**1. Introduction**

Medical technologies for smaller groups of patients and with incremental innovation potential, such as limb prosthetics, pose particular methodological challenges for HTA [1,2]. At the same time, HTA of medical technologies is increasingly important to spend scarce resources efficiently in times of multiple crises, aging populations and progressing technological development. This poster discusses HTA of prosthetic limbs from an ethical, in particular justice perspective. It points out how access to limb prosthetics may be restricted currently, how it could be improved, and which role HTA would have to play here. It is also a case study of ethics in HTA, an assessment domain still often not implemented in HTA reports, contributing to the methodological discussion.

**3. Ethical aspects of prosthetic care**

| 46 articles, 16 interviews, 42 ethical aspects | 9 aspects of interventions | 11 aspects of interviews | 22 aspects of literature |

**Societal:** Sports, self-perception and concept of disability, normality and identity, enhancement, embodiment, responsibility and autonomy

**Technological:** Privacy and data security, safety, embodiment, responsibility and autonomy

**Health care:** Informed and user-centred choice, user-centred development

**5. HTA of limb prosthetics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practical:</td>
<td>1. Not reported/discussed in existing HTAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulatory:</td>
<td>2. Identified based on Hofmann's catalogue [7]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodological:</td>
<td>3. System level: distribution of budgets</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Potential benefits**
- For health care systems/society: limiting price/costs
- For developers/producers: competitive advantage
- For patients/users: improve access, enhance real-world-benefit

**Ethical considerations**
- Informed and user-centred choice
- Safety, embodiment, responsibility and autonomy
- Enhancement, personal identity
- Health care normality and identity, enhancement, improvement

**6. Discussion and outlook: Reimbursement of limb prosthetics and just health care**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High costs for prosthetics</th>
<th>Organizational/communication challenges</th>
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<td>Unfairness in reimbursement regulation</td>
<td>High relevance of social courts instead of ethical discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of knowledge and practical implementation of HTA</td>
<td>Lack of information for patients</td>
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**7. Discussion and outlook: Role and method of HTA**

The example of prosthetic care shows the need for collaboration between HTA, other disciplines (TA, public health, health service research), patients and policy makers in order to address ethical issues. The most pressing issue identified for prosthetic care in Germany is access to suitable limb prosthetics. HTA may contribute to informing patients and professionals about prosthetic technology from different producers, foster a public debate on rationing in health care, and controlling costs/prices for prosthetic technology. To this end, methodological innovations, infrastructure and training for registries and evidence based practice, as well as raising awareness for the benefits of HTA may be needed.

This case study also showed that a mixed method combining literature and interview studies is suitable to identify and describe a wider range of ethical aspects than a question and literature based (socratic) approach alone. Overall, the message of this work is that qualitative empirical methods in HTA could help to improve impact of HTA through an investigation of structural, legal, practical, ethical and methodological challenges for a realization of its potential benefits in different technological fields and health system environments.

**References**


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