

## Proposing a Clinical Inquiry Question

**CI authors and sites propose their own questions.** The questions should be of interest to practicing family physicians. The questions need to have evidence to support an answer, but must be narrow or specific enough to answer in the desired word count (750 words). The journals want reasonably broad questions. For example, we might discourage, “Does metoprolol succinate in CHF reduce mortality?” but would approve, “In patients with CHF, Do beta-blockers reduce CHF exacerbations and mortality?”

**To submit a question** email the Clinical Inquiry project manager at [CI@FPIN.org](mailto:CI@FPIN.org)

### Wording of your question

- We strongly recommend using the PICO format (Patient or Population; Intervention or Investigation; Comparison group; and Outcome). Writing out more of the details of PICO clarifies exactly what question you will be answering. A short snappy title can be created later. Non-treatment questions cannot always use the PICO format but you can still use the concept of being very explicit about the details of your question.
- Resources on forming a PICO question are found in the HDA member resources and The FPIN Institute on the FPIN website.
- We encourage CI Corresponding Authors to submit multiple questions and to be prepared for revisions before a question is approved and you begin writing. The reason for this up front work, is that our experience with over 700 published Clinical Inquiries is that getting the question right in the beginning greatly improves the writing process and the chances for successful publication.
- We encourage, but do not require, you to submit the PREP form that contains 3 possible references to answer your question at the same times as you submit the question. The process of doing a brief literature search in advance will save us all time and avoid later frustrations.
- We encourage you to visit our Active CI Questions page to review all current CI questions that are in process. While formulating your question, we also encourage you to do a preliminary search on published CIs by visiting this [archive](#).

### The CI Project Manager will...

Send your question to our editors for consideration and feedback. The editors will ensure the question is well constructed. In addition to using the PICO model as a guide, we require that the question be:

- Answerable within the Clinical Inquiries format and style, meaning that there is evidence and that it can be presented within our word count.
- Relevant to family medicine and/or primary care

Send your question to a FPIN librarian to ensure that the question is not a duplicate of a Clinical Inquiry published in the last 7 years, nor is anyone else in the FPIN community currently working on the same question.

**The editors will** make one of three decisions:

- Approve the question or questions exactly as submitted.

- Revise the questions and approve the revised question.
- Reject the question.

If a question is revised or rejected, the CI Project Manager will request that you decide whether you wish to answer the revised question or submit a new question.

Once the question is approved by the editors and we ensure no duplicate published or in process questions, **the author must** submit the PREP form, if not already completed, which will include the best three references you can find in your initial search. (We encourage you to submit the PREP form with the question to expedite the process.)

**The journal editors will** also assess the question in terms of the quality and quantity of evidence, likelihood of the question lending itself to a well-written answer, interest to the journal's readership, and if they have other conflicting articles in preparation.

**Ultimately, The CI project manager will** inform you of the decision. (Please always make a note of the FPIN question ID number, the ID number should be utilized in all communications. FPIN processes lots of questions, many of them related to each other, and having a unique ID number prevents mixing up manuscripts).