



Patient Involvement in Drug Evaluations to Inform Funding Decisions: A Singapore Case Study

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Introduction

To encourage meaningful patient input in health technology assessments (HTAs) and improve the legitimacy and acceptance of funding decisions in Singapore, patient involvement processes and educational resources were co-developed with local patient organisations by the Agency for Care Effectiveness (ACE) in 2022.

This poster describes how local patient groups were identified and summarises the new patient involvement processes.

Methods

- In April 2021, a dedicated work stream – the Consumer Engagement and Education (CEE) team – was established to support all patient involvement initiatives at ACE.
- CEE conducted a stakeholder mapping exercise to identify all patient and volunteer groups in Singapore by searching the Singapore Charity Portal, hospital websites, Google search engine and social media platforms (Fig. 1).
- Identified groups were screened in line with specific criteria then contacted via email and telephone to find out their interest in providing patient input into ACE's work and foster collaborative working relationships.
- A Consumer Panel comprising 14 members with senior appointments in local patient organisations was subsequently established in April 2022 to represent the collective voice of healthcare consumers and provide strategic advice to ACE on opportunities to strengthen patient engagement efforts.
- Plain English resources, targeted training materials and a process guide¹ to encourage patient involvement in ACE's work were co-developed with local patient organisations, by drawing upon expertise and best practices from overseas HTA agencies in Australia, Canada and the UK, contextualised to local patients' needs (Fig. 2).

