

Expert Consensus Opinion

An **expert consensus opinion** is a collective judgment, recommendation, or guideline formulated by a group of experts in a particular field when high-quality empirical evidence (such as randomized controlled trials or systematic reviews) is lacking, inconsistent, or insufficient to guide clinical practice.

Key Characteristics:

1. **Based on Expert Judgment** – Developed by specialists with extensive experience in the field.
2. **Used When Evidence is Limited** – Often applied in emerging or niche medical areas where robust data is unavailable.
3. **Formal or Informal Methodology** – Can be established through **Delphi method**, panel discussions, or systematic review of available data.
4. **Not a Primary Research Study** – Does not present new experimental data but synthesizes existing knowledge and expert perspectives.
5. **Can Influence Guidelines** – Helps in shaping clinical guidelines, policies, and best practices.

Examples of Expert Consensus Opinions in Medicine:

- The American Society for Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery's statement on **MRI-guided Laser Interstitial Thermal Therapy (MRgLITT)** for epilepsy.
- Consensus statements on surgical approaches in neurosurgery, oncology, or rare diseases.
- Guidelines on ethical issues, surgical indications, or the use of novel medical technologies.

Distinction from Other Study Types:

- **Different from Systematic Reviews or Meta-Analyses:** Does not follow a strict evidence-based approach with predefined inclusion/exclusion criteria.
- **Different from Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs):** Does not test a hypothesis through direct experimentation.
- **Different from Narrative Reviews:** While both summarize knowledge, an expert consensus is typically the **official position** of a recognized organization or expert panel.

Would you like examples of specific expert consensus documents in neurosurgery or another field?

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