



Symbiosis Instead of Competing Demands: A Tale of 2 Preventive Services

Ann Fam Med 2009;7:iii. doi:10.1370/afm.992.

The *Annals of Family Medicine* encourages readers to develop a learning community of those seeking to improve health care and health through enhanced primary care. You can participate by conducting a RADICAL journal club and sharing the results of your discussions in the *Annals* online discussion for the featured articles. RADICAL is an acronym for Read, Ask, Discuss, Inquire, Collaborate, Act, and Learn. The word *radical* also indicates the need to engage diverse participants in thinking critically about important issues affecting primary care and then acting on those discussions.¹

HOW IT WORKS

In each issue, the *Annals* selects an article or articles and provides discussion tips and questions. We encourage you to take a RADICAL approach to these materials and to post a summary of your conversation in our online discussion. (Open the article online and click on "TRACK Comments: Submit a response.") You can find



discussion questions and more information online at: <http://www.AnnFamMed.org/AJC/>.

CURRENT SELECTION

Article for Discussion

Hahn DL. Importance of evidence grading for guideline implementation: the example of asthma. *Ann Fam Med*. 2009;7(4):364-369.

DISCUSSION TIPS

This article is unusual for a journal club selection. The article and its appendices are an analysis of how evidence-based guidelines are influenced by the approach used to grade the quality of scientific information. The analysis uses the specific example of the *Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma (EPR-3)*, which was developed by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. You may want to look at these guidelines² during the course of reading and discussing this article, as well as consider examining evidence rating system criteria.^{3,4}

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What question is addressed by the article? How does the question fit with what already is known?
- How useful are the author's "4 important questions" for assessing evidence quality?
- What questions would you want answered to evaluate the quality of scientific evidence that goes into a clinical practice guideline or decision on how to apply evidence to the care of your patients?
- What are the main points from the asthma guideline used as the example?²
- How do the author's recommended review criteria³ compare with other recommended criteria for grading scientific evidence?⁴
- What problems with the asthma guidelines does the author identify?
- How do these problems affect the validity and relevance of the guidelines to caring for your patients?
- What biases are apparent in the author's analysis? How do these affect your interpretation and application of his conclusions?
- How will this article affect your interpretation and application of other guidelines to caring for your patients?
- What are some next steps for applying the findings or answering other questions that this study raises?
- What policy recommendations do you have based on this article?

Please consider sharing thoughts from your group's discussion with others at: <http://www.annfammed.org/cgi/eletters/7/4/iii>.

References

1. Stange KC, Miller WL, McLellan LA, et al. *Annals Journal Club: it's time to get RADICAL*. *Ann Fam Med*. 2006;4(3):196-197. <http://annfammed.org/cgi/content/full/4/3/196>.
2. National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. *Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma (EPR-3)*. <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/asthma>. Accessed Jun 1, 2009.
3. Ebell MH, Siwek J, Weiss BD, et al. Strength of recommendation taxonomy (SORT): a patient-centered approach to grading evidence in the medical literature. *Am Fam Physician*. 2004;69(3):548-556. <http://www.aafp.org/afp/20040201/548.html>. Accessed Jun 1, 2009.
4. Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research. Systems to rate the strength of scientific evidence. <http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/epcsums/strengthsum.htm>. Accessed Jun 1, 2009.