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Teaching Guideline Developers Up-to-Date Guideline Methodology: The Canadian Thoracic Society Experience

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Background: The Canadian Thoracic Society (CTS) revised its guideline process to establish uniform and valid guideline production, using latest tools.

Purpose: We sought to evaluate the educational effects of a one-day introductory workshop on guideline tools, held for guideline-writers.

Methods: Guideline experts introduced each tool/instrument in a one-hour session consisting of lecture followed by informal questions. Questionnaires were completed by each participant immediately pre- and post- workshop. Six-months later, a questionnaire was sent to attendees and CTS guideline developers who did not attend.

Results: Twenty guideline developers attended the workshop. Each was currently or had previously been involved in an average of 3 guidelines.

Pre-questionnaire: 17/20 (85%) had previously heard of the GRADE recommendations, 12/20 (60%) of the ADAPTE process, 14/19 (74%) of the AGREE instrument, 5/18 (28%) of the GLIA tool. On a Likert scale for knowledge/expertise (1-7; 1-no knowledge, 4-novice, 7-expert), mean ratings were as follows: articulating a research question (5.2 +/- 0.9), using GRADE (3.8 +/- 1.3), using ADAPTE (2.8 +/- 1.4); using AGREE (3.1 +/- 1.6).

Post-questionnaire: most participants indicated an increased level of comfort with these tools, but only 13/19 (68%) (GRADE), 11/19 (58%) (ADAPTE), and 11/19 (58%) (AGREE) felt that they could use these tools in the guideline process.

6-month post-questionnaire: Nine of 20 attendees (45%) and 23/63 (36%) other guideline developers responded. Attendees were more likely to agree with the statement that they ``have the skills required to use`` each tool than non-attendees (Likert scale 1-7; 1-strongly disagree, 7-strongly agree), as follows: GRADE (5.2 vs 4.1); ADAPTE (4.3 vs 3.2); AGREE (4.6 vs 3.8).

Discussion: Experienced guideline-developers had a low baseline knowledge of these tools. A one day workshop increased comfort, but a large proportion continued to rate their skills as inadequate. Given their complexity, repeated sessions may be required to empower members to use these tools independently.