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GUIDELINES AND CLINICIANS' TIME NEEDED TO TREAT

Guidelines should say how much extra time is needed for each patient to implement them

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Data from a study we published in 2022 confirm the assertion by Johansson and colleagues that implementing guidelines requires extra clinic time.^{1,2}

Following concerns about the recent cutaneous squamous cell carcinoma guidelines, which ran to 32 pages and contained 46 recommendations, we began to monitor clinical consultation times. The usual 10-15 minute appointments now took 22-60 minutes (mean 31 minutes) and generated greater surgical activity as a consequence. No extra time or resources were suggested in the guidelines as being necessary for their implementation. Variable adoption of these guidelines may mean substandard care for some patients or put clinicians at risk of criticism, complaints, or even litigation.

Our published recommendation was that future guideline committees should indicate how much extra time in clinic would be needed for each patient to adequately implement the advice. We suggest that a discussion with department managers will be needed for adequate planning of resources in the future.

Competing interests: None declared.

- 1 Moledina Z, Sharma A, Rabindranathnambi A, Varma S. Future guidelines should come with a health warning. *Clin Exp Dermatol* 2022;47:-1. doi: 10.1111/ced.15088 pmid: 34994014
- 2 Johansson M, Guyatt G, Montori V. Guidelines should consider clinicians' time needed to treat. *BMJ* 2023;380:e072953. doi: 10.1136/bmj-2022-072953 pmid: 36596571