



The Royal New Zealand
College of General Practitioners
Te Whare Tohu Rata o Aotearoa

RNZCGP

Guideline/Endorsement Assessment Tool

Explanation

It is intended that this assessment tool be used for just that purpose - *the assessment of existing guidelines*. It will form the basis on which the RNZCGP Board will recommend that a particular guideline qualifies for RNZCGP endorsement.

The tables which form this assessment tool are based on the document "Guidelines for Guidelines", developed in 1996 by an advisory group drawn from IPAs, RNZCGP, CHEs and Medical schools. The project was contributed to and supported by Adis International and Merck, Sharp and Dohme. Some of the material in this document has been altered slightly and added to in the light of the experience of some members of the RNZCGP Guidelines Committee in Seattle, as part of the NZ Guidelines Group Fellowships sponsored by the National Health Committee.

Instructions for scoring

It is important to allow each question to be answered as concisely within the constraints of often-subjective assessment. Some omissions or deficiencies will clearly be of greater importance than others, and the weighting given to different questions is likely to vary with the subject of the guideline. It is likely that no existing guidelines completely satisfy the "gold standard" advocated by the Guidelines for Guidelines document. It is therefore a question of the judgement of potential users as to the importance and relevance of any deviations from this standard.

As a result, it is expected that the RNZCGP Board will classify guidelines according to one of the categories below, and we expect guideline users to do the same:

1. Guidelines endorsed by RNZCGP
2. Guidelines endorsed by RNZCGP with specified qualifications
3. Guidelines recognised by RNZCGP
3. Guidelines not endorsed by RNZCGP.



Statement from College Guideline Reviewer

I have assessed the xxxxxxx against the RNZCGP Guideline Assessment Tool (see below), and the principles identified by the College (*September 1997*) as appropriate for NZ general practices.

- Principle 1: Guidelines should address a specific healthcare need.
- Principle 2: The aims and objectives of the guidelines must be clearly stated and achievable.
- Principle 3: Guidelines should be based on the scientific evidence and should clearly state the strength and source of that evidence.
- Principle 4: Guidelines should be developed by a multidisciplinary panel that includes representatives from all key groups.
- Principle 5: Guidelines should be flexible and adaptable to local conditions.
- Principle 6: Resource implications should be considered in the development and use of guidelines.
- Principle 7: The means of ensuring that guidelines reach their target audience should be outlined.
- Principle 8: Strategies for implementing the guidelines should be specified.
- Principle 9: The process behind the development, dissemination, implementation and evaluation of guidelines should be fully documented.
- Principle 10: The effect of guidelines should be evaluated to determine if the aims and objectives have been achieved.
- Principle 11: Guidelines should be regularly reviewed and revised.
- Principle 12: Guidelines should be written in clear, concise language and be presented in an easy-to-use format.

Comments on the guideline:

The _____ has been reviewed against the RNZCGP Guideline Assessment /Endorsement tool and is assessed as relevant and important for use in New Zealand general practices.

I recommend that the College approve the _____
as either:

1. Guideline endorsed by RNZCGP
 2. Guideline endorsed by RNZCGP with specified qualifications (*noted*)
- or:
3. Guideline not endorsed by RNZCGP

Reviewer: _____ (Reviewer)

Contact details:



Principle 1: Guidelines should address a specific healthcare need

Test questions:		Y/N	Relevant	Important
1	Do the guidelines address a specific health need that is recognised to be of major importance to the eventual users of the guidelines?			
2	Does the subject of the guidelines address: (a) an important health need in terms of, for example, high volume, high risk, high benefit? (b) uncertainty in care or new knowledge available? (c) large or undesirable variations in practice? (d) an important economic/resource need?			
3	Is there potential for the quality of care and/or health outcomes to be improved by use of the guidelines?			
4	Are the benefits expected through use of the guidelines of sufficient magnitude to warrant the effort of implementation?			
Notes:				

Principle 2: The aims and objectives of the guidelines must be clearly stated and achievable

Test questions:		Y/N	Relevant	Important
1	Are the aims and objectives of the guidelines clearly stated?			
2	Is the clinical issue addressed by the guidelines stated specifically?			
3	Is the target patient population clearly identified?			
4	Are the healthcare providers who are intended to use the guidelines specified?			
5	Is the practice setting in which the guidelines will be employed specified?			
6	Is the health outcome hoped to be achieved by use of the guidelines specifically stated?			
7	Are the guidelines realistic and are they achievable in the relevant practice setting?			
8	Is the motivation of the developing group clear with respect to: (a) quality improvement? (b) increase/decreased utilisation? (c) solving a local problem?			
Notes:				



Principle 3: Guidelines should be based on the scientific evidence and should clearly state the strength and source of that evidence

Test questions:		Y/N	Relevant	Important
1	Are the guideline recommendations based on scientific evidence?			
2	Was the process: (a) Explicit evidence-based? (b) Evidence-based? (c) Global subjective agreement/consensus? (d) Unclear or no process evident?			
3	Were the methods used to collect, evaluate and synthesise the scientific evidence valid?			
4	Has any rationale been provided for evidence not included as part of the scientific evidence?			
5	Has the scientific evidence been graded to reflect the quality of the studies?			
6	Have the recommendations been graded to reflect the quality of the evidence?			
7	Have sources of scientific bias been considered and, if so, have the potential effects been discussed?			
8	Does the evidence support a quantitative assessment of the benefits, harms and costs of different treatment options?			
9	Has a structured technique been used to reach professional consensus and how valid is the professional consensus?			
10	Were persons with the appropriate expertise involved in collecting, evaluating and synthesising the scientific evidence?			
11	Do the guidelines state explicitly any value judgements made in combining the evidence?			
Notes:				



