



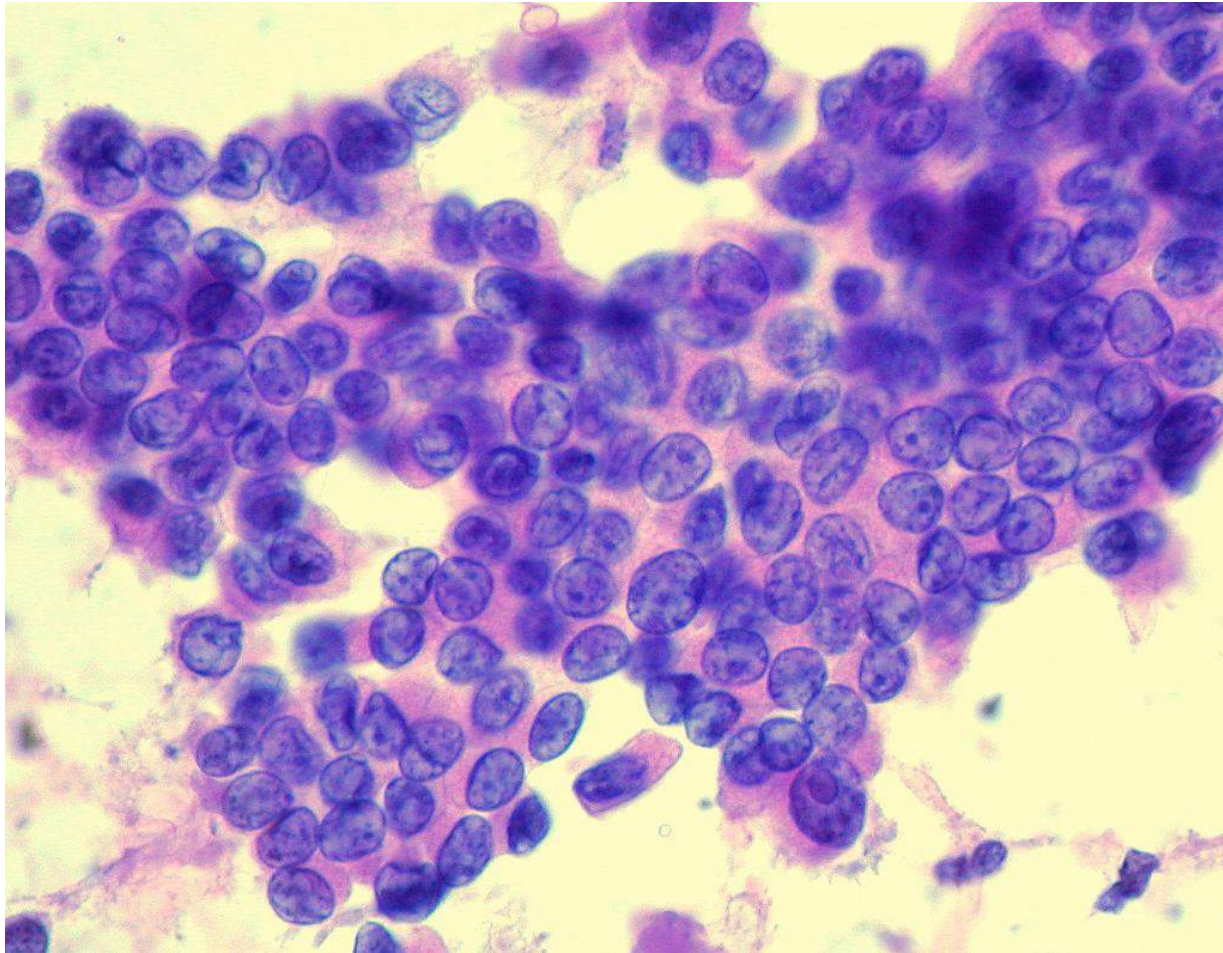
Preventing overmedicalization by listening and sharing

