

Identification of New Scientific Evidence to Update Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology

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Background : The up-to-date nature of the underlying evidence of guidelines is a major quality criteria and crucial for their validity. Since 2001, the " Standards, Options and Recommendations " (SOR) project has defined a formal methodology to update more than 60 clinical practice guidelines in oncology. This methodology is based on 5 separate steps : 1) Identification of relevant literature. 2) Critical appraisal and synthesis of relevant publications. 3) Confrontation of new data with current recommendations. 4) Update of SOR guidelines. 5) Dissemination of updated SOR.

Objectives : To define an appropriate methodology to identify new scientific evidence in order to update SOR guidelines (step 1).

Methodology : The methodology is based on our experience from the update of already completed SOR guidelines and the published experience of other guidelines programs. It includes 2 phases: evaluation and implementation of the process.

The literature search involves (1) the selection of relevant sources, (2) the elaboration of sensitive and specific standardized search strategies, and (3) the definition of an optimal search periodicity.

Specific evaluation criteria have been defined for each of these aspects.

At the end of the test period, the updating process will be routinely run using a groupware system.

Frequently aware of future developments, experts in oncology will be highly involved in the process.

Results : The methodology defined is tested on 4 topics since august 2001. The results of this test will be presented during the congress.

Discussion and conclusion: The implementation phase of the process will involve the management of a high amount of data. To avoid the duplication of resources and efforts, international collaborations have to be defined.