



Overview of the AGREE Instrument

GIN EC Community Workshop – ICEM 2010

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Evidence - based Guidelines

“A guideline is a document with recommendations and instructions to assist healthcare professionals and patients in clinical decision making, based on research findings and consensus among experts, in order to make effective and efficient clinical practice explicit”

Van Everdingen et al (eds).
◦Evidence-based guideline development. A practical guide. 2004



Why are guidelines important

- “a dearth of published evidence”
- 1 review suggested only 80% of interventions were evidence - based
- distilling best evidence into formats suitable for bedside
- support consistency of practice in an environment where there is:
 - often high staff turnover
 - mixed staff skill
 - interaction with other units



Some definitions...

Best practice guideline

- Systematically developed statements designed to assist practitioner and consumer decisions that *takes account of evidence*

Consensus based guideline

- Statements by a group of experts, *with or without reference to evidence*

Reviews vs Guidelines

- Both gather, appraise and combine evidence
- Guidelines:
 - Refines questions and trade-offs
 - Tries to address all that is relevant to a clinical decision
 - Tries to address all values that might sway a decision
 - Makes explicit recommendations

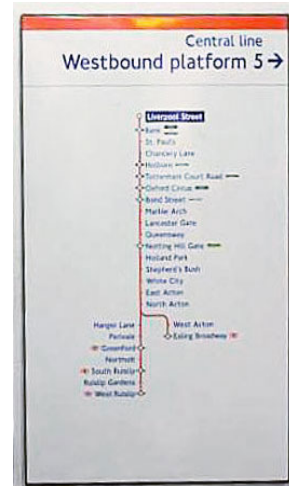
Clinical Protocols

- Protocols are used when there is little scope for variation
- More precise & specific than guidelines
- Provide a comprehensive set of rigid criteria outlining the management steps for a single clinical condition or aspects of organisation



Care Pathways

- Specify care from start to finish for a particular condition in a particular health care institution including sequencing of care & elapsed time for components of care
- Framework for organising care of a patient population



Definition of guideline “Quality”

- ‘Quality of clinical guidelines’ is the confidence that:
 - the potential biases of guideline development have been addressed adequately
 - the recommendations are both internally and externally valid, and are feasible for practice



AGREE II On-Line Training Tool

- Description of each criteria
- Where to look in the guideline for the information
- How to rate each criteria
- Scoring templates
- <http://www.agreetrust.org>



Appraising Guidelines



- AGREE internationally validated guideline appraisal instrument
- AGREE expects that:
 - A guideline should have been pre-tested for further validation among intended users prior to publication
 - The recommendations are specific & unambiguous
 - The guideline is externally reviewed by experts prior to publication
 - Barriers in applying the recommendations have been discussed
- Most guideline agencies use AGREE at the draft stage of the guideline process.



Who can use AGREE

- Health care providers who wish to undertake their own assessment of a guideline
- Guideline developers to follow a structured and rigorous development methodology
- Policy makers to help them decide which guidelines could be recommended for use in practice or to inform policy decisions; and
- Educators to help enhance critical appraisal skills



