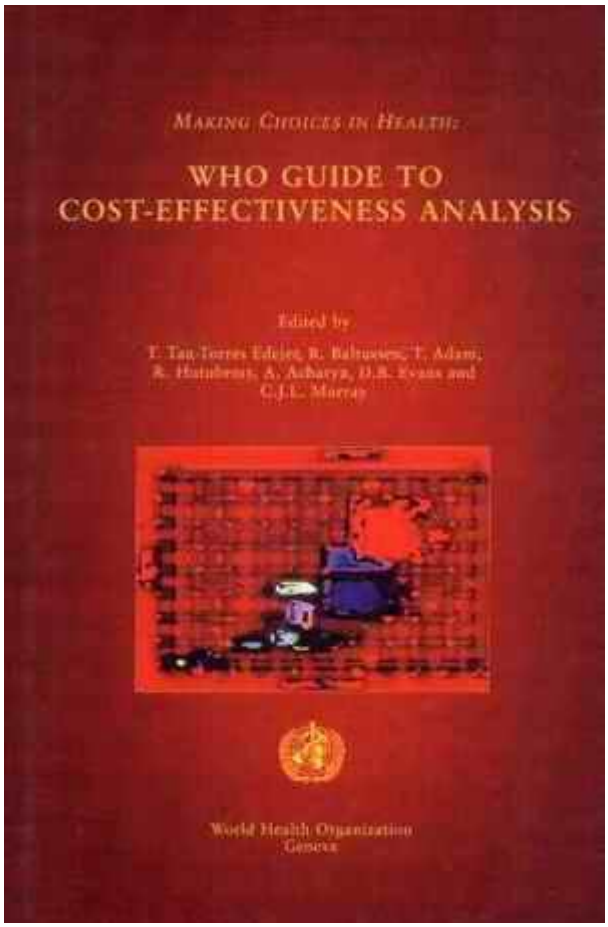
Making Choices in Health: WHO Guide to Cost-Effectiveness Analysis, 1st Edition *Edited by* T. Tan-Torres Edejer, R. Baltussen, T. Adam, R. Hutubessy, A. Acharya, D.B. Evans and C.J.L. Murray. Soft cover, 6" x 9" (a rectangular CD enclosed).
World Health Organization, Avenue Appia 20, 1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland. (; ; email: bookorders@who.int); xxii +318 pages: ISBN-10: 9241546018. ISBN-13: 978-9241546010. LC/NLM Classification: HD 47.4. Publication date: December 31, 2003: Order No.: 110542. Price: Swiss Francs 30 / US $ 27.00. In developing Countries Sw. Fr. 21, Indian Rupees 630/=

Official site of the book

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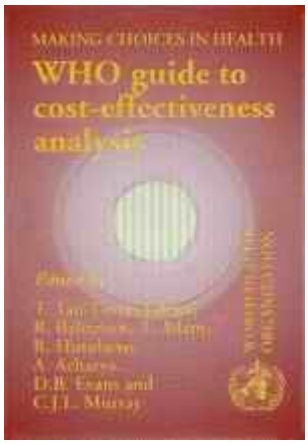


Cost Effective Analysis (CEA) is one of the important management tools in health field especially Public Health. There are several guidelines available for CEA. These guidelines generally compares the cost effectiveness of an intervention over the existing infrastructure which may vary from country to country as per capita health expenditure shows a wide variations, hence a cost effective method for a country may not be same in another country and one can not generalize the intervention for other countries with Generalied Cost-Effectivtive Method (GCEA) it is now possible.

World Health Organization (WHO) initiated work on **CHO**osing **I**nterventions that are **C**ost **E**ffective (WHO- **CHOICE**) and is working on costs, impact on population health and cost effectiveness of key health interventions by standardized methods and certain tools like Cost It (for costing) , Pop Mod (for Population Modeling) and MCLeague (Monte Carlo League for probabilistic uncertainty analysis). These methods and tools help in generalizability of the results across different settings and identifying the efficient (mix of) interventions.

The guideline "Making choices in Health : WHO Guide to Cost-Effectiveness Analysis" is the outcome of the six years hard work from many contributors, analysts, reviewers of the published work, feedback from policy makers and also user's perspective inputs from many other experts in this field. I enjoyed reading this book and found it to be thought provoking.

Visiting card shaped CD which accompanies this book



There are two parts in the book.

Part One contains ***methods for generalized cost-effectiveness analysis*** dealing with issues relating to study design, estimating costs, assessing health effects, discounting, uncertainty and sensitivity analysis, and reporting results, it also contains seven Annexures relating to GCEA.

Part Two has nine *background papers and applications* on accompanied Compact Disk.

