# Perspectives on Quality Assurance and Risk Reduction in Telehealth

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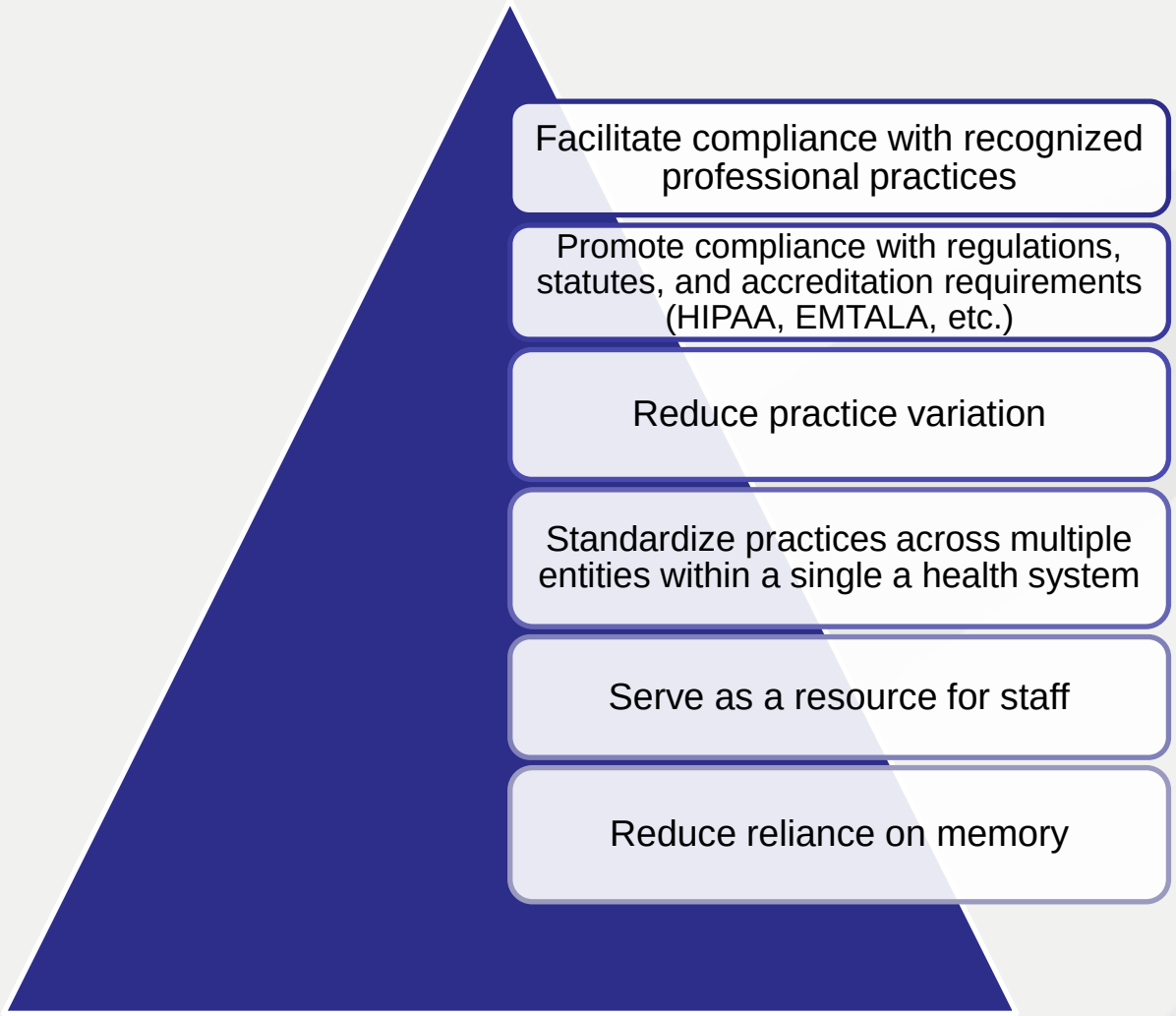
# Guidelines Generally



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# Clinical Guidelines – Benefits for Practitioners

## Improve the quality of clinical decisions

- Offer explicit recommendations for clinicians who are uncertain about how to proceed
- Overturn the beliefs of doctors used to outdated practices
- Improve the consistency of care
- Good guidelines based on respected authorities may reassure practitioners about the appropriateness of treatment policies

## Can support quality improvement activities

- First step in designing QA tools involves how patients should be treated
- Guidelines good point of reference for prospective and retrospective audits of provider/facility practices

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# Clinical Guidelines – Benefits for Patients

## Improve health outcomes

- Promote proven interventions - discourage ineffective ones
- Improve the consistency of care (studies show great variation in care
  - Patients with identical clinical problems receive different care depending on clinician, hospital, or location
  - Guidelines make it more likely that patients will be cared for in the same manner regardless of where or by whom treated

