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# STANDARDS COMMITTEE

## Journey to Guidelines - Part Two: “The Road is Long....”

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Welcome back to the second article on the transition of the ORNAC Standards to Guidelines. In this article we will introduce our validation team, discuss how we selected on sections 3 and 4 for review, and explain levels of evidence and our approach to adding levels of evidence to our document.

### Who is Woo?

In May 2016 ORNAC President, Cathy Ferguson, and Standards Co-Chair, Chris Downey, met with Dr. Kevin Woo to discuss a collaboration to help meet ORNAC's goal of validating our work and of the transition of our current Standards to Guidelines. Dr. Woo PhD, RN, FAPWCA, is an Assistant Professor in the School of Nursing and the School of Rehabilitation Therapy in the Faculty of Health Sciences at Queen's University in Kingston, ON. Dr. Woo, along with his students Bryn Rahusaar Routledge and Lauren Suen, are now working with the ORNAC Standards Committee members. Their role is to validate the two sections, conduct systematic reviews for the members to ensure a seminal work has not been missed, assist with the addition of *levels of evidence*, and perform a review, for plagiarism, of the entire document.

### The Decision: Sections 3 and 4

Dr Woo agreed with the Standards Committee's belief that revising and validating the entire document within a two-year time frame would be unrealistic and that the completion of this process may take up to five years. The decision to beginning with the revision and validation of two sections

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allowed us to run a pilot program of our processes and make changes accordingly.

Standards Committee members were each assigned a portion of the section(s) being. Revising sections at a time is not a new process – in previous editions of the Standards only some sections were revised and, as a result, there were some sections that had not been revised for a few years. The timing of past revisions was the reason for selecting Sections 3 and 4 as the first sections to revise and validate with Section 4 being first priority.

Committee members began by actively searching the literature for studies, seminal works, and other material that reflected best practices regarding their assigned portion. Once the literature had been obtained they began to revise the current standards to reflect what the literature suggested as best practices. Using a web-based project management software application the team would revise and post their parts of the section for other committee members to read and review. Once per month the committee would meet as a group, via an on-line meeting application or face to face during ORNAC semi-annual Board Meetings, allowing each member to hear comments and questions, from other members, regarding their postings. Changes suggested at these meetings were incorporated and re-posted for final approval. The committee Co-

Chairs then reviewed the final submissions for accuracy, flow, and necessary changes. This process has been completed for Section 4 and is underway for Section 3.

### ORNAC Levels of Evidence

Levels of evidence assist the writers and readers in their critical thinking regarding a statement and are designed to increase the reader's confidence in the guidelines' reflection of best practices. During one of the face to face meetings it was determined that the application of a *level of evidence* was required in order to support external validity. After reviewing the literature regarding levels of evidence, and reviewing examples of the different models already in use (AORN, SIGN, GRADE, AGREE), the Standards Committee members decided to create an ORNAC system that would be applied to the new guidelines.

In June 2016 Dr. Woo and his team began the validation process by reviewing the revised Practice Statements produced by the Standards Committee members in relation to Section 4. These new and revised statements were checked for consistency between the statements and the evidence as presented through a systematic review of the literature to ensure that no seminal work had been overlooked during the revision process. Dr. Woo's team then applied the

ORNAC Levels of Evidence to the supporting references.

As this process moves forward the Standards Committee will, section by section, produce guidelines, versus standards, that will include a level of

evidence for all ORNAC Practice Guidelines based on the supporting evidence available for each guideline.

In our final article, in the next Journal, we will look at the differences between standards and guidelines, why validation

is important, the work of the reviewers, why other disciplines are being asked to endorse the new documents, and our planned presentation at the 2017 ORNAC National Conference. We hope you will join us for the final leg in our *Journey to Guidelines* series.

The ORNAC Levels of Evidence have been determined as follows:

Level	Acronym	Definition	Examples
<i>Legislated</i>	LEG	We have practice statements that are driven by our regulatory bodies	Regulatory College's Standards of Practice, federal/provincial/ territorial health acts
<i>Manufacturer's Instructions for Use</i>	IFU		User manuals, label instructions
<i>Accreditation Canada</i>	ACC	Statements that are written as Required Organizational Practices for Accreditation	ROPs
<i>Level 1</i>	L1	Strength of the evidence is high quality and informs practice	Well-designed Randomized Control Trial (RCT) applicable to greater populations, meta analyses
<i>Level 2</i>	L2	Strength of the evidence is good quality and further research may better inform practice	Systematic review, RCT with limitations, quasi-experimental, well-designed observational studies making a significant contribution to the body of knowledge
<i>Level 3</i>	L3	Strength of the evidence is limited and further research will benefit practice	Homogeneous systematic review, RCT with significant limitations, case control studies, observational studies with serious limitations
<i>Level 4</i>	L4	Strength of the evidence is unknown and further research is required	Studies with very significant limitations, primary studies, results of study are inconsistent
<i>Level 5</i>	L5	Expert Opinion, studies with acknowledged bias, evidence based on physiology	Manufacturer's studies on own products, publication bias, Consensus panel

For further information on the ORNAC Standards please email [standards@ORNAC.ca](mailto:standards@ORNAC.ca).

The ORNAC Standards are available for purchase at [www.shop.csa.ca](http://www.shop.csa.ca).