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## Updating Clinical Practice Guideline. Methodological Handbook

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**Background:** Recommendations included in clinical practice guidelines (CPGs) need to review their validity in the light of the constant appearance of new scientific evidence and changes in clinical practice. Nevertheless, the methodology to update CPGs is not well standardized and there is little research published so far.

**Purpose:** To develop a Methodological Handbook for Updating (MHU) CPGs in the context of an emergent National Guideline Programme in Spain.

**Methods:** A scientific literature search was performed (1966-2008) and methodological material and experiences in updating guidelines were collected from GIN member institutions. By consensus, an expert group decided the structure and the focus of the MHU, and 12 additional experts developed the chapters related to different stages and aspects of a rigorous updating process.

**Results:** This handbook for updating CPGs identifies two main phases in the updating process: monitoring (to identify new upcoming evidence which may suggest the need to update the CPG) and the actual updating (when new evidence has been identified during the monitoring, or when the maximum time period recommended for updating, 3 to 5 years, has been reached). The MHU provides an explicit and structured approach to systematically undertake the following stages of the updating process: monitoring, assessing the need to update, types of update, how to search the literature when updating, critical appraisal and synthesis of the quality of the evidence, formulation of recommendations, publication and finally a framework to assess the process.

**Discussion:** Updating a CPG requires to monitor the upcoming evidence which may modify its validity, regardless the CPG should be updated after 3 to 5 years. Given the scarce information available about this topic this handbook will be of help to those institutions or development groups in charge of updating and developing CPGs.