

OHE ACADEMY

Foundational
Health Economics:

What are the top research
trends in health economics?



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Top five research trends in Health Economics:

Real-World Evidence (RWE)

RWE describes the range of evidence relating to patient health or experience or care delivery collected outside the context of randomised control trials. RWE can provide timely data at a reasonable cost, comprise larger sample sizes that enable analysis of subpopulations, and represent outcomes reflecting real-world practice. The way in which RWE continues to be incorporate in HTA and reimbursement decisions is of great interest to health economists.

Sources: [HE dictionary](#), [ISPOR \(The Professional Society for Health Economics and Outcomes Research\) trends](#), [OHE | Topic Page | Real World Evidence](#)

Drug Pricing

Drug pricing is a global issue in healthcare. With rising costs and high demand for novel therapies, healthcare systems face pressure to maintain access within constrained budgets. Several policies, like the United States' Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and "Most-Favoured Nation" pricing model, aim to tackle soaring prices. Researchers are investigating the implications of these policies, not only on the issuing country, but also on the rest of the world.

Sources: [ISPOR trends](#), [OHE website](#)

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

AI has the potential to revolutionise health economics by enhancing evidence generation and synthesis as well as streamlining economic modelling. There is growing research on how AI can be harnessed to aid health technology assessment (HTA) whilst also acknowledging its current limitations related to model reliability and risk of bias.

Sources: [ISPOR trends](#), [ISPOR Strategic Initiatives](#), [ISPOR Working Group Report](#)



Fostering Innovation

Innovation is crucial for developing new health technologies that address public health priorities and unmet needs. However, innovation relies on lengthy, costly and risky research and development (R&D) processes. Financial incentives can incentivise innovation but risk undermining affordable pricing. Health economists research how to balance this trade off and maximise the effectiveness of innovation. Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR) and rare disease are particular areas where innovation is currently needed.

Sources: [ISPOR trends](#), [OHE website](#), [Advancing Rare Disease Care: Challenges and Key Issues](#), [Taking STRIDES: The value of diagnostics against AMR](#)

Health Equity

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the stark health disparities across the world, and in 2025 these disparities are not going away. Health systems need to ensure the allocation of resources is such that there is broad access to high quality care for all members of society. This involves applying frameworks that centre on fairness, opportunity, quality and social justice.

Sources: [ISPOR trends](#), [World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](#)

Impact of Climate Change on Health

One of the strengths of health economics lies in its capacity to make explicit the often-unseen health and social consequences of policy choices. Beyond quantifying the benefits of avoided illness and premature mortality of climate policies, health economics methods allow understanding behavioural responses, distributional impacts, and system-level dynamics that shape vulnerability and resilience. By integrating these insights into climate policy, health economics offers insights into the broader value of climate action - including gains in wellbeing, productivity, and intergenerational equity. Through rigorous modelling and evaluation, it helps ensure that health, both global and intertemporal, becomes a central driver rather than a by-product of climate strategy.

Sources:
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These topics reflect a wide range of issues, from advancing methodological approaches to broader questions about healthcare delivery and policy. It's important to note that the field of health economics is vast and constantly evolving, with researchers tackling many different questions depending on their specific interests and the needs of the healthcare system.

**More
Information**

For more information on the OHE's work in these 5 areas, please visit our Research pages on the website: ohe.org

