

Overtreatment as an Urgent Patient Safety Priority

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and Wall of Silence***



The Big Three

- ❖ **Underuse:** when people don't get the care they need
- ❖ **Misuse:** when people are harmed by medical mistakes and hospital-acquired infections
- ❖ **Overuse:** when the potential for harm of a health care service exceeds the possible benefit



Misuse

- ❖ **Medical errors**
- ❖ **Hospital-acquired infections**





The Toll

- ❖ **The number of deaths over the course of 10 years from preventable medical errors, hospital-acquired infections, unnecessary surgery among other causes is equivalent to the populations of RI, ND and VT combined**

"A call to arms for families who have had loved ones disabled or die in the pursuit of medical treatment." —Former First Lady Rosalynn Carter



WALL OF SILENCE

THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE MEDICAL MISTAKES
THAT KILL AND INJURE MILLIONS OF AMERICANS

ROSEMARY GIBSON AND
JANARDAN PRASAD SINGH

Overuse Defined

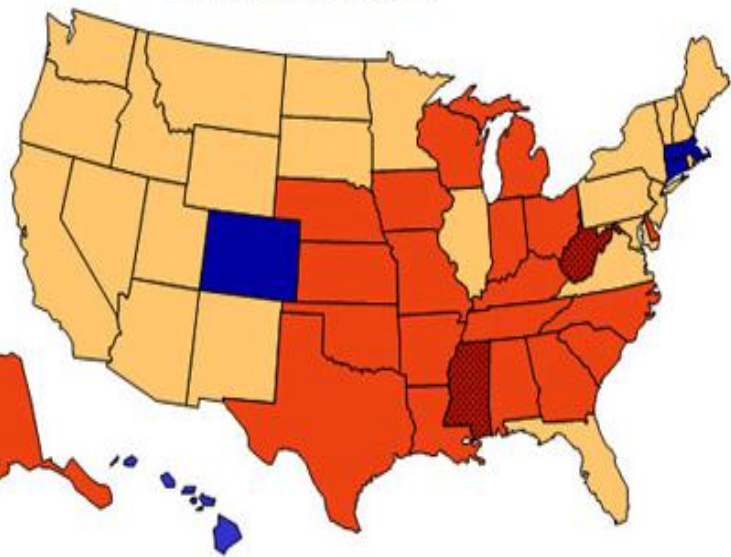
- ❖ **Overuse: when the potential for harm of a health care service exceeds the possible benefit.**

Source: Institute of Medicine, National Roundtable on Quality, 1998

THE BIGGEST LOSER



2006



Hunger Hurts



"I wish my mommy had a better job so we could have more food. But I'm not angry about it, because I know my mommy is trying."

Libby

ALLVOICES

Factoid

- ❖ **32% of people surveyed for a Commonwealth Fund report said they have had medical care they thought was unnecessary**

Source: Sabrina How, et al, "Public View on U.S. Health System Organization: A Call for New Directions," The Commonwealth Fund, Data Brief, August 2008 p. 4.

Two Questions For You

- ❖ Have you or someone you know had medical care that you/they thought was unnecessary?
- ❖ Have you or someone you know declined treatment recommendations because they were too invasive, and found a medically appropriate, less intensive alternative?

“I’ve been getting an EKG at my annual physical exam since I was 27. I’m 41 now. I don’t know why. I have no heart disease. My husband gets one, too.”

“My knees were hurting and I went to a well-known orthopedic surgeon. He said he could do surgery. He didn’t talk about me or my situation. I left and found a personal trainer who helped me strengthen my muscles. I’m much better now.”

“One of our employees was told he needed a heart transplant. Our company paid for a second opinion at a well-known health care organization. The employee had a blockage in one artery that did not require a transplant. He had a stent placed and he’s fine.”

“Another of our employees was told he needed a heart transplant. We paid for a second opinion for him as well. There, they said that his cancer was advanced and he would likely succumb to that. Our employee died a short time later. Afterwards, his widow received a call from the first hospital to schedule the transplant.”

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- ❖ For the first time, perhaps in the entire history of medicine, a subset of the population is saying “no” to medical care, not cavalierly but in an informed and thoughtful way.

Diagnostic Tests

- ❖ “I was troubled to read that the President's physical examination included an electron beam computed tomographic (CT) scan for coronary calcium. This screening test likely exposed Mr. Obama to significant radiation unnecessarily, increasing his risk of future cancer...
- ❖ ...A single electron beam CT scan is estimated to result in a lifetime excess cancer risk of 9 additional cancers per 100 000 persons for men.

