BIGG, the international database of GRADE Guidelines

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Health and equity have a central place in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that was adopted by all United Nations Member States. Implementation of evidence-based practice (EBP) principles has resulted in major advances in improving the quality of delivered health care. One of the EBP instruments are evidence-based trustworthy guidelines.[1] The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and more than 110 other organizations worldwide use the *Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation*-GRADE- system to develop guidelines.[2,3] GRADE provides a standardised and transparent approach for grading the quality of evidence and strength of recommendations. When implemented appropriately, the use of GRADE addresses best-practice requirements for guideline development and reporting (e.g., compliance with AGREE II), while also ensuring a focus on questions of importance to decision-makers and users and the formulation of appropriate recommendations.

Many countries have opted to adapt or adopt existing updated high-quality guidelines to their context to avoid duplication of synthesis reviews, reduce cost and accelerate the production of needed recommendations. Institutionalising this process and grounding it to existing and emerging methodologies such as the GRADE system can improve the capacity of decision-makers to provide the most efficient and safe interventions for the population. The process to adopt or adapt evidence-informed guidelines requires several steps, including defining scope and locating all existing guidelines that are relevant to the topic.[2,3] Guidelines are frequently not indexed and hard to find which threatens the extent evidence is used.

Several scientific repositories such as Health Systems Evidence, Epistemonikos or Trip database are available for those interested in public health or clinical practice. BIGG[4] from the acronym in Spanish "International Database of Grade Guidelines", includes a comprehensive list of worldwide guidelines developed with the GRADE system and classified accordingly to the Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG3 – good health and well-being). On a monthly basis BIGG searches the main health databases, websites of guideline developer groups and governmental institutions to gather GRADE guidelines. To date, the database offers more than 1300 guidelines in several languages that cover a wide range of health topics related to the SDG3 and other health priorities, including COVID-19. Most of the guidelines included in BIGG were published in the last 3 years and provide recommendations to address non-communicable and communicable diseases, maternal and child morbidity and mortality, health systems and services among other areas. The database compiles and sorts these guidelines by health topic, SGD3, institution, publication country, language, and year. Users can search and access all published guidelines as well as a short summary of their objective and scope.

BIGG is one of the main databases used by the *COVID-19 Evidence Network to support Decision-making* (COVID-END), a network that brings together more than 50 of the world's leading evidence-synthesis, technology-assessment and guideline-development groups around the world to support decision-making for the COVID-19 response. It is also continually searched by the COVID-19 living catalogue of guidelines Recommendations and Gateway to Contextualization (covid19.recmap.org),[5] which collects recommendations on COVID-19 for clinical, public health and health systems, critically appraises them and makes them globally accessible.

Several countries are strengthening the institutionalisation of their guideline programs by including the establishment of priorities and adaptation/adoption of guidelines, which may be facilitated using BIGG. And

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once guidelines have been selected, instruments for assessing their quality should be used to establish if they are suitable to be adopted or adapted.

BIGG was designed to give policymakers and health personnel rapid access to GRADE guidelines. The database is part of PAHO's ongoing efforts to stimulate health-related evidence use and to promote evidence-informed decisions and policymaking.

Contributors

LR conceived the commentary, verified the data, and oversaw the whole process. LR, MT, MR and EB extracted, reviewed and analyzed data from the database. LR, MT, MR wrote the first draft, which all authors revised for critical content. All authors had full access to the data in this study and reviewed and approved of the final manuscript. LR and MT are the guarantors. The corresponding author attests that all listed authors meet authorship criteria and that no others meeting the criteria have been omitted.

Declaration of Interests

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist. Authors hold sole responsibility for the views expressed in the manuscript, which may not necessarily reflect the opinion or policy of the Pan American Health Organization.

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