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## Too much medicine



The BMJ's [Too Much Medicine](#) campaign aims to highlight the threat to human health posed by overdiagnosis and the waste of resources on unnecessary care.

There is growing evidence that many people are overdiagnosed and overtreated for a wide range of conditions, such as prostate and thyroid cancers, asthma, and chronic kidney disease.

Through the campaign, the journal plans to work with others to increase awareness of the benefits and harms of treatments and technologies and develop ways to wind back medical excess, safely and fairly. This [editorial](#) by Fiona Godlee, editor in chief of *The BMJ* and overdiagnosis researcher Ray Moynihan, senior research fellow at Bond University, Australia, explains more about the campaign:

Dr Godlee said: "Like the evidence based medicine and quality and safety movements of previous decades, combatting excess is a contemporary manifestation of a much older desire to avoid doing harm when we try to help or heal.

"Making such efforts even more necessary are the growing concerns about escalating healthcare spending and the threats to health from climate change. Winding back unnecessary tests and treatments, unhelpful labels and diagnoses won't only benefit those who directly avoid harm, it can also help us create a more sustainable future."

*The BMJ* was a partner in the international scientific conference, Preventing Overdiagnosis, held in September 2013 in Hanover, New Hampshire. The conference brought together the research and researchers, advanced the science of the problem and its solutions, and developed ways to better communicate about this modern epidemic.

### Your feedback

Share your thoughts on overdiagnosis by responding to this [editorial](#).

## Interactive timeline

Click on our interactive timeline to see how the *BMJ* has covered overtreatment in recent years. [Find out more here](#)

## Theme issue

Has modern medicine undermined the capacity of individuals and societies to cope with death, pain, and sickness? Has too much medicine become a threat to health? Yes, argued Ray Moynihan in a theme issue in [April 2002](#). He accused the pharma industry of extending the boundaries of treatable disease to expand markets for new products. Barbara Mintzes <http://www.bmj.com/content/324/7342> blamed direct to consumer advertising of drugs in the US for portraying a dual message of "a pill for every ill," and "an ill for every pill." Elsewhere in the issue, doctors were accused of colluding in and encouraging medicalisation. Leonard Leibovici and Michel Lièvre <http://www.bmj.com/content/324/7342/866> wrote : "The bad things of life: old age, death, pain, and handicap are thrust on doctors to keep families and society from

facing them."

**Useful links:**

- [Choosing Wisely](#)
- [Center for Medical Consumers - Why too much medicine is making us sicker and poorer](#)
- [Preventing Overdiagnosis conference](#)
- [Consumer Reports](#)
- [Avoiding Avoidable Care](#)
- [Selling Sickness](#)
- [Dartmouth Institute for Health and Clinical Practice](#)
- [Bond University](#)