

BMJ Best Practice

Reviewed by Dr Cuthbert Teo Eng Swee, Editorial Board Member,
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Introduction

Best Practice (bestpractice.bmj.com) is a decision-support tool published by the BMJ Group, which incorporates the medical database *Clinical Evidence*. It contains information relating to over 10,000 diagnoses, more than 3,000 diagnostic tests, and over 4,000 diagnostic and treatment guidelines.

Best Practice aims to provide fast and easy access to reliable, up-to-date information when making diagnosis and treatment decisions. The decision-support information covers areas such as diagnosis, prognosis, treatment and prevention.

Searching for information

Finding information in *Best Practice* can be done via a browsing list (“Show conditions”) or via the search box (“Search Best Practice”), which is found at the top of every page.

In the left panel of the “Show conditions” browsing link, you can view “All conditions” in alphabetical order, view “Assessments” of specific symptoms like chest pain, see “Overviews” of conditions like acute coronary syndrome, or browse through broad clinical categories like “Cardiovascular disorders”.

If searching for a condition, the results are ranked by relevance. The search can be refined by content type, for example, by “Diagnosis” or by “Treatment”.



Information search made easy through the “Show conditions” list, or via the “Search Best Practice” box

“Assessment” monographs



Useful headers facilitate the search for information

Should you require help diagnosing a patient presenting with a specific symptom or laboratory finding, then the “Assessment” section of the topic is a useful place to start.

The “Assessment” monographs provide detailed guidance on the diagnosis of key clinical symptoms and the use of diagnostic tests and procedures. There is an overview of the condition, information on urgent or emergency considerations, detailed information on how to make the diagnosis, and a sorting of differential diagnoses by whether common or uncommon. Resources like references, images and patient leaflets are also available. Additional information can be obtained by clicking “To expand” or “To link”.

“Overview” monographs

As the title of section implies, these monographs give an overview of the condition. For example, an overview of “Acute coronary syndrome” includes an “Introduction” (background, pathophysiology, history, evaluation), conditions to be considered (unstable angina, non ST-Elevation myocardial infarction, ST-elevation myocardial infarction), and the evidence basis for treatments.

Clicking on a question such as “Which treatments improve outcomes in people with myocardial infarction (ST-elevation)?” leads to a table, which lists interventions according to whether it is beneficial, or whether it is likely to be ineffective or harmful.



Clicking on a question will lead to an intervention table listed according to efficacy

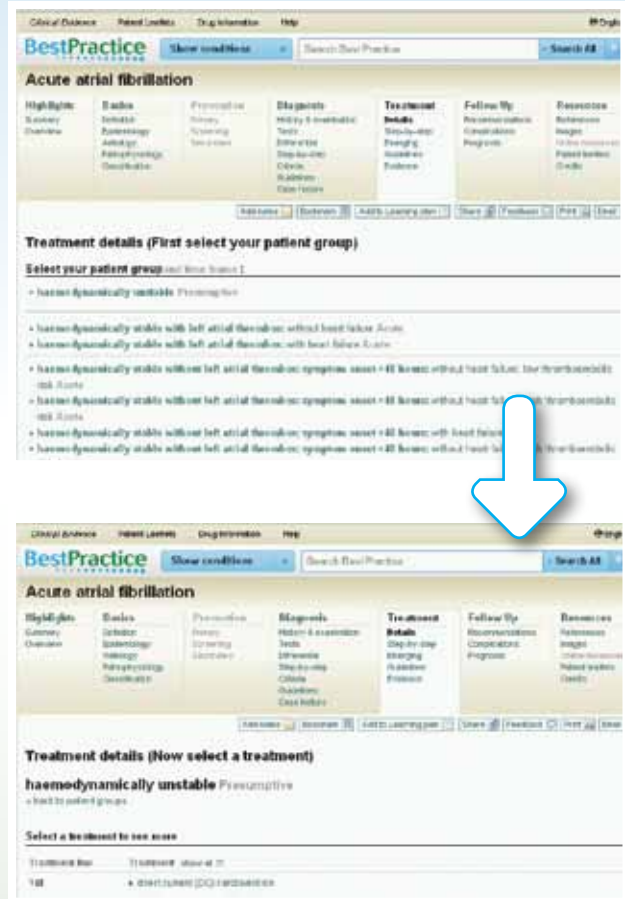
“Condition” monographs

The “Condition” monographs contain information on the complete management of the patient with this condition. Navigation within the “Condition” monographs is easy and consistent – under the headings of “Highlights”, “Basics”, “Prevention”, “Diagnosis”, “Treatment”, “Follow-up” and “Resources”.

