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Recommendations for creating a strategic approach to sustainable guideline development

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Background: The currency of clinical practice guidelines is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain due to the fast-paced environment of evidence-based care. National Breast and Ovarian Cancer Centre (NBOCC) is a leader in guideline development for oncology in Australia. To ensure the sustainability and currency of NBOCC guidelines in the future, a review of guideline development methodologies was undertaken.

Purpose: To develop and implement recommendations for a strategic approach to guidelines

Methods: Recommendations were developed based on a multifaceted review of guideline development methodologies. Specific components of the guideline development process were addressed, including topic identification and prioritisation, collation of evidence, stakeholder engagement and decision making, quality assurance, publication and presentation, dissemination, updating and maintenance of currency, and implementation.

Results: Twenty-two recommendations were made, covering the full spectrum of the guideline development process. Significant recommendations included:

- (a) Improved documentation, such as a new guideline manual to ensure that existing high quality processes are transparently documented.
- (b) A structured approach, such as ASCO's 'signals' method for review and updating guidelines to maintain currency.
- (c) Investigation of new technologies, such as the wiki platform for updating guidelines.
- (d) Extension of the currently high level of consumer involvement in the guideline process, to allow community input into topic identification and prioritisation via the NBOCC website.

Discussion: Implementation of these recommendations provides a strategic framework in which NBOCC can continue to work to achieve best practice in the field of guideline development. Many of these recommendations are easily implementable at the local level, while other recommendations address technological innovation for implementation in the longer term.