Principle 4: Guidelines should be developed by a multidisciplinary panel that includes representatives from all key groups

Test questions:		Y/N	Relevant	Important
1	Have representatives from groups expected to use the guidelines been included in the development process?			
2	Are the skills, qualifications and expertise of the persons who developed the guidelines satisfactory for the type of guideline produced?			
3	Were all key stakeholders represented?			
4	Were the guidelines reviewed independently by relevant experts or outside panels prior to their publication/release?			
5	Was the process of selection satisfactory and was a Specialist GP with knowledge and skill in the subject and guideline process involved?			
Notes:				

Principle 5: Guidelines should be flexible and adaptable to local conditions

Test questions:		Y/N	Relevant	Important
1	Are the guidelines flexible enough to allow for differences in factors such as: (a) Target populations? (b) Geographical and clinical settings? (c) The presence of multiple complicating factors? (d) Patient/doctor preferences?			
2	Do the guidelines identify any exceptions, which might be made in terms of their application?			
3	Do the guidelines address areas of uncertainty by providing broad treatment boundaries, thereby allowing for clinical judgement?			
4	If guidelines have been adapted to meet local needs, have the links with the supporting scientific evidence been maintained?			
Notes:				



Principle 6: Resource implications should be considered in the development and use of guidelines

Test questions:		Y/N	Relevant	Important
1	Is any information provided regarding the estimated costs of developing and maintaining the guidelines?			
2	Have resource implications been considered in these contexts?: (a) Health outcomes (b) Patient satisfaction (c) Provider satisfaction (d) Cost of development and implementation (e) Effects on the health care team (f) Total organisational impact			
Notes:				

Principle 7: The means of ensuring that guidelines reach their target audience should be outlined

Test questions:		Y/N	Relevant	Important
1	Are the means specified by which the guideline will reach the target audience?			
2	Does the dissemination strategy appear to be appropriate for the type of guideline being promulgated?			
Notes:				

Principle 8: Strategies for implementing the guidelines should be specified

Test questions:		Y/N	Relevant	Important
1	Have appropriate strategies for implementation of the guideline been specified?			
2	Are there any specific local issues relevant to guideline implementation?			
3	Have the potential barriers to and promoting factors of the guideline been identified and, if so, has a suitable strategy been chosen to overcome or utilise them?			
4	Overall, can we implement this guideline?			
Notes:				



Principle 9: The process behind the development, dissemination, implementation and evaluation of guidelines should be fully documented

Test questions:		Y/N	Relevant	Important
1	Are full details provided of the processes behind the development of guidelines?			
2	Have key persons or groups that developed, funded or endorsed the guidelines been identified and disclosed?			
3	Were any potential biases, agendas and/or conflicts of interest of panel members noted and, if so, how were these accounted for?			
4	Are the sources of information used to develop the guidelines adequately referenced?			
5	Has a rationale been provided for how and why particular dissemination and implementation strategies were selected?			
Notes:				

Principle 10: The effect of guidelines should be evaluated to determine if the aims and objectives have been achieved

Test questions:		Y/N	Relevant	Important
1	Are the guidelines in actual use in their targeted practice setting?			
2	Is there appropriate information technology in place to capture and analyse the patient data?			
3	Have relevant review criteria been identified to assess the impact of guidelines on patient outcomes? Are these review criteria adequate?			
4	If the impact of guidelines on patient outcomes has not been evaluated, have the guidelines been able to change attitudes or reduce practice variation?			
5	Has the guideline planned to evaluate: (a) Health outcomes (b) Patient satisfaction (c) Provider satisfaction (d) Cost of development and implementation (e) Effects on the health care team (f) Total organisational impact			
Notes:				

Principle 11: Guidelines should be regularly reviewed and revised



Test questions:		Y/N	Relevant	Important
1	Are the persons/groups responsible for reviewing and updating the guidelines identified?			
2	Do the guidelines provide publication dates for the supporting evidence?			
3	Do the guidelines mention a specific date for scheduled review or suggest an expiry date?			
Notes:				

Principle 12: Guidelines should be written in clear, concise language and be presented in an easy-to-use format

Test questions:		Y/N	Relevant	Important
1	Are the major recommendations of the guidelines clear and unambiguous?			
2	Are the benefits, harms and costs of the recommendations presented in an explicit way?			
3	Does the guideline document use headings, indexes, lists, flow charts or other devices to enhance clarity?			
4	Do the guidelines make use of a structured abstract format to present the key information?			
5	Do the guidelines offer a multi-tiered approach to providing information: complete document containing methodology, evidence and references; short summary of the principal recommendations for healthcare professionals; short summary of the principal recommendations for patients?			
Notes:				

RNZCGP Board signoff

The RNZCGP Board has assessed the reviewer's comments and uphold the recommendation that the xxxxxx be endorsed for use by general practice.