

Introduction to Clinical Inquiries

New series by the Family Physicians Inquiries Network

Timothy Mott MD Richard Guthmann MD MPH

We are thrilled to be collaborating with *Canadian Family Physician* (CFP) on the publication of our Clinical Inquiries (CIs) series. Clinical Inquiries are author-formulated questions that are answered with the best available current evidence. Family medicine residency faculty and their residents write CIs. These authors have demonstrated success writing other evidence-based reviews for our Family Physicians Inquiries Network (FPIN). Editors vet the questions for interest to family physicians and adequacy of available empiric data. A professional medical librarian then searches the medical literature to ensure inclusion of all pertinent references. The authors select the highest-quality evidence to answer their question. They grade each reference using the Oxford Centre for Evidence-based Medicine Levels of Evidence.¹ The evidence-based answers provide recommendations labeled with the Strength of Recommendation Taxonomy and explicit categorization of the evidence.² Finally, recommendations from other authoritative sources, when available, offer comparisons of the evidence to the guidelines.

Clinical Inquiries are the longest-lived publication project of FPIN. They have been published in the *Journal of Family Practice* and *American Family Physician* for nearly 2 decades. With the launch of CIs in the current issue of *CFP* (page 186),³ we are exceptionally pleased to appear in another prominent primary care journal and join ranks with our neighbour.

Who is FPIN?

Here is a bit more about who “we” are: FPIN is a non-profit membership organization offering scholarship, education, and faculty development opportunities for primary care learners and educators. With partial support through a grant from the American Academy of Family Physicians, FPIN was founded in 1998 by Dr Bernard Ewigman in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the University of Missouri–Columbia, with 7 other “founding member” university departments. Since then, FPIN has expanded to more than 150 sites, including university programs, community hospital residencies, and military residencies, in addition to adding international programs in Ontario and China.

The primary mission of FPIN is to provide high-quality education and professional development for primary

care clinicians to practise evidence-based medicine and produce scholarly work. Additionally, we envision a primary care work force that thinks critically, communicates expertly, and uses the best current evidence to improve the health of patients. We achieve these goals through our dedicated Executive Director, LuShawna Gerdes; her stellar staff; and a largely volunteer work force of tireless editors, many of whom have been involved with FPIN for more than a decade. Through workshops, conference presentations, online modules, and editorial feedback, we train members to produce evidence-based scholarly reviews. More information can be found on FPIN’s website at www.fpin.org.

Growth and new projects

With growth and diversification, FPIN has also developed other peer-reviewed publications, including Help Desk Answers, Priority Updates from the Research Literature, and our newest offering, Good Evidence Matters. Several of these projects are also published in the *Journal of Family Practice* and *American Family Physician* in addition to FPIN’s own journal, *Evidence-Based Practice*.

In the past couple of years and with ongoing growth of our CI project, we needed to find an additional outlet for our content. We were already familiar with *CFP* as online readers; it was quickly clear from recognizing the similarities between *CFP* and the current journals publishing CIs, and then from reviewing the *CFP* mission statement, that we should approach *CFP*’s editorial advisory board for collaboration. We are so grateful they obliged. We hope *CFP* readers find these articles topical, useful, and timely. 🍁

Dr Mott is Executive Editor and Vice President of Publications and Dr Guthmann is Editor-in-Chief for Clinical Inquiries, both for the Family Physicians Inquiries Network in Columbia, Mo.

Competing interests

None declared

Correspondence

Dr Timothy Mott; e-mail vppubs@fpin.org

The opinions expressed in commentaries are those of the authors. Publication does not imply endorsement by the College of Family Physicians of Canada.

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