## Level of evidence

### Table 1-a. Level of evidence

| Level | Description |
|-------|-------------|
| 1a    | Meta-analysis of randomized controlled studies |
| 1b    | At least one randomized controlled study |
| 2a    | Cohort study with concurrent controls without randomization (prospective study, concurrent cohort study, etc.) |
| 2b    | Cohort study with controls in the past without randomization (historical cohort study, retrospective cohort study, etc.) |
| 3     | Case control study (retrospective study) |
| 4     | Before-after study and study without control groups |
| 5     | Case report and case series |
| 6     | Personal opinions of specialists (including an expert panel report) |

### Table 1-b. Level of evidence for diagnostic examinations articles

| Level | Description |
|-------|-------------|
| 1     | A new diagnostic examination and a gold-standard examination conducted concurrently and evaluation of the characteristics of the examinations (sensitivity, specificity, and ROC curve) in a blinded fashion (results of examination in the other group are not notified). |
| 2a    | A new diagnostic examination and a gold-standard examination conducted separately in two different groups, instead of being conducted concurrently. |
| 2b    | A new diagnostic examination conducted in all patients and comparison of the results with the data of the past, instead of being conducted concurrently. |
| 3     | Only a new diagnostic examination, with no comparison. |

### Table 1-c. Level of evidence for treatment methods articles (level 1 or 2, or level 4)

| Level | Description |
|-------|-------------|
| 1     | The number of patients is at least 200, the mean (or median) follow-up period is at least 5 years, and the dropout rate is lower than 10%. |
| 2     | The number of patients is moderate (100 to 199), the mean (or median) follow-up period is at least 5 years, and the dropout rate is lower than 10%. |
| 3     | The number of patients is at least 200, the mean (or median) follow-up period is less than 5 years, and the dropout rate is lower than 10%. |
| 4     | The number of patients is moderate (100 to 199), the mean (or median) follow-up period is less than 5 years, and the dropout rate is lower than 10%. |
| 5     | The number of patients is less than 100, the mean (or median) follow-up period is at least 5 years, and the dropout rate is lower than 10%. |
| 6     | The number of patients is less than 100, the mean (or median) follow-up period is less than 5 years, and the dropout rate is lower than 10%. |
| 7     | The dropout rate is 10% or higher, irrespective of the number of patients and the follow-up period. |
Grades of recommendation

| Table 2-a. Indication of grades of recommendation |
|-----------------------------------------------|
| Grade A: Strongly recommended                 |
| Grade B: Recommended                          |
| Grade C1: May be worth considering, but there is no sufficient evidence |
| Grade C2: Not recommended due to lack of evidence |
| Grade D: Recommended against                  |

| Table 2-b. Indication of evidence levels      |
|-----------------------------------------------|
| Grade A: Strong evidence                      |
| Grade B: Sufficient evidence                  |
| Grade C: No evidence                          |
| Grade A: At least one level-1 study (1a/1b)   |
| Grade B: At least one level-2 study (2a/2b)   |

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