

1. Enter search term(s) and click **Search**. Or browse the Disease modules in the left hand Table of Contents.

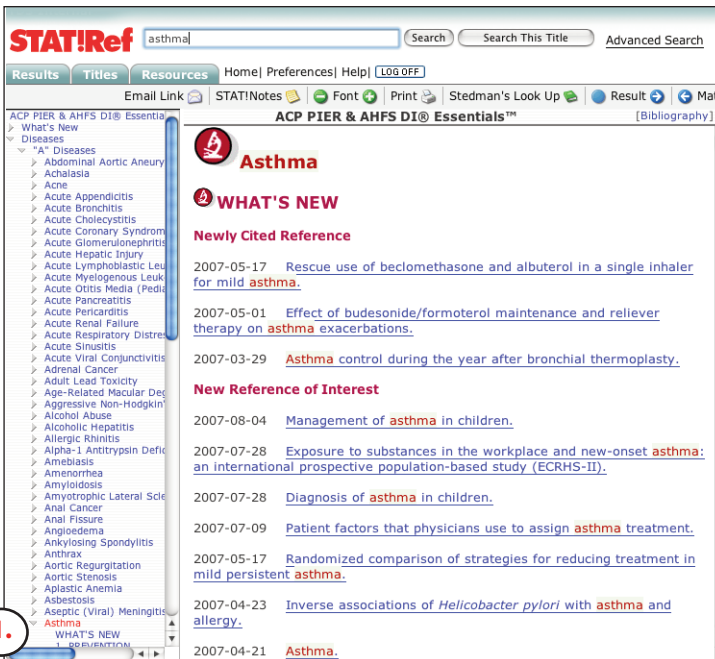
2. Choose a relevant result from the applicable disease module. (For Example, in the asthma search image on the left, we see several results related to asthma.)

3. View a module's section by scrolling or directly clicking on the blue link in the left-hand Table of Contents navigation bar.

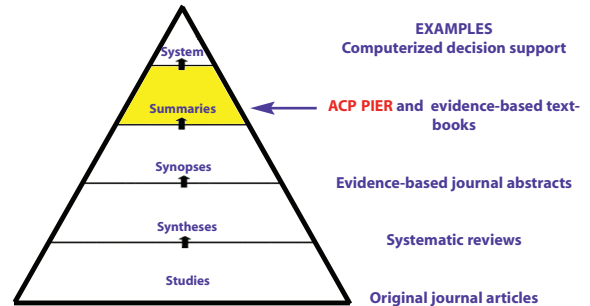
4. Find the Specific Recommendation within the section. Each Specific recommendation includes Rationale, Evidence and Comments.

5. Click on the footnote to find the Evidence Rating and Criteria

See reverse side for description of ACP PIER Reference Citations, Guidance Statements, content details and updates.

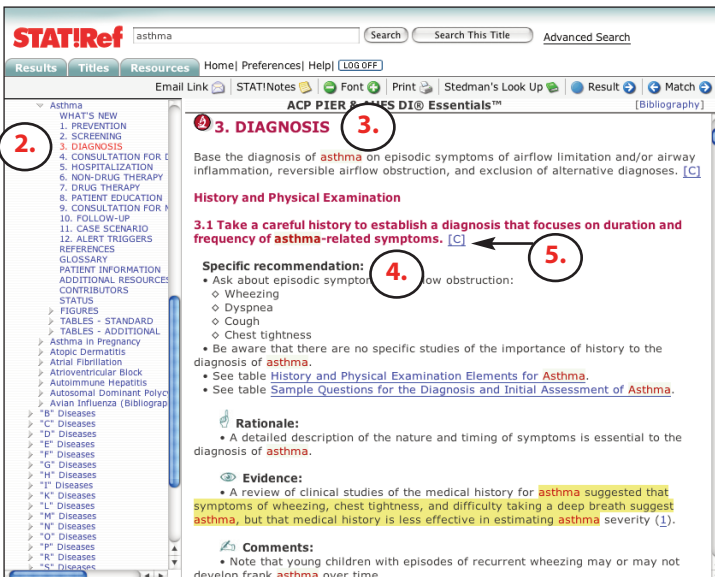


The "5S" Levels of Organization of Evidence From Health Care Research



"... we add a layer to the model, namely clinical topic summaries of evidence about all pertinent management options for a health condition, such as those included in *Clinical Evidence* and PIER. If a current topic summary exists, it would summarize the relevant *synopses, syntheses, or studies* about several aspects of a health condition. Thus, a current *summary* 'trumps' an individual *synopsis, synthesis, or study* or a collection of these."

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Evidence-Based Clinical Content in ACP PIER

The Physicians' Information and Education Resource (PIER) provides evidence-based clinical guidance for primary care physicians. In an effort to ensure the breadth and quality of this evidence, PIER has contracted with McMaster University to conduct continual literature searches on topics contained in PIER. McMaster University is known and respected for establishing the most strident methodology for evidence based medicine. PIER authors are required to base the recommendations in their modules on citations from the medical literature which are ranked by McMaster. This process provides PIER authors with vetted, reliable, evidence-based references which they can review as they produce and update modules and guidance statements.

Reference citations in PIER modules are rated by the type and quality of the study. A general guide to this rating system is as follows:

- 1 - level reference: randomized controlled trial, meta-analysis, or systematic review
- 2 - level reference: any experimental study designs other than randomized controlled trials or meta-analyses (e.g., case series, or cohort, case-control, or observational studies)
- 3 - level reference: expert opinion or consensus statements

The guidance statements in PIER are rated A, B, or C.

Explanations for each of these ratings include:

- A - level statement: The recommendation is supported by at least one good randomized controlled trial, or the preponderance of evidence supports the recommendation.
- B - level statement: The recommendation is based on research data that are less compelling than a randomized controlled trial (e.g., cohort, case-control, observational studies, or case series).
- C - level statement: The recommendation is based on expert opinion or consensus, or on historically, generally accepted standards of clinical practice not based on evidence.

Every PIER module is reviewed by expert peer reviewers who are selected for both their clinical knowledge and strong familiarity with the medical literature for the topic they are reviewing.

In addition to **regular updating** by PIER's editorial consultants, the contents of at least six major medical journals are reviewed each week by PIER's editorial staff. Relevant citations are added to the "What's New" section of module home pages to keep readers abreast of the latest relevant studies and to add to the depth and currency of knowledge contained on the site.