Background The field of anaesthesiology is multidisciplinary and includes the perioperative trajectory, but also the domains of pain, palliative, intensive and emergency care. In The Netherlands there are numerous guidelines on anaesthesiology, from generic to disease and target group specific. These were developed by different stakeholders and were not always thoroughly checked on consistency with other guidelines.

Objective To assess uniformity in recommendations in the field of anaesthesiology.

Methods Four guidelines were considered the base of anaesthesiology care; pre-, peri- and postoperative care and postoperative pain treatment. The recommendations of these four guidelines were combined with a number of consensus statements and matched with disease and target group specific recommendations. These recommendations were categorised into three groups: 1) no controversy; 2) controversy, update necessary; 3) new guideline(s) needed. For the recommendations in the categories 2 and 3 a working group was formed to address these issues.

Results The inventory is on-going and will be finished in spring 2013.

Discussion The total number of guidelines and recommendations on the topic of anaesthesiology are great. This makes it complex for the clinician to find the right recommendation and calls for a more convenient way of presenting them. Supervision from the anaesthesiology association is required for the development of new guidelines to guarantee uniformity between anaesthesiology recommendations.

Implications for Guideline Developers/Users It is of great importance that recommendations throughout guideline clusters are never conflicting. An electronic modular database could be a more convenient way of presenting recommendations.