



## Method

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This consensus report on gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) consists of recommendations based on evidence and expert opinion. For forming these recommendations, an evidence-based method was followed by combining the results of a systematic literature review with the opinions of experts in the field of GERD.

While preparing the consensus report, a study group including physicians who were experts in the field of GERD from various Universities all over Turkey was formed as the first step. This group decided on areas that were important in GERD and on which there was no consensus. Candidate research questions for the systematic literature review were determined, and these questions were finalized in the final form after grouping and amalgamating using the Delphi method.

During the first meeting that included the study group and fellows who were responsible for performing the systematic literature review, these questions were formulated and prepared for the literature review. The group agreed on a total of 15 questions on the epidemiology, diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up of GERD. For each question, key words to be used in the literature search, criteria for selection of studies, outcome measures and statistical methods that will be used were identified.

Fellows responsible for the systematic review had a half day training on performing the systematic literature review and the methods for selection of articles, data extraction from articles, and methods used for bringing data together and analyzing were discussed.

Between the first and second meetings, fellows performed the systemic literature review regarding their questions by following the methodology explained

above using PubMed. The initial results of the systematic review were presented to the group during the second meeting. These were discussed and missing and additionally required analyses according to the experts were determined. These were completed between the second and third meetings. In the third meeting, these analyses were presented, and the process of preparing the drafts of the recommendations began. In the fourth meeting, the draft of the recommendations was finalized, and it was ready for being voted on by a large group gastroenterologists interested in GERD.

The final meeting was conducted with the participation of 46 gastroenterologists who worked at University hospitals, public hospitals, or private practice and who were interested in the area of GERD.

The results of the systematic literature review and drafts of the recommendations that were formed based on these results were presented for each question during this final meeting. Each draft was discussed, modified (if necessary), and voted by the group. The recommendations confirmed by at least 70% of the group members were accepted. Other recommendations were re-discussed and re-voted on after modifying as necessary. At the end, the final revised forms of all recommendations were agreed on by at least 70% of the group members and were accepted. The "levels of evidence" and "grades of recommendations" were determined according to the Oxford Centre for Evidence-based Medicine Levels of Evidence (March 2009) (<http://www.cebm.net/?o=1116>).

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