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Overdiagnosis: How to assess? How to prevent?

Symposium and Workshop Report

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SSPH+

SWISS SCHOOL OF
PUBLIC HEALTH

Symposium and Workshop Report

Background

Overdiagnosis and overtreatment of diseases detected in their earliest form, notably through screening, are of growing public health and medical concerns, notably in Switzerland because of its high technology-oriented medicine. Issues and challenges around overdiagnosis and overtreatment are major, numerous, and multidisciplinary. They span from the statistical quantification of the magnitude of overdiagnosis to the recognition of overdiagnosed and overtreated patients by physicians, in a context where clinical guidelines are often lacking, awareness of patients and clinicians are poor, and availability of reliable, evidence-based data is scarce.

Content and organisation of the event

We organized a half-day symposium and workshop on March 22th at the CHUV in Lausanne where experts from various fields (epidemiology, public health, clinical care) and Swiss stakeholders met to address issues at stake and identify ways to prevent harms from overdiagnosis and overtreatment. The first part was a symposium centered on the assessment of overdiagnosis and overtreatment, including short presentations of Swiss case studies, in the classical format of distinguished speakers' presentations followed by questions from the audience. After a networking-oriented break, the workshop focused on participative exchanges, first in small groups, then in a plenary session with 3 vignette presentations on prostate cancer, hypothyroidism, and thyroid cancer. The practical questions addressed during this workshop were how to prevent overdiagnosis and overtreatment of these conditions, and how to implement such prevention strategies in Switzerland.

Networking

57 scientists and healthcare providers participated, with 41 from the french speaking part of Switzerland and 11 from the german part, and 5 from a foreign country. There were PhD students, junior and senior scientists, healthcare providers, as well as several professors. Participants covered the broad spectrum of stakeholders in overdiagnosis and overtreatment: medicine (generalists and specialists from many medical fields, both hospital- and outpatients-based), epidemiology, public health, pathology, including representatives from cantonal and national authorities, *i.e.* cantonal cancer screening programmes and public health authorities, H+, swiss cancer league, swiss cancer screening (see below, in annex 1, the list of participants).

Feedback

Participants were asked to fill in a dedicated evaluation form that was analysed independently by the mandated organizer (meeting.com). On a scale of 1 to 4 (1=poor / 2=average / 3=good / 4=excellent), 19 persons answered the evaluation and ranked highly both the symposium (average score: 3.54) and the workshop (3.46) (see

attached document "Evaluation_results_overdx100322.pdf"). The format, content and utility of each section of the programme were overall highly appreciated (ranging from 3.3 to 3.59) with little variation across items and presentations. This suggests that the specific topics, choice of speakers and break-out activities met the expectations of the audience as well as the objectives of the organizers. The purchasability of the conference was stressed with free registration for all students and collaborators affiliated with the Bern and Lausanne institutions co-organizing the event. On the downside, the short duration of the event was pointed out by some participants. An initial standing lunch would be an option to consider along with registration for future scientific events of similar format in order to provide more time for networking.

Conclusions and perspectives

The workshop succeeded in bringing together swiss stakeholders from various professional and geographical backgrounds. Based on exchanges among all stakeholders, several suggestions were made to prevent overdiagnosis and overtreatment in Switzerland. The six major points identified, covering most chronic diseases, are summarized in the Table below:

Table: Measures suggested in the Workshop held on March 22nd 2019 in Lausanne on how to reduce overdiagnosis and overtreatment in Switzerland

Measure 1:

Create urgently a national Health Technology Assessment (HTA) to prevent screening and diagnostic activities leading to overdiagnosis. This HTA needs to have a large multidisciplinary composition to cover the various dimensions of this issue.

Measure 2:

Increase literacy and better educate Swiss physicians about overdiagnosis and overtreatment ("think twice" before acting!)

Measure 3:

Support active surveillance (no treatment option) and bewilling to stop treatment. Robust trial evidence about active surveillance is necessary.

Measure 4:

Reconsider some guidelines and how they are produced. Raising level of evidence for clinical guidelines and enlarging disciplines involved in producing guidelines is necessary.

Measure 5:

Include harms of screening and treatment in health-decision tools for clinicians. A link between these tools and key indicators such as change in life expectancy and quality of life is necessary.

Measure 6: **Change the terminology of some non-life threatening cancers**

Acknowledgements

The organizers thank the SSPH+, whose financial support made this scientific and networking event possible, and all speakers and moderators for sharing their insight and experience.

