

LEVELS OF EVIDENCE

The Journal asks authors to assign a level of evidence to all clinically oriented manuscripts, as detailed in the table

Definitions

Therapeutic studies investigate the results of treatment on patient outcomes and complications.

Prognostic studies investigate the natural history of a disease or disorder, and they evaluate the effect of a patient characteristic on the outcome of the disease.

Diagnostic studies evaluate the effectiveness of a diagnostic test or outcome assessment.

Economic/decision analysis or modelling studies explore costs and alternatives or may even develop or assess the effectiveness of decision models.

Systematic reviews and **meta-analyses** are assigned a level of evidence equivalent to the lowest level of evidence used from the manuscripts analysed.

A **prospective study** is defined as a study in which the research question was developed (and the statistical analysis for determining power was developed) before data were collected.

A **retrospective study** is defined as a study in which the research question was determined after the data were collected (even for studies where the authors collected general data prospectively).

Levels of Evidence for *Knee Surgery Sports Traumatology Arthroscopy*

Type of Study	Therapeutic studies – investigating the results of treatment	Prognostic Studies - investigating natural history and evaluating the effect of a patient characteristic	Diagnostic studies – investigating a diagnostic test	Economic and decision analysis – developing an economic or decision model
LEVEL I	Randomized controlled trials with adequate statistical power to detect differences (narrow confidence intervals) and follow up >80% Systematic review of Level-I randomised controlled studies	High-quality prospective cohort study with >80% follow-up, and all patients enrolled at same time point in disease. Systematic review of Level-I studies	Testing previously developed diagnostic criteria in a consecutive series of patients and a universally applied “gold” standard Systematic review of Level-I studies	Reasonable costs and alternatives used in study with values obtained from many studies, study used multi-way sensitivity analysis Systematic review of Level-I studies
LEVEL II	Lower quality randomized trials (follow up <80%, improper randomization techniques, no masking) Prospective comparative study Systematic review of Level-II studies or	Retrospective study Untreated controls from a randomized controlled trial Lower quality prospective cohort study (<80% follow-up, patients enrolled at different time points in disease)	Development of diagnostic criteria in a consecutive series of patients and a universally applied “gold” standard Systematic review of Level-II studies	Reasonable costs and alternatives used in study with values obtained from limited studies, study used multi-way sensitivity analysis Systematic review of Level-II studies

	Level-I studies with inconsistent results	Systematic review of Level-II studies		
LEVEL III	Case-control study Retrospective comparative study Systematic review of Level-III studies	Case-control study Systematic review of Level-III studies	Study of a non-consecutive patients and/or without a universally applied “gold” standard Systematic review of Level-III studies	Analysis based on a limited section of alternatives and costs, or poor estimates of costs Systematic review of Level-III studies
LEVEL IV	Case series with no comparison group Retrospective case series	Case series with no comparison groups	Use of a poor reference standard Case control study	No sensitivity analysis
LEVEL V	Expert opinion	Expert opinion	Expert opinion	Expert opinion

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