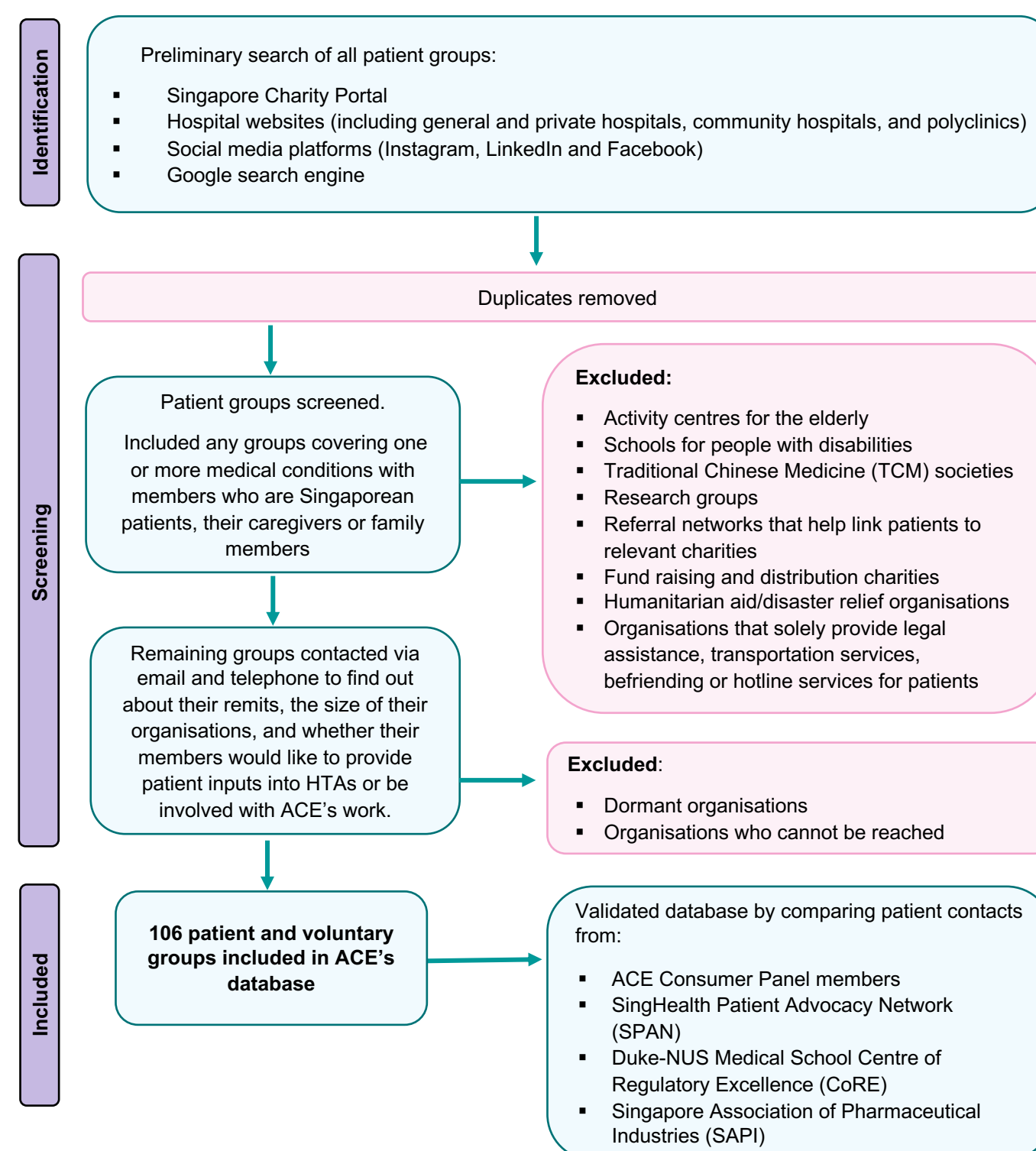


Figure 1: Flow diagram of the stakeholder mapping exercise to identify all patient and voluntary organisations in Singapore

Results

- 106 local patient groups covering 20 conditions were identified including registered organisations and informal support groups (Tab.1).

Table 1: Conditions supported by patient organisations in Singapore

Conditions	Groups
Cancer	27
Neurological conditions	17
Mental health/behavioural conditions	14
Diabetes and other endocrinal, nutritional and metabolic conditions	7
Cardiovascular conditions	6
Blood and immune system conditions	5
Kidney conditions	4
Non-disease specific	4
Respiratory conditions	4
Digestive tract conditions	3
Neonatal/infant/paediatric conditions	3
Eye conditions	2
Infections	2
Skin conditions	2
Congenital malformations and chromosomal abnormalities	1
Gynaecological conditions	1
Injuries, accidents and wounds	1
Liver conditions	1
Oral and dental health	1
Rare diseases	1
Total	106

- From August 2022, ACE began including patient input into drug HTAs. 82 responses from 10 patient organisations were received to inform 7 evaluations of drugs for cancer, diabetes, HIV, and other conditions in line with the new patient involvement processes (Fig. 3).
- Patient organisations viewed the opportunity to submit testimonials of lived experiences as a meaningful and important activity for their members.

Impact of Patient Input

Patients and their carers provide important evidence to inform ACE's HTAs and help decision-makers to:

- Understand how different medical conditions affect patients, their carers, and families
- Identify unmet needs and treatment preferences of patients
- Understand the benefits and disadvantages of different health technologies
- Understand patients' expectations for new treatments
- Identify health outcomes that are important to patients
- Determine if the outcomes measured in clinical trials and economic models are relevant to patients in Singapore
- Fill gaps or address uncertainties in the scientific evidence
- Identify if there are any issues affecting a patient's ability to use or access treatments

Discussion

- Patient involvement has become integral to ACE's HTAs due to an increased recognition that patients have the requisite expertise and an important contribution to make in addressing uncertainties in the scientific evidence base and interpreting results for real-world implementation by describing their needs, preferences, experiences, and expectations.
- Patient organisations will receive ongoing training and support from CEE to ensure that their members can meaningfully contribute to ACE's work and are up to date with any process changes over time.
- From 2023, patients will be able to propose topics for ACE to evaluate for funding consideration and provide input into HTAs for non-drug topics including gene therapies and medical devices.

Conclusion

ACE is committed to understanding the priorities and preferences of patients in Singapore to improve the quality of its HTAs and ensure that funding recommendations for health technologies are relevant to the people most affected by them.

ACE's patient involvement processes will be continuously revised to ensure that they meet patients' expectations and needs.

