Summary Report of 2005 COMPUS Stakeholder Consultation Sessions
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The views expressed herein represent the views of the authors and do not necessarily
represent the views of Health Canada or any provincial or territorial government.
Glossary

*Best practice:* An approach to drug prescribing or use that, based on the evidence, is clinically effective, cost-effective and contributes to optimal health outcomes.

*Best practice initiative:* An activity or program, shown to be effective, that encourages patients, health care professionals and others to adopt best practice information.

*Evaluation methodology:* A rating system that will be used consistently to evaluate the evidence considered in determining best practices and best practice initiatives. COMPUS’s proposed evaluation methodology is a rating system with three components:

- quality assessment tools (used to determine the strength of evidence)
- an evidence grading system (used to grade the strength of the body of evidence)
- recommendation ranking system (used to grade recommendations based on the level of evidence supporting the recommendation.)
1 Introduction

The Canadian Coordinating Office for Health Technology Assessment (CCOHTA) is a primary source for unbiased, evidence-based information on drugs, devices, health care systems and best practices. Canadian health care decision makers rely on CCOHTA, funded by Canadian federal, provincial and territorial governments, to help them make well-informed health technology choices.

Formed in 1989 to assess medical devices, CCOHTA has evolved into a comprehensive Canadian source for evidence-based health technology information. CCOHTA’s scope includes health technology assessment, the clinical and cost-effectiveness of new drugs, and best practices in drug prescribing and use in Canada.

CCOHTA’s mission is to provide timely, relevant and rigorously derived, evidence-based information to decision makers, and to support decision-making processes. One of CCOHTA’s core programs, the Canadian Optimal Medication Prescribing and Utilization Service (COMPUS) is charged with identifying and promoting best practices in drug prescribing and use among health care providers and consumers across Canada.

Best practice activities are aimed at improving drug-related health outcomes and the cost-effective use of medications by expanding knowledge, changing attitudes and ultimately changing the behaviours of health care providers and consumers. COMPUS’s role includes supporting networking for improved information sharing; and through its coordination function, helping jurisdictions adopt new initiatives and build on existing ones. This will contribute to the more efficient use of resources and will enhance the sustainability of Canada’s health care system.

COMPUS is mandated to provide evidence-based recommendations for optimal drug prescribing and utilization in priority prescribing areas, as well as for implementation strategies. The first three assigned priorities are proton pump inhibitors (for the treatment of gastrointestinal problems); diabetes management; and anti-hypertensives (drugs used to lower high blood pressure).

As COMPUS begins to assess evidence related to these three prescribing areas, key stakeholders were invited to the CCOHTA consultation sessions, to comment on CCOHTA’s planned approach to evaluate evidence and develop recommendations.
1.1 Background and Purpose

On June 10, 2005, COMPUS held a half-day consultation session in Ottawa. During this session COMPUS sought advice about its proposed processes to select an evaluation methodology and assess evidence for best practices. More than 60 people attended the session and participants included representatives from consumer advocacy groups, health care research, pharmaceutical manufacturers, health care professional organizations and those involved or interested in best practice projects in drug prescribing and utilization.

The primary goals of the session were to outline and discuss COMPUS’s proposed processes to:

- select an appropriate methodology to evaluate evidence collected by COMPUS; and
- develop evidence-based recommendations for best practices and best practice initiatives.

The session was facilitated by Raymonde D’Amour, Praxis Consulting.

All presentations were given in English and simultaneous French translation was available. Participants received information packages, provided in both English and French, which included speaker presentations, a participant list, general CCOHTA information, and a fact sheet regarding COMPUS’s proposed evaluation methodology.

In attendance to listen to stakeholder feedback, and to respond to questions and comments were a number of COMPUS research staff, as well as an external methodology expert, George Wells, PhD MSc. He is a professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Community Medicine at the University of Ottawa; and a professor in the Department of Medicine and a Senior Investigator at the Ottawa Health Research Institute at the Ottawa Hospital.

The purpose of this report is to summarize the proceedings of the consultation session and to briefly outline how stakeholders can participate in next steps.
2 Welcome Address

Barb Shea, vice-president of the CCOHTA Common Drug Review (CDR) and COMPUS directorates, opened the session with a brief overview of CCOHTA’s mandate and the day’s agenda.

Building transparent processes and listening to a broad range of stakeholders were described as key priorities for CCOHTA.
3 Session Presentations

3.1 Creating Evidence-based Recommendations and Evaluations

Barbara Wells, COMPUS director, detailed the proposed procedures and timelines to develop evidence-based recommendations and determine the methodology by which the evidence will be evaluated. Additional opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback on these proposals were also announced.

There were two proposed procedures discussed during the presentation.

*How COMPUS plans to select an evaluation methodology:*
- conduct a thorough scientific review of existing quality assessment instruments and evidence grading systems
- receive advice from world-recognized experts
- receive feedback from stakeholders.

