

7. Levels of evidence in clinical and medical literature

LEVELS OF EVIDENCE (1)	
Therapy/Prevention/Aetiology/Harm	
1a	Systematic reviews (with homogeneity) of randomized controlled trials
1b	Individual randomized controlled trials (with narrow confidence interval)
1c	All or none randomized controlled trials
2a	Systematic reviews (with homogeneity) of cohort studies
2b	Individual cohort study (including low-quality randomized controlled trials; e.g., < 80% follow-up)
2c	"Outcomes" research; ecological studies
3a	Systematic reviews (with homogeneity) of case-control studies
3b	Individual case-control study
4	Case-series (and poor quality cohort and case control studies)
5	Expert opinion without explicit critical appraisal, or based on physiology, bench research or "first principles"

- 1 Burns, P.B., Rohrich, R.J. & Chung, K.C. (2011) The levels of evidence and their role in evidence-based medicine. *Plast Reconstr Surg*, **128**(1), 305-10.