

# The Rise of NICE Advice on the Use of Pharmaceuticals, Medical Devices, and Digital Health Care in the NHS

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## OBJECTIVE

- In England, medicines, devices, and diagnostics not suitable for formal health technology assessment (HTA) by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) can be selected for a range of NICE advice products.
- NICE advice does not constitute formal guidance and does not provide recommendations, but rather informs local National Health Service decision making for medicines, devices, and digital apps. This study reviews the differences between NICE advice products, the processes involved, and the areas of health care covered by published advice.

## METHODS

- Published NICE advice products and processes were reviewed on the NICE website up to 24 September 2018 and were verified by consultation with NICE technical staff. For each product, the output was analysed to record the type of technology, clinical area, and setting.

## RESULTS

### NICE Advice Products for New Medicines, Devices, Diagnostics, and Digital Apps

- Four types of NICE advice products are available (Table 1):
  - Evidence summaries of new or unlicensed medicines (ESNMs)
  - Key therapeutic topics (KTTs) for medicines optimisation
  - Medtech innovation briefings (MIBs) of devices, diagnostics, and digital apps
  - Improving access to psychological therapies assessment briefings (IABs) for digital psychological therapies
- All NICE advice is peer reviewed and includes a summary and critical review of the best available clinical evidence and a cost/resource impact assessment. MIBs and IABs also include expert and/or patient commentary.

Table 1. Overview of NICE Advice Products<sup>1</sup>

NICE Advice Product	Technologies Covered	No. Published	Aim and Scope	Key Audiences	Topic Selection Method
ESNMs	New and unlicensed medicines	131 (since 2012)	Summarises the best available evidence for selected new medicines, off-label use of licensed medicines, and unlicensed medicines	Health care professionals, commissioners in the NHS, patients, and the public	Selected directly by NICE from a range of sources
KTTs	Medicines optimisation	20 (since 2015)	Summarises the evidence base in therapeutic areas where there are potential opportunities for maintaining or improving quality and improving value from our use of medicines	Local medicines optimisation services and clinicians in the NHS	NHS England identifies topics
MIBs	Devices, diagnostics, digital health care apps	154 (since 2014)	Summarises the evidence base on a new or innovative medical device, its potential impact on care pathways, and some expert commentary	NHS and social care commissioners and staff who are considering using new medical devices or diagnostic technologies	Companies notify their products to NICE for consideration
IABs	Digital psychological therapies	5 (since 2018)	Summarises assessments of eligible digital psychological therapies and how they would fit in IAPT services	IAPT expert panel, IAPT service providers and therapists	Companies notify their products to NICE for consideration

IAPT = improving access to psychological therapies.

### Number of NICE Advice Products by Year

- Since the first ESNM in 2012, 310 NICE advice products have been published up to September 2018 (Figure 1). NICE advice products on digital apps have been launched in the past year, with the introduction of a new product: IABs.

### Areas of Health Care Covered by NICE Advice

- NICE has published advice summarising the evidence base for pharmaceuticals, devices, and diagnostics across a range of disease areas (Figure 2). A large proportion of both ESNMs and MIBs were classified as "other" due to the wide variety of indications covered by these advice products.
- Apart from "other," the largest category of ESNMs was for respiratory medicines; for MIBs, the largest category was for cardiovascular devices and diagnostic technologies. Fewer ESNMs than MIBs covered cancer, probably because all cancer drugs are referred to the NICE TA programme.
- The types of technologies covered by MIBs may reflect the type of companies that have notified their products to NICE for consideration as an advice product, which is a selection route not available for ESNMs or KTTs.
- As IABs cover only digital technologies for treating mental health conditions, and only 20 KTTs have been published since 2015, these 2 products were not included in this analysis.

