Information Services: Where to Find Evidence-Based Clinical Practice Guidelines Post-National Guidelines Clearinghouse

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Figure 1: ECRI Guidelines Trust sample search.

In July of 2018, the National Guideline Clearinghouse (NGC) (Guidelines.gov), the US Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality–sponsored compilation of evidence-based clinical practice guidelines for health care, was discontinued due to budget cuts. This cessation of an important resource for clinicians, policy makers, and librarians caused considerable distress among these groups since, at least at first, there seemed to be no suitable replacement for the site on the horizon.

What might be some good sources for evidence-based guidelines now that the NGC site is no longer available? The following resources were among those suggested by respondents to a forum post for input on that question on the MLA Clinical Librarians and Evidence-Based Healthcare Caucus site in the spring of 2020.

Fortunately, ECRI Institute, a nonprofit contractor for NGC, soon stepped up to offer a replacement repository for the NGC site. Although not an exact substitution for the Guidelines.gov site, the ECRI Guidelines Trust site seeks to offer a similarly robust experience in accessing up-to-date, reliable clinical guidelines. Even if the site does not yet enjoy the broad base of content available in the NGC site [1], the site is adding new submitted guidelines regularly and is building its repository rapidly. The institute also
noted in a private tutorial on July 28, 2020, that their strict criteria for inclusion in the repository meant that numerous outdated NGC guidelines were not eligible for incorporation as ECRI Guidelines Trust records. The site is freely available, although it is necessary to establish a (free) personal account to use some search functions and features. A basic search interface is available at the top of the page, which also supports advanced search features such as truncated keywords and Boolean logic. Categorized browsing capability is also available, and search refinement options are presented with results. Both brief summaries and full content of guidelines are accessible.

TRIP, or Turning Research Into Practice as it was originally known, is an established evidence-based practice support database. TRIP includes clinical practice guidelines among the indexed resources, which are easily accessible among search results by means of the “evidence type” filters on the right-hand sidebar. Although the database is freely available, advanced search features are available only to “premium” TRIP subscribers.

There are other clinical practice guideline resources available that might be considered complementary to the ECRI Guidelines Trust repository. Many of these have been collected in library guides and web pages such as the Des Moines University Library’s “Clinical Practice Guidelines” LibGuide. Besides the ECRI Guidelines Trust site and TRIP, these pages include such resources as:

- **US Preventive Services Task Force Recommendations for Primary Care Practice** provides evidence-based preventive care recommendations.
- **Guideline Central summaries** are a proprietary resource offering free guideline summaries as well as evidence-based practice products for purchase.
- Organization- or field-specific collections of guidelines, such as the Veterans Administration/Department of Defense Clinical Practice Guidelines site or the American Physical Therapy Association guidelines collection, are available.
- **UpToDate**, a clinical decision support database, includes links to “Society guidelines” among the resources linked in its topic review monographs.

These and other resources are welcomed by librarians and providers as potential replacements for the NGC. Are there other evidence-based practice guidelines resources we may have missed? Update the Clinical Librarians and Evidence-Based Healthcare Caucus forum!

**Reference**