

O36

Estimating time and costs for Guidelines' Development

Alexander Nast, Lukas Graf, Ricardo Erdmann, Delano Pathirana, Berthold Rzany
Division of Evidence based Medicin in Dermatology (dEBM), Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Berlin, Germany

Background: Developing evidence based guidelines is an expensive and time-consuming process. At the beginning of such a project, the necessary funds are very difficult to calculate.

Purpose: In order to facilitate the calculation of necessary funds and resources for guidelines' development, we documented the time necessary to collect the evidence for the recommendations during the development of the German S3 – evidence based Guidelines for the Treatment of Psoriasis vulgaris.

Results: Development of a search strategy using OVID as an access to MEDLINE; EMBASE and the Cochrane Library takes 1 – 2 days; development of a literature evaluation form with inclusion and exclusion criteria with a small pilot phase takes 4-5 days. Screening of 100 hits by two assessors takes 2 x 15-20 minutes, comparing and discussing differences in 10 assessments takes 15 minutes, transferring 10 references into a database and retrieving the PDF files if they are available online takes 30 minutes.

Screening for 20 inclusion and quality criteria and assessing the quality of a study (blinding, randomisation etc) by two assessors and choosing a grade of evidence, takes about 2 x 20 minutes per study, collecting five information (reduction of psoriasis area and severity index, improvement in quality of life score etc.) from 1 publications takes 15 minutes. Intraindividual differences can be immense. Necessary time for writing, editing and consenting the recommendations varies largely.

Discussion: Time and resources necessary for the development of guidelines are very difficult to estimate. The most time consuming process lays in the checking of inclusion criteria and quality assessment as well as in the retrieval of data result from the included publications.

An experienced methodological centre with a full time coordinator may help to reduce necessary costs and can significantly speed up guidelines development.