Figure 1. NICE Advice Product Publication by Year<sup>1</sup>

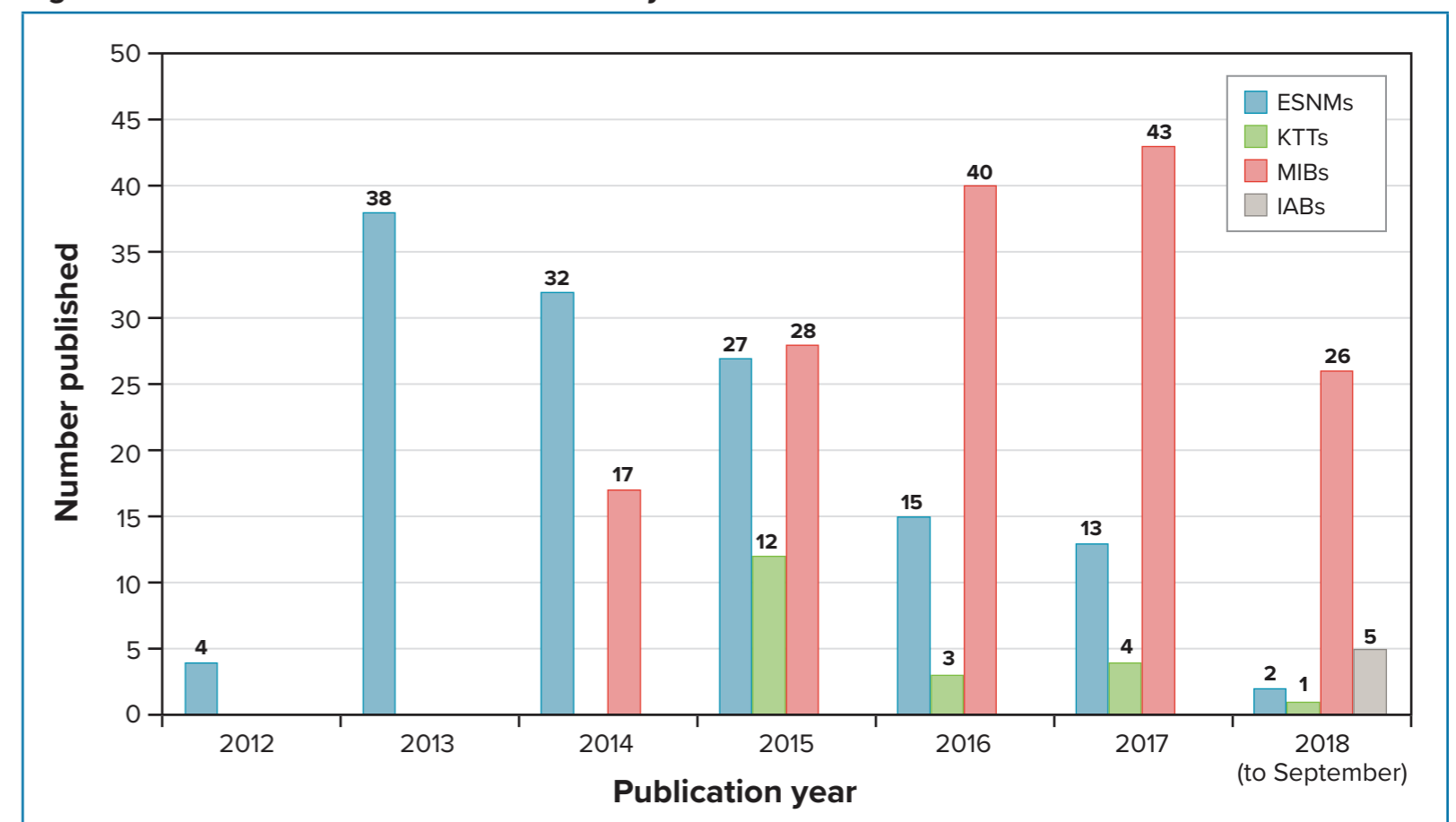
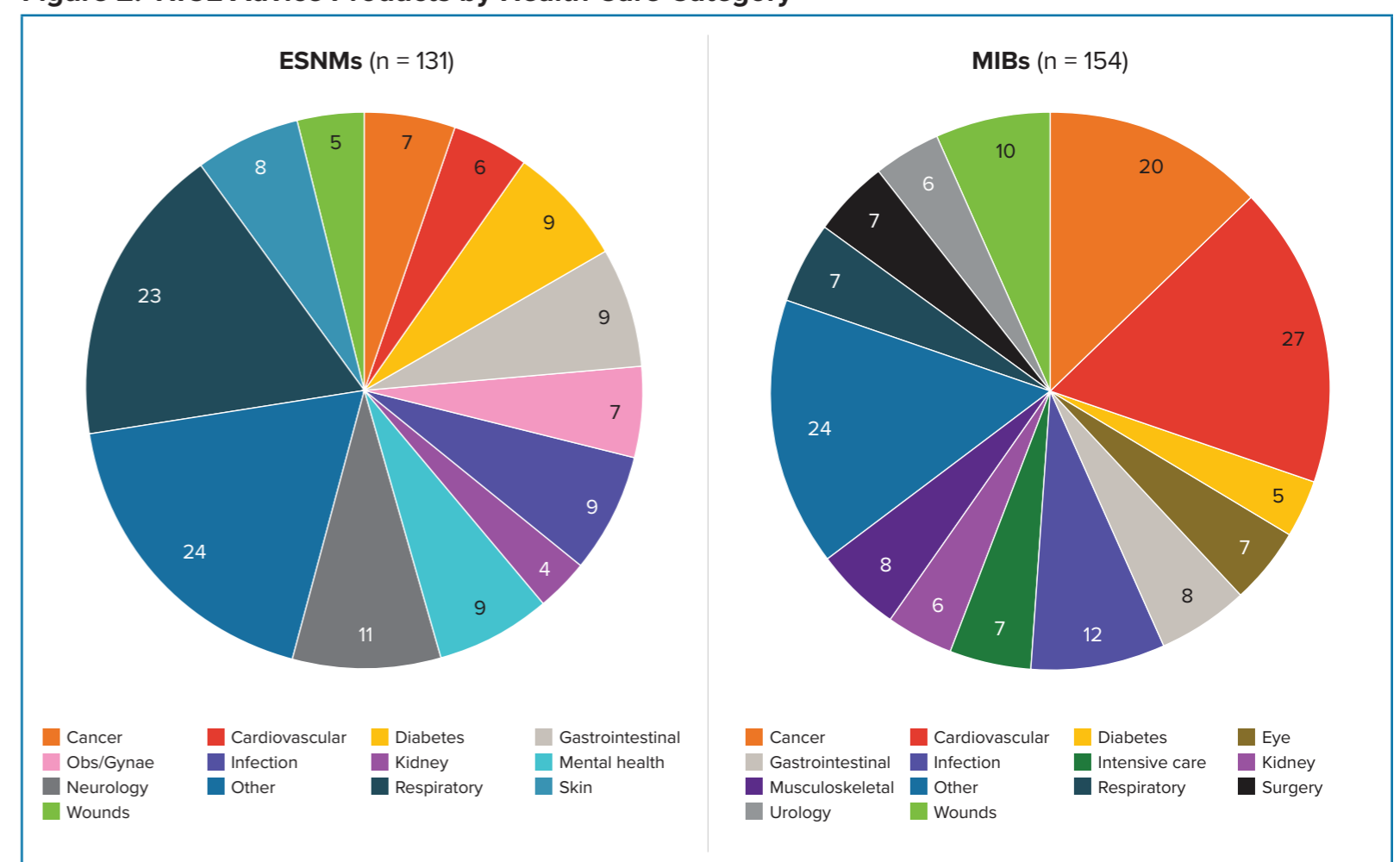


