

USING HTA TO SUPPORT DECISIONS IN A SUPERREGIONAL PERSPECTIVE: EXPERIENCE OF THE LAVAL UNIVERSITY INTEGRATED HEALTH NETWORK

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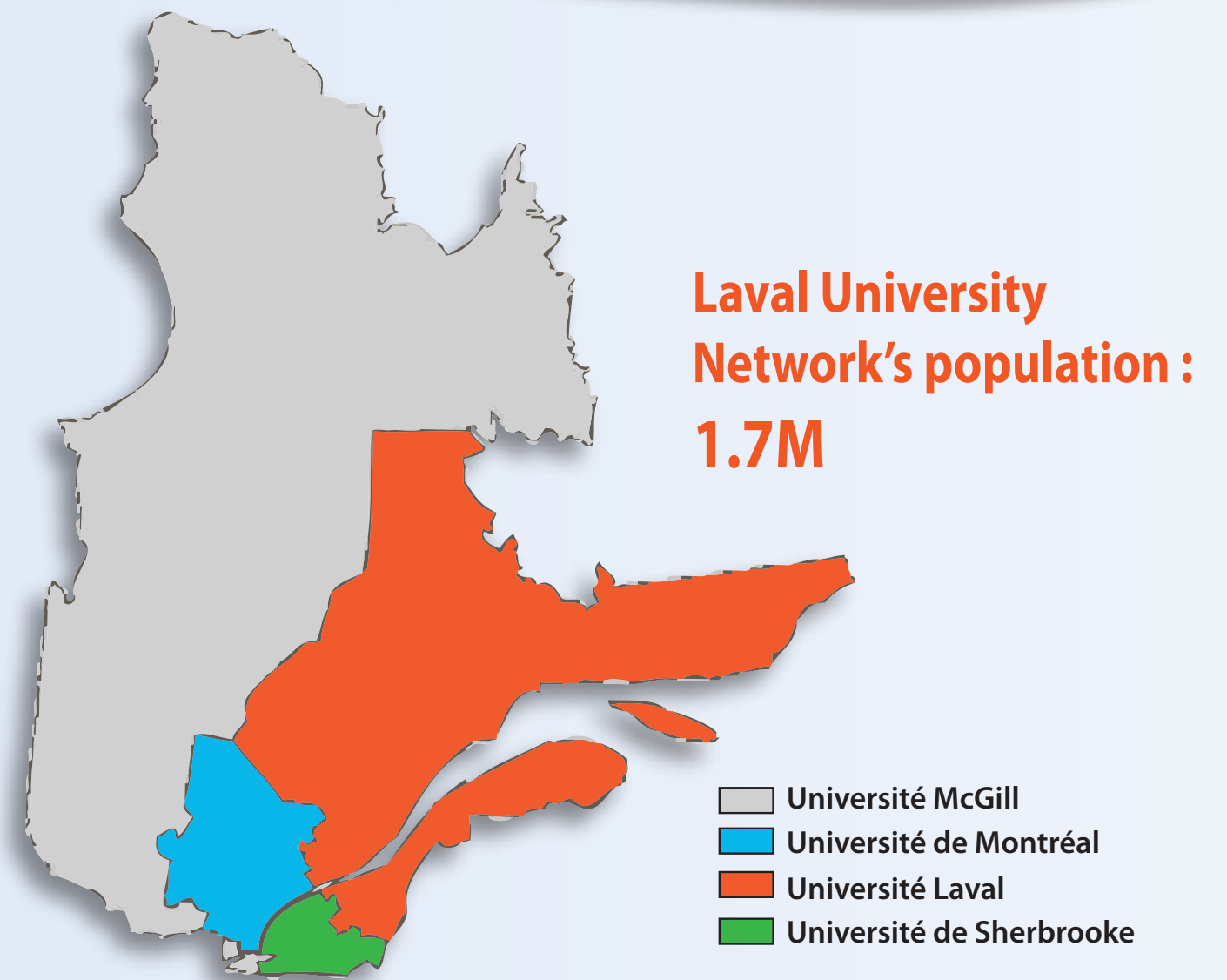
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BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE

To optimize their performance, hospitals and regional health agencies must manage and implement changes and innovations to face the evolution of the healthcare system including the population's needs and expectations and the necessity of costs control. To increase the impacts of their decisions, it appears essential that healthcare authorities lean on evidence-based medicine and management but also take into account the expertise of clinical and administrative teams at the local level.

In 2004, new reform in healthcare allowed the creation in the province of Quebec (Canada) of four University Integrated Health Networks. The Laval University network regroups six regional health agencies. The network was implemented to coordinate specialized care, teaching, research and health technology assessment (HTA) in order to share information and to help smaller regional hospitals. HTA activities are mainly concentrated in the bigger university health centers because of the teams of reviewers required to conduct such processes and the scarcity of specialized resources. Panels of representatives of the regions and of the university centers were recruited to act at the superregional level to coordinate HTA activities on common healthcare priorities.



