

Abstracts of CPG2002 Satellite Symposium

Abstracts of oral presentations at the Satellite Symposium Clinical Practice Guidelines 2002 (CPG2002) are presented in alphabetical order.

Clinical judgement and CPGs

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In daily clinical practice, physicians and other health care professionals make numerous decisions for the many steps that constitute patient care. These myriads of decisions are based on long-established habit, experience, intuition, consulting colleagues, books, journals, the Internet, clinical practice guidelines, etc. Most decisions are based on or influenced by clinical judgement, which constitutes the central momentum that governs decisions made at the individual patient level in health care. Although clinical judgement plays a key role in the delivery of high quality care it is usually not considered as a scientific activity and is rarely the object of appropriate scientific research. Clinical judgement is also intimately associated with freedom of practice – within accepted limits. However, in these times of rapidly evolving health care systems and when freedom of clinical decisions is perceived as severely challenged, attempts at intervening to influence clinical decisions, by means of guidelines for instance, may not always be well received.

Given the many factors that intervene in the construction of clinical judgement, it is therefore not surprising that large variations in health care decisions and delivery have been observed within and between systems of care, small areas, countries or physicians. The problem is that variations in practice is sometimes also linked with arbitrariness and with substandard quality of care, largely independent of the amount of resources available in the health care system.

One aim of clinical practice guidelines is to improve quality of care. Guidelines should therefore also reduce variations in health care. Some studies have shown that guidelines may indeed modify health care practice and increase quality of delivered care. However, in many studies that report on the impact of a guideline no effects or only small effects have been observed. Large variations between the recommendations made in various guidelines tackling the same topic have been observed, some of which may be due to the poor quality of guidelines. In addition, knowledge and skills in effective implementation of guidelines is still insufficient.

Given the complexity in the building of clinical judgement, the insufficient knowledge and research devoted to better understanding how clinical judgement is made and may vary, and the variations in the recommendations that exist among guidelines, it is not surprising that, until now, clinical practice guidelines infrequently have had a large impact in improving health care.

Track 1: Clinical Practice and CPGs, Friday, June 7

Attitudinal barriers to CPGs. Perceptions of guidelines by oncologists: A new tool to measure clinicians' attitudes towards practice guidelines

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Objective: Research has demonstrated that uptake of innovations, such as practice guidelines, is influenced by adopters' perceptions of the innovation itself and by the process by which the innovation is developed. To date, no tool has been developed to assess the range of practitioners' perceptions that enhance and impede their uptake of guideline messages. The purpose of this presentation is to describe

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