# Johns Hopkins Nursing Evidence-Based Practice
# Appendix C: Evidence Level and Quality Guide

| Evidence Levels | Quality Guides |
|---|---|
| **Level I**<br>Experimental study, randomized controlled trial (RCT)<br>Systematic review of RCTs, with or without meta-analysis | **A** <u>**High quality:**</u> Consistent, generalizable results; sufficient sample size for the study design; adequate control; definitive conclusions; consistent recommendations based on comprehensive literature review that includes thorough reference to scientific evidence |
| **Level II**<br>Quasi-experimental study<br>Systematic review of a combination of RCTs and quasi-experimental, or quasi-experimental studies only, with or without meta-analysis | **B** <u>**Good quality:**</u> Reasonably consistent results; sufficient sample size for the study design; some control, fairly definitive conclusions; reasonably consistent recommendations based on fairly comprehensive literature review that includes some reference to scientific evidence |
| **Level III**<br>Non-experimental study<br>Systematic review of a combination of RCTs, quasi-experimental and non-experimental studies, or non-experimental studies only, with or without meta-analysis<br>Qualitative study or systematic review with or without a meta-synthesis | **C** <u>**Low quality or major flaws:**</u> Little evidence with inconsistent results; insufficient sample size for the study design; conclusions cannot be drawn |

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| **Level IV**<br>Opinion of respected authorities and/or nationally recognized expert committees/consensus panels based on scientific evidence<br><br>Includes:<br>• Clinical practice guidelines<br>• Consensus panels | **A** <u>**High quality:**</u> Material officially sponsored by a professional, public, private organization, or government agency; documentation of a systematic literature search strategy; consistent results with sufficient numbers of well-designed studies; criteria-based evaluation of overall scientific strength and quality of included studies and definitive conclusions; national expertise is clearly evident; developed or revised within the last 5 years<br><br>**B** <u>**Good quality:**</u> Material officially sponsored by a professional, public, private organization, or government agency; reasonably thorough and appropriate systematic literature search strategy; reasonably consistent results, sufficient numbers of well-designed studies; evaluation of strengths and limitations of included studies with fairly definitive conclusions; national expertise is clearly evident; developed or revised within the last 5 years<br><br>**C** <u>**Low quality or major flaws:**</u> Material not sponsored by an official organization or agency; undefined, poorly defined, or limited literature search strategy; no evaluation of strengths and limitations of included studies, insufficient evidence with inconsistent results, conclusions cannot be drawn; not revised within the last 5 years |

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| Level V<br>Based on experiential and non-research evidence<br><br>Includes:<br>• Literature reviews<br>• Quality improvement, program or financial evaluation<br>• Case reports<br>• Opinion of nationally recognized experts(s) based on experiential evidence | **Organizational Experience:**<br><br>**A** <u>**High quality:**</u> Clear aims and objectives; consistent results across multiple settings; formal quality improvement, financial or program evaluation methods used; definitive conclusions; consistent recommendations with thorough reference to scientific evidence<br><br>**B** <u>**Good quality:**</u> Clear aims and objectives; consistent results in a single setting; formal quality improvement or financial or program evaluation methods used; reasonably consistent recommendations with some reference to scientific evidence<br><br>**C** <u>**Low quality or major flaws:**</u> Unclear or missing aims and objectives; inconsistent results; poorly defined quality improvement, financial or program evaluation methods; recommendations cannot be made<br><br>**Literature Review, Expert Opinion, Case Report, Community Standard, Clinician Experience, Consumer Preference:**<br><br>**A** <u>**High quality:**</u> Expertise is clearly evident; draws definitive conclusions; provides scientific rationale; thought leader(s) in the field<br><br>**B** <u>**Good quality:**</u> Expertise appears to be credible; draws fairly definitive conclusions; provides logical argument for opinions<br><br>**C** <u>**Low quality or major flaws:**</u> Expertise is not discernable or is dubious; conclusions cannot be drawn |