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The Future of HTA: Key Trends and Strategic Implications for 2026 and Beyond

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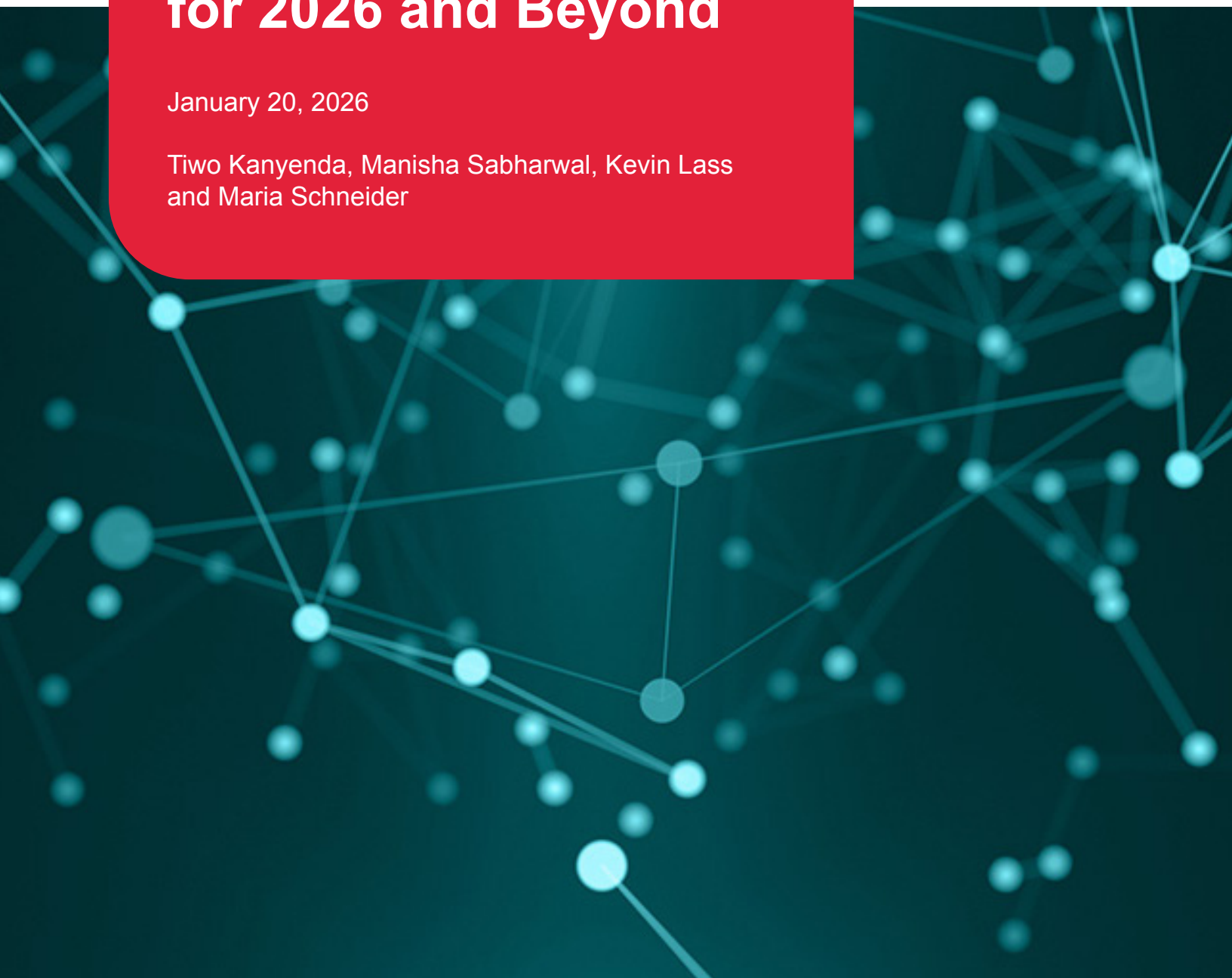

Introduction

Health Technology Assessment (HTA), the process used to evaluate the value of medicines, vaccines, devices and digital tools, is undergoing a major shift. Once viewed mainly as a reimbursement gatekeeper, HTA is now a framework that guides how organizations across biopharma, biotech, and academia generate evidence and assess the value of new technologies as health system priorities evolve. A one-time evaluation at product launch has become a continuous, multidimensional process that rewards early preparation, stronger data collection, and deeper engagement with stakeholders.

