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The Role of Health in Impact Assessment and Related Initiatives: A Literature Review

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Abstract

Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is widely unstructured in their scope and procedures. Besides, it lacks regulation in several countries. However, health impacts of projects and plans are assuming increasing relevance and are claimed as critical in traditional Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and similar types of assessment. This paper investigates the role of health in EIA and in other variety of assessment in which human health is directly or indirectly related. A literature review in *Web of Knowledge* data basis enabled to recover 46 studies related to HIA, EIA and respective correlations. These studies were classified in 10 categories accordingly the main subject presented. For each category, a content analysis were performed aimed at identify the role assumed by health. It was found that: (i) when EIA is central, health assumes secondary function, usually associated to harm from exposure (category 1); (ii) when the main subject regards to EIA framework, health is a variable in EIA structure (2) or health assessment is embedded in EIA (8); health plays central and community characteristics when EIA is assumed as integrated to social aspects (3); health tends to be quantified and analytically deployed when Risk Assessment is central (4); health is considered an asset when practical assessment is addressed to integration purposes (5); in HIA, health assumes a pluralistic role due the wide scope it undergoes (6), but it can be uplifted from the traditional toxicological/epidemiological approaches to social ones (7); in infrastructure projects, HIA embraces governance issues (9) and in combined HIA and RA frameworks, health is regarded as management subject (10).

Keywords: *Health Impact Assessment. Environmental Impact Assessment. Health. Risk Assessment.*