

# Change in doc, public attitudes needed to cut overtreatment

October 16 2014

---



Reform of malpractice laws as well as inclusion of patients in medical decision making may help reduce overdiagnosis and overtreatment, according to an article published online Oct. 14 in *The BMJ*.

(HealthDay)—Reform of malpractice laws as well as inclusion of patients in medical decision making may help reduce overdiagnosis and overtreatment, according to an article published online Oct. 14 in *The BMJ*.

Jerome R. Hoffman, M.D., and Hemal K. Kanzaria, M.D., from the University of California in Los Angeles, discuss ways to reduce overdiagnosis and overtreatment, focusing on changing professional and public attitudes toward uncertainty and medical errors.

The authors note that although the best protection against harm from

[medical errors](#) is to identify them in order to design systems that can catch or mitigate errors, the medical culture of shame and blame can lead to practitioners denying and hiding errors. Physicians agree that defensive medicine is the leading cause of medical excess, but the majority of physicians report engaging in [defensive medicine](#). To reduce overdiagnosis and overtreatment, reform of malpractice laws may be necessary, although this is likely to be insufficient to drive such change. An additional change would be to include patients in the medical decision making process, making sure they understand the uncertainty attached to each benefit-risk profile.

"We need to go beyond these ideas and start to change the culture of [medicine](#), and even the wider culture," the authors write. "This will require us to be more open about the inevitability of failure, and even of error."

**More information:** [Full Text](#)

Copyright © 2014 [HealthDay](#). All rights reserved.

Citation: Change in doc, public attitudes needed to cut overtreatment (2014, October 16)  
retrieved 19 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-10-doc-attitudes-overtreatment.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--