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A CHINESE PERSPECTIVE FOR GUIDELINES: DOES COST MATTER

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Clinical practice guidelines are an important tool for healthcare delivery in China. Implementation of cost effective treatment and care will help to optimise resource use and patient outcomes for the country with the largest population in the world. Substantial variability in clinical practice exists among hospitals and in different districts across China, which can be minimized by the use of cost effective interventions. Beside, China is the only country where Western medicine and traditional Chinese medicine are practised alongside each other at every level of the healthcare system. From 1993 to 2017, nearly 1000 guidelines including Western medicine and traditional Chinese medicine were developed in China. However, very few of them identify and apply health economics evidence. For example, a study showed that only 11.32% of Chinese guidelines reported that economics should be considered but none of them use any such evidence.

We propose the following recommendations to promote Chinese guideline developers to use cost effectiveness evidence: firstly, given the low quality of Chinese guidelines and the limited resources available, the adoption or adaptation of existing high quality international health economics evidence and guidelines is a potentially efficient and cost effective approach. Secondly, to improve the transparency, guideline developers should follow RIGHT reporting checklist to elaborate whether or how they consider or use health economics evidence in their guidelines. Thirdly, more local high quality health economics studies should be implemented and synthesized in the future. Fourthly, Chinese guideline developers and methodologists should enhance communication and cooperation with international guideline and evidence base healthcare organisations such as GIN, Cochrane and INAHTA.