Figure 2. NICE Advice Products by Health Care Category



Note: Categories with ≤ 5 advice publications in a disease area were classed as "other." KTTs and IABs were not assessed, as only 20 and 5 have been published, respectively.

### Use of NICE Advice by Health Care Professionals and Industry

- In 2016, NICE surveyed NHS staff (n = 106) and manufacturers of medical technologies (n = 42) to gauge opinions on MIBs.<sup>2</sup>
- The feedback received was generally positive, with both Medtech manufacturers and NHS staff understanding the purpose of MIBs and responding favourably regarding the content. More than half of clinicians were aware of MIBs and thought that raising awareness and visibility should be a future priority.<sup>2</sup>
- Manufacturers whose products had already been described in a MIB stated that the MIB had a positive impact on their reputation, helped them guide future research plans, produce educational materials and for use with payers.<sup>2</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

- In addition to publishing formal HTA, NICE publishes a suite of advice products to inform both clinicians and commissioners on medicines, devices, and apps, covering a broad range of clinical areas and care settings, including hospital, primary, and community care.

## REFERENCES

- NICE website. Available at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/>. Accessed 26 September 2018.
- Campbell-Burton, A, Unsworth, H. Industry and clinician views of Medtech Innovation Briefings. Oral presentation OPI54 at HTAi; 1-5 June 2018; Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

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