

## Making decision makers accountable: better journalism – better chances of getting to Universal Health Coverage

*Pre-conference workshop at the Prince Mahidol Award Conference (PMAC) 2016*

Tuesday 26 January 2016, 09:00 –16:45 (including lunch and coffee breaks)  
Lotus Suite 6, Floor 22, Centara Grand & Bangkok Convention Center, Bangkok

### Organisers

- Ms Sarah Boseley, Health Editor, The Guardian, UK
- Dr Sripen Tantivess, Senior Researcher, Health Interventions and Technology Assessment Program (HITAP), Thailand
- Prof John Appleby, Chief Economist, The King's Fund, UK
- Dr Kalipso Chalkidou, Director, NICE International
- Dr Ryan Li, Adviser, NICE International

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### Background

Every health dollar can only be spent once. As an increasing number of low- and middle-income countries commit to universal health coverage (UHC; [UN adopts 'momentous' resolution on universal healthcare, The Guardian, 13 Dec 2012](#)), there is a growing recognition by governments and other stakeholders in respective health systems of the need to set priorities explicitly for spending hence making the most of limited resources, in order to achieve and sustain the objectives of UHC (Center for Global Development Report: <http://www.cgdev.org/working-group/priority-setting-institutions-global-health>). The competing claims of different stakeholders against a finite budget lie at the crux of priority-setting in health, and in many countries the media yield significant power in influencing how these claims are to be understood by the general public and acted upon by policymakers.

While the role of the media varies from country to country, there will be technical, political and ethical issues around priority-setting common that are shared across settings, as well as generalisable principles for understanding and communicating such notions as priority setting, rationing and fair access to services, of relevance to journalists and editors worldwide.

We shall aim to use this side meeting, bringing together journalists, bloggers and editors from around the world, to share our stories of reporting countries' journey towards and efforts to sustain UHC.

## Session Objectives

1. To increase understanding of:
  - How limited resources can be allocated fairly and efficiently to meet demands by patients; why this matters especially in the context of the drive towards UHC; how good reporting can help governments to become more accountable and make better decisions, and service users to understand and influence the reality they live in.
  - Best practices for objective and impartial journalistic reporting for stories linked to access to technologies and services, and also to institutions set up by governments to make such decisions. Such stories could cover individual policy decisions to include or exclude a drug/treatment from the government-funded package, within any given journalistic environment (which might comprise but not be limited to free speech, regulation, professional codes of conduct)
2. To understand existing efforts for the networking and capacity-building of health/science/development journalists, and inform next steps in building such efforts, with the ultimate aim of improving journalistic reporting of priority-setting in health, globally, regionally and at individual country levels.

## Session overview

The workshop will include:

- Short technical components around the principles of priority-setting, cost-effectiveness, and health technology assessment (HTA), illuminated using with many examples of case studies, stories, media coverage
- Interactive sessions to reflect on the challenges, good and bad practices in the reporting of priority-setting through sharing of experiences from different settings (including from key stakeholders in health priority-setting), including around expensive, politically contentious technologies such as human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccine, cancer medicines, screening diagnostic tests
- Discussions about tangible next steps, including establishing a community of practice and possible communication tools to support better reporting at global/country levels.

## Pre-workshop task for participants

Please bring along any relevant stories you have covered in your country that you would like to share during the workshop. In particular, try to prepare examples around healthcare interventions that appear to be unaffordable, with the following issues in mind:

- Is there any sort of rationing in your country?
- Are there medicines or treatments that some people can get but others cannot?
- What is your government's approach to this?
- What other perceived or actual challenges face your country in relation to healthcare (e.g. poor quality of care, politically contentious health policy decisions, fraud, corruption)
- Do you have difficulties in covering any of these stories?

## Agenda

Topic	Time	Lead	Format
Opening remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• why are we here and how can better journalism contribute to achieving universal coverage?</li> <li>• short round of intros around the room (subject to numbers)</li> </ul>	0900-0930	Chavarong Limpattamapanee (Chairman, National Press Council of Thailand) & Sarah Boseley	Lecture plus Q&A
How to do write a good story <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• general principles of good journalism incl. credibility and sources; interrogation and investigation</li> </ul>	0930-1000	Sarah Boseley	Lecture plus Q&A
Every country is different <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• journalism differs within countries: discuss challenges and barriers incl. education of journalists, freedom of speech, cultural barriers, access to data and sources, funding sources for journalists</li> <li>• role of the social media – blogging in LMICs</li> </ul>	1000-1030	Sarah Boseley	Participatory discussion with description of own country settings from the floor chaired by SB
<b>Tea/coffee break</b>			
Writing about economics in healthcare systems... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basics of cost effectiveness analysis, health technology assessment, opportunity costs and trade-offs: terms and definitions; ways of communicating to the public</li> <li>• Managing vested interests-knowing your stakeholders: who stands to win or lose when it comes to discussing access to technologies and services?</li> </ul>	1045-1130	John Appleby	Lecture plus Q&A
Covering cases of denying access to medicines in the UK: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Herceptin for breast cancer and Avastin for age-related macular degeneration in the English National Health Service (Sarah Boseley)</li> <li>• Drug price hikes: should we be worried? (Sarah Boseley)</li> </ul>	1130-1200	Sarah Boseley	Lecture plus Q&A
Sharing your stories! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite journalists to present their own stories in this area (India, Indonesia, Thailand, South Africa...)</li> <li>• Discuss challenges, impact, what would they have done better...</li> </ul>	1200-1300	Sripen Tantivess	Short presentations by journalists followed by discussion
<b>Lunch</b>			
Covering the birth of NICE and of HITAP	1400-1445	Nick Timmins & Benjarin Santatiwongchai	Lecture plus Q&A
More stories: break out groups where journalists discuss story ideas which they would like to develop into full stories!	1445-1545	Sripen T, Sarah B, John A, Nick T.	Break out groups to discuss more LMICs stories
What next? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global resources and global networking</li> <li>• Another gathering in South Africa?</li> <li>• Funding for a network of LMIC journalists for UHC?</li> <li>• Reporting on PMAC field visits and PMAC proceedings over the coming week!</li> <li>• Story ideas!!</li> <li>• PMAC 2017 side meeting!</li> </ul>	1545-1645	Rajesh Mirchandani	Wrap up/next steps

## Speakers and moderators

- Mr Chavarong Limpattamapanee – *Chairman, National Press Council of Thailand*
- Prof John Appleby, *Chief Economist, The King's Fund, UK*
- Ms Sarah Boseley, *Health Editor, The Guardian, UK*
- Mr Rajesh Mirchandani, *Senior Director of Communications and Policy Outreach, Center for Global Development, USA*
- Ms Benjarin Santatiwongchai, *Researcher, Health Interventions and Technology Assessment Program (HITAP), Thailand*
- Dr Sripen Tantivess, *Senior Researcher, Health Interventions and Technology Assessment Program (HITAP), Thailand*
- Mr Nick Timmins, *Senior Fellow, Policy, The King's Fund, UK*