

**CRITICAL APPRAISAL CHECKLIST FOR AN ARTICLE  
ON GUIDELINES.**

**Study Design: Secondary analysis of primary studies.**

**Adapted from:**

Hayward RSA, Wilson MC, Tunis SR, Bass EB, Guyatt G. Users' guides to the medical literature. VIII. How to use clinical practice guidelines. A. Are the recommendations valid? *JAMA* 1995; 274: 570-574.

Wilson MC, Hayward RSA, Tunis SR, Bass EB, Guyatt G. Users' guides to the medical literature. VIII. How to use clinical practice guidelines. B. What are the recommendations and will they help you in caring for you patients? *JAMA* 1995; 274: 570-574.

Greenhalgh T. Papers that tell you what to do (guidelines). In: *How to read a paper. The basics of evidence based medicine*. BMJ Publishing Group, 1997.

## DOES THE GUIDELINE ADDRESS A CLEAR ISSUE?

|  |            |                   |           |
|--|------------|-------------------|-----------|
| <p><b>1. Were the following clearly stated:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patient group to which guideline should be applied.</li> <li>• Their health problem.</li> <li>• Who is providing the care.</li> <li>• The setting for that care.</li> </ul> | <b>Yes</b> | <b>Can't tell</b> | <b>No</b> |
|--|------------|-------------------|-----------|

## ARE THE RECOMMENDATIONS VALID?

### A. The main questions to answer:

|  |            |                   |           |
|--|------------|-------------------|-----------|
| <p><b>2. Were all the important options and outcomes clearly specified?</b></p>  | <b>Yes</b> | <b>Can't tell</b> | <b>No</b> |
| <p><b>3. Was an explicit and sensible process used to identify, select and combine evidence?</b></p>   |            |                   |           |
| <p><b>4. Was an explicit and sensible process used to consider the relative value of different outcomes?</b></p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who participated in this process.</li> <li>• Whose values were considered.</li> </ul> |            |                   |           |
| <p><b>5. Is the guideline resistant to clinically sensible variations in practice?</b></p>   |            |                   |           |

### B. Some finer points to address:

|   |            |                   |           |
|---|------------|-------------------|-----------|
| <p><b>6. Are the relative preferences that key stakeholders attach to the outcomes of decisions identified and explicitly considered.</b></p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were all potential stakeholders involved.</li> <li>• Benefits.</li> <li>• Risks.</li> <li>• Costs.</li> </ul> | <b>Yes</b> | <b>Can't tell</b> | <b>No</b> |
|---|------------|-------------------|-----------|

|  |            |                   |           |
|--|------------|-------------------|-----------|
| <p><b>7. Is the guideline likely to account for important recent developments, i.e. how up to date is it?</b></p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The publication date of the most recent evidence considered.</li> <li>• The date on which the final recommendation was made.</li> <li>• The date suggested for it to be reviewed.</li> </ul> | <b>Yes</b> | <b>Can't tell</b> | <b>No</b> |
| <p><b>8. Has the guideline been subject to peer review and testing?</b></p>  |            |                   |           |
| <p><b>9. Is there a conflict of interest in the development and publication of these guidelines?</b></p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How independent were the individuals who developed this guideline?</li> </ul>   |            |                   |           |

#### WHAT ARE THE RECOMMENDATIONS?

|  |            |                   |           |
|--|------------|-------------------|-----------|
| <p><b>10. Are practical, clinically important recommendations made?</b></p>  | <b>Yes</b> | <b>Can't tell</b> | <b>No</b> |
| <p><b>11. How strong are the recommendations?</b></p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How strong is the evidence on which the guidelines are based.</li> </ul> |            |                   |           |
| <p><b>12. What is the impact of uncertainty associated with the evidence and values used in the guideline?</b></p>   |            |                   |           |

**SHOULD THIS GUIDELINE BE APPLIED IN YOUR PRACTICE?**

| 13. Are the recommendations applicable to your patients?   | Yes | Can't tell | No |
|--|-----|------------|----|
| <p><b>14. Does the guideline offer an opportunity for significant improvement in the quality of care?</b></p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a large variation or uncertainty in current practice?</li> <li>• Does it contain evidence that could have an important impact on management?</li> <li>• Does it affect such large numbers of patients, or concern patients at such high risk, or involve such high costs, that even small changes in practice could have a major impact?</li> </ul> |     |            |    |
| <p><b>15. What are the barriers to its implementation?</b></p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can they be overcome?</li> <li>• Will colleagues be supportive?</li> </ul>  |     |            |    |
| <p><b>16. Can you meet the educational, administrative and/or economic conditions that are likely to determine the success or failure of implementing the guideline?</b></p>   |     |            |    |