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Patient blood management is the new standard of care to achieve improved patient outcomes for patients facing a medical or surgical intervention, who are at high risk of significant blood loss. Patient blood management views a patient's own blood as a valuable and unique resource that should be conserved and managed appropriately.

In Australia, the National Blood Authority funded and project managed the development of the world's first evidence-based patient blood management guidelines to assist healthcare professionals to make clinical decisions based on the best available evidence.

Work began the guidelines in 2008, and between 2011 and 2016, six modules were released: Critical Bleeding; Massive Transfusion; Perioperative; Medical; Critical Care; Obstetrics and Maternity; Neonatal and Paediatrics. Eminent clinical experts from all relevant disciplines, systematic reviewers, guideline development experts, and consumer representatives were involved in the development process. Independent systematic review teams searched and appraised the relevant literature and presented their findings to the clinical committees overseeing the development of the modules.

The clinical committees and systematic reviewers worked together to translate the evidence into clinical guidance. Where there was sufficient high-quality evidence, recommendations were developed and graded. Where there was insufficient high-quality evidence found, the clinical committee used a consensus process to carefully craft practice points.

The clinical committees also developed expert opinion points through the expert consensus process to provide clinical guidance in areas outside the scope of the systematic reviews. Across the six modules, there are 52 recommendations, 142 practice points, and 56 expert opinion points. All modules were subject to rigorous review process, including a comprehensive public consultation process, appraisal against the AGREE II instrument, and consideration by the National Health and Medical Research Council. All the modules were approved by the National Health and Medical Research Council and endorsed by many Australian, Australasian and New Zealand clinical colleges and societies.

The 6 Patient Blood Management Guidelines modules are currently under review. Rather than using the process used to develop the original modules, the National Blood Authority is transitioning to a more sustainable guideline model that will enable clinical guidance to remain current and relevant. The original modules remain available to guide practice while the review is underway. Connect now with the Australian National Blood Authority for more information on patient blood management. To access the National Blood Authority Patient Blood Management Guidelines, visit www.blood.gov.au