*How COMPUS plans to develop evidence-based recommendations:*
- identify the topics
- prepare a work plan
- assemble an evaluation team
- identify prescribing indications or existing initiatives
- identify and collect the evidence
- evaluate the evidence
- develop the recommendations for best practices or best practice initiatives.

You may view the Evaluation Methodology presentation (including notes) in PDF format.

3.2 Update on other COMPUS Activities - Medication Prescribing and Use Project (MPUP) Collection

Greg Bak, COMPUS Information Specialist, gave a description and demonstration of CCOHTA’s Medication Prescribing and Use Project (MPUP) Collection. You may view the MPUP presentation in PDF format.
The MPUP Collection – an online, stakeholder-contributed catalogue of projects and programs intended to improve drug prescribing and use – was launched in March of 2005. The Collection marks an important step in fulfilling COMPUS’s commitment to build on existing efforts to optimize medication prescribing and use. The MPUP Collection also contributes to COMPUS’s goal of increasing awareness about best practices and best practice initiatives in Canada that relate to drug prescribing and use.

### 3.3 Questions and Answers

The following are some of the questions and answers received during the consultation discussion period:

**Why does COMPUS need an evaluation methodology?**

COMPUS was established to identify and promote best practices in drug prescribing and use across Canada. A comprehensive evaluation methodology (rating system) is needed to assess and grade existing evidence to develop evidence-based recommendations regarding best practices.
Will this methodology be used to develop or assess clinical practice guidelines (CPGs)?
No. COMPUS will collect various types of documents that contain recommendations about drug therapy, including CPGs. The recommendations will be extracted from these documents and COMPUS will then assess the evidence behind the extracted recommendations. The CPGs themselves will not be assessed.

Who is part of COMPUS’s evaluation team?
COMPUS’s evaluation team comprises CCOHTA research officers, health economists, methodologists and information specialists (librarians) as well as external methodology, clinical and other experts.

How can other stakeholders, such as consumers, provide input to the COMPUS evaluation team?
The COMPUS Directorate recognizes the value of receiving input from a broad range of stakeholder groups and will provide opportunities for input from consumers and other interested parties during its processes. Stakeholders had an opportunity to review and to identify omissions in the list of guidelines and consensus reports that COMPUS identified as relevant to the evaluation of Proton Pump Inhibitor (PPI) best practices and were invited to identify omissions. Additional opportunities for input will be announced through a new COMPUS e-bulletin. To subscribe to the COMPUS e-bulletin, send an email to e-mail to compusinfo@ccohta.ca with "Subscribe to COMPUS Connects” in the subject line.

How will CCOHTA ensure transparency and accountability with respect to stakeholder submissions that are external to the COMPUS evaluation group?
The COMPUS Directorate is committed to a clear and transparent process for COMPUS. Stakeholders will have an opportunity to comment on our process, including provisions to ensure transparency and accountability, before the processes are finalized.

COMPUS has indicated that it is striving to become the recognized Canadian centre for information and education on best practices. Does this mean that CCOHTA does not recognize the expertise resulting from other groups?
On the contrary, COMPUS recognizes that an immense amount of excellent work has already been done to produce evidence-based information about best practices. One of COMPUS’s goals is to build on this existing evidence to reduce duplication of effort and to create efficiencies that will result in optimal health outcomes for Canadians.

How will COMPUS review the cost-effectiveness of medications?
COMPUS will review literature related to evaluating the economics of medications and undertake consultations with its key stakeholder groups.

How does COMPUS plan to maintain the most up-to-date evidence related to best practice recommendations?
COMPUS will continuously search for and assess the latest published evidence to keep its recommendations relevant and up-to-date. Stakeholders will be notified about new and revised recommendations.
**What are COMPUS end products?**
COMPUS has a number of deliverables, including evidence-based recommendations for best practices in prescribing and use of drugs; and for initiatives aimed at supporting the adoption of these recommendations, the provision of education and information, as well as advice and tools to support the adoption of our recommendations.

**Who might be interested in using these products?**
COMPUS recommendations, advice and support tools will be provided to federal, provincial and territorial health jurisdictions. They will also be made available to any individual or organization interested in adopting best practices in drug prescribing and use. It is hoped that COMPUS’s recommendations will serve as the gold standard in terms of quality, comprehensiveness, currency, usability and adaptability.
4 Next Steps

COMPUS is working on the following activities, many of which reflect recommendations heard throughout the recent consultation session:

- posting additional reference materials, such as frequently asked questions and the June 10 presentations on the CCOHTA website
- providing opportunities for stakeholders to provide written feedback
- developing and publicizing comprehensive long-term strategies for external input and engagement
- continuing to build partnerships and expand outreach efforts with key stakeholder groups;
- engaging key stakeholders, proactively, to clarify COMPUS’s role
- promoting open, transparent and frequent communication with stakeholders
- developing communication materials such as e-bulletins to keep stakeholders up-to-date about COMPUS activities.