



National Institute of Clinical Studies

APPENDIX F: Levels of evidence and recommendation grading

Emergency Department Stroke and Transient Ischaemic Attack Care Bundle: Information and implementation package

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Endorsements



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Appendix F: Levels of evidence and recommendation grading

Grading of recommendations⁸

Grade	Description
A	Body of evidence can be trusted to guide practice
B	Body of evidence can be trusted to guide practice in most situations
C	Body of evidence provides some support for recommendation(s) but care should be taken in its application
D	Body of evidence is weak and recommendation must be applied with caution
✓	Recommended best practice based on clinical experience and expert opinion

Designations of levels of evidence according to type of research question⁸

Level	Intervention	Diagnosis	Prognosis	Aetiology	Screening
I	A systematic review of Level II studies	A systematic review of Level II studies	A systematic review of Level II studies	A systematic review of Level II studies	A systematic review of Level II studies
II	A randomised controlled trial	A study of test accuracy with an independent, blinded comparison with a valid reference standard, among consecutive patients with a defined clinical presentation	A prospective cohort study	A prospective cohort study	A randomised controlled trial
III-1	A pseudorandomised controlled trial (i.e. alternate allocation of some other method)	A study of test accuracy with an independent, blinded comparison with a valid reference standard, among consecutive patients with a defined clinical presentation	All or none	All or none	A pseudorandomised controlled trial (i.e. alternate allocation of some other method)
III-2	A comparative study with concurrent controls: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-randomised, experimental trial • Cohort study • Case-control study • Interrupted time series with a control group 	A comparison with reference standard that does not meet the criteria required for Level II and III-1	Analysis of prognostic factors amongst untreated control patients in a randomised controlled trial	A retrospective cohort study	A comparative study with concurrent controls: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-randomised, experimental trial • Cohort study • Case-control study
III-3	A comparative study without concurrent controls: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical control study • Two or more single arm study • Interrupted time series without a parallel control group 	Diagnostic case-control study	A retrospective cohort study	A case-control study	A comparative study without concurrent controls: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical control study • Two or more single arm study
IV	Case studies with either post-test or pre-test/post-test outcomes	Study of diagnostic yield (no reference standard)	Case series, or cohort study of patients at different stages of disease	A cross-sectional study	Case studies