Part One: Methods for Generalized Cost-Effectiveness Analysis

...Cost Effective Analysis (CEA) is one of the important management tools in health field especially Public Health. There are several guidelines available for CEA. These guidelines generally compares the cost effectiveness of an intervention over the existing infrastructure which may vary from country to country as per capita health expenditure shows a wide variations, hence a cost effective method for a country may not be same in another country and one can not generalize the intervention for other countries with Generalied Cost-Effectivtive Method (GCEA) it is now possible...

Contents

1. What is Generalized Cost-Effectiveness Analysis?

2. Undertaking a study using GCEA

3. Estimating costs

4. Estimating health effects

5. Discounting

6. Uncertainty in cost-effectiveness analysis

7. Policy uses of Generalized CEA

8. Reporting CEA results

9. Summary of recommendations

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Annexure

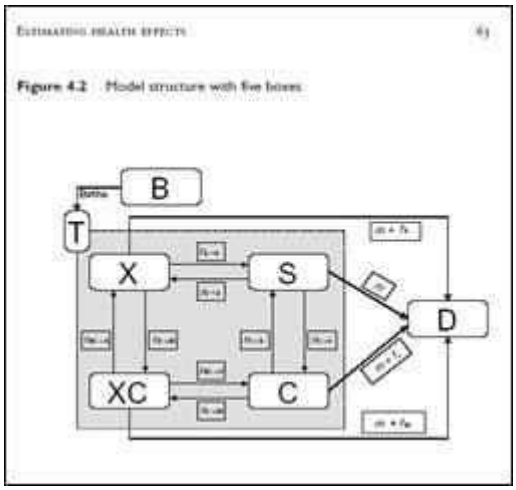
A. WHO-CHOICE activities on Generalized Cost-Effectiveness Analysis

B. Draft list of intervention clusters for evaluation by WHO-CHOICE

C. An illustration of the types of costs included in a selection of intervention activities at central levels

D. Interpreting international dollars

Figure 1. Model structure with five boxes [This figure appears on page 63 of the book under review as Figure 4.2 of the book]



E. DALYs to measure burden of disease

F. Measuring intervention benefit at the population level

G. Epidemiological subregions as applied in WHO Generalized CEA

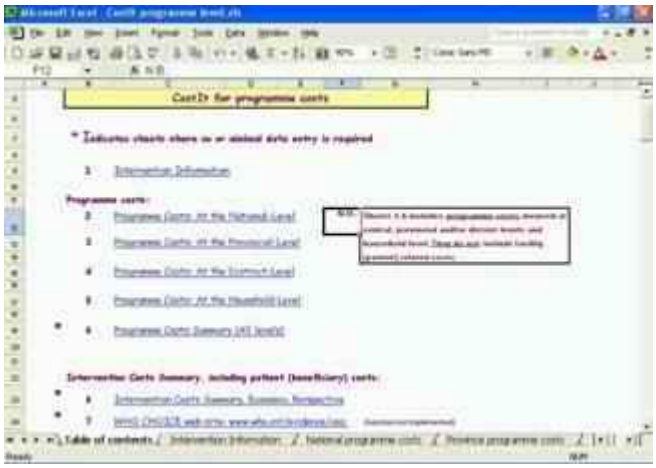
At the end of annexures, endnotes are given for easy understanding of a particular point in this guide; this is in addition to the list of acronyms and abbreviations.

Part Two : Contains 189 pages of background papers and applications which have been published in Journal, and very thoughtfully included in this book for reader's easy reference. These papers were published in : Cost-effectiveness resource Allocation 2003, Health Economics, The Lancet, International Journal of Technology-Assessment in Health Care , Applied Health Economics and Health Policy, Bioethics : A Philosophical Overview.

The nine **background papers** included are:

1. Development of WHO guidelines on generalized cost-effectiveness analysis

Figure 2. CostIt ver4.3 is a costing template to record cost data in a way that is of most use to analysts and policy-makers. It can record programme cost at national, province or state, district, Primary Health Care level



2. PopMod: A longitudinal population model with two interacting disease states

3. Programme costs in the economic evaluation of health interventions

4. Econometric estimation of country-specific hospital costs

5. Stochastic league tables: communicating cost-effectiveness results to decision-makers

6. Uncertainty in cost-effectiveness analysis: probabilistic uncertainty analysis and stochastic league tables

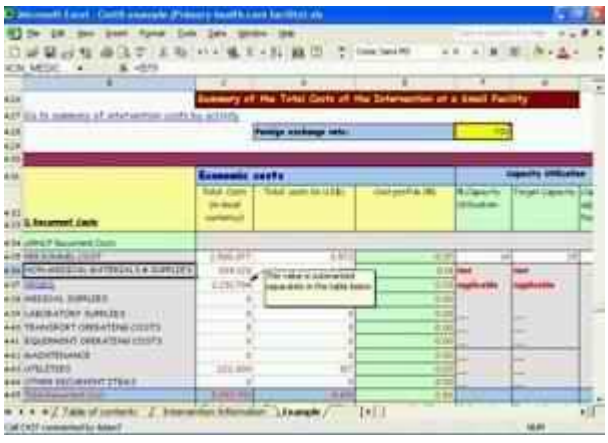
7. Effectiveness and costs of interventions to lower systolic blood pressure and cholesterol: a global and regional analysis on reduction of cardiovascular-disease risk