## Empower patients to make more informed healthcare choices

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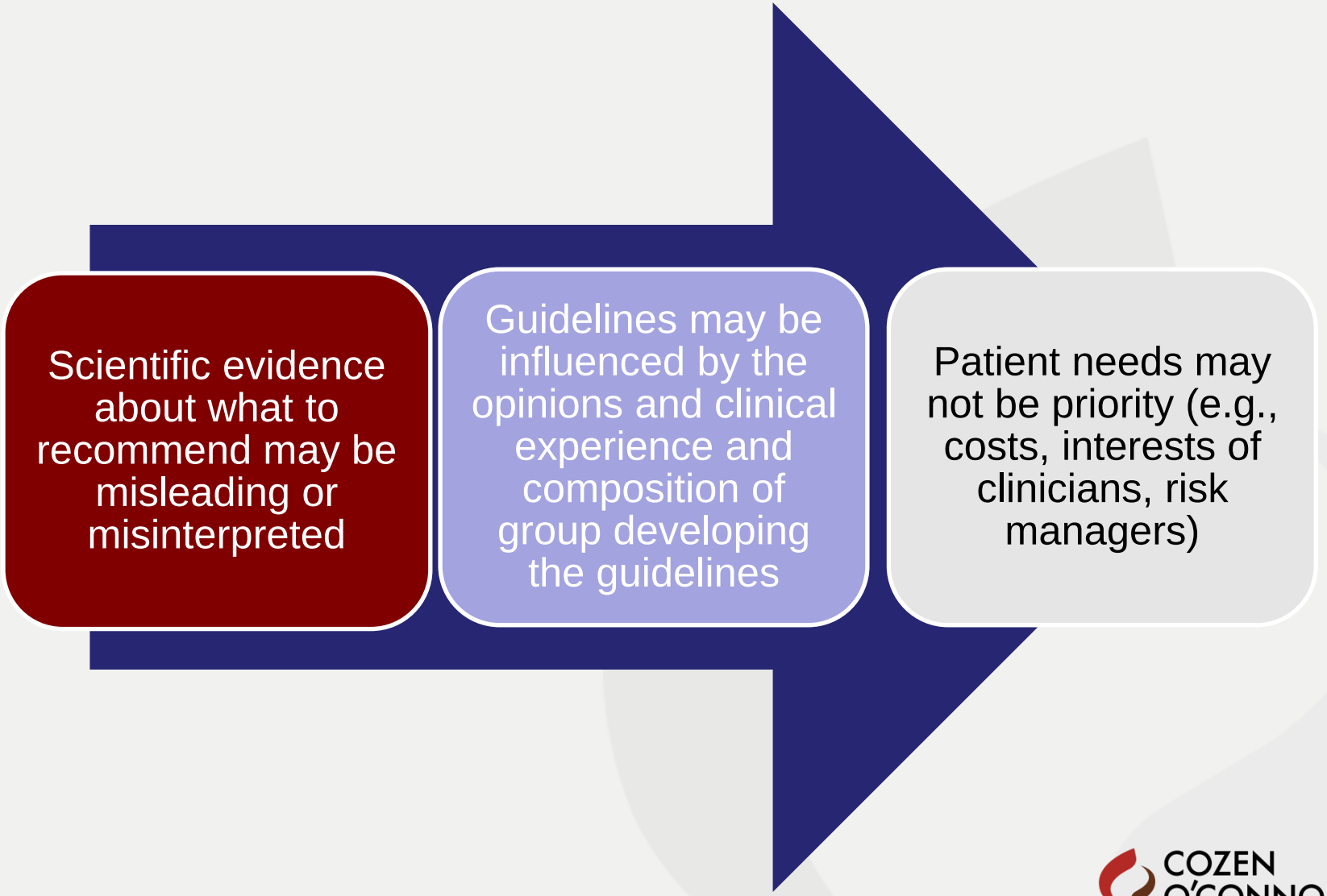
# Potential Limitations



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# Appraising Clinical Guidelines

- Who developed the guidelines?
- Was an explicit, sensible and impartial process used to identify, select, and combine evidence?
- Did the developers carry out a comprehensive, reproducible literature review within the past 12 months of its publication or revision?
- Were all important options and outcomes considered?
- Is each recommendation in the guideline tagged by the level or strength of evidence upon which it is based and linked with the scientific evidence?
- Have the guidelines been subjected to peer review and testing?
- Are the recommendations clinically relevant?
- Will the recommendations help providers in caring for patients?

Source: Bernadette Mazurek Melnyk

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# Recommendations for Good Clinical Guideline Development

- Objectives specifically described
- Clinical questions covered by guidelines are specifically described
- Development group includes individuals from all the relevant professional groups
- Patients' views and preferences have been sought
- Systematic methods used to search for evidence
- Criteria for selecting the evidence are clearly described
- Health benefits, side effects and risks have been considered
- Procedure for updating the guidelines are provided
- Organizational barriers, cost implications considered
- Monitoring/auditing function

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