Overmedicalization and Quaternary Prevention

Lecce - Italy

ERNESTO MOLA
ITALIAN NETWORK OF –
SCIENTIFIC ASSOCIATIONS
AFFILIATED WITH WONCA

Papillary thyroid cancer

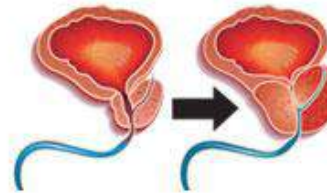


Meniscectomy in elder people





SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION



CHANGES IN
BLADDER HABITS



WEAKNESS OR
NUMBNESS IN LEGS



FREQUENT PAIN



BLOOD IN
THE URINE

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF **PROSTATE CANCER** THAT YOU MUST KNOW



What should I do?

- ...saying to the patient that probably the surgical intervention won't increase her survival but will increase the need of tests and drug therapy for all life ?
- What should I suggest to the patient who wants to get quickly over the pain of knee?
- Should I deny the PSA test to the elder patient? Yes, of course, but how can I tell him that harms of a diagnosis would be more than the benefits?

Aims of the Conference

- To spread knowledge about the entity of the overdiagnosis matter
- To know the risk of overdiagnosis and overmedicalization deriving from imaging for IHA in asymptomatic people
- To spread the concept of Quaternary Prevention
- To give some tools to face the problem in the everyday practice
- To contribute to the position paper of WONCA Europe on the topic of overdiagnosis

**World Organization of National Colleges, Academies and
Academic Associations
of General Practitioners/Family Physicians**

Founded in 1972

118 Member Organizations
in 131 countries and
territories

Membership of about
500,000 family doctors

Involve more than 90 per
cent of the world's
population



WONCA Italia

ASSIMEFAC

CSERMEG

ISDE

*Coordinamento Italiano
delle società scientifiche
aderenti al WONCA*

ACP

AIMEF

Mov. Giotto

European definitions of Family Medicine



WONCA EUROPE

General Practice:

- is normally the first point of medical contact..
- makes efficient use of health care resources through coordinating care
- develops a person-centred approach.....
- is responsible for the provision of longitudinal continuity of care as determined by needs of the patient
- has a specific decision making process determined by the prevalence and incidence of illness in the community
- promotes health and well-being both by appropriate and effective intervention
- manages comprehensive care....

Characteristics of General Practice

FDs play an advocacy role

"protecting patients from the harm which may ensue through unnecessary screening, testing, and treatment"

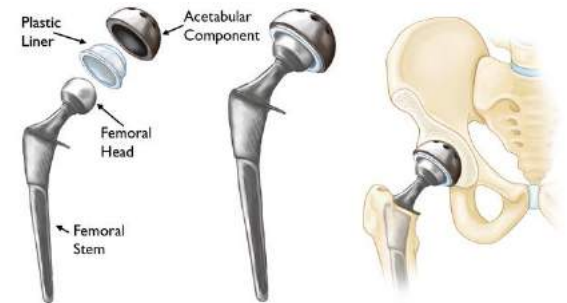
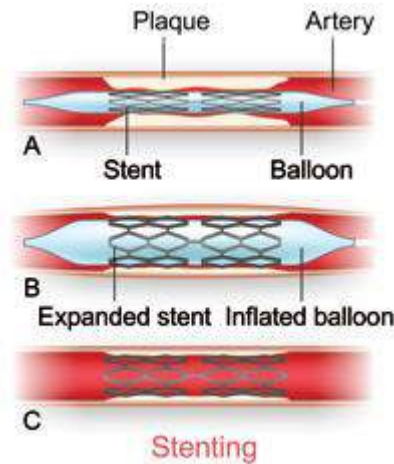
(WONCA Europe: Definitions of General Practice/Family Medicine)

Quaternary prevention

defined as "an action taken to identify a patient at risk of over-medicalization, to protect him/her from new medical invasion, and to suggest interventions which are ethically acceptable"

(WONCA Dictionary of General Practice)

High level of care?



