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Empirical Evidence from the Social Sciences:

“Why We Should not Minimize Cost per QALY”

This presentation gives evidence on four issues relating to population views with respect to costs and QALYs. These are (i) the importance of age; (ii) social characteristics; (iii) severity of illness; and (iv) sharing of resources per se. All of the results imply that we should not minimise cost per QALY.

A further pragmatic reason for not applying this rule to interventions in different diagnostic areas is that the major instruments used for measuring quality of life and QALYs have not been properly validated.

The paper concludes with a consideration of the reason why these results have been ignored. It is agreed that the paradigm underlying orthodox evaluation theory which may be described as “Quasi Rationalism” is fundamentally flawed. This is seen most clearly in the absurdity of a number of the implications of the theory in the health sector.