Clinical Practice Guidelines in AAC? Lessons Learned from Evidence-based Decision-making in AAC conference
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How would a combination of consensus and evidence-based methods work?

- Use both methodology and content experts to evaluate clinical practice guidelines
- Consider evaluation tool(s) during the development process in order to develop practices that can be accepted and evaluated (Vlayen et al. 2004)
- Many methods have been created to evaluate clinical practice guidelines
- Growing use of AGREE instrument has been noted (Vlayen et al. 2004)

AGREE: Assessment of Guidelines for Research and Evaluation in Europe
- Created and validated by researchers from 13 countries
- Involves the evidence base (agreed, disagree, and strongly disagree)
- A detailed manual and the instrument is available on its website

What other issues should be considered before developing clinical practice guidelines?

- Real-life constraints
  - Significant investment of time and other organizational/personal resources to develop and maintain clinical practice guidelines
  - Current development methods may be too complex to develop and maintain valid and reliable clinical practice guidelines (Rayne et al., Trobridge et al. 2003)
  - Clinical practice guidelines development teams should explicitly consider tradeoff between thoroughness and practicality in their clinical practice guideline methodology (SIGN)
  - The ongoing task of maintaining and updating the clinical practice guidelines should be considered during development
  - Not clear that guidelines change clinical practices

- Scalability
  - Guidelines measured to document whether and how the guidelines influence different stakeholders’ behaviors (Wood et al. 2006)
  - Temporal issues: occur if guidelines are not updated when relevant new research is available
  - Lack of funding and resources usually will vary depending on the research being done in a particular area
  - Clinical practice guidelines should explicitly state its last review and its next scheduled review and possible update

How do I find Clinical Practice Guidelines?

- Do literature search of relevant journals
  - Hundreds of clinical practice guidelines created by professional organizations have been published in a variety of journal articles
  - General clinical practice guideline clearinghouses
    - International and national clinical practice guideline repositories have been created, including a. Guidelines International Network (www.gin.net)
    - National Electronic Library for Health Guidelines finder (www.nelh.nhs.uk)
    - SIGN-Scottish Intercollegiate Guideline Network (http://www.sign.ac.uk/)
    - National Guideline Clearinghouse (www.guideline.gov)
  - Speech-language pathology groups are beginning to create clinical practice guidelines

What are issues to consider in creating Clinical Practice Guidelines for AAC?

- Develop clinical practice guidelines when necessary
- Focus on one or more important outcomes
- Likely to influence clinical practice
- Recognize the unique opportunities and limitations of the AAC evidence base (many case studies and small-n designs)
- Consider AAC areas that have already received systematic literature reviews or meta-analysis
- Generalizable and negative consequences and be evaluated by independently convened clinical practice guidelines

Next steps for AAC Clinical Practice Guidelines

1. AAC leaders should decide what purposes AGREE (and many other clinical practice guideline evaluation tools) is focused on methodological quality while ignoring the content quality (Vlayen et al. 2004)

How would clinical practice guidelines be evaluated?

- Combination of consensus- and evidence-based methodology
  - Created from the experience, expertise, and opinion of invited experts
- Evidence-based
  - Created from the systematic literature review including evidence grading evidence
  - Appropriate clinical practice guidelines
  - Subject the guideline to peer review
  - Disseminate the guidelines

- Possible problems in combination methods:
  - Conflicts of interests
  - Publication bias

- Possible problems in consensus methods:
  - Selection bias—based on who is invited
  - Confounder—group dynamics may affect both the selection of potential practices and client outcomes learned produce
  - Conflicting recommendations—different development groups use different sets of experts

- Possible problems in evidence-based methods:
  - Information bias if limited data on search strategies
  - Limited research available on clinical practices
  - Poor quality of available studies
  - Unavailable evidence grading systems
  - Difficulty translating the research findings into policy

What are Clinical Practice Guidelines?

- Systematically developed statements to assist practitioners and policy-makers in making decisions on appropriate health care for specific clinical circumstances (Field et al. 2008)
- Recommendations for assessment and/or intervention

What are evidence-based methods?

- Evidence-based methods follow explicitly stated steps:
  - Specify a particular topic
  Conduct a systematic literature review including evidence grading evidence
  Draft the guidelines
  Subject the guideline to peer review
  Disseminate the guidelines

- Possible problems in evidence-based methods:
  - Information bias if limited data on search strategies
  - Limited research available on clinical practices
  - Poor quality of available studies
  - Unavailable evidence grading systems
  - Difficulty translating the research findings into policy

What are consensus methods?

- Consensus methods include:
  - Nominal group processes
  - Delphi survey techniques
  - Multiple rounds of survey of expert stakeholders until consensus achievements

- Possible problems in combination consensus and evidence-based methods:
  - Focus on desirable evidence-based practices and needed AAC research
  - Conflicts of interests
  - Postpone certain topics until their evidence base increases

- What steps may decrease problems in consensus and evidence-based methods?

  1. Consensus-based
     - Created from the experience, expertise, and opinion of invited experts
  2. Evidence-based
     - Created from the systematic literature review including evidence grading evidence
     - Appropriate clinical practice guidelines
     - Subject the guideline to peer review
     - Disseminate the guidelines

- Decreasers in consensus methods:
  - Decrease selection bias—by including diverse stakeholders in the development and evaluation of the clinical practice guidelines
  - Include clients with the particular disorder or disease
  - Publish detailed information on potential conflicts, such as:
    - The process used to select participants & practices
    - Reasons for any disagreements among the participants
    - Differences in information of research, and clinical experiences
    - Offering values attributed to cost-benefit ratios
    - Offering degrees of support for the resulting recommendation
  - This transparency may make systematic biases easier to detect

- Decreasing problems in either methods:
  - A systematic literature review (SIGN has sample form)
  - Conduct a systematic literature review including evidence grading evidence
  - Appropriate clinical practice guidelines
  - Subject the guideline to peer review
  - Disseminate the guidelines

- Possible problems in evidence grading systems:
- Difficult translating the research findings into policy

- Systematic reviews and meta-analysis
- Comparative effectiveness research
- Delphi surveys
- Consensus conferences
- Evidence-based guidelines
- Quality improvement

- Consensus guidelines created?

- To improve clinical practice
- To endorse evidence-based practices within the organization
- To decrease inappropriate clinical practice variation
- To ensure access to health care
- To propose needed research directions

- Clinical practice guidelines should explicitly state the developers’ purpose(s)
Clinical Practice Guidelines in AAC?
Lessons learned from other organizations
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Suggested References


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**Suggested Websites**

- American Academy of Neurologic Communication Disorders and Sciences ([www.ancds.org](http://www.ancds.org))
- ASHA ([www.asha.org/members/ebp/compendium/](http://www.asha.org/members/ebp/compendium/))
- Guidelines International Network ([www.gin.net](http://www.gin.net))
- National Electronic Library for Health Guidelines finder ([www.nelh.nhs.uk](http://www.nelh.nhs.uk))
- National Institute for Clinical Excellence ([www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk))
- Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists ([www.rcslt.org/resources/](http://www.rcslt.org/resources/))
- SIGN -Scottish Intercollegiate Guideline Networks ([www.sign.ac.uk](http://www.sign.ac.uk))