

# Guidelines on Preventing Medication Errors in Anaesthesia and Intensive Care.

French Society of Anaesthesia and Intensive Care (SFAR : Société Française d'Anesthésie Réanimation)  
· 2026

## Study Guide: Guidelines on Preventing Medication Errors in Anaesthesia and Intensive Care

This study guide provides a comprehensive overview of the 2026 professional practice guidelines developed to mitigate medication errors within the fields of anaesthesia and intensive care. It outlines the methodological rigor, thematic focus, and consensus-driven results of the collaborative effort between the French Society of Anaesthesia and Intensive Care (SFAR) and the French Society of Clinical Pharmacy (SFPC).

### Overview and Development Context

The guidelines were developed to address the critical need for systematic prevention of medication errors. The project was spearheaded by a multidisciplinary group of 19 experts and published in the journal *Anaesthesia, critical care & pain medicine*.

### Key Project Parameters

| Detail            | Description                                                                                             |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Primary Societies | SFAR (French Society of Anaesthesia and Intensive Care) and SFPC (French Society of Clinical Pharmacy). |
| Expert Panel      | 19 French experts representing both clinical and pharmaceutical backgrounds.                            |
| Methodology       | GRADE (Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation).                              |
| Search Framework  | PRISMA recommendations for bibliographic search; 20-year search history.                                |
| Output            | 29 recommendations reached with strong expert agreement.                                                |

## Methodological Framework

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The experts utilized several rigorous scientific frameworks to ensure the recommendations were evidence-based and professionally relevant:

- **PICO Model:** Questions were formulated based on Population, Intervention, Comparison, and Outcome to target specific clinical scenarios.
  - **Professional Practice Guidelines (PPG):** The experts opted for the PPG format rather than "Formalized Expert Recommendations." This decision was made because the number of studies providing sufficient power to answer the primary judgment criterion—actual medication errors—was limited.
  - **GRADE Grid Method:** This was used for the final vote on recommendations to assess the strength of evidence and reach a consensus.
  - **Conflict of Interest Management:** All potential conflicts were declared at the start, and the process was conducted independently of industry funding.
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## The Four Fields of Inquiry

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The 29 recommendations are categorized into four distinct fields, ensuring a holistic approach to risk management in clinical settings:

1. **Work Environment and Processes:** Analysis of the physical and systemic conditions under which medication is administered.
  2. **Human and Organizational Factors:** Examination of how personnel dynamics and institutional structures contribute to error rates.
  3. **Post-hoc Risk Management:** Strategies for responding to, reporting, and learning from errors after they have occurred.
  4. **The Problem of Drug Shortages:** Addressing the unique risks and error potentials introduced when standard medications are unavailable.
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## Short-Answer Practice Quiz

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**1. Which two professional societies collaborated to produce these guidelines?** *Answer: The French Society of Anaesthesia and Intensive Care (SFAR) and the French Society of Clinical Pharmacy (SFPC).*

**2. Why did the expert group choose the "Professional Practice Guidelines (PPG)" format over "Formalized Expert Recommendations"?** *Answer: Because there was a very small number of studies with the necessary power to address the specific judgment criterion of medication errors.*

**3. What specific timeframe was covered by the bibliographic search conducted for these recommendations?** *Answer: An extensive 20-year period.*

**4. How many total recommendations were ultimately formulated by the experts?** *Answer: 29 recommendations.*

**5. How was the level of evidence in the literature assessed during the development process?** *Answer: Through the GRADE (Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation) methodology.*

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## Essay Prompts for Deeper Exploration

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### 1. Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Patient Safety

Analyze the significance of the partnership between anaesthesia experts (SFAR) and clinical pharmacy experts (SFPC). How does combining these two distinct perspectives enhance the quality and applicability of medication error prevention strategies in high-stakes environments like intensive care?

### 2. Methodological Adaptation in Clinical Research

The document notes a transition from "Formalized Expert Recommendations" to "Professional Practice Guidelines" due to a lack of high-power studies on medication errors. Discuss the challenges researchers face when attempting to find evidence-based data on errors and justify the use of PPG as an alternative framework for establishing safety standards.

### 3. The Impact of Systemic Factors on Medication Safety

Reflecting on the four fields defined by the experts (Environment, Human Factors, Post-hoc Management, and Shortages), evaluate which field likely presents the greatest challenge for modern healthcare facilities. Use the document's structure to argue how addressing "Drug Shortages" as a specific field recognizes a modern clinical reality.

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## Glossary of Key Terms

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- **DOI (Digital Object Identifier):** A unique string used to identify a document and provide it with a permanent web address (e.g., 10.1016/j.accpm.2025.101718).
- **GRADE Methodology:** A systematic approach to grading the quality of evidence and the strength of recommendations in healthcare.
- **PICO Model:** A mnemonic used in evidence-based medicine to frame research questions (Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome).

- **Post-hoc:** Occurring after an event; in this context, it refers to risk management strategies employed after a medication error has taken place.
- **PPG (Professional Practice Guidelines):** A set of systematically developed statements to assist practitioner and patient decisions about appropriate healthcare for specific clinical circumstances.
- **PRISMA:** Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses; a set of evidence-based minimum items for reporting in reviews and meta-analyses.
- **SFAR:** Société Française d'Anesthésie et de Réanimation (French Society of Anaesthesia and Intensive Care).
- **SFPC:** Société Française de Pharmacie Clinique (French Society of Clinical Pharmacy).