

CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES UNIT

Objectives

At the end of this module the learner should be able to:

- Understand the format of guidelines.
- Be familiar with the GRADE system for levels of evidence and grades of recommendations.
- Be able to assess the key credibility elements that CPG should fulfill.
- Be familiar with important considerations while applying the CPG in individual patient care.

Assignments

- Read the article listed in the reading material.
- Read the clinical scenario.
- Formulate your clinical question.
- Read the relevant parts of the guideline.
- Critically appraise at least one guideline using the worksheet.
- Try to resolve the clinical scenario.

Clinical Scenario

You are a primary care physician. One day, Ms. Dripper, a 68 years old woman came to your clinic complaining about her lower back pain. She was a bank clerk before retirement. The patient complained that the pain had been lasting for two weeks, radiates bilaterally to the thighs. Her sleep was affected. The patient denied the history of trauma, weight loss, and fever. She denied the feeling of tingling or numbness. No bump or swelling was palpable. She wanted her pain relieved, because she had been unable to attend social activities as before due to the pain and “low energy”. She was concerned about the adverse effect of painkiller, and worried about forgetting to have the pills in time. She said, “The last thing I would like to try is the pill”. Her friend recommended yoga and acupuncture for relief. She doubted yoga could be “her thing” since she doesn't feel herself as flexible, but was open to acupuncture. As her primary care physician, she asked you for advice.

You searched PubMed and Clinical Queries, using search terms “low back pain” AND “acupuncture”, restricting the search to “therapy”. You identified one following guideline about nonpharmacologic therapies for low back pain, developed by the American College of Physicians.

Enclosed Reading Materials

- Amir Qaseem, MD, PhD, MHA; Timothy J. Wilt, MD, MPH; Robert M. McLean, MD; and Mary Ann Forciea, MD; for the Clinical Guidelines Committee of the American College of Physicians. Non invasive Treatments for Acute, Sub acute, and Chronic Low Back Pain: A Clinical Practice Guideline From the American College of Physicians. Ann Intern Med. 2017 Feb 14. doi: 10.7326/M16-2367.
- In Guyatt GH, Rennie D, Made MO, Cook DJ, Editors. JAMAevidence User's Guides to the Medical Literature: A Manual for Evidence Based Clinical Practice, 3rd Edition, New York, NY: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. 2015.
- Chapter 26: How to Use a Patient Management Recommendation: Clinical Practice Guidelines and Decision Analyses
- Chapter 28.1: Assessing the Strength of Recommendations: The GRADE Approach
- Worksheet for the critical appraisal of clinical practice guidelines.