



# Challenges to developing guidelines for a public dental service



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# Irish Context

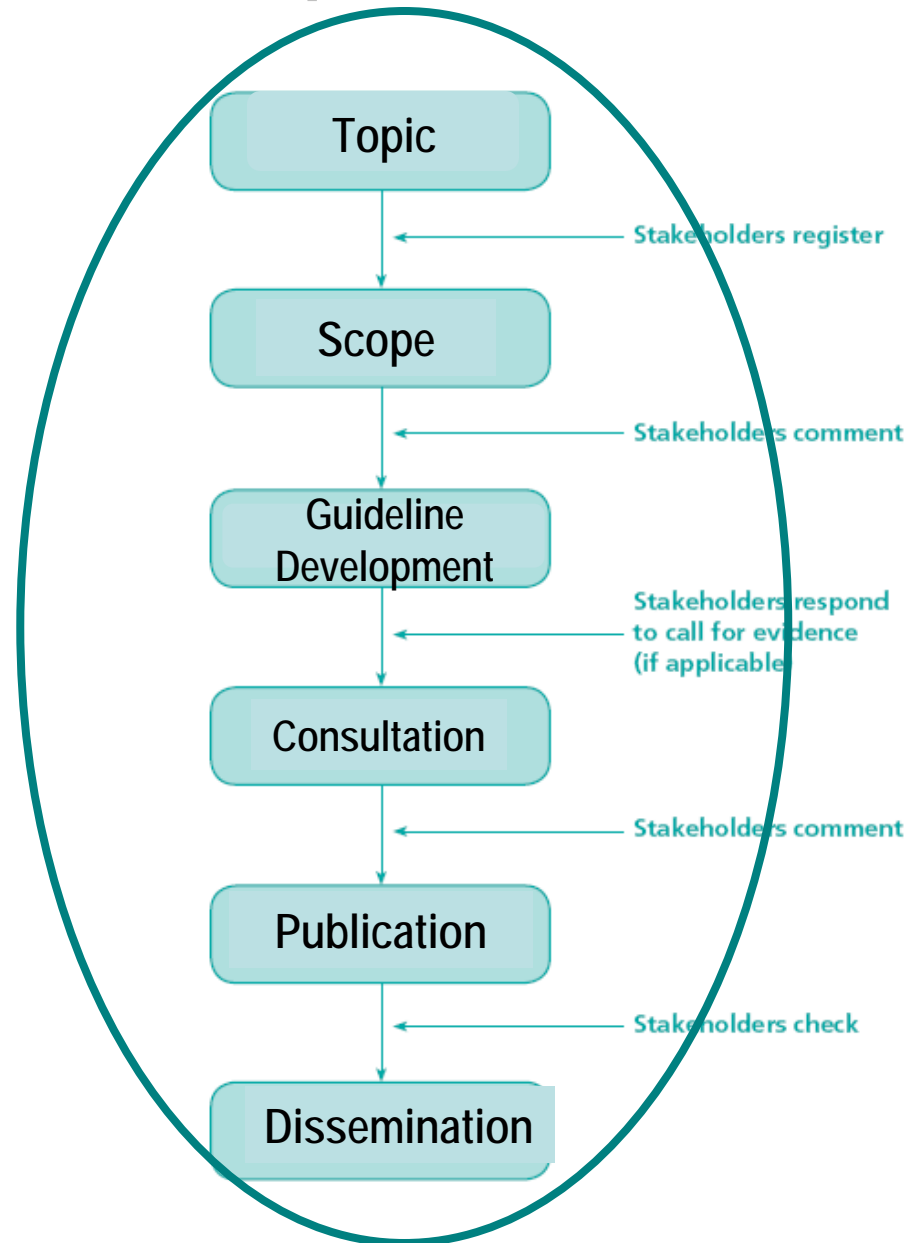


- ◆ Oral Health targets for children not met
  - Variation in service delivery between dental service delivery areas
- ◆ Several DoH reports calling for guidelines for children's dental services



# Guideline Development

- ◆ Department of Health
  - Policy
  - Priorities
- ◆ Health Service Quality Initiatives
- ◆ Professional Organisations





# Contextual challenge to guideline development

- ◆ Department of Health
  - Policy
  - Priorities
- ◆ Health Service Quality Initiatives
- ◆ Professional Organisations



- ◆ Lack of oral health leadership in DoH or Health Service Executive
- ◆ No culture of guideline development

*“Improving quality in the health system requires implementation of internationally-recognised, evidence-based guidelines...”*

Department of Health, 2001

# National funding agency for health research



Strategic Health Research and  
Development Research Award



# Irish Oral Health Services Guideline Initiative



- ◆ Oral Health Services Research Centre
  - Establish centre for systematic reviewing and guideline development
- ◆ Collaboration with
  - UK Cochrane Centre
  - Public dental service



# Irish Oral Health Services Guideline Initiative

- ◆ Priority topics for guideline development:
  - Clinical practice (core procedures)
  - Service operational issues



# Guideline Development Process

- ◆ AGREE Principles
- ◆ NICE & SIGN technical manuals





# Process challenges to guideline development



# Lack of experience

- ◆ Researchers
- ◆ GDG members
- ◆ Stakeholders
  - Unrealistic expectations
    - ◆ Time required
    - ◆ Evidence



## Lesson

- ◆ Guideline Development will take longer
- ◆ Contact your Cochrane Group early in the process!
- ◆ Benefits to all involved
- ◆ Enthusiasm is important!

