

## Making evidence user-friendly



In this issue of THE JOURNAL OF FAMILY PRACTICE, you will find the result of an extraordinary collaboration among the editors of the major family medicine journals: SORT, which stands for the Strength of Recommendation Taxonomy. This evidence rating system provides a unified and comprehensive approach to “grading” levels of evidence and strengths of recommendation. Why another evidence rating scheme? After all, don’t we have adequate systems from the Oxford Centre for Evidence Based Medicine (*JFP*’s current schema), the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF), and others?

### Equipping our specialty

My primary reason for supporting this effort is the goal of giving our specialty a consistent and immediately familiar code for evidence recommendations. Given the variability and multitude of current evidence systems, family physicians either must remember their nuances, search their meaning, or—more likely, I suspect—give up on trying to understand the evidence behind the recommendations all together. With adoption of this proposal, our readers will be able to understand the results of a study presented in our major family medicine journals much more intuitively.

### Is it meant for everyone?

You might wonder if we are swimming upstream. After all, will the evidence-based “gurus” rush to adopt our system? And won’t this effort merely add to the confusion? Undeniably, there will remain a multiplicity of evidence-based rating systems. But my desire is not to see our family medicine system used universally. Rather, I trust SORT will be a reliable resource for all of us within the specialty and enhance our identity as family physicians.

As the Future of Family Medicine Project advances, this small step should enhance our discipline’s ability to attain a single, immediately identifiable yardstick for scholarship. I invite your comments and support as we make the transition to this new system.

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