

Appendix A

Quality of evidence ratings

- I: Evidence obtained from a systematic review of all relevant randomised controlled trials.
- II: Evidence obtained from at least one properly-designed randomised controlled trial.
- III-1: Evidence obtained from well-designed controlled trials without randomisation.
- III-2: Evidence obtained from well-designed cohort or case-control analytic studies preferably from more than one centre or research group.
- III-3: Evidence obtained from multiple time series with or without the intervention. Dramatic results in uncontrolled experiments (such as the results of the introduction of penicillin treatment in the 1940s) could also be regarded as this type of evidence.
- IV: Opinions of respected authorities, based on clinical experience, descriptive studies, or reports of expert committees.

These ratings have been adapted from US Preventive Services Task Force (1989). *Guide to clinical preventive services: an assessment of the effectiveness of 169 interventions*, (ed M Fisher). Williams & Wilkins, Baltimore, Appendix A, p388.