Background There are a plethora of guideline development groups in operation, each with its own methods for summarising evidence and processes for developing recommendations, which can leave consumers with questions about which guidelines to follow. In 2011 the Institute of Medicine (IOM) released a set of standards for developing trustworthy systematic reviews and clinical practice guidelines (CPGs). These standards address the structure, process, reporting and final products associated with evidence-based CPGs. The Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care (CTFPHC) was recently re-established with a mandate to develop clinical practice guidelines for primary care practitioners based on a systematic assessment of scientific evidence.

Objectives To compare the Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care’s methods with the standards outlined in the IOM.

Methods The methods of the CTFPHC were compared to the IOM standards for both systematic reviews and CPGs and to the methods of other international guideline producers.

Results The CTFPHC methods are consistent with those of the IOM and international guideline development groups. Some differences include how patient and consumer input is incorporated into guidelines, the review of documents, and the final recommendation statements, the degree to which documents are publicly available and the processes for dissemination and knowledge translation.

Discussion New processes put in place to address the differences between CTFPHC methods and IOM standards will be explored.

Implications for Guideline Developers/ Users Comparing the methods of guideline development groups to the IOM standards may provide users with a way to ascertain potential areas for enhancement of their CPG development process.