

Consistent evidence based practice

It's important that GPs and clinical staff provide consistent and quality care to their patients. This can be assisted by the use of clinical guidelines, and by communication between team members.

RACGP 4th Edition Standards

- 1.4.1** *Our practice has a consistent approach for the diagnosis and management of conditions affecting patients in accordance with best available evidence.*

Assessment methods

- Interview with GPs and clinical staff

Surveyors will interview GPs and clinical staff to confirm the processes used to access clinical guidelines, including specific guidelines for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients. This may include describing how the processes support the clinical team in providing consistency in its diagnosis and management of patients. The practice team will also demonstrate how the clinical team communicates about clinical issues and support systems within the practice. Ideally, this will be the practice demonstrating that regular clinical meetings are held.

- Documentation review

Evidence of paper based or electronic clinical guidelines should be available for review, and this might include GPs demonstrating how guidelines are accessed online. Ideally, evidence of clinical meetings occurring will be reviewed, for example meeting minutes, calendar appointments or a communications book.

- Medical records review

Ideally, patient health records reviewed will appear consistent with clinical practice guidelines, and based on best available evidence.

Meeting the Standards

Clinical practice guidelines provide important recommendations for clinical care, and should be accessible to GPs and clinical staff when they are providing care. It's essential that practices are always checking that clinical practice guidelines are current. Clinical guidelines might include paper-based resources, such as text books and medical journals, as well as electronic resources, such as being able to access guidelines via the internet or CD. Some medical records software allows access to these resources. To ensure a consistent approach to clinical care, it is paramount that members of the clinical team communicate well. Face-to-face clinical meetings are preferable, however communication books and electronic notice boards can be useful to consider clinical issues.

Best practice

Ideally, the practice's policies and procedures manual will describe practice processes in relation to 1.4.1 Consistent evidence based practice. It is recommend that practices minute clinical meeting minutes, and that a record is kept.