# Lack of experience

## Feedback

- Obtaining feedback
- Preference for verbal feedback

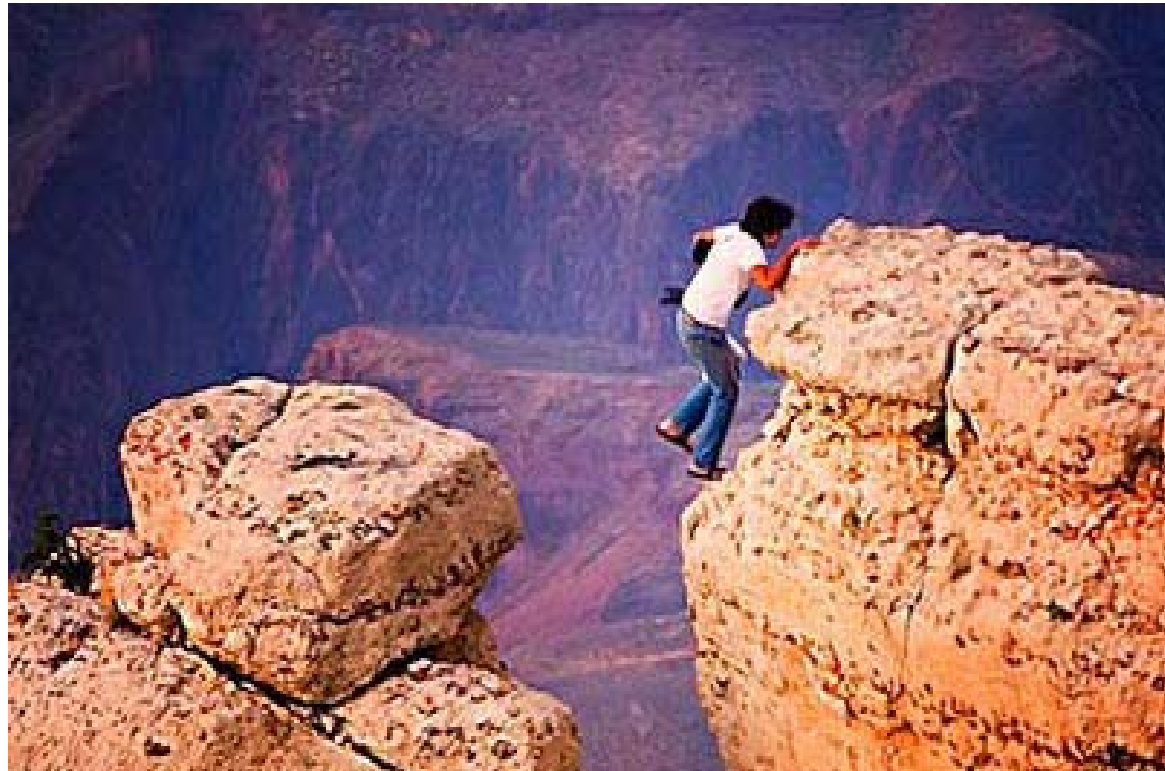


## Lesson

- ◆ Use the telephone for GDG feedback
- ◆ Keep documentation for GDG and stakeholders as short as possible
- ◆ It takes time to establish your credentials as a guideline developer



# Gulf between evidence and current practice





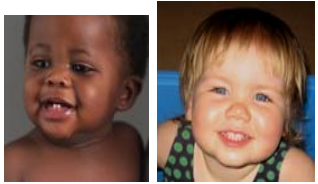
# STRATEGIES TO PREVENT DENTAL CARIES IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Guidance on identifying high caries risk children and developing  
preventive strategies for high caries risk children in Ireland



# Gulf between evidence and current practice

**Evidence**



**6 mths**



**7-8 yrs**



**Current practice**

# Implementation challenges

Identification of high caries risk children	Grade of recommendation
Public health nurses should have training in the identification of high caries risk children	D
An oral assessment should be incorporated into each child's developmental visit...	D

# Implementation challenges

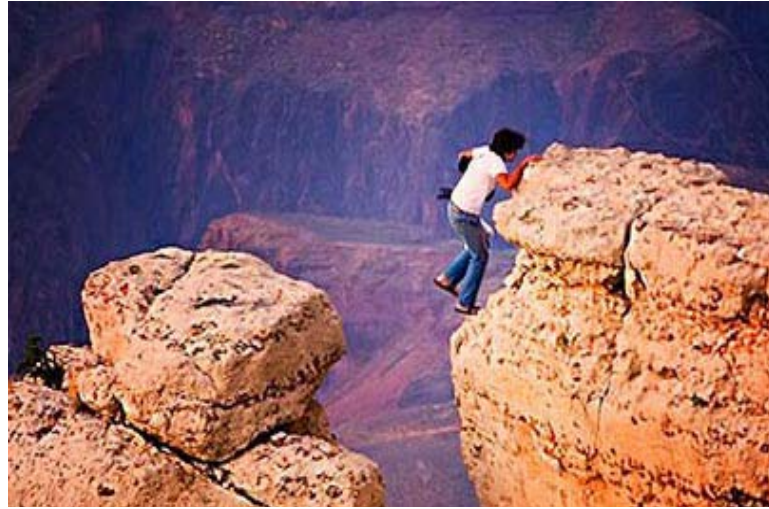
## Identification of high caries risk children

- ◆ No oral health component in Public Health Nurse (PHN) university course
- ◆ Limited and outdated training in oral health for PHNs in post

into each child's developmental visit...



# Gulf between evidence and practice



## Lesson

- ◆ Stick with the evidence – change the system!
- ◆ Guideline becomes a *resource* for change rather than the instrument of change
- ◆ Enthusiasm is even more important!

# Positive Impacts

- ◆ Raised profile of evidence-based practice
- ◆ Foundation for pilot caries prevention programme
- ◆ Contributed to successful grant application (addressing knowledge gaps)



# In Conclusion



# Thank you!

