

About the WHO review

Why was the review initiated?

In 2003, when the UK's NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence) was around four years old, NICE invited the WHO to evaluate two of its work programmes. IQWiG was impressed with the rigour and usefulness of that evaluation (see: <http://www.nice.org.uk/Docref.asp?d=85797>). IQWiG invited the WHO to evaluate its health information programme when the Institute was also around four years old. The Institute wanted the WHO to assess the methods for selecting topics, evaluating evidence, developing patient information and the quality assurance and evaluation mechanisms. The quality and accuracy of the information itself was to be evaluated, and stakeholder views considered.

Who was on the review team?

The review was performed by a team of five international experts:

- Dr Kees de Joncheere (Coordinator of Team), Regional Advisor for Health Technology and Pharmaceuticals, WHO Regional Office for Europe, Copenhagen, Denmark
- Dr Gerald Gartlehner, Head of Department for Evidence-based Medicine and Clinical Epidemiology, Danube University, Krems, Austria
- Dr Laragh Gollogly, Managing Editor, Bulletin of the World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland
- Professor Pertti Mustajoki, Duodecim – Finnish Medical Society, Helsinki, Finland
- Dr Govin Permanand, Health Evidence Network, World Health Organization, Copenhagen, Switzerland

When did the review happen and what did they look at?

The review was conducted in 2008 and 2009. The WHO experts conducted two site visits to IQWiG in Cologne, Germany in 2008. They reviewed documents and the Institute's website, conducted interviews with Institute staff and management, as well as a series of interviews

with external stakeholders, including representatives of the German Ministry for Health, health insurers, patient and doctor organisations, and industry. Interviews were also held with experts who work with the IQWiG's Department of Health Information. The team selected three topics for health information and studied these in depth (allergies, asthma, and postnatal depression).

About WHO

The World Health Organization, the United Nations specialist agency for health, was established in 1948. WHO's objective, as set out in its Constitution, is the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health. One hundred and ninety-three countries are WHO Member States. WHO Member States are grouped into six regions. The Regional Office for Europe is located in Copenhagen: <http://www.euro.who.int/> WHO Regional Offices conduct and coordinate the WHO's core functions at the regional level.

About IQWiG

The German Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care (IQWiG) is a scientifically independent institute that was established under the 2004 health reform legislation to provide evidence-based advice for the German healthcare system, as well as independent patient information for patients and citizens. It publishes this information in two languages at www.gesundheitsinformation.de / www.informedhealthonline.org .