Dr. Rita Redberg, Editor
Archives of Internal Medicine
March 8, 2010
[http://archinte.ama-assn.org/
cgi/content/full/2010.81?home](http://archinte.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/2010.81?home)

National Cancer Institute Study of CT scans

- ❖ **70 million CT scans performed in 2007 will cause 29,000 cancers in Americans and 15,000 deaths.**
- ❖ **Two thirds of the projected cancers will occur in women.**

Source: Archives of Internal Medicine, 2009

Lap-band Surgery

- ❖ **Lap-band surgery: a procedure marketed to reduce obesity**
- ❖ **Allergen, the device maker, received FDA approval to expand the population for device use to include those with a BMI of 30 + a medical condition, e.g. diabetes.**

Lap-band Surgery

- ❖ **Company website reports a study of 299 patients:**
- ❖ **25% of patients had a second operation to remove the device**
- ❖ **18% had a second operation for other reasons**

End-of-Life Care

- ❖ **New England Journal of Medicine published a landmark study of patients with metastatic lung cancer**
- ❖ **Patients who received early palliative care and less aggressive treatment lived 2.7 months longer than patients who received usual oncology care.**

Source: Temel JS et al., “Early palliative care for patients with metastatic non-small-cell lung cancer, NEJM, 2010: 363:733-742.

<http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10/1056/NEJMoa1000678>

National Priorities Partnership: A Roadmap to Begin

❖ **Overuse is one of the six priorities of the National Priorities Partnership which was convened by the National Quality Forum**

❖ **Source: National Priorities and Goals, National Priorities Partnership, November 2008.
www.nationalprioritiespartnership.org.**

National Priorities Partnership: Areas to Reduce Overuse

- ❖ **Medication use especially antibiotics and multiple drugs prescribed for a patient**
- ❖ **Lab tests**
- ❖ **C-sections**
- ❖ **Diagnostic imaging, CT scans, x-rays**

Prescribing rate, ALL CLASSES (2007)

AB

MB

SK

NL

ON

QC

Gulf of Lawre

NB

NS

NH

MA

RI

CT

DE

NJ

North Atlantic Ocean

PR

México

Gulf of Mexico

Gulf of California

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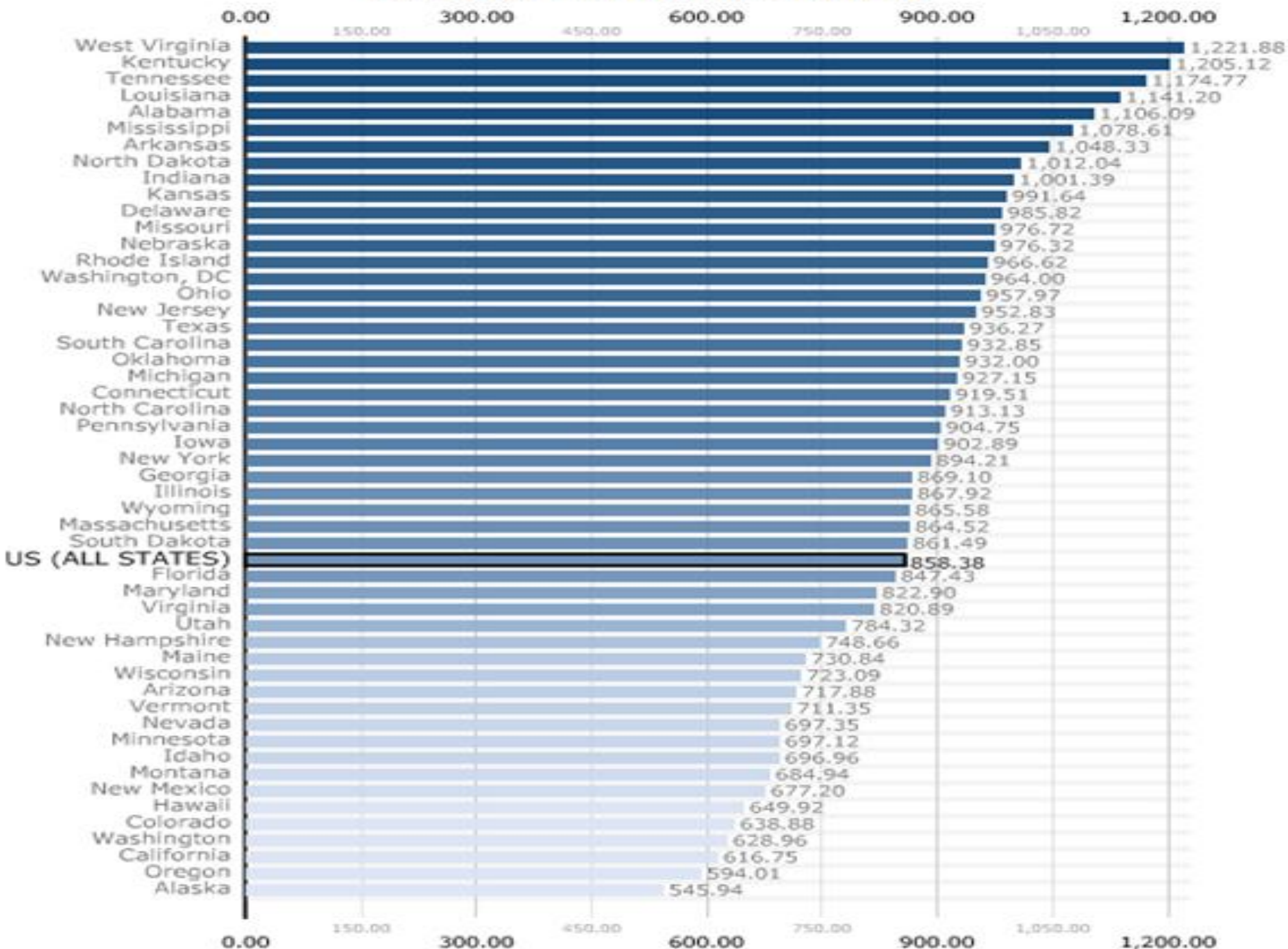
996.57

