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Are universal the factors related to physicians' adoption of Clinical Practice Guidelines? - Experiences in Korea

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Background: Physicians' adoption and implementation of clinical practice guidelines (CPGs) are no less important than the development of these guidelines. Many researches have made considerable efforts to explain and investigate the issues and related factors involved in the adoption and implementation of CPGs in clinical fields.

Purpose: This study aims to investigate the factors related to the adoption and implementation of CPGs in clinical settings in Korea with comprehensive analytic model.

Methods: We examined physicians who are affiliated with three different medical academic societies, and who were experienced in developing CPGs. 324 cases were collected by using a structured questionnaire at the fall of 2007.

Results: From all the respondents, 48.8% stated that they followed CPGs, and 93.4% agreed with the content in the CPGs. With regard to the item on the self-efficacy of practicing CPGs, 90.3% of the respondents selected 'low level'. 11.7% of the respondents were found to use these guidelines all the time, and 60.8% were found to use them only sometimes. In the analysis of the relationship between the recognition, agreement and implementation levels, the group with high scores for agreement, recognition and self-efficacy demonstrated a higher implementation score than the other group. In the regression analysis, the factors associated with implementation were level of recognition, agreement and self-efficacy and positive attitude towards CPGs.

Discussion: Although the health care system in Korea differs from those in Western countries, our results revealed that the factors related to the adoption and implementation of CPGs, as found in our study, were similar to the results of research conducted in Western countries. These results suggest that professionals' attitudes towards CPGs are universal, and implementation strategies should be developed globally.