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## When to Update Guidelines: A pragmatic approach.

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**Background:** The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) was commissioned to develop the first comprehensive guidance on obesity prevention, identification and management. The guideline was published in December 2006. As part of NICE process, 3 years after publication of a clinical guideline, developers must review whether a guideline needs updating and advise NICE on the extent of the possible update. There is currently lack of consensus on the most effective method of deciding when a guideline needs updating.

**Purpose:** To describe a pragmatic approach taken in deciding whether the clinical section of the obesity guidance required an update and discuss the learning points.

**Methods:** To conduct an evidence-based review of clinical guidelines that covered the management/treatment of obesity. To present the review to the former guideline development group (GDG) members, and check whether any changes in practice had occurred or additional relevant evidence had been published.

**Results:** We systematically searched and reviewed clinical guidelines published since the guidance publication. From the twenty-five guidelines retrieved, eleven were ordered. A further four were excluded as they were either outside of the clinical remit of the guideline, or did not clarify the methodology applied for the guideline. Overall, the recommendations seemed to be consistent with the NICE guideline. There were no recommendations that would contradict with any of those contained in the NICE guideline. However, there was a need to judge the recommendations from other guidelines in the context of the UK health system and current UK practice and judge their applicability.

**Discussion:** Further guidance is required to assist developers in preparing evidence based reports (e.g. whether the AGREE instrument is to be used when reviewing clinical guidelines) to decide whether a NICE guideline needs updating or not. We will discuss in detail the strengths and limitations of this approach.