

Translation of evidence levels

Prior to SIGN 54 evidence was appraised using a different grading system. How the previous grading system has been translated to SIGN's current grading system is shown below.

Levels of evidence			
Previous grading system	Description	Current grading system	Description
Ia	Evidence obtained from meta-analysis of RCTs	1 + +	High quality meta-analysis, systematic reviews of RCTs, or RCTs with a very low risk of bias
Ib	Evidence obtained from at least one RCT	1 +	Well conducted meta-analyses, systematic reviews, or RCTs with a low risk of bias
IIa	Evidence obtained from at least one well designed controlled study without randomisation	2 +	Well conducted case control or cohort studies with a low risk of confounding or bias and a moderate probability that the relationship is causal
IIb	Evidence obtained from at least one other type of well designed quasi-experimental study	2 +	
III	Evidence obtained from well designed non-experimental descriptive studies such as comparative studies, correlation studies, and case studies	3	Non-analytic studies
IV	Evidence obtained from expert committee reports or opinions and/or clinical experiences of respected authorities	4	Expert opinion