Select the Highest Quality Evidence to cite in your CI Manuscript by assigning the Level (or Step) of Evidence (and ultimately Grade the Strength of Recommendations)

- Once you and your author team have identified likely references that contain evidence to answer your CI question, you must appraise it for validity. Appraising it for validity allows you to rank it from the strongest evidence to the weakest evidence. You should base your manuscript and Evidence-based Answer on the strongest evidence that you can find. If you have strong evidence, you may be able to exclude the weaker evidence from your manuscript. So, start working from your strongest evidence.
- The levels of evidence (Step 1, Step 2, etc.) can be determined using the CEBM level of evidence guide (found within these instruction as "Determining the LOEs and SORs" as well as online through the Center for Evidence Based Medicine (CEBM.net) under level of evidence.

  - When studies are of the same level of evidence, you may further rank them using factors like date of publication, sample sizes, differences in the methods such as appropriate control groups, and trustworthiness of the place of publication.
  - The Level of Evidence for each article must be reported in your references. The preferred format is "(STEP 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5)" at the end of each reference.

Grade the Strength of Recommendations

- The strength of recommendation (SOR) (included in your Evidence-Based Answer) can be determined using the same document in these instructions. For a further description here is the full article on SORs: Strength of Recommendation Taxonomy (SORT): A patient-centered approach to grading evidence in the medical literature www.aafp.org/afp/20040201/548.html
- The Strength of Recommendation of each statement (usually a single sentence for each conclusion) in your Evidence Based Answer should have a "SOR A, B, or C, based on RCTs (or whatever it is based on). Please review previously published examples.

Several Help Desk Answer and FPIN institute modules applicable to this process are found at "HDA member resources" and within the "FPIN Institute".