8. Generalized cost-effectiveness analysis: an aid to decision making in health

9. Ethical issues in the use of cost effectiveness analysis for the prioritization of health care resources

The guide has many graphs, tables, and figures like the one on page 63 (reproduced here for the benefit of readers). The figure - as is quite evident - shows population "Model Structure With five boxes" developed by WHO. It represents different health states i.e. full health, disease X, co-morbid condition C, Disease + co-morbid condition XC, and Death.

Figure 3. This template assembles information on the quantities of inputs used in an intervention and their unit prices.



A cute little Mini CD-ROM which is of the shape and size of a credit card accompanies the book. This CD (please see above for the picture of this CD) contains the full book of the guidelines in PDF (Portable Document Format, which needs Adobe Acrobat Reader) and tools to help in "Generalized

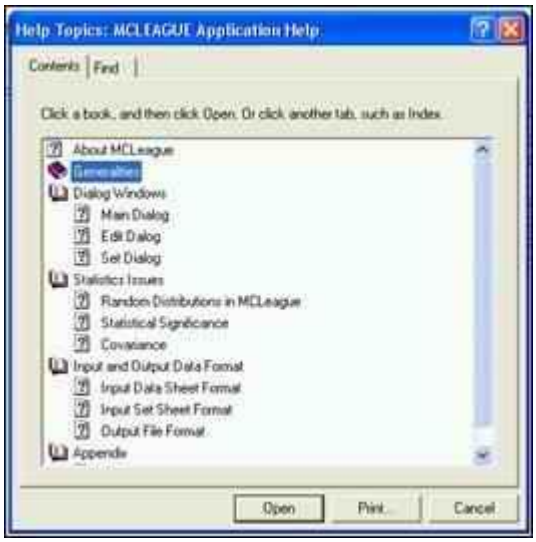
Cost Effective Analysis". The three WHO-CHOICE tools included in the Compact Disk are CostIt, PopMod, and MCLegue.

CostIt ver4.3 is a costing template to record cost data in a way that is of most use to analysts and policy-makers. It can record programme cost at national, province or state, district, Primary Health Care level (Figure 2, above right).

This template (for Primary Health Care Facility. Fig 3) assembles information on the quantities of inputs used in an intervention and their unit prices.

PopMod ver2.2.4 is a population model which will automatically calculate the effectiveness of interventions for a standardized population, in terms of outcome indicators such as disability adjusted life years (DALYs) averted.

Figure 4



MCLeague ver1.1.1 ("Monte Carlo League") presents uncertainty around costs and effects to decision-makers in the form of stochastic league tables. It provides additional information beyond that offered by the traditional treatment of uncertainty in cost-effectiveness analysis, presenting the probability that each intervention is included in the optimal intervention mix for given levels of resource availability.

Versions of later two tools are very thoughtfully provided for Microsoft Office 97, 2000, and XP, that is whether the PC is old or new one can use these tools. All the tools have a license agreement (the tools are for personal or research purpose and NOT for commercial gains), working manual, and help topics (fig. 4) like windows.

Note: The Mac versions of the tools are not available.

"*Making Choices in Health: WHO Guide to Cost-Effectiveness Analysis*" is a valuable book and food for thought. It will definitely appeal to Health Planners, Policy Makers, Analysts, Epidemiologists, and Statistician and those pursuing higher studies in Public Health. Though there are some detailed technical aspects, it is also useful for postgraduates in Community Medicine.

-G.S.Meena

Dr Gajendra Singh Meena was born on 25th December 1955 at pink city Jaipur in Rajasthan, India. He did his first twelve years of studies at Jaipur and medical graduation as well as post-graduation both from the



prestigious All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi (AIIMSONIAN, 1974 Batch).
He has worked at AIIMS in ICMR Project, Lady Hardinge Medical College, New Delhi Dr. S.N. Medical College, Jodhpur, Rajasthan. He has more than seventeen years of UGs & PGs teaching experience as a faculty member in Community Medicine (Preventive and Social Medicine).
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