



Australian Government

National Health and
Medical Research Council

EMERGENCY CARE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

National Institute of Clinical Studies



Preparation, review and endorsement of Evidence in Practice 2008 brochures

Each brochure includes an introduction to the relevance of the topic, a summary of best available evidence, information about current practice, and a summary of implications for improving practice.

In developing the content for the 2008 brochures, our aim was to identify and use existing high quality, synthesised evidence rather than generating new meta-analyses of the literature.

Researching and developing the content

Best available evidence

- To identify best available evidence we commissioned literature searches for each topic, following standard protocols for systematic literature reviews. Literature searching and appraisal for the topics 'Pain medication for acute abdominal pain' and 'Lumbar imaging in acute non-specific low back pain' were undertaken by the Centre for Clinical Effectiveness (Southern Health, Victoria), in consultation with NICS staff. The work on 'Rate or rhythm control for recurrent atrial fibrillation' was completed by a literature search consultant and NICS staff.
- Professionals with experience in systematically searching medical literature developed a search string, in consultation with NICS and clinicians with expertise in the topic. Each search string was run on relevant literature databases including Cochrane Library, Medline, and Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effects. It was then modified to search relevant websites of relevant organisations including medical Colleges, Canadian, American and British guideline clearing-houses, and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). Articles identified in the search were selected according to inclusion and exclusion criteria determined a priori for each topic. The search aimed to identify current Cochrane Reviews and other high quality systematic reviews or meta-analyses, and evidence-based guidelines. The search also sought to identify any randomised controlled trials published subsequent to the search completed for the systematic reviews and evidence-based guidelines.
- Standard critical appraisal and guideline appraisal tools were used to assess the quality of the selected articles. Content of the selected reviews and guidelines and subsequently published randomised controlled trials (RCTs) were compared to identify any conflicts between results and recommendations, and to confirm that the reviews were still current.
- The level of evidence behind the key recommendations was graded using NHMRC criteria (NHMRC 1999¹). Limitations of the evidence base were noted within the text of the brochure.

Current practice

- To identify relevant literature on current practice, individuals with experience in searching medical literature developed a search string for each topic in consultation with clinicians with expertise in the topic.
- Searches were run on relevant literature databases and modified to search relevant websites, including Medline, relevant medical societies and quality organisations.
- Considerable hand searching from reference lists of identified articles was also involved.

Writing the content

In consultation with clinical reviewers, NICS staff developed draft content for the brochure, based on information identified through the above process.

Review and endorsement

- Clinicians and researchers from emergency care and clinicians with specific expertise in individual topics reviewed the content for accuracy, clarity, style, relevance and usefulness of included information.
- NICS program and communications staff reviewed the content of each brochure for content clarity and to ensure that the information conformed to that identified in the literature searches.
- NICS sought and was granted endorsement of the brochures from the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM) through the ACEM Scientific Committee, the College of Emergency Nursing Australasia (CENA) Board of Directors, and the Executive of the Australian College of Emergency Nursing.

1. National Health and Medical Research Council. A guide to the development, implementation and evaluation of clinical practice guidelines. Canberra: NHMRC, 1999.