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**Medical guidelines and standards as tools for making clinical decisions in accordance with Evidence Base Medicine (EBM)**

**Streszczenie w języku angielskim**

Introduction: Clinical management guidelines are defined as a collection of statements (recommendations) articulated in a methodical way which are supposed to assist physicians in taking optimal decisions regarding patient care in specific clinical situations. Their aim is to improve the quality of patient care through the solidification of medical knowledge into a convenient, easy to use form. Following the guidelines means promoting an effective usage of available resources through the support of healthcare employees in making the best possible decision with regard to the choice of planning a therapeutic process.

Aim: The aim of the thesis is to assess the physicians' knowledge and abilities of utilizing guidelines and standards of medical conduct as tools used to take clinical decisions in compliance with Evidence Based Medicine. The secondary aim is to identify the factors which are responsible for the issues that arise during the implementation of guidelines as well as ways of solving them (advantages and incentives).

Material and method: The material of the thesis was a research survey directed to health care professionals (physicians and trainee doctors) which was aimed to investigate their views on EBM and on the role of clinical guidelines in a daily clinical practice. The questions in the research survey included the sources of knowledge that health care professionals use while analyzing clinical cases, the physicians' opinion on EBM and its usefulness in a clinical practice. The research method was a research survey conducted among 717 physicians.

Results: Based on the conducted research survey, it was demonstrated that the physicians who follow their own experience only while analyzing clinical cases had less knowledge about EBM. Moreover, the respondents who use information shared during scientific conferences in their daily clinical practice show greater knowledge about EBM and have appropriate approaches to EBM. The physicians who follow clinical leaders' opinions demonstrate both greater knowledge about EBM and a more proper line of conduct regarding EBM. The identified barriers in utilizing guidelines among the analysed group of respondents are the deficits of practical skills related to the process of searching for source information and its verification. The surveyed physicians agreed that the organization of healthcare system fails not only to promote constant training of physicians but also to support them in this process.

Conclusions: EBM is a familiar and applicable concept among the surveyed physician. However, several of the respondents do not have sufficient competencies to properly search and assess publications. These constraints can be considered responsible for the physicians to prefer using literature reviews, which present data in a synthetic way. Nevertheless, importantly, use of the guidelines do not limit the physicians' flexibility and their individual approach to a patient which is shown by both the clinicians' confidence in these type of documents and their trust that the guidelines can offer assistance in clinical decisions making process. The guidelines are important and useful tools used in a clinical practice. Nonetheless, physicians use them selectively and are not always fully satisfied with the identified answers