The “Highlights” section gives an overview of the condition and key points in diagnosis and treatment. The “Basics” section includes definition, epidemiology, aetiology, pathophysiology and classification. This “Diagnosis” section includes “History & examination”, “Tests”, “Differential”, “Step-by-step”, “Criteria”, “Guidelines”, and “Case history”. The “Treatment” section includes treatment details, a step-by-step treatment approach, emerging treatments, treatment guidelines where available, and the evidence basis. Lastly, the “Follow-up” section includes recommendations, complications and prognosis.

For example, for the condition “Acute atrial fibrillation”, the section on “Treatment – Details”, will ask you to select your patient group – haemodynamically unstable or stable, and then describes the appropriate treatment.

Headings appear in grey when no relevant information is available in the database. The diagnosis and treatment information are easy to find. It is not necessary to scroll through pages of text; instead users expand or hide the detailed text appropriate to their requirements.



Customised treatment plans

Personalisation

Best Practice contains features that allow a user to personalise the content – for example, you can add your own notes and you can bookmark sections.

Mobile functions

Best Practice is available on an internet-enabled mobile phone and as an iPhone app, but these were not made available for review.

Dr Cuthbert Teo Eng Swee
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“Journal- and evidence-based learning in day-to-day practice”

BMJ *Best Practice* is a supporting platform that has been extensively designed through intensive research. This website mainly incorporates clinically and evidence-based medical data and contains medical information ranging from rare to common medical conditions, diagnoses and evidence-based treatment guidelines. A commitment to using the best practices is a commitment to using knowledge and technology at one's disposal to ensure success.

Through providing up to date information, *Best Practice* helps clinicians in diagnosing and formulating investigation or treatment plans.

The home page is user friendly and starts with simple login information. A search box opens the world of medical informatics in a well-designed and easy to understand fashion. A list of updated topics populates the home page in alphabetical order, and indicates the latest reviews on poorly understood topics.

Items sourced via the search box, “Search Best Practice”, come with citations and references from where it was derived, thus providing text book, as well as journal- and evidence-based learning. These can then be easily implemented in day-to-day practice with confidence. For example, a search for “Amoebiasis” turns up results to do with definition of the condition, preventive measures, as well as treatment options. Results are also ranked by relevance, and this search can be further refined by content type, for example “Diagnosis” or by “Treatment”.

Assessing conditions through the “Assessment” monograph is an iterative development process that progresses in incremental stages. This helps to maintain a focus on manageable tasks, and ensures that earlier stages are successful before the later stages are attempted.

Detailed guidance is provided to aid the assessment of conditions, to formulate a diagnosis or treatment plan, along with citations and reviews. In addition, links are provided to access research reports and resumes of latest reviews from reliable resources. Summaries of ongoing data collection and analysis knols in preparation can also be easily found.

Treatment plans will be reflected step by step, and will also show possible complications. In the instance of ordering diagnostic tests for Amoebiasis (e.g. serum antibody test), one is also alerted to other tests that can be considered.

Lastly, one aspect I find useful is that discussions can be opened on the same page, and one can share views with peers, add notes, or insert a bookmark while formulating a learning plan.

Dr Ashok Tahilyani
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“An effective aid to daily learning”

I have enjoyed using BMJ's *Best Practice* for nearly two months. It has provided me fast and reliable access to scientific facts, and evidence in medical literature and clinical guidelines about the topics that I am researching on, all in one interface. The ease of navigation, neat layout and links that bring users to the relevant websites are all plus points of *Best Practice*.

In these two months, *Best Practice* has helped me tremendously in preparing for my presentations as well as doing up assignments. It is easy to perform a search and the results returned are listed sequentially according to the relevance of the search terms. When clicked on one of the results, for example, when looking up cervical cancer, the information is located under different headers – “Summary”, “Overview”, “Epidemiology”, “Pathophysiology”, “Prevention”, “Diagnosis”, “Treatment”, and “Follow up”. Within each category, the relevant clinical guidelines and details are listed. To further illustrate how helpful it is, under “Diagnosis”, practical information can be found on the appropriate history to take, and physical examination to perform, the screening and diagnostic tests to carry out, as well as the differentials to consider and/or rule out.

Best Practice is very comprehensive and I do not need to locate different websites to gather all the information I require. In addition, the recommendations that are listed are labelled based on how strong the evidence in the literature is. This is very valuable to all medical professionals, as the practice of evidence-based medicine has become increasingly important. Lastly, I am sure other medical students would find *Best Practice* a breeze to use, and an effective aid to their daily learning.

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Best Practice is available on subscription, and includes full access to both the web product and the mobile edition. Free 3-month trials of *Best Practice* are available now at the **SMA Members Corner**. Simply log in and click on the BMJ *Best Practice* icon.

To request for an individual or institutional subscription quote, please contact Mr Dalvin Loh today.
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