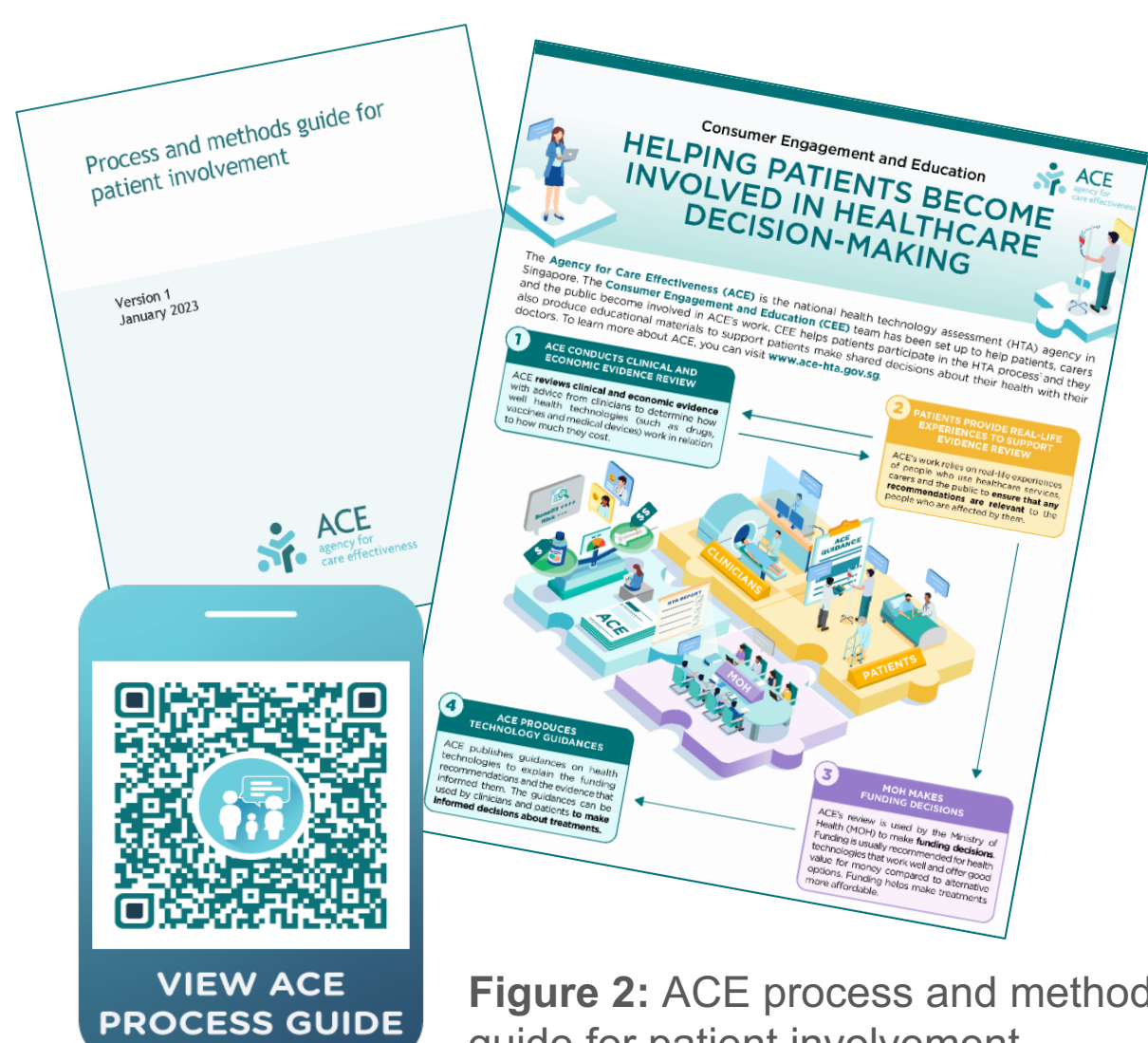


Figure 2: ACE process and methods guide for patient involvement



Figure 3: Patient responses informing ACE's drug HTAs in 2022

References:

- Agency for Care Effectiveness, Ministry of Health Singapore. January 2023. Process and methods guide for patient involvement (Version 1).