

# Official presentation

Care practice is becoming more and more complicated due to many different factors. One of the most relevant factors is the exponential increase of scientific information.

To make clinical decisions that are adequate, safe and effective, practitioners need to devote a lot of effort in continuously updating their knowledge.

In 2003, the Interterritorial Council of the Spanish NHS created the GuiaSalud Project whose final aim is to improve clinical decision-making based on scientific evidence, via training activities and the configuration of a registry of Clinical Practice Guidelines (CPG). Since then, the GuiaSalud project has assessed dozens of CPGs in agreement with explicit criteria stipulated by its scientific committee, it has registered them and has disseminated them over the Internet.

At the beginning of 2006, the Directorate General of the Quality Agency of the National Health System prepared the Quality Plan for the National Health System, which was divided into 12 strategies. The purpose of this Plan is to increase the cohesion of the National Health System and help guarantee maximum quality health care for all citizens regardless of their place of residence.

Within that context, the GuiaSalud Project was renewed in 2007 and the Clinical Practice Guideline Library was created. This project developed into the preparation of the CPGs and included other Evidence-Based Medicine services and products. It also aims to favour the implementation and assessment of the use of CPGs in the National Health System.

A first step was to commission different agencies and expert groups in prevalent pathologies related to health strategies to prepare eight CPGs. This Anxiety guideline is the consequence of this assignment.

The definition of a common methodology to prepare the CPG for the NHS was also requested and this has been prepared as a collective effort of consensus and coordination among the Spanish CPG expert groups. This methodology was used as the basis to prepare this Anxiety guideline and the other CPGs driven by the Quality Plan.

It is widely acknowledged that mental disorders constitute a significant social and economic burden due to their frequency, coexistence, and comorbidity, in addition to the disability that they generate.

Within the area of mental health problems, anxiety disorders are associated with high levels of disability and have a considerable impact on personal well-being as well as on social and labour relations. The aggravating factor of the prevalence of these disorders and the recurrent or even chronic nature of many of these disorders makes them as incapacitating as any other chronic illness.

Anxiety disorders, alone or associated with other pathologies, are one of the most frequent causes of Primary Care visits, and there is a certain degree of variability in how they are managed. The lack of a common pattern of manifestation, somatisation and association with chronic illnesses, as well as the need for specific therapy sometimes prolonged over time, increases the complexity of the treatment of these patients.

The purpose of the *Clinical Practice Guideline for Treatment of Patients with Anxiety Disorders in Primary Care* is to provide professionals with practical recommendations based on scientific evidence to assist in the detection and effective treatment of these disorders, offering the ideal therapeutic alternatives in each process. The professionals involved in providing care,

as well as the patients themselves and scientific organizations were involved in the preparation of this guideline, which seeks to improve the care provided to patients with anxiety disorders and the quality of life of those patients.

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