The AGREE Instrument



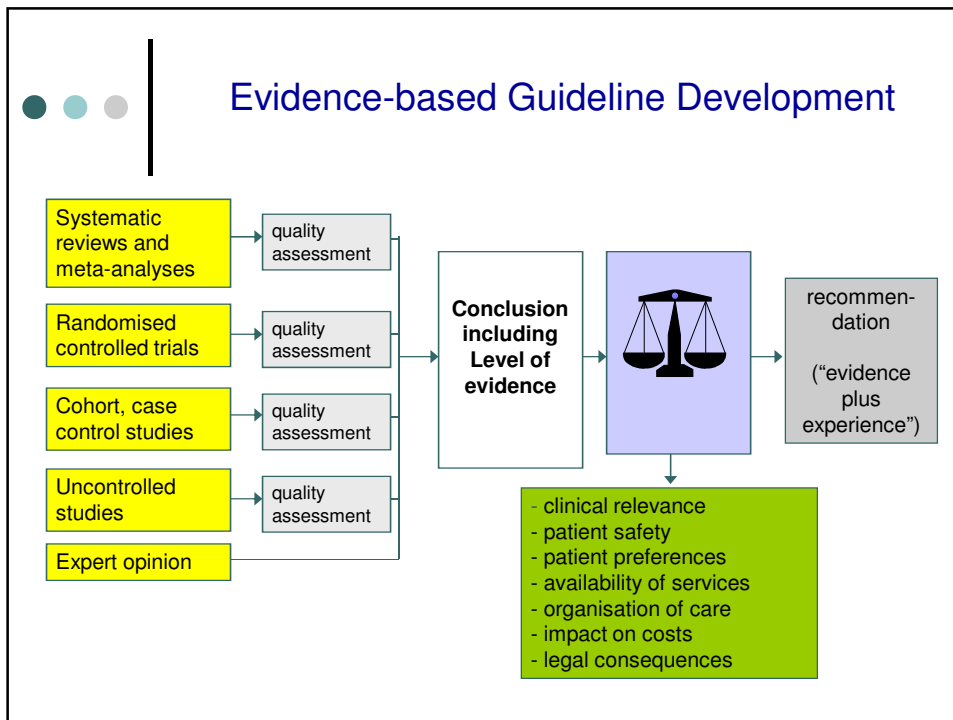
- **23 items**
- **7-point Likert Scale**

Overall assessment

User guide

Six domains

1. Scope & purpose (3)
2. Stakeholder involvement (4)
3. Rigour of development (7)
4. Clarity & presentation (4)
5. Applicability (3)
6. Editorial independence (2)



- ## DOMAIN 1: SCOPE AND PURPOSE
- *overall aim of the guideline, the specific clinical questions and the target patient population. (3)*
- ## DOMAIN 2. STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT
- *extent to which guideline represent views of intended users (4)*



DOMAIN 3. RIGOUR OF DEVELOPMENT

- *process used to gather and synthesize the evidence, methods used to formulate the recommendations and to update them (7)*

DOMAIN 4. CLARITY AND PRESENTATION

- *language and format of the guideline (4)*



DOMAIN 5: APPLICABILITY

- *likely organizational, behavioral and cost implications of applying the guideline (3)*

DOMAIN 6. EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE

- *independence of the recommendations; acknowledgement of possible conflict of interest from the guideline development and group (2)*



Overall Assessment

- Would you recommend this guideline for use in practice?
 - Yes
 - Yes, with modifications
 - No



Rating the guideline

1 Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly Agree
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Score of 1 – when there is no information that is relevant to the AGREE II item

Score of 7 – if the quality of reporting is exceptional and where full criteria have been met



Rating the guideline

	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Total
Appraiser 1	5	6	6	17
Appraiser 2	6	6	7	19
Appraiser 3	2	4	3	9
Appraiser 4	3	3	2	8
Total	16	19	18	53

Maximum possible score = 7 (strongly agree) x 3 (items) x 4 (appraisers) = 84
Minimum possible score = 1 (strongly disagree) x 3 (items) x 4 (appraisers) = 12

The scaled domain score will be:

$$\frac{\text{Obtained score} - \text{Minimum possible score}}{\text{Maximum possible score} - \text{Minimum possible score}}$$
$$\frac{53 - 12}{84 - 12} \times 100 = \frac{41}{72} \times 100 = 0.5694 \times 100 = 57\%$$



AGREE assessment of a guideline

- For this exercise 4 people assessed the Minor Traumatic Brain Injury (*2 clinicians & 2 implementers*)
 - Scope & purpose 100%
 - Stakeholder involvement 42%
 - Rigor of development 81%
 - Clarity & presentation 63%
 - Implementation info 6%
 - Editorial independence 42%
- Overall assessment
 - Yes with modifications