

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CARE EXCELLENCE

HealthTech Programme

Equality impact assessment: Topic selection and scoping

HTE43 Robot-assisted surgery for orthopaedic procedures

The impact on equality has been assessed during this evaluation according to the principles of the [NICE Equality scheme](#).

1. Have any potential equality issues been identified during the development of the topic briefing note or during selection, and, if so, what are they?

Several potential equality issues have been identified in line with equality considerations for the included technologies. Key issues include:

- There may be some inequalities in access to RAS. Robotic platforms are expensive and if the placement of robotic systems is limited to larger hospitals with more resources to procure and maintain the system and staff needed to use the system, access to RAS may exacerbate existing regional inequalities ([Morton et al., 2024](#)).
- One of the proposed benefits of RAS is improved outcomes by providing consistency in surgical procedures and reducing variability among surgeons. This technology may be particularly beneficial for low-volume surgeons or those with less experience.
- People who are at higher surgical risk such as those who are older, obese or with a high BMI, or with multiple comorbidities may benefit from an increased access to surgery. Age is a protected characteristic, and many people may be covered by the Equality Act if their condition has had a substantial adverse impact on normal day to day activities for over 12 months or is likely to do so. RAS can potentially allow for more precise surgery which may be beneficial in challenging surgical scenarios, such as in the obese people, where conventional surgery is more challenging.

2. What is the preliminary view as to what extent these potential equality issues need addressing by the committee?

The committee should consider all the equality issues when making recommendations.

3. Has any change to the draft scope been agreed to highlight potential equality issues?

An equality considerations section was included the scope to highlight the potential equality issues described in this document.

The potential equality issues were discussed at the scoping workshop. Stakeholders agreed with the potential issues that were raised and 1 additional equality considerations were discussed:

- For surgeons operating with RAS, there may be less physical burden, which could improve the diversity of orthopaedic surgeons by increasing the number of female surgeons and those who may not be as physically able

4. Have any additional stakeholders related to potential equality issues been identified during the scoping process, and, if so, have changes to the stakeholder list been made?

No additional stakeholders related to potential equality issues were identified during the scoping process.

Approved by Associate Director: Anastasia Chalkidou

Date: 5 July 2024