

Type of Study				
Study Quality	Diagnosis	Treatment, Prevention, Screening	Prognosis	
Level 1 Good-quality patient-oriented evidence	Validated clinical decision rule	Systematic review/meta-analysis of RCTs with consistent findings	Systematic review/meta-analysis of good-quality cohort studies	
	Systematic review/meta-analysis of high-quality studies	High-quality individual RCT +	Prospective cohort study with good follow-up	
	High-quality diagnostic cohort study*	All or none study ++		
Level 2 Limited-quality patient-oriented evidence	Unvalidated clinical decision rule	Systematic review/meta-analysis of lower-quality clinical trials or of studies with inconsistent findings	Systematic review/meta-analysis of lower-quality cohort studies or with inconsistent results	
	Systematic review/meta-analysis of lower-quality studies or studies with inconsistent findings	Lower-quality clinical trial +	Retrospective cohort study or prospective cohort study with poor follow-up	
	Lower-quality diagnostic cohort study or diagnostic case-control study*	Cohort study		Case-control study
		Case-control study		Case series

<p>Level 3 Other evidence</p>	<p>Consensus guidelines, extrapolations from bench research, usual practice, opinion, disease-oriented evidence (intermediate or physiologic outcomes only), and case series for studies of diagnosis, treatment, prevention, or screening.</p>
<p>RCT = randomized controlled trial.</p>	
<p>*—High-quality diagnostic cohort study: cohort design, adequate size, adequate spectrum of patients, blinding, and a consistent, well-defined reference standard. +—High-quality RCT: allocation concealed, blinding if possible, intention-to-treat analysis, adequate statistical power, adequate follow-up (> 80%). ++—An all-or-none study is one where the treatment causes a dramatic change in outcomes, such as antibiotics for meningitis or surgery for appendicitis, which precludes study in a controlled trial.</p>	