

Health Economy is THE Key to Market Access for Innovative Medicines

Fact-based evaluation of health measures is THE key to market access for innovative medicines, Univ.-Prof. Dr. Heinrich Klech, Managing Director of the Vienna School of Clinical Research, Public Health and Medical Education (VSCR), is convinced about this.

Interview with Univ.-Prof. Dr. Heinrich Klech, Text: Nicole Gerfertz-Schiefer



Univ.-Prof. Dr. Heinrich Klech, Managing Director, VSCR

After his successful international academic career and positions in international R&D management, Univ.-Prof. Dr. Heinrich Klech, specialist in internal medicine and pneumology, founded the Vienna School of Clinical Research (VSCR) in 2000, an independent training center in close cooperation with the Medical University of Vienna and other international universities. Prof. Klech calls on all healthcare players to include health economics in their decisions. He tells more about this in an interview.

PHARMAustria: What is Health Outcome Research?

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Heinrich Klech: Health Outcome Research (HEOR) is the systemic results research of health measures in patients and populations as well as with regard to the effects on a health system through a synthesis of medical and economic measurement and assessment parameters. The so-called pharmaco-economics is an essential part of this. The prerequisite for this is the systematic recording of medical patient data in the sense of evidence-based medicine with si-

multaneous knowledge of the costs and efficiency of a recorded healthcare system.

What can be achieved through HEOR?

Such data collection about the effects of health measures such as access to a new innovative drug is called a Health Technology Assessment (HTA). In addition to the known properties such as effectiveness and tolerability of a drug, this systematic scientific method also provides results on the efficiency and affordability of a new drug in a recorded healthcare system, enables health-economic comparisons to alternatives and thus helps with decisions about measures such as reimbursement or non-reimbursement a drug. Incidentally, there is an established and European networked HTA facility in Austria, the AIHTA (Austrian Institute for Health Technology Assessment), headed by Prof.in Dr.in Claudia Wild, with a focus on oncology and medical devices.

Why is such a systematic evaluation important?

HTA is now an indispensable piece of scientific knowledge, as it enables fact-based assessment of health interventions within modern healthcare systems.

Such measures can be, for example:

- the decision to include a new, innovative drug in a health insurance provider's catalog of services or, for example, only to provide it to a specific patient segment;
- the decision to refund a new imaging method that can replace other methods and ultimately also makes economic sense.

HEOR and HTA integrate both medical and economic facts and enable a more holistic view of health measures and systems and therefore have a very important societal be-

nefit and status. However, this is currently not sufficiently supported by the lack of transparency and availability of health data in Austria. In addition, the payers for medical services in this country are fragmented and often only have their own budget pots in view. However, I am hopeful that at least the linking and transparency of the data will improve in the next few years, because it is now clear to everyone involved that costs can be reduced and processes improved in this way.

What is the role of the VSCR?

As a center of excellence, the VSCR deals with the science of pharmaco-economics and has trained over 2,000 scientists/students from over 40 countries with the help of an international faculty in the field of health and pharmaco-economics - since 2018 also in a joint international diploma program with the Sigmund Freud University in Vienna. In the diploma courses you receive the basic tools for the collection and interpretation of health economic data; workshops teach how an HTA dossier is put together and how negotiations with a wide variety of stakeholders can be optimized. The participants come mainly from industry. The VSCR diploma modules are aimed at market access specialists, country managers, key account managers, medical affairs and regulatory. There are also participants from university institutions as well as from health authorities and ministries. In addition, the VSCR, as a non-profit limited company, also organizes national and international courses as well as accredited training events for doctors. ■

Thank you for the interview!