Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN)
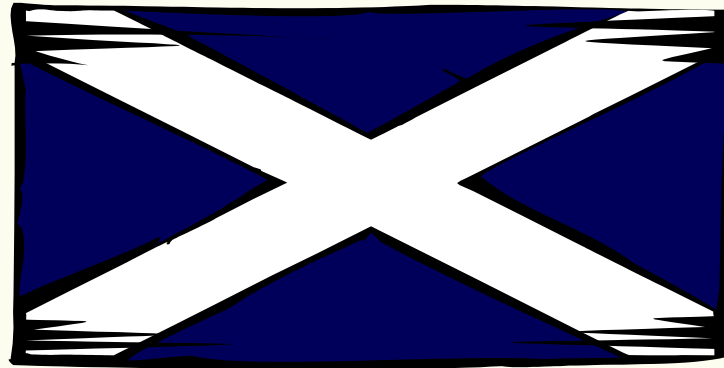
Principles of SIGN

- Publicly-funded (NHS Quality Improvement Scotland)

- Professionally-led (SIGN Council – healthcare professional bodies in Scotland; patient representatives)

- Professionally-developed (SIGN Executive – CPG experts)

- Independent of politicians and industry

SIGN Council

40 representatives

SIGN Executive

Programme Management Team

12

Research and Information Team

5

Administration and Networking

3

Guideline development groups

What are we trying to achieve?

Guideline recommendations that:

- are based on the strongest available evidence
- take account of the balance between benefits, harms
- take account of the realities of health care delivery
- are acceptable to patients and health care professionals
- are ***implementable***

Topic selection:

- Guideline topics are proposed by healthcare professionals

- Existence of variation in practice

- Evidence of effective practice

- Burden of disease

- Priority area for national health service
  - *cardiovascular disease, cancer, child health, mental health*

Multidisciplinary development group

Multidisciplinary participation is essential to ensure:

- Proper evaluation and interpretation of specialty-specific evidence

- Relevance to the realities of everyday practice

- Ownership and co-operation of all stakeholder groups

Skill mix within the group

- Relevant range of clinical expertise
- Specialist expertise (e.g. health economics)
- Practical knowledge
- Patient empathy
- Critical appraisal skills

Collect the evidence → **Rate the evidence** → **Summarise the evidence** → **Consider the evidence** → **Evidence based recommendation**

Systematic reviews meta-analyses

Randomised controlled trials

Cohort, case control studies

Non-experimental studies

Expert opinion

Quality rating

Quality rating

Quality rating

Evidence tables
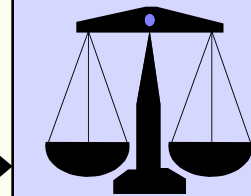
Considered judgement

Graded recommend-ations

Systematic review process

Considered judgement

Systematic literature review

Evidence level
= study type
+ quality assessment

**Evidence table
of validated studies**

‾ Volume of evidence
‾ Consistency of evidence
‾ Generalisability
‾ Clinical impact
‾ Resource implications

**Considered judgement
of multidisciplinary guideline
development group**

Graded recommendation
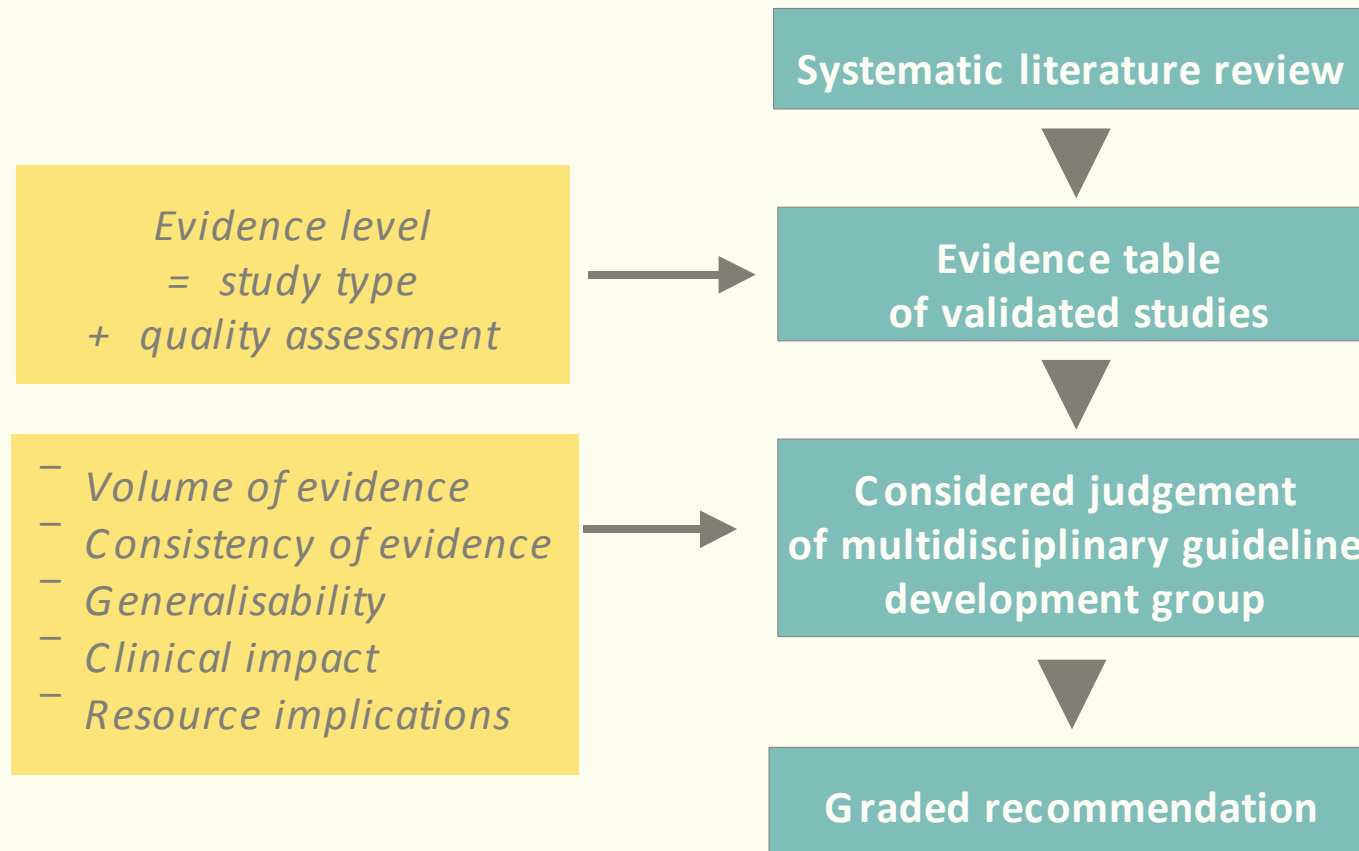
Consultation and peer review

- **National open meeting**

- **Peer review**

- **SIGN Editorial Group**

Is SIGN good for you?

- Target population <5 million

- Target population >5 million

Is SIGN good for you?

Core principles:

- Independence from government & industry

- Explicit, documented process

- Multidisciplinary involvement

- Managed development process

Key challenges

- Grading different types of evidence
- Balancing benefits, harms, and costs
- Faster development process

Most critical factor

Leadership!