

PL010
USING FORMAL CONSENSUS METHODOLOGY

Professor Andrew Hutchings

Department of Health Services Research and Policy at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, London (UK)

Guideline development involves making decisions at various stages of the process, for example, on the questions to be considered or on the final recommendations. Formal consensus development methods have been used in guideline development as a means for obtaining and synthesizing views of guideline group members. Such methods typically involve two or more rounds where group members generate and/or rate questions. Feedback of results and, in some cases, structured discussion allow group members to revise their judgments between rounds with the aim of establishing a consensus view of the group.

The last decade has seen advances in the ways that the quality of evidence is assessed during guideline development and the ways that the strength of recommendations are determined. Less attention has been paid to the different ways that formal consensus development is used and how different approaches might lead to differences in the guidelines and recommendations produced.

This talk will provide a brief summary of different formal consensus development methods. The main focus will be an assessment of the evidence for the use of formal consensus development approaches in guideline development and how variations in these approaches might influence guidelines and their recommendations.