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Library and Information Services

# Journal club checklist

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| **2022 AAHA Pain Management Guidelines for Dogs and Cats  Journal of the American Animal Hospital Association 58 (2): 55–76.** | |
| This checklist has been developed specifically to guide the discussion of these published guidelines as part of the development of practice guidelines relating to pain management for dogs and cats. It starts with some basic appraisal of the published guidelines and then focuses on how you might use the guidelines to develop specific recommendations for your practice. For those looking to carry out a more general appraisal of the guidelines RCVS Knowledge have developed a [Clinical Guidelines Checklist](https://knowledge.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/ebvm-toolkit-15-clinical-guidelines-checklist/). | |
| **Was the scope and purpose of the guidelines clearly defined?**  **Do you think that the published guideline fulfils this purpose?** | In the introduction the purpose of the guidelines is clearly stated as  *to help veterinarians and veterinary team members confidently and accurately create a reproduceable pain assessment in cats and dogs, as well as an initial therapy plan with guidance on reassessing and adjusting the plan as needed. As such, these guidelines discuss pain management as a therapeutic continuum consisting of assessment, treatment, reassessment, and plan revision.* |
| **Is the subject matter relevant to your practice?** | The Guideline covers assessment and management of pain in four main areas:   * Acute pain in cats * Chronic pain in cats * Acute pain in dogs * Chronic pain t in dogs   If you are looking to use this document to help you develop practice guidelines, the first decision to make is which areas of pain management you are going to cover in your own guidelines. |
| **Do the authors have appropriate knowledge and expertise to write this guideline?**  e.g. specialist status or appropriate postgraduate qualifications | The authors of the paper all have post graduate qualifications relevant to the subject matter and several of them have published widely in the field of pain management. |
| **How up to date is the guideline?** | The guidelines were published in 2022, updating the previous AAHA Guidelines published in 2015. |
| **How was the development of the guidelines funded?**  **Is there any evidence of bias in the evidence included or its interpretation?** | These guidelines are supported by generous educational grants from Arthrex Vet Systems, Boehringer Ingelheim Animal Health USA Inc., Elanco, and Zoetis. |
| **METHODOLOGY** |  |
| **Was the methodology for developing the guideline clearly described?** | The paper states that  *These guidelines were prepared by a task force of experts convened by the American Animal Hospital Association* and that *Evidence-based support for specific recommendations has been cited whenever possible and appropriate*. *Other recommendations are based on practical clinical experience and a consensus of expert opinion.*  However, the actual methodology for retrieving literature or reaching consensus was not described. |
| **Did the authors include a range of suitable evidence covering relevant questions?**  Is a full list of references included in the guideline? | The authors include a wide range of references and do provide references validating the pain assessment methods and tools cited (where available). |
| **Are the recommendations clearly laid out?**  Have the authors critically appraised the evidence? Has the grading of the evidence been clearly described? | Although not explicitly referred to as recommendations, the guidelines are presented under clear headings.  While explicit grading of the evidence has not been provided the decision tree in Figure 3 outlines a tiered approach, with tiers representing the degree of evidence. |
| **Have differing viewpoints and knowledge gaps been discussed?**  **Are there any other areas that you would like to have seen covered in the Guidelines?** | Although specific differences in viewpoint and knowledge gaps are not discussed the authors do state that  *Further research is needed to document some of these recommendations. Because each case is different, veterinarians must base their decisions on the best available scientific evidence in conjunction with their own knowledge and experience.* |
| **RECOMMENDATIONS** |  |
| 1. **Pain Assessment** |  |
| **What are the 4 guiding principles of pain assessment listed?**  **Are these relevant to your practice and do you wish to include them in your guidelines?** |  |
| **The published guidelines provide tables of pain assessment methods for cats and dogs.**  **Which of these do you already use?**  **Having looked at the evidence provided are there any other assessment methods you wish to introduce to your practice and include in your practice guidelines?** |  |
| **The published guidelines include reference to a number of Clinical Metrology Instruments.**  **Do you currently use any Clinical Metrology Instruments in your practice?**  **Do you wish to introduce the use of any Clinical Metrology Instruments into your practice and include them in your practice guidelines?** | Further evidence on pain assessment tools can be found in the RCVS Knowledge [In the Spotlight feature on Quality of Life assessment tools](https://www.infocusvj.org/qol-spotlight-on-quality-of-life-assessment-tools/), where section 4 deals specifically with pain assessment tools. |
| 1. **Pain management** |  |
| **What are the guiding principles of pain management listed?**   1. **Acute pain** 2. **Chronic pain** |  |
| **For each of the following scenarios – discuss the 1st, 2nd and 3rd tier pain management therapies you are going to include in your guidelines.**  **Acute pain of unknown cause**   * **Cat** * **Dog** * **Any other species**   **Acute pain of known initial cause e.g. postoperative pain**   * **Cat** * **Dog** * **Any other species**   **Chronic pain e.g. Musculo-skeletal pain**   * **Cat** * **Dog** * **Any other species**   **Are there any other scenarios you wish to include in your practice guidelines?** | While the published guidelines refer to specific classes of therapy (Figure 3) it may be preferable in your practice guidelines to refer to the specific products stocked in your practice |
| **Do you wish to include information on frequency of follow up and reassessment in your guidelines?** |  |
| **Are all the important aspects of the subject considered?**  Are there any questions that you would consider important that were not addressed in the guidelines? |  |
| **Having read the guidelines are there any primary sources or other references that you want to access?** |  |
| **Are there any areas where you would like to consider more evidence?** | Further information on finding the evidence you need can be found in the [EBVM Toolkit - RCVS Knowledge](https://knowledge.rcvs.org.uk/evidence-based-veterinary-medicine/ebvm-toolkit/#finding) and our courses [EBVM for Practitioners](https://www.ebvmforpractitioners.org/) and  [EBVM Learning](https://learn.rcvsknowledge.org/course/view.php?id=2) |
| **Having considered which points you wish to include in your practice guidelines what steps would be needed to implement them?** | Points you may wish to consider are staff training needs and the development of any support materials for both staff and clients. |
| **Are you clear on the roles and responsibilities for the practice team in implementing your practice guidelines?** |  |
| **Have you set dates to implement and review your practice guidelines?** |  |