Experts needed for HANDGUIDE study

Evidence based treatment guidelines for hand disorders can further optimize the quality of care by maximally integrating scientific evidence in the intervention selection. However, since scientific evidence is often insufficient to make treatment choices, we have initiated a consensus project named the HANDGUIDE study, to develop European treatment guidelines for five non-traumatic hand disorders: trigger finger, De Quervain’s disease, Dupuytren’s disease, carpal tunnel syndrome and Guyon canal syndrome. The development of these guidelines is performed in two phases:

Phase I: Establishing current evidence for effectiveness of interventions
For this phase, we have finalized systematic reviews on the effectiveness of conservative and surgical treatments for these five hand disorders.

Phase II: Delphi consensus strategy
Based on the presence or absence of such evidence, we will use the Delphi consensus strategy to develop guidelines. For this consensus project, we seek assistance from experts on the treatment of these disorders.

We have asked the boards of three European professional associations, including the EFSHT, to participate in this consensus project by delegating experts in the field of hand surgery and rehabilitation to participate in the Delphi consensus strategies. Ultimate goal is to achieve multidisciplinary consensus on treatment guidelines for these five hand disorders. Therefore, we will conduct three web-based Delphi consensus projects that will be started consequently:

I Tendinopathies of the hand, i.e. trigger finger, and De Quervain’s disease
II Dupuytren’s disease
III Nerve entrapments of the hand, i.e. carpal tunnel syndrome and Guyon canal syndrome

Selection of experts
We will request the executive board of each member country to select a maximum of three experts for each Delphi consensus strategy (tendinopathies, Dupuytren’s disease and nerve entrapments respectively).

Ten experts from each association will participate in each Delphi consensus strategy, leading to a total of 30 experts. Each expert can participate in only one of the three Delphi consensus strategies.

Results
The results of each Delphi consensus strategy will be published in a scientific article. As one of the authors of each article, we will mention ‘the European Hand Guide group’. The name of each expert participating in that particular Delphi consensus strategy will be mentioned (with permission) in the acknowledgements. In this way, the contribution to the consensus strategy will lead to peer-reviewed publications for the contributors. Furthermore, we will send the results of each Delphi consensus strategy to the board of each European organisation.

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