This article outlines 10 key trends we are seeing that leaders across biopharma, global health, and public agencies need to understand as HTA enters a new era. As global markets grow more complex and innovation accelerates, organizations that anticipate these changes will be best positioned to deliver value for both patients and payers.

The Forces Transforming HTA in 2026 and Beyond

The external environment surrounding HTA has never been more dynamic or demanding. For example, the EU Regulation on HTA (HTAR) is changing evidence requirements and driving earlier, more coordinated clinical development planning, including decisions about study design, comparators, and outcome measures. As a result, organizations will need to generate data that meets shared requirements across Europe rather than addressing each country's needs separately.

At the same time, HTA bodies in the UK (NICE), Canada (CDA-AMC), and other countries are updating their assessment processes and evaluation methods to better integrate real-world evidence, patient perspectives, and broader societal value. Likewise, low- and middle-income countries are rapidly building HTA capacity to strengthen priority-setting and support more consistent decision making about which technologies or interventions to fund given scarce health dollars.

Other developments affecting the HTA landscape are breakthrough technologies – from cell and gene therapies to digital tools and long-acting prevention methods. The long-term impact of these emerging technologies continues to challenge traditional assessment frameworks, which were designed for products with shorter time horizons, clearer comparators, more predictable evidence profiles and well-established clinical endpoints, usually supported by Randomized Control Trials (RCTs). As a result, it is difficult to evaluate them using conventional HTA methods.

The forces transforming HTA highlight how rapidly stakeholders with a vested interest in HTA will need to adapt. These organizations must retool how they demonstrate value and deliver meaningful impact across diverse health systems or they will risk misalignment with payer expectations and unfavorable reimbursement decisions.

Key Trends to Look Out for in 2026

Theme 1: Evolving Expectations for Evidence

1. Earlier and deeper HTA engagement

HTA will continue moving upstream. Early scientific advice on study design and comparator selection, early economic modeling to assess potential value, and early planning for key data needs – such as patient reported outcomes and high-quality real-world evidence – are becoming standard expectations. *Organizations that build HTA readiness into the product development phase – rather than waiting for launch – will gain a strategic advantage by improving the quality of the evidence they generate and ensuring greater alignment with payer expectations.*

2. Growing use of dynamic or lifecycle HTA

HTA is shifting from a one-time evaluation to an ongoing process, with *reassessments tied to emerging real-world data on how a technology performs in routine practice, updated clinical evidence on long-term safety and effectiveness, and evolving pricing or uncertainty considerations. Organizations must be prepared to continuously generate evidence and adapt research plans to address new questions about clinical performance and comparative value over time.*

Theme 2: Broadening the Value Framework

3. Equity and societal value are gaining momentum

HTA frameworks are expanding to consider not only who benefits from new products and how benefits are distributed, but also the broader impact of innovations on health systems and society. *Organizations that articulate value beyond clinical outcomes – such as caregiver burden or productivity gains – will be better positioned for favorable assessments of their products.*

4. Evolving expectations for value demonstration

Clinical superiority alone is no longer sufficient to win the day. Value dossiers will need to go beyond clinical benefits to show that a technology is effective, affordable and addresses patients' needs and preferences. In addition, the technology must demonstrate that it can be integrated into the health system in a sustainable way without overburdening human or financial resources. *Clear, evidence-backed narratives that resonate with multiple stakeholders – including payers, clinicians, patient groups, and policymakers – will be critical to enable decision making.*

Theme 3: Elevating Stakeholder Voices in HTA

5. Increased demand for transparency and stakeholder participation

Patients, clinicians, and civil society groups expect more open HTA processes, clearer rationales for decisions, and greater incorporation of patients' lived experience and qualitative evidence into assessments. *To meet these rising expectations, organizations should engage early with patient communities and build structured approaches for capturing qualitative insights, ensuring these perspectives are reflected in value dossiers.*

