

Process for suggesting ODG updates

The ODG process for incorporating suggestions from the public is both inclusive and transparent. [Note: The ODG ongoing regular internal process for updating the guidelines is described in detail in Appendix B, Methodology Description using the AGREE Instrument, [ODG AGREE.pdf](#). Here only the public input process is described.] The public updating suggestion process is document-based, i.e., driven by high-quality published studies as described above in the Explanation of Medical Literature Ratings (Exhibit C of [ODG AGREE.pdf](#)). In-person meetings, telephone conferences, or other verbal presentations will not be accepted.

Suggestion submission process outline:

- Outside parties with suggestions for change are asked to copy the current procedure summary entry in ODG. ODG requests that the submitting party use “Track Changes” to highlight their suggestions.
- Submit any high-quality scientific studies supporting their suggestion:
- The submitter should determine that a submitted study is not already referenced in ODG either as a stand-alone reference or as part of the references included in a Systematic Review or Meta-Analysis.
- If a study is not found in ODG and meets ODG’s criteria for inclusion, i.e., the study has been accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal, and that journal is one of the journals accepted for inclusion in MEDLINE® by the National Library of Medicine, then WLDI will review and rank the study or studies and circulate them, together with the suggested revision, to topic-specific subject matter experts before considering any updates. (For complete Journal Selection Criteria, see <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/factsheets/jsel.html>.)
- Send suggestions for change(s) and any high-quality scientific studies supporting their suggestion:
 - Via email to the ODG Helpdesk at odghelp@mcg.com
 - Via phone at (800) 488-5548
 - Via US mail to: Managing Editor, ODG by MCG, 3006 Bee Caves Road, Suite A250, Austin, TX 78746
- All suggestions will be acknowledged upon receipt via email or US mail in accordance with the method used for the suggestion submission.
- The ODG subject matter experts on any topic would comprise a subset of the ODG Editorial Advisory Board, consisting of those members who have contributed to, or expressed interest in, that topic in the past. For some topics, such as spinal fusion, there may be as many as 30 subject matter experts, whereas for others there would be a smaller group. The list of subject matter experts could also include others who are not even listed on the ODG Advisory Board, if these people are world-renowned experts in



a field and have made comments to ODG in the past, but they do not want to assume the broader responsibilities of being a member of the ODG Board.

- When circulating suggestions to the ODG contributors who are subject matter experts, ODG medical editors will include relevant study information including ODG's proprietary ranking system for those studies as described above, if that information is not already available. This is a modified Delphi process, which means that the positions taken by individual contributors are not made publicly available. This policy is also important to protect individual ODG contributors from personal repercussions, including personal legal liability, undesired solicitations, and personal attacks. What becomes public is the final ODG determination that becomes part of the guidelines.
- When universal agreement among the ODG subject matter experts is obtained to make a change, based on new high-quality scientific evidence, that change will be incorporated into ODG. If there is disagreement among these subject matter experts, then the change will need to be reviewed by the entire board, and a change will require support from at least 80% of the members. If there were universal agreement not to make the change, then it would not be accepted.
- The time required for ODG's external suggestion review process varies considerably. Minor wording improvements for usability and clarification, or adding a new reference which further supports the existing ODG conclusion, can take as little as a few days, whereas a change in overall recommendation for a major treatment could take up to a year, depending on the degree of medical controversy.
- Submitters interested in obtaining information on the status of their submission should contact the ODG Helpdesk via email at odghelp@mcg.com or by phone at 800 488-5548. Inquiries may be given a status of a) in queue for review; b) in internal ranking and review process; c) in circulation among subject matter experts; or d) in final update/review process.
- After updates have been made to ODG and noted in the update log file, ODG will send the individual(s) who have suggested revision a final notice as to the outcome of their submission, including whether the referenced study has been accepted or rejected for inclusion and what, if any, change or update has been made as a result of his/her submission.
- A formal notice or multiple progress reports may be sent from ODG to the commenter in certain situations, which may require a lengthier review for the following reasons:
 - a significant or highly technical change to a specific topic area may be under consideration;



- there is controversy among the subject matter experts as to whether a change should be made, warranting an in-depth advisory board review; or
 - newly emerging technology or body of evidence is forthcoming that could have a significant impact within a procedure summary.
- In these instances, the letter is sent from the entire ODG Board with no individual author singled out. This public suggestion process is an important updating tool for ODG. Because the ODG subscription access gets millions of hits per year, the sheer volume of ODG users has resulted in a potent force for suggestions that continues to make ODG better, when these users email the [ODG Helpdesk](#) with suggestions or requests for clarification or help when they cannot find a topic. Included within these suggestions would be feedback from stakeholders in states that have proposed adopting or already adopted ODG.
- A submitter may track ODG updates by viewing the ODG update log located at [ODG-TWC updates.xls](#) (subscription required).