ESC Guidelines Development Process

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A few ESC landmarks

- Founded 1950 by 14 NCS (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and Yugoslavia).

  Now has 57 member countries.

- First General Assembly 1950

The first ESC Guidelines were published in Eur Heart J 1994.

The CPG was created in 1994 by the ESC in order to oversee the process of guidelines development and their publication. The first EHH dedicated staff was hired in 2001.

The CPG has the responsibility of selecting the topics for the documents in a timely manner as well as putting into place the Task Forces and Review Teams developing them.

The CPG is responsible for the administrative supervision and coordination of all ESC Guidelines Task Forces (TF) following the development process and within the allocated budget.
ESC Guidelines = Evidence + expertise for clinicians

- Evidence-based recommendations developed by Task Forces of leading European experts
- Help physicians weigh benefits & risks of particular diagnostic & therapeutic procedures
- Formats include: full texts, pocket guidelines, slide-sets, books, mobile application...
The virtuous circle at the ESC
ESC Guidelines Production: 3 phases

- Goals and team definitions
- Document elaboration & Review process
- Publication

Details available on the ESC Web Site at:
http://www.escardio.org/guidelines-surveys/esc-guidelines/about/Pages/rules-writing.aspx
Goals & Team Definitions (3 months)

- **CPG**: Choice of titles and timelines
- **Board**: Validation of titles and timelines
- **CPG**: Choice of Chairs with Board validation pending DOI review by Board VPs
- **CPG**: Choice of TF Members with call on specific expertise from specialty center and others
- **CPG**: Invitations to TF members and check of their DOIs for final composition of TF
Document Elaboration (12-15 months)

Kick-off meeting
- Laying out writing rules +
  table of contents +
  assignments +
  timelines +
  document search
  (literature +
  systematic reviews)

→ TF writing phase
- 2-3 face to face
  meetings and Task
  Force review
  phases (2-3)

→ CPG
- Choice of Review
  Coordinators
  with Board
  validation
  pending DOI
  review by
  Board VPs

→ CPG
- Choice of Peer
  Reviewers
  with call on
  specific
  expertise
  from specialty
  center and
  others

→ External peer review
- 2-3 rounds of peer
  review are
  necessary to obtain
  a final document
Publication Phase (3 months)

CPG + TF pub. ➔ Endorsement phase ➔ EHJ publication + in specialty and partner society journals when appropriate ➔ Devlp of derivative products

- CME questions
- Pocket Guidelines
- Guidelines App
- Slide-sets
- Essential messages
- Summary cards...
Guidelines for Guidelines Writing


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1. General overview

The European Society of Cardiology (ESC) distributes the most up-to-date evidence-based recommendations on individual and treatment of cardiovascular diseases to provide a consistent overview of the latest available information in this field. The ESC’s General Guidelines are documents that present relevant information on a wide range of cardiovascular conditions. Guidelines provide the best possible advice on existing practices, clarify contemporary areas of uncertainty and disagreement, improve standards in clinical practice, and help overcome clinical decision-making. They serve as evidence for common guidelines (CPGs), and the ESC brings together groups of experts from across Europe and beyond to create the content of Guidelines according to a formal process defined in this document, access to the full text version of ESC Guidelines is free and it’s also available in a wide range of print, digital, and online formats as well as a wide range of educational products derived from them in implementation of the ESC mission statement and strategic plan.

2. General

2.1 Purpose: This document contains the governance, process, and procedures for all activities associated with creating the basic, writing, reviewing, updating, maintaining, and assessing the ESC’s Clinical Practice Guidelines.

2.2 Scope: This document covers

1. The composition and functioning of the Committee for Practice Guidelines (CPGs), the appointment of its Chair and members of the committee, and the overall roles and responsibilities in developing, reviewing, and approving Guidelines.
ESC Classification of Recommendations – COR
Classification of Recommendations for Procedures and Treatments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classes of recommendations</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Suggested wording to use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class I</td>
<td>Evidence and/or general agreement that a given treatment or procedure is beneficial, useful, effective.</td>
<td>Is recommended/Is indicated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class II</td>
<td>Conflicting evidence and/or a divergence of opinion about the usefulness/efficacy of the given treatment or procedure.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class IIa</td>
<td>Weight of evidence/opinion is in favour of usefulness/efficacy.</td>
<td>Should be considered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class IIb</td>
<td>Usefulness/efficacy is less well established by evidence/opinion.</td>
<td>May be considered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class III</td>
<td>Evidence or general agreement that the given treatment or procedure is not useful/effective, and in some cases may be harmful.</td>
<td>Is not recommended</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2 Levels of evidence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of evidence A</th>
<th>Data derived from multiple randomized clinical trials or meta-analyses.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of evidence B</td>
<td>Data derived from a single randomized clinical trial or large non-randomized studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of evidence C</td>
<td>Consensus of opinion of the experts and/or small studies, retrospective studies, registries.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The one and only link to remember: www.escardio.org/guidelines
ESC Guidelines available on professional & social networks