883.91

771.26

658.60

Prescribing rate, ALL CLASSES (2007)



National Priorities Partnership: Procedures That Are Overused

- ❖ **Procedures that are overused include:**
 - * heart bypass surgery**
 - * hysterectomy**
 - * spine surgery**
 - * prostatectomy**

What A Health Care Insider Says About Overuse

- ❖ **“Health insurance used to be about giving patients access to providers. Now it’s about giving providers access to patients.”**

Dean of a Midwest nursing school.

Factors Contributing to Overtreatment

- ❖ **Uncertainty**
- ❖ **Belief**
- ❖ **Enthusiasm**
- ❖ **Fear/Liability**
- ❖ **Peers**
- ❖ **Knowledge**
- ❖ **Financial incentive**
- ❖ **Patient expectation**

**One way to communicate to
patients and the public about
overuse:**



❖ What can we do to curb overuse?

Strategies for Change: Start the Conversation

- ❖ Ask yourself, friends and colleagues these two questions:
- ❖ Have you had medical care you thought was unnecessary?
- ❖ Have you declined recommendations and found a less intensive, medically appropriate alternative?

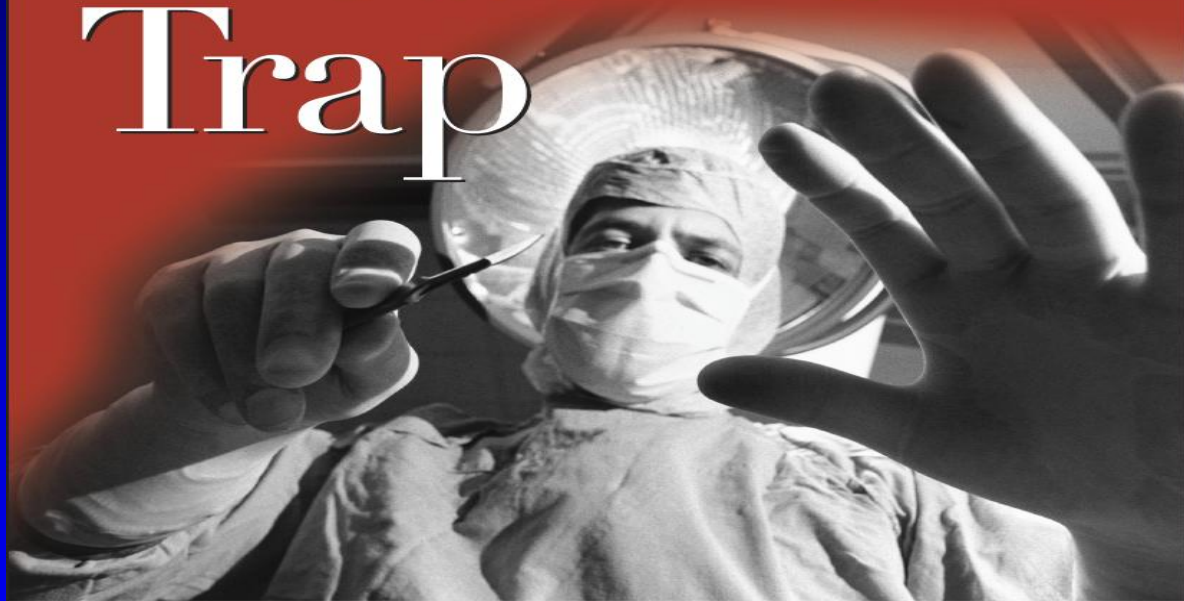
**“From the ability to not let well
enough alone, deliver us...”**

**British Medical Journal
1952**

The Treatment Trap

*“A wake-up call
for Americans.”*

—Dr. Christine Cassel,
President, American Board
of Internal Medicine



**HOW THE OVERUSE OF MEDICAL CARE
IS WRECKING YOUR HEALTH AND
WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT IT**

Rosemary Gibson and Janardan Prasad Singh

With a Foreword by Jim Guest, President, Consumers Union

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