

Categories of Evidence for Clinical Practice

For use in addressing clinical questions, arranged from most to least weight of evidence.

Type	Description
Clinical practice guidelines (CPGs)	Combines data from multiple RCTs with expert opinion and patient experiences
Meta-analysis	Combines data from multiple RCTs, giving more power to find results and more precision
Systematic review	Looks at multiple RCTs that might be too different to combine their data in a meta-analysis
Randomized controlled trials (RCTs)	One RCT alone is limited, but two RCTs with similar results makes a far more impressive argument
Open-label studies	Prone to placebo effects of around 50% “improvement” as well as other biases
Studies from related fields	Other conditions, animal models, bench research, etc
Expert opinion alone	Borrowing treatment for another condition for a similar-looking situation

From the Expert Q&A:
“Medications for Depression” with **Martha J. Ignaszewski, MD**
 Depression in Children and Adolescents, Volume 10, Number 4&5, May/June/July/August 2019
www.thecarlatchildreport.com