

## **Critical appraisal of Irish clinical guidelines: Looking for advice on treating multimorbid patients**

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**Introduction:** Multimorbid patients account for a significant number of patients in general practice. However, most clinical guidelines are developed using research that is focused on a single diseases. As a result, advice on treating multimorbid patients is often absent from these guidelines.

**Aims:** To assess the extent to which Irish guidelines for chronic diseases advise on treatment of multimorbid patients.

**Methods:** Guidelines for chronic diseases were identified through the websites for the Irish College of General Practitioners(ICGP), National Medicines Information Centre(NMIC), and National Institute for Health and Care Excellence(NICE). A 17-point yes/no checklist developed by Boyd et al. was used to assess if a guideline contained advice on treating multimorbid patients, as well as other patient-centered aspects of care. Two reviewers independently assessed each guideline.

**Results:** Of 16 guidelines evaluated, 15 (94%) gave specific advice for treating patients with at least one comorbidity. 6 (38%) gave specific advice for treating patients with more than one comorbidity.

**Discussion:** Our results suggest that Irish and UK guidelines provide more information on the treatment of patients with multimorbidity than other international guidelines. However, the lack of consistency between guidelines in describing this information highlights the need for a common protocol for including this advice.