

CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Objectives:

At the completion of this unit, participants will be able to critically appraise a Guideline, using the “Users’ Guides to the Medical Literature.” Specifically, participants will develop skills to:

- Assess the validity of a Clinical Practice Guideline.
- Understand how patient values & preferences inform guideline recommendations.
- Interpret and apply ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ recommendations.

Assignment:

Read the Clinical Scenario, below. Using the article identified, and relevant sections of the Users’ Guides to the Medical Literature, critically appraise the guideline, completing the blank critical appraisal worksheet.

Clinical Scenario:

A 48-year-old woman presents to your office due to chronic pain associated with her known fibromyalgia. She reports being diagnosed with fibromyalgia 1-year ago and has managed her pain with an anti-convulsant (Lyrica) and regular massage but continues to experience troublesome pain and functional limitation and wonders if opioids may be helpful. She has heard from some friends that opioids may help, and from others that the risk of harm is too great. She is interested in finding out about the most current evidence to help inform her decision.

You advise your patient that this is an active area of research, as well as an active field of debate that often plays out in the lay press. You respond that you would be happy to look into this further and discuss your findings at her next appointment.

Using PubMed and Clinical Queries you use the search terms “chronic noncancer pain” and “opioids” and “guideline” and restrict your search to “therapy”. You identify 53 articles and you decide to explore the most recent guideline further:

Busse JW, Craigie S, Juurlink DN, Buckley DN, Wang L, Couban RJ, Agoritsas T, Akl EA, Carrasco-Labra A, Cooper L, et al. Guideline for opioid therapy and chronic noncancer pain. CMAJ. 2017 May 8; 189(18): E659-E666.

The abstract suggests that the article is relevant to your patient and you decide to critically appraise this paper using the “Users’ Guides” for a Guideline.

After critically appraising this paper, what will you tell your patient?

Enclosed Materials:

1. Busse JW, Craigie S, Juurlink DN, Buckley DN, Wang L, Couban RJ, Agoritsas T, Akl EA, Carrasco-Labra A, Cooper L, et al. Guideline for opioid therapy and chronic noncancer pain. *CMAJ*. 2017 May 8; 189(18): E659-E666.
2. Worksheet for the evaluation of an article on Clinical Practice Guidelines.
3. Guyatt G, Drummond R. *User's Guides to the Medical Literature: A Manual for Evidence Based Clinical Practice*, 3rd Edition (JAMA). New York, NY: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc, 2015. 26. How to use a Patient Management Recommendation: Clinical Practice Guidelines and Decision Analyses.