Annex 1 : Participants' list

| Nb | Name | Surname | Institution |
|----|---------------|----------------------|--|
| 1 | Daniela | ANKER | BIHAM |
| 2 | Drahomir | AUJESKY | Inselspital Bern |
| 3 | Calvin | BESONG ETA OBEN | Karolinska Institute, Sweden |
| 4 | Fanny | BLONDET | CHUV |
| 5 | Murielle | BOCHUD | Unisanté |
| 6 | Noureddine | BOUTI | SSTM, Bitam Centre, Algeria |
| 7 | Pascal | BOVET | CHUV |
| 8 | Karen | BRAENDLE | Unisanté |
| 9 | Thierry | BUCLIN | CHUV & Unisanté |
| 10 | Jean-Luc | BULLIARD | Unisanté |
| 11 | Lauren Sofia | CALVO BETANCOURT | Hospital Univ. San Ignacio, Bogota, Colombia |
| 12 | Arnaud | CHIOLERO | Berner Universität - BIHAM |
| 13 | Carole | CLAIR | Unisanté |
| 14 | Jacques | CORNUZ | Unisanté |
| 15 | Monica | COSMA ROCHAT | CHUV |
| 16 | Nadia | DANON | CHUV - CEMIC - Centre d'Antalgie |
| 17 | M'hamed | DAROUICHI | Private |
| 18 | Christophorus | DE WOLF | ADSAN |
| 19 | Cyril | DUCROS | Fondation vaudoise pour le dépistage du cancer |
| 20 | Julien | DUPRAZ | IUMSP |
| 21 | Nadia | ELIA | UNIGE & Geneva Cancer Registry |
| 22 | Ruth | ETZIONI | Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Seattle, USA |
| 23 | Luc | FORNEROD | Observatoire Valaisan de la Santé (OVS) |
| 24 | Marjorie | FRANCOIS | Unisanté - Dept Santé au Travail et Environnement |
| 25 | Simon | GERMANN | Unisanté |
| 26 | Nathalia | GONZALEZ | ISPM - Bern |
| 27 | Elena | GONZALEZ DE MANUELES | HJU - Site de Delémont |
| 28 | Valentina | GONZÁLEZ JARAMILLO | ISPM - Bern |
| 29 | Yvonne | GRENDDELMEIER | Swiss Cancer League |
| 30 | Angelina | HOFSTETTER | H+ die Spitäler der Schweiz |
| 31 | Isabelle | JACOT SADOWSKI | Unisanté |
| 32 | Vladimir | JOLIDON | UNIGE |
| 33 | Katharina | JUNGO | Universität Bern - BIHAM |
| 34 | Ioannis | KOKKINAKIS | Unisanté |
| 35 | Tania | LAREQUI | DSAS - DGS (Vaud) |
| 36 | Viviane | LEDERMANN | ADC BEJUNE |
| 37 | Ewa | MARIETHOZ | Swiss Cancer Screening |
| 38 | Marie | MET DOMESTICI | CHUV - Hôpital Nestlé |
| 39 | Stéphane | MORANDI | CHUV - Unité de psychiatrie mobile |
| 40 | Duc-Huy | NGUYEN | Cabinet médical |
| 41 | Ricardo | NIEVES ORTEGA | Unispital Basel |
| 42 | Jacques | OLIVIER | Unisanté |
| 43 | Fred | PACCAUD | Unisanté - Médecin bénévole |
| 44 | Oliver | PETERS | CHUV |
| 45 | Mathilde | ROCHAT | CHUV |
| 46 | Arnoud | ROCHAT | CHUV |
| 47 | Nicolas | RODONDI | Berner Universität - BIHAM |
| 48 | Markos | ROUSAKIS | CHUV - Médecine Interne |

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|----|----------|--------------|--|
| 49 | Marc | RYSER | Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, USA |
| 50 | Mukta | SANDU | CHUV |
| 51 | David | SCUCCIMARRA | Northernmedical Specialists |
| 52 | Kevin | SELBY | Unisanté - Département des policliniques |
| 53 | Valentin | SIMONIN | CHUV |
| 54 | Bastien | TRÄCHSEL | Unisanté & UNIL |
| 55 | Sheila | UNGER | CHUV |
| 56 | Massimo | VALERIO | CHUV |
| 57 | Caroline | WYSS-ABULKER | ADMED Pathologie |

Annex 2 : Symposium and Workshop Program

PROGRAM

- 13:00 Registration
- 13:30 Welcome
Dr PD MER Jean-Luc Bulliard, Unisanté, Lausanne
& Prof. Arnaud Chiolero, BIHAM, Bern

Symposium: How to assess overdiagnosis and overtreatment?

- 13:40-13:45 Introduction
Dr PD MER Jean-Luc Bulliard, Unisanté, Lausanne
- 13:45-14:25 Key notes speaker
Estimating overdiagnosis in cancer screening: overcoming challenges,
avoiding mistakes
Prof. Ruth Etzioni, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Seattle, USA

Short presentations: case study

- 14:25-14:40 Overdiagnosis and overtreatment of cancer: where do we stand?
What evidence in Switzerland?
Dr PD MER Jean-Luc Bulliard, Unisanté, Lausanne
- 14:40-14:55 About true and false pulmonary emboli
Prof. Drahomir Aujesky, Insel Spital, Bern

14:55-15:15 Coffee break & Networking

Workshop: How to prevent overdiagnosis and overtreatment?

- 15:15-15:30 Introduction and instructions for the group work
Prof. Arnaud Chiolero, BIHAM, Bern
- 15:30-15:45 How to reduce overdiagnosis and overtreatment in daily clinical practice?
Prof. Nicolas Rodondi, BIHAM, Bern
- 15:45-16:15 **Group work: “How to implement interventions to prevent overdiagnosis and overtreatment?”**
moderated by group leaders
- 16:15-17:00 **Plenary: “Which research agenda? Which policy?”**
With short presentations by each group leaders of the interventions proposed
Prof. Jacques Cornuz et Prof. Murielle Bochud, Unisanté, Lausanne, moderators
- 17:00 **END of program**

