

**Course ID:** CMEC19

## **The cost-effectiveness of psychiatric treatments: An evidence-based approach**

**Course director:** Andrew McIntosh

**Teaching faculty:** Kirsten Major

### **Educational Objectives:**

1. Familiarise attendees with the fundamental principles of economic analysis.
2. Introduce the main types of study design used in economic analysis and the potential strengths and limitations associated with each.
3. Enable attendees to be able to critically appraise economic analysis articles themselves.

**Course description:** *Session 1: Principles of Economic Analysis (1 hour), Dr Andrew McIntosh.* This session will concentrate on a general introduction to economic analysis. Concepts such as opportunity cost, direct and indirect costs and the three main types of economic evaluation (cost-effectiveness, cost-utility, and cost-benefit analysis) will be introduced and explained. The difference between an economic perspective and an accounting perspective will be clarified and discussed. The session will also touch on other economic methods such as 'willingness to pay'.

*Session 2: Study design (1 hour) Dr Kirsten Major.* This session will concentrate on the main types of study design used in economic evaluation, but will concentrate on the evaluations alongside randomised controlled trials. This will involve a brief discussion of the general issues of RCT design and potential sources of bias before going on to discuss how a study may be optimally designed to yield an accurate and unbiased economic evaluation. This session will also use a hypothetical dataset to allow participants to observe key issues in economics evaluation. Limitations of economic analysis will be discussed and methods for testing the robustness of their conclusions (sensitivity analysis) will also be mentioned. Recent innovations such as the treatment of highly skewed cost data which have particular relevance in economic evaluations in mental health interventions will also be highlighted.

*Session 3: Critical appraisal of a Cost-effectiveness Paper (1 hour), Dr Kirsten Major & Dr Andrew McIntosh.* This session will involve the critical appraisal of a relevant published study with reference to the above points covered in the previous sessions. Participants will be introduced to a range of checklists which have been produced for economic evaluation. Guidance will also be given on the relative importance of the items generally included in critical appraisal guides. Participants should be in a position to assess the quality and relevance of economic evaluations conducted within their field of interest.

**Course Methods and Materials:** Microsoft PowerPoint 2002 will be used throughout. Slide shows will be projected on-screen using a light projector and PC compatible laptop. Copies of the slides, plus adequate space for adding notes, will be made available at the start of each session and will be made available on the Edinburgh University Department of Psychiatry web site following the course [[www.pst.ed.ac.uk](http://www.pst.ed.ac.uk)].

**Target audience:** The course will appeal to anyone wishing to develop a better understanding of economics analysis and make evidence-based decisions about purchasing, health technology assessment and efficient service development.

**Course level:** Previous knowledge is not required but some knowledge of RCT appraisal would be an advantage. The course will be held in English.