
Importance of transparency and methodological quality of clinical practice guidelines

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Practice guidelines are systematically developed documents which guide clinical practitioners and patients in their decisions about health care for specific clinical circumstances. The US Institute of Medicine has recently published a revised definition of a clinical practice guideline as "statements that include recommendations intended to optimize patient care. They are informed by a systematic review of evidence and an assessment of the benefits and harms of alternative care options". Guidelines we can trust are not only based on a systematic review of best available evidence, they are also developed by a multidisciplinary panel in a transparent, minimally biased, stakeholder inclusive, documented and accessible process. This is why it is essential that all aspects of clinical practice guidelines are reported fully and transparently. Transparency of reporting is particularly important for practice guidelines published at a national level, which represent the translation of evidence generated at a global level to a concrete local environment. We studied the quality and completeness of reporting of clinical practice guidelines published by the professional societies of the Croatian Medical Association in its journal *Liječnički vjesnik* from 2014 to 2016, as well as corresponding clinical practice guidelines published by European associations. We used the RIGHT checklist to evaluate the guidelines; the checklist contains 22 items organized into 7 sections: basic information, background, evidence, recommendations, review and quality assurance, funding, declaration and management of interest, and other information. We reviewed 26 Croatian and 26 European clinical practice guidelines. Croatian HPGs adhered to significantly fewer RIGHT checklist items than their European counterparts (median 14.0 (95% CI 13.0-15.0) vs. 16.0 (95% CI 14.6-18.0) out of total 35 checklist items, respectively ($P=0.018$, Mann Whitney U test). There is a need for professional societies and other stakeholders in clinical practice guidelines to report on clinical practice guidelines in a more complete and transparent way.

Keywords: guidelines, clinical; transparency, quality, methodological

Cochrane rehabilitation – a great starting place for Physical medicine and rehabilitation specialist on his journey as a scientist

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Today, evidence-based science is accepted as proof that something works. Most insurance companies or state health-related institutions will not pay for medication or intervention that is not proven to work and have benefit for both the patient and society.

In some areas of medicine, like chirurgy or internal medicine, there is very good scientific data that can tell us whether some chirurgic intervention or medication is better than the current standard.

This is not the case in the physical medicine and rehabilitation field and most data are based on only a few studies with a small number of patients. Therefore Cochrane rehabilitation is a greatly anticipated project that is of great help to everyone that would like to do research in this area. It is a collection of systematic reviews that summarize all available data on a specific subject of interest.

All systematic reviews are available online (<http://rehabilitation.cochrane.org/evidence>) and can be searched by health conditions and health professionals. Health conditions are further subdivided into different fields of rehabilitation: cardiac, neurological, for patients above 65 years of age, for paediatric patients etc.

If you want to search as a medical doctor and you are interested in neurological rehabilitation, then it is better to use health condition search folder – neurological rehabilitation. If you are a nurse, then it is more convenient to search the part Medical professionals – rehabilitation nurses and there are systematic reviews from all parts of rehabilitation that involve interventions by a rehabilitation nurse.

Some systematic reviews are finished, some of them are in a protocol stage waiting for the completion of the review.

What is the benefit for you as a scientist? Firstly, it can give you ideas for your research. If the conclusion of a Cochrane review states that the level of evidence is poor or inconclusive and that further well designed studies are needed, then your work on this subject is needed.

Secondly, a group of authors have analysed all of the available literature and have detected the flaws in design of previous studies and this can help you to better design your study. In the literature part of the systematic review you have citation of all papers dealing with analysed subject.

To conclude, Cochrane rehabilitation could be the ideal starting point of your research in the physical medicine and rehabilitation field.

Keywords: rehabilitation, physical medicine, Cochrane, scientist