Overdiagnosis

“We have entered an era in which we can find diseases and illnesses in many more people .. But it is not clear that, by making everyone a patient, we are necessarily improve their health”

Gilbert Welch 2012



A definition:

Overdiagnosis occur when people without symptoms are diagnosed with a disease that ultimately will not cause them to experience symptoms or early death.

The concept of prevention: a good idea gone astray?

“A renewed (and possibly renamed) conceptualization of ‘prevention’ would consider:

- 1. Population orientation (even for clinical medicine)*
- 2. Population-attributable risk rather than individual (relative) risk*
- 3. Morbidity burden rather than disease burden*
- 4. Tandem estimation of the benefits and costs of strategies to improve both population health and the distribution of health within populations*
- 5. Improving overall health rather than disease prevention as a major goal..”*



(B. Starfield 2007)

A cause of overdiagnosis

Inappropriateness is the consequence of the encounter of two fears with many interests

- Fear of the patient to have a disease
- Fear of the doctor to underestimate a problem or for defensive medicine
- Interests of the industries and professionals

THE ART OF DOING NOTHING

“Doing nothing, but having the courage sometimes to wait – to use time as both a diagnostic and a therapeutic tool – to see what nature does – to wait and see. These are essential skills...that are profoundly important if we are not to fall into the seductive traps of overdiagnosis and overtreatment.”



(Iona Heath)

Overdiagnosis: A clinical matter

Screening detected, overdiagnosis occurs in some people without symptoms (some cancers can regress or fail to progress or grow very slowly)

(Back 1998)

Overdiagnosis is acceptable if it is compensated for definite advantages!

Breast Cancer Early Detection

by Mammography



Mammography screening may reduce the number of women who die from breast cancer but this has no effect on overall cancer deaths. Among all women taking part in screening, some women will be overdiagnosed with non-progressive cancer and unnecessarily treated.

Numbers for women aged 50 years or older who did or did not participate in screening for about 10 years.

	1000 women without screening	1000 women with screening
Benefits		
How many women died from breast cancer?	5	4
How many women died from all types of cancer?	21	21
Harms		
How many women without cancer experienced false alarms or biopsies?	–	about 100
How many women with non-progressive cancer had unnecessary partial or complete breast removal?	–	5

Source: [1] Gatzsche, PC, Jørgensen, KJ (2013). *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* (6): CD001877, pub5
Numbers in the Fact Box are rounded. Where no data for women above 50 years of age are available, numbers refer to women above 40 years of age.

Date last updated: 13 March, 2014

Prostate Cancer Early Detection



by PSA testing and palpation of the prostate gland

Numbers are for men aged 50 years or older, not participating vs. participating in early detection for 11 years.

	1,000 men without early detection	1,000 men with early detection
Benefits		
How many men died from prostate cancer?	7	7*
How many men died from any cause?	210	210
Harms		
How many men without cancer experienced a biopsy and a false alarm?	–	160
How many healthy men were diagnosed and treated** for prostate cancer unnecessarily?	–	20

* This means that about 7 out of 1,000 men (50+ years of age) with early detection died from prostate cancer within 11 years.

** E.g. prostate removal or radiation therapy, which can lead to incontinence or impotence.

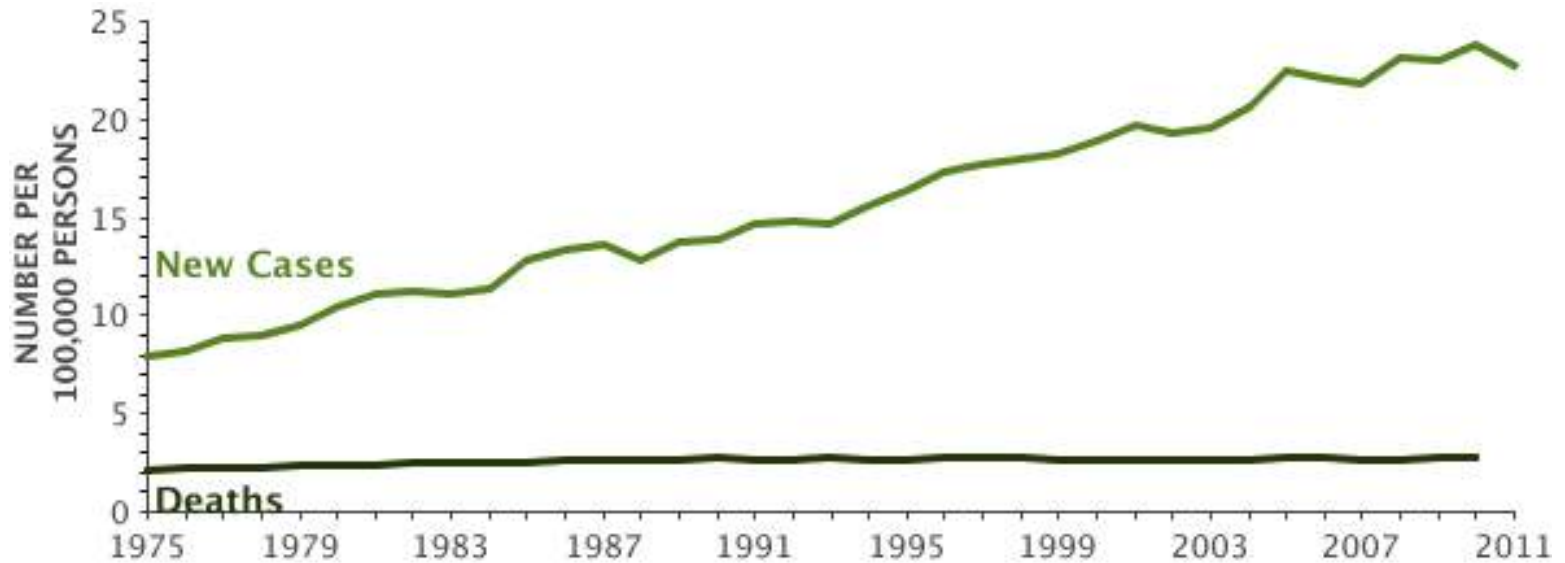
Source: Ilic et al. (2013) *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, Art. No.: CD004720.

Overdiagnosis: a cultural matter

- The ability to detect smaller abnormalities asymptotically tends to increase the prevalence of any given disease
- In turn this leads to overestimate the benefits of therapies, as milder forms of the disease are treated and improvements in health (recovery) are wrongly ascribed to treatment success
- A cycle of increasing testing and treatment starts, which may eventually cause more harm than benefit
- Doctors are very often not aware about the problem of overdiagnosis

(Black 1998)

A same diagram



Thyroid cancer
Melanoma
Kidney cancer
Prostate cancer
Breast cancer

Chronic kidney disease
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
Gestational diabetes
Pulmonary embolism
.....

A muddled information

- Biennial mammography screening is recommended by the most important guidelines (but often a young or very elderly woman asks for it without symptoms!)
- PSA screening is not recommended by the most important international guidelines (but several specialist local guidelines suggest the prostate screening)
- There are not proof that an annual blood tests' screening is useful in asymptomatic people (but media always suggest "doing something for our health")
- Thorax x-ray or CT scan are not recommended as screening (but "if you are a big smokers what are you doing for your health?")

A cultural pressure

From industries

- Direct to consumer advertising
- Disease 'awareness' campaigns
- Medical education
- Financial ties with professional and patient groups

From health professionals' associations

- Many diagnosis maximize the patient pool

From judicial matters

- Professionals are punished from missing, never for overdiagnosis

In conclusion

Overdiagnosis is implicit in the modern medicine ...but we must act (all health professionals) to limit negative consequences for people and communities.

Our duty is taking care the patients as well as avoiding harm and suffering.

We should always take in account that too much medicine could be harmful for our patients.

Listening needs and expectations of the patient and communicating the scientific knowledge by the doctor allow sharing with patients an informed decision making process.

Preve

Overme

Lecce - Italy



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E DEI CONGRESSI
LECCE

