

## 7 Assumptions That Drive Too Much Medical Care

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Many doctors are worried about the problems caused by too much medical care. A recent survey suggested that nearly one-half said their patients received too much medical care. But it is hard to communicate the nuances – that medical care can do a lot of good in selected settings, but can also do harm in others – during a 10-15 minute clinic visit.

Doctors like to blame lawyers for the problem of too much medical care. But ask yourself this: Would the problem of overuse disappear if the lawyers disappeared? Economists like to blame economics. But the recipe of adding fee for service to third-party payment to cook up too much medical care would not work without strong underlying beliefs about the value of the product. The general public harbors assumptions about medical care that encourage overuse.

I'm not blaming the public; many of these assumptions flow directly from information provided to them – be it from the news media, talk shows, advertising, PR campaigns, disease advocacy groups, public service announcements or doctors themselves.

Regardless of their source, these assumptions lead individuals to have an excessively optimistic view of medical care. That leads them to seek – some would say to demand, others to accept – too much care.

### Objectives

To consider 7 assumptions that drive too much medical care:

1. All risks can be lowered
2. It's always better to fix the problem
3. Sooner is always better
4. It never hurts to get more information
5. Action is always better than inaction
6. Newer is always better
7. It's all about avoiding death

NOTICE: Dr. Welch did not provide his slide set for distribution.
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