Theme 4: Evolving Methodological Approaches

6. Greater integration of artificial intelligence and advanced analytics

AI-enabled syntheses of evidence, predictive modeling, and AI-driven technologies such as imaging algorithms or digital therapeutics are creating new challenges for HTA agencies and innovators. These tools raise questions about transparency, including how algorithms make decisions, how they use and update data, and whether potential biases are detected and addressed. They also present concerns about data quality, given the variability of real-world data sources and the need to ensure accuracy and reliability across diverse patient populations. To support HTA evaluations, *organizations will need robust validation frameworks, clear documentation of algorithm performance, and real-world evidence demonstrating their reliability and impact in practice.*

7. New approaches for assessing high-cost, one-time therapies

Cell and gene therapies – which are often one-time, high-cost treatments with uncertain long-term outcomes – are pushing HTA bodies to rethink traditional evaluation methodologies and payment models. Creative approaches, such as outcomes-based contracts and amortization of the cost of a technology over a lifetime, will be important to manage uncertainty and improve affordability. To prepare, *organizations should build pricing and access strategies that can accommodate flexible payment models and engage proactively with payers to co-create solutions that balance innovation in improving health with affordability.*

8. Expansion of HTA into public health and preventive interventions

Increasingly, HTA is being applied not only to vaccines and medicines but also to public health interventions, such as prevention campaigns and disease screening initiatives. *Organizations will need to develop new methods for capturing long-term and indirect benefits, including reduction in future healthcare utilization, productivity gains and broader economic benefits, to adequately assess the value of these broader population level strategies.*

Theme 5: The Push for Global Alignment

9. Global harmonization is accelerating, yet divergence persists

The EU HTA Regulation is driving greater alignment in clinical assessments by establishing a single joint review of a technology's clinical effectiveness that all EU member states can use, reducing the need for duplicative assessments across countries. However, significant variation remains in how countries conduct economic evaluations, set prices, and make reimbursement decisions. *Organizations must balance global guidance with market-specific adaptations.*

10. Expansion of HTA capacity in LMICs and regional collaboratives

Rapid growth in HTA capacity across LMICs is raising expectations for stronger regional networks and country collaboration to generate locally relevant data that supports value assessments and informs decision making. While this expanded capacity encourages countries to share methodological approaches such as economic evaluation frameworks and appraisal processes, *organizations will still need to tailor their strategies to reflect local needs, contexts, and health systems.*

Call to Action

The leaders who succeed in this new HTA environment are investing more, strategically planning earlier and generating evidence that matters most to payers – while proactively adapting to shifting expectations. The HTA landscape is moving quickly, but organizations don't have to navigate it alone. To stay ahead, leaders should:

- **Engage early** to optimize evidence generation strategies and anticipate HTA requirements well before launch.
- **Conduct HTA readiness assessment across the pipeline** to identify gaps in evidence, data infrastructure, analytical capacity, and internal capabilities needed to meet evolving HTA requirements.
- **Develop forward-looking market access roadmaps** that anticipate evolving HTA frameworks, especially changes in evidence requirements and growing expectations that value should reflect meaningful benefit aligned with patient needs.
- **Strengthen the value story** by integrating clinical, economic, patient, and societal insights into a comprehensive narrative about a technology's impact.
- **Strengthen cross-functional coordination** among clinical, outcomes research, policy, and commercial teams for integrated decision making.

From Compliance to Strategic Advantage

The forces reshaping HTA globally are signaling a decisive shift: HTA is no longer a downstream compliance exercise, but a strategic framework that influences how evidence is generated, how value is defined, and how access decisions are made. As assessment expectations evolve, fragmented and reactive approaches are giving way to more coordinated, forward-looking models.

There is no simple playbook for navigating this transition. The organizations that prepare now will be best positioned to demonstrate value, secure reimbursement, and make smarter investment decisions in the years ahead that will accelerate patient access while delivering value for health systems.

Rabin Martin supports organizations in preparing for changes in the HTA landscape. Through our experience in policy, evidence, and market access, we help clients build practical strategies, strengthen internal readiness, and translate regulatory shifts into meaningful advantages for patients and markets.

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