

India to establish Medical Technology Assessment Board

Rhythmia Kaul | Updated: Jul 22, 2016 20:00 IST

New Delhi: India announced the setting up of a Medical Technology Assessment Board (MTAB) that will be one-stop shop to review standards for medicines, vaccines, devices and insurance.

The Board's recommendations will be the last word for health policies and healthcare delivery providers.

Health technology assessment will involve evidence together on clinical effectiveness, safety and cost-effectiveness as well as the social, ethical and legal aspects of the use of health technologies.

“For a country like India that has a limited health budget, we have to ensure maximum people receive quality healthcare at minimum cost. For example, how to decide which vaccines to be given or which stent to use to treat blockage in heart, there have to be standard guidelines in place,” said Dr Soumya Swaminathan, secretary, department of health research.

The board will be constituted under the Department of Health Research and is expected to have up to 15 members from different areas of expertise.

The health ministry has partnered with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), an executive non-departmental public body of UK's Department of Health, to seek guidance in the project.

Whatever recommendations NICE gives, UK's National Health Services (NHS) follows. Closer home, Thailand has Health Intervention and Technology Assessment (HITAP) doing the same work successfully, and will share knowledge on the subject.

“Before this there was no such body, now that we are going in the direction of having one, the recommendations made will be binding for all. The board, however, will need to be notified, and will be completely free of any industry influence,” she said.

The concept being new to India, health ministry is conducting a three-day International workshop beginning Monday, July 25.

The workshop titled ‘Health Technology Assessment-Awareness and Topic Selection’ will have consultations with international experts in the field.

The need to establish such a board was discussed and recommended by the 12th Plan Working Group on health research.

