

Evidence level	Definition
Ia	Evidence obtained from meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials
Ib	Evidence obtained from at least one randomised controlled trial
IIa	Evidence obtained from at least one well-designed controlled study without randomisation
IIb	Evidence obtained from at least one other type of well-designed quasi-experimental study*
III	Evidence obtained from well-designed non-experimental descriptive studies, such as comparative studies, correlated studies and case studies
IV	Evidence obtained from expert committee reports or opinions and/or clinical experience of respected authorities

\*Refers to a situation in which implementation of an intervention is without the control of the investigators, but an opportunity exists to evaluate its effect

Grade of recommendation	Definition	Level of evidence
A	Requires at least one randomized controlled trial as part of a body of literature of overall good quality and consistency addressing specific recommendation	Evidence levels Ia, Ib
B	Requires the availability of well-conducted clinical studies but no randomized clinical trials on the topic of recommendation	Evidence levels IIa, IIb, III
C	Requires evidence obtained from expert committee reports or opinions and/or clinical experiences of respected authorities. Indicates an absence of directly applicable clinical studies of good quality	Evidence level IV

Adapted from National Guidelines Clearinghouse

URL: [www.guideline.gov](http://www.guideline.gov)

date accessed: 10 September 2009