STRUCTURE

The HTA Panel mandates are :

- › to prioritize HTA questions of common interest
- › to enhance knowledge translation and use of HTA reports in decision-making at the local and regional levels
- › to promote implementation of a culture of evidence-informed management and evidence-based clinical practice in the university network.
- › the HTA unit of the CHUQ leads the HTA projects within the network and offers coordination, mentoring, and knowledge translation.

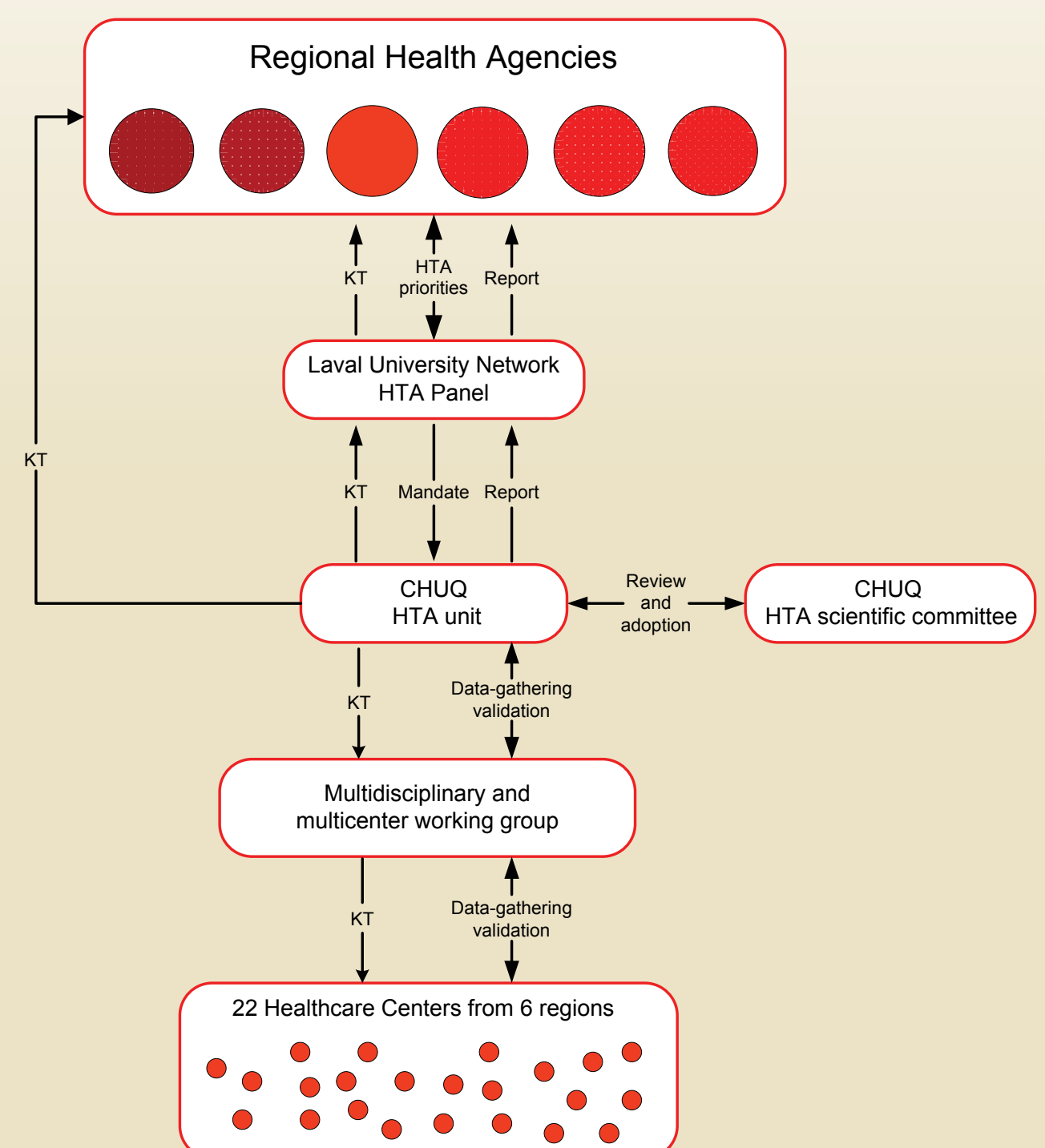
BENEFITS

- › Supporting initiatives for better care and organization of care
- › Efficiency of HTA process
- › Coordinated efforts in HTA and evidence-informed decision making
- › Improvement of knowledge translation
- › Availability of the HTA expertise for smaller health centers
- › Implementation of an evaluation culture in the network

IMPLEMENTATION FACILITATORS

- › Leadership and commitment of the University Integrated Health Network, the regional health agencies and the HTA Unit of the University Health Center
- › Budget support from all the regional health agencies involved
- › Willingness of decision makers to implement HTA recommendations.
- › Knowledge translation activities

ASSESSMENT OF ALTERNATIVES TO SECLUSION AND RESTRAINT: AN EXAMPLE



CONCLUSION

HTA is an important tool to support evidence-informed management and clinical practice. A superregional approach, based on the needs of the hospitals and regional agencies, should be preferred to the multiplication of local initiatives to optimize the use of the rare and specialized HTA resources.