



Fact Boxes

Knowing benefits and risks

The concept in a nutshell

The benefits and risks of certain medical treatments and diagnostic procedures are the subject of independent scientific studies. These comparisons allow for a better decision-making basis.

When its indication has not been sufficiently clarified, a medical procedure will not always have the expected benefit. This means that some medical examinations, therapies, or treatments cause more risks than health benefits. This is the case, for example, when an incorrect diagnosis is made and an unnecessary treatment is administered. Fears, uncertainties and additional health costs are possible consequences.

Evidence-based medicine requires a high level of scientific clarity regarding the benefits and effectiveness of a medical treatment. Such rendered evidence increases the quality of the diagnosis and promotes the meaningful use of medical measures.

We provide you with this scientifically based decision-making basis in the form of fact boxes. These fact boxes, created by doctors, are written in understandable language and support you in critically scrutinising medical claims.

What does that mean for you?

Find out which fact boxes exist and how to read and understand them correctly.

Fact boxes convey health information and allow you to compare benefits and risks in a transparent and understandable way.

For example, if an x-ray is taken in the first six weeks in the event of acute, non-specific back pain without health warning signs, this is considered an over-diagnosis. An immediate x-ray image usually does nothing in such cases, but leads to follow-up examinations, radiation exposure and unnecessary costs.

There are fact boxes for these treatments, examinations or medication use:

- Check-ups
- Cancer screening (e.g. colon, breast, prostate, lung, uterus)
- Medicative treatment of cardiovascular diseases
- Arthroscopy of the knee joint
- Back pain
- Health and addictive behaviours (e.g. weight, smoking, alcohol)
- Vaccinations (e.g. flu, ticks, mumps, measles, rubella, pneumococci, meningococci)

Here is how you can find out more



mediX AG network of doctors – facts explained in an understandable way.
(only available in German) www.medix.ch



Harding Center for Risk Literacy at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development (D) – Benefits and risks of selected medical treatments.
(available in English) www.harding-center.mpg.de



Do you have any questions? Write to us. You can reach us at
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My notes
