

# Intro: Health Impact Assessment #2

## methodologies & levels of assessment

By Denise Attard Sacco, BS Environmental Health (Hons), MPH, CHES.

Decisions taken on policies, programs and plans operating outside the health sector can affect the health of Iowa’s population both on an individual as well as on a public level. Such decisions can impact both the physical and social environment and in turn the economic development of the State.

Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a tool/process which may be employed to tackle those aspects which disproportionately impact disparity populations, and helps address those health concerns which can contribute towards economic decline and poverty.

### HIA Methodologies

Health Impact Assessment may be undertaken prospectively, retrospectively, or concurrently depending on the stage at which the proposal under consideration is to be assessed.

**Prospective Assessments** are generally conducted during the development stages of a proposal. A prospective assessment can help in identifying the possible health impacts a proposal may have, as well as assist in determining any necessary changes which may need to be carried out to reduce/eliminate identified negative health impacts or to enhance positive ones..

**Retrospective Assessments** are employed in the evaluation of existing policies, programs or projects (PPPs), to determine the health impacts and consequences resulting from their implementation. A retrospective assessment can help in identifying the health inequity impacts of existing PPPs, and can therefore be used to inform future actions when developing similar proposals.

**Concurrent Assessments** are used to evaluate the health impacts of PPPs during the course of their implementation. The information provided through concurrent HIA assessments can help PPP implementers to take prompt corrective measures to address any negative health impacts which may arise.

### Levels of Assessment

Different depths of assessment can be employed when conducting a HIA, depending on the resources available (funding, data, personnel, time) as well as the purpose of the HIA and the ultimate aim to be achieved. Other determining factors include the severity of the health impacts under consideration and the context of the proposal to be assessed. A description of the different levels at which a HIA can be performed is provided in the table below.

HIA level	Description
<b>Desk-based HIA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⊕ Broad overview of possible health impacts.</li> <li>⊕ Requires collecting and assessing existing data and information.</li> <li>⊕ Time frame: 2 to 6 weeks duration.</li> </ul>
<b>Rapid HIA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⊕ Requires collecting and analyzing both existing data and new qualitative data.</li> <li>⊕ Time frame: approximately 12 weeks.</li> </ul>
<b>Intermediate HIA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⊕ Review of available evidence and of any similar HIA topic areas</li> <li>⊕ Collection and analyses of new data.</li> <li>⊕ Stakeholder engagement.</li> <li>⊕ Time frame: 3-6 months.</li> </ul>
<b>In-depth HIA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⊕ Comprehensive assessment of all potential health impacts.</li> <li>⊕ Employed when scale and severity of identified health impacts warrants detailed investigation.</li> <li>⊕ Data collection and analyzes conducted using various methods and sources.</li> <li>⊕ Stakeholder engagement.</li> <li>⊕ Time Frames: 6 months – 1 year. Assessments may need to be conducted during different periods over the course of a one year period, to take into account the possible impact of seasonal variations.</li> </ul>

**For More Information:**  
 Contact Denise Attard Sacco at [deniseatsac@gmail.com](mailto:deniseatsac@gmail.com)

(Adapted from IMPACT et al, 2004; IPH Ireland, 2009; & Queensland Health, 2003)

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## methodologies & levels of assessment cont...

### References & Further Information

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