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Evaluating the Quality of Papillary Thyroid Cancer Guidelines: A Comparative Study of Scandinavian and American Recommendations.

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ABSTRACT

Background:

Clinical Practice Guidelines (CPGs) aim to optimize patient care and resource use. However, little is known about the quality of CPGs for diagnosing and managing papillary thyroid cancer (PTC). This study compares the quality of Scandinavian CPGs on PTC with that of the American Thyroid Association (ATA), using the Appraisal of guidelines for research and evaluation (AGREE II) instrument.

Methods:

CPGs were purposefully selected based on the research question. Each guideline was appraised by the same reviewer pair—a resident in otorhinolaryngology and a senior endocrine surgeon. Quality scores for six AGREE II domains were calculated per CPG, with mean domain values computed across guidelines. Overall quality was assessed using a threshold of >60% scaled domain scores.

Results:

Four CPGs on PTC were reviewed. None met the criteria for “high quality” (scores >60% in five or more domains). The ATA guideline achieved “average quality” with scores >60% in four domains. Among Scandinavian guidelines, only the Swedish one was rated as “low quality.” Deficiencies in the Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian CPGs were most notable in domains related to rigor of development, applicability and editorial independence.

Conclusions:

Improvement in the quality of PTC guidelines is needed, particularly in Scandinavia. Future evaluations should include multiple reviewer pairs and a